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| Instructor: | Jillian Pierson, Ph.D. | I'm available many times other than what is listed here as my official hours. We can usually talk before or after class, we can set a meeting for a different time or we can meet by phone. |
| Office | ASC 333 | You can text me to see if I'm in my office before heading over—even the official hours occasionally are disrupted by meetings or talks I'm attending, so it's a good idea to check first. |
| Hours: | Wed 10-12 Thurs 2-3 | |
| Phone: | (323)610-6820 | Sometimes talking is much more useful than emailing. As long as you're respectful, I welcome your phone calls. |
| Email: | jilliank@usc.edu | Please text me only with a very quick "are you in your office" type of message—otherwise, use email for content or assignment-related questions. |
| TAs: | Marcia Allison Ignacio Cruz Francesca Smith Yunwen Wang | <div>mcalliso@usc.edu ignacioc@usc.edu francesca.smith@usc.edu yunwenwa@usc.edu</div> <div>Your TAs will give you more information on how to contact them during discussion section. They are all excellent scholars and will be invaluable resources for you throughout the semester.</div> |

Course Goals

This class will introduce you to social scientific scholarship in human communication. I'd like you to complete this course recognizing how powerful communication theory can be in explaining the social world around us, and appreciating that communication is much more than everyday talk and conversation. You will encounter a variety of areas of communication theory that may help you decide which parts of the discipline will become the focus of your studies.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should have the ability to:

- Distinguish between common uses of the term "communication" and how the concept is defined by communication scholars
- Identify the perspectives researchers bring to the study of communication as a social science
- Explain theories of communication as a social science and critique them according to specific criteria
- Apply theoretical constructs to "real world" communication examples
- Describe recent research studies in communication

Required Texts

West, R., & Turner, L. (2018). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional required readings are posted on Blackboard and listed as "Bb" on the course calendar.

Please note that even when class lectures and discussions do not cover material from the text, you will be required to read and thoroughly understand the readings for the exams and assignments.

Tentative Course Schedule, Subject to Change:

| | Date | Topic | Assignment Due | Read after class |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Aug 21 | Course introduction | | |
| | Aug 23 | What is social science? | | Chapter 1, pp 3-14 |
| 2 | Aug 28 | Communication as a social science | | Chapter 2, pp 30-41 |
| | Aug 30 | How social science research works | | Bb |
| 3 | Sept 4 | Theorizing in social science | | Chapter 3 |
| | Sept 6 | Criteria of a “good” theory | | Bb |
| 4 | Sept 11 | Coordinated management of meaning | Research Paradigm | Chapter 5 |
| | Sept 13 | Persuasion: Elaboration likelihood | | Bb |
| 5 | Sept 18 | Cognitive dissonance | | Chapter 6 |
| | Sept 20 | Social judgment theory | | Bb |
| 6 | Sept 25 | Midterm 1 | Midterm | |
| | Sept 27 | Interpersonal to intercultural | | Bb |
| 7 | Oct 2 | Uncertainty reduction | | Chapter 8 |
| | Oct 4 | Expectancy violations theory | | Chapter 7 |
| 8 | Oct 9 | Social exchange theory | | Chapter 9 |
| | Oct 11 | Relational dialectics theory | | Chapter 11 |
| 9 | Oct 16 | Communication privacy management | “Wiki” | Chapter 12 |
| | Oct 18 | Social information processing | | Chapter 13 |
| 10 | Oct 23 | Face negotiation theory | | Chapter 27 |
| | Oct 25 | Communication accommodation | | Chapter 28 |
| 11 | Oct 30 | Midterm 2 | Midterm | |
| | Nov 1 | Groups and organizations: Groupthink | | Chapter 14 |
| 12 | Nov 6 | Structuration | | Chapter 15 |
| | Nov 8 | Organizational culture | | Chapter 16 |
| 13 | Nov 13 | Media theories: Agenda setting | Application | Chapter 21 |
| | Nov 15 | Uses and gratifications | | Chapter 23 |
| 14 | Nov 20 | Cultivation theory | | Chapter 24 |
| | <i>-----Enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday-----</i> | | | |
| 15 | Nov 27 | Media ecology theory | | Chapter 26 |
| | Nov 29 | A critical perspective | | Chapters 29, 30 |
| | Dec 11 | Final exam 11 – 1 pm | Final | |
| [The final exam date and time are set by the university and cannot be changed.] | | | | |

Course Policies

No laptops or electronics.

In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to not use your laptops, tablets or phones. I completely understand the temptation, but I think we all benefit from focusing without technology. Current research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective than typing them. Read the articles posted on Blackboard on this topic for a lengthier discussion of this policy. (Sometimes students have documented reasons for using laptops for note-taking; exceptions are made only for students with such documentation.)

Please bring old-fashioned pen and paper to lectures for note-taking and activities.

Late Papers: If your paper is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for every day it is late. Also, please be aware that if you end up handing a paper in late (thus accepting the automatic deduction), it falls to the bottom of our stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

Missed exams: Missing an exam is very difficult for you and for us. You would never miss unless you were really, seriously ill or had a serious emergency. Contact me and your discussion section TA immediately so we can try to remedy the situation and make sure you do not end up with a zero score.

Electronic Submission of Assignments

Please upload your assignments to Blackboard only. If you have trouble with Blackboard, reach out to Blackboard support directly for help—service is available 24/7 at 213-740-5555.

Attendance and Participation

1. To get the most out of this class, you must be here. While it is normal to miss a few times during the course of a semester, you cannot “take” this class without attending the class and discussion sections regularly.
2. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Please don’t send me notes from your doctor or even tell me why you are missing (unless it’s the day of an exam). I’m confident you won’t miss class except on the very rare occasion of an unavoidable conflict.

Note for student athletes, band members, and similar: I expect that if you are in-season, you may have to miss several classes. You should go ahead and send us official notices from your university sponsors.

3. Participation will be graded based on in-class work in both lecture and discussion. The lowest 20% of your participation grade will be dropped, which will allow for any absences throughout the semester.
4. When you miss class, please do not ask the TAs or me what you missed. It is your responsibility to seek out that information from other students. Once you have, we welcome the opportunity to talk with you and to go over any questions.

Grading

To achieve a “C” or better on papers, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. If you have specific difficulties with either writing or oral communication, please let me know before you turn in your first assignment.

Grades are based on this scale: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 59 or below.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| In-class work | 10% |
| Homework | 15% |
| Application paper | 15% |
| Midterm 1 | 20% |
| Midterm 2 | 20% |
| Final | 20% |

Assignments

In-Class Work

During both lecture and discussion meetings, we will have a variety of participation activities including brief small group assignments and quizzes. In class-work may be assigned at any point during the class and will not be scheduled in advance but randomly distributed throughout the semester. If you miss by arriving late or leaving early, or by being absent altogether, *you will not have an opportunity to make up the work*. Your lowest 20% of these grades will be dropped from the participation grade calculation because we recognize that some absences and lateness are inevitable.

Homework

Student Information Sheet

Please complete and upload to Blackboard. We want to get to know you and to have your contact information on hand.

Research Paradigm Assignment

1. Find and read a recent research article in communication from a communication journal.
2. Turn in the citation for the article along with the article’s published abstract.
3. Based on the information presented in class and in the text, write a brief paragraph or two explaining which perspective the author(s) took and what about their work made that perspective evident.

Be sure to choose a *research* article in which the authors conducted some kind of study. Do not choose a meta-analysis (a study of other studies), a book review, an essay, or an article that only discusses theory.

More information will be posted on Blackboard.

Theory “Wiki”

In this assignment you will describe a theory in your own words, evaluate it, and offer an original example of the theory in action. Check Blackboard for further information.

Research Study Participation

Undergraduate students studying research methods and doctoral students frequently need participants for their studies. To encourage you to participate, a small amount of credit will be offered for your participation in one study. If you have more than one class where such credit is offered, please keep in mind that you can only use your participation once—one study, one class.

Application Paper

This 5-7 page paper is an opportunity to apply the theories and concepts you’ve learned about communication to *examples* of communication you observe in a work of fiction. Detailed information about the assignment will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

Exams

The exams assess if you have learned the material covered in the readings, lectures, and class discussions. They will also ask you to put your knowledge to use by applying it to material presented in new examples. Prepare for a series of rigorous multiple choice questions on the exams. If you know yourself to be someone who finds these kinds of tests particularly challenging, check my posts on Blackboard and seek help early in the semester.

Please note that you are responsible for the material presented both in the readings and in class. The two do not always overlap. If you miss a class, it would be a good idea to get notes and discuss them with at least two other students.

The final will not be “cumulative” in that you won’t have to go back to the earlier chapters and study them in depth, but your knowledge will build and questions on later exams may rely on that foundation.

Campus Resources

Please take advantage of some of the resources your tuition supports. Early in the semester, visit The Writing Center for one-on-one assistance or small-group workshops. (Email writing@usc.edu or call 213-740-3691). If you have difficulty with tests, reach out to the Center for Academic Support (call 213-740-0776 or email them at study@usc.edu).

Looking Ahead

Exploring the field of communication is an ongoing experience for me. I look forward to learning more with all of you this semester.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu