



COMM 200 (4 units, 20327)
Communication and Social Science
Spring 2020 T/T 12:30-1:50 ANN L105A

Instructor: Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.

Office ASC G21F

Hours: Mon 2-3
 Wed 10:30-11:30
 Thurs 11-12

Phone:

XXX-XXX-XXX

Email:

jilliank@usc.edu

TAs: xx

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I encourage you to connect with me outside of our regularly scheduled class meetings! I am 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.

You can text me to see if I'm in my office before heading over—even the official hours sometimes are disrupted by meetings or talks I'm attending, so it's a good idea to check first. Please text only with a very quick "are you in your office" type of question—otherwise, use email for content or assignment-related issues.

xxx

Your TAs will give you more information on how to contact them during discussion section.

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

Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2019). *Applying communication theory for professional life* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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:

This is our plan but be aware there may be slight adjustments during the course of the semester.

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due <i>before</i> class	Read <i>after</i> class
1	Jan 14	Course introduction		
	Jan 16	What is social science?	Student info	Bb
2	Jan 21	Communication as a social science		Bb
	Jan 23	How social science research works	Academic integrity	Chapter 1
3	Jan 28	Theorizing in social science		Bb
	Jan 30	Researching communication		Chapter 2
4	Feb 4	Cognition and communication	Research Paradigm	Bb
	Feb 6	Uncertainty reduction		Chapter 3
5	Feb 11	Expectancy violations theory		Bb
	Feb 13	(cont.)		Bb
6	Feb 18	Exam 1	Exam	
	Feb 20	Cognitive dissonance theory		Bb
7	Feb 25	Politeness theory		Bb
	Feb 27	Social exchange theory		Chapter 5
8	Mar 3	Relational dialectics theory		Bb
	Mar 5	Communication privacy management		
9	Mar 10	Communication accommodation	“Wiki”	Bb
	Mar 12	Face negotiation theory		Bb
<i>No class Mar 17-19. Enjoy spring break!</i>				
10	Mar 24	Understanding culture		Chapter 6
	Mar 26	(cont).		Bb
11	Mar 31	Exam 2	Exam	
	Apr 2	Organizational comm		Chapter 9
12	Apr 7	(cont)		
	Apr 9	Persuasion		Chapter 7 (<i>except</i> pp. 132-135)
13	Apr 14	(cont)		Bb
	Apr 16	Diffusion and network theory		Chapter 10, pp. 182-191
14	Apr 21	Media Richness; SIP		Chapter 10, pp. 192-194, Bb
	Apr 23	Mediated comm		Chapter 11, pp. 199-213
15	Apr 28	A critical look back		
	Apr 30	Exam 3	Exam	
	May 13	Application paper due on Blackboard at 2 pm		

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 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 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.

Back up your work: Computer failures are sadly not uncommon. Please cover yourself by saving your work to cloud storage and an external storage device.

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 lecture 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).

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. After the first few weeks, attendance will be taken only occasionally, and in-class participation activities will be held sporadically.

If You Miss Class

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. Set yourself up at the beginning of the semester with at least two fellow students who you can count on for good notes if you have to miss class.

Slides shown in class will be posted on Blackboard but the slides are in no way meant to replace your own listening, involvement, and note-taking.

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 writing, please visit the university’s Writing Center before you submit your first assignment.

The grading scale for this class will be that an A is equivalent to 94 or above; A- is 90-93; B+ is 87-89; B is 84-86; B- is 80-83; C+ is 77-79; C is 74-76; C- is 70-73; D+ is 67-69; D is 64-66; D- is 60-63; and F is 59 and below.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Homework/In-Class Work	10%
Research Paradigm	5%
Theory “Wiki”	10%
Application paper	20%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%

No “Extra Credit”

This class gives you many opportunities to succeed. The ten percent homework/in-class work specifically gives you an opportunity to get full credit without any evaluation. Do homework on time, come to class to get credit for participation, and you’ll have an automatic “A” in ten percent of the class.

Assignments**Homework/In-Class Work (10%)***Student Information Sheet*

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

Academic Integrity Tutorials

Please complete the assigned tutorials listed on Blackboard, and then upload your certificates of completion.

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*. Because we recognize that some absences and lateness are inevitable, three missing scores will not count against your in-class work grade.

Research Paradigm Assignment (5%)

1. Find and read a recent research article in communication from one of the communication journals listed for this assignment on Blackboard.
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 an actual 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" (10%)

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.

Application Paper (20%)

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 for tips 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 third exam 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 of discovery 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:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | *Title IX* – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

<https://campussupport.usc.edu/>

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, February 28: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001