

Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D. (213)821-1127 jilliank@usc.edu	Feel free to reach out to me by texting or calling my office phone number. Text for short messages only, please. Longer, content-related questions are best sent via email.
Office hours:	TBD ASC G21 by appt	I encourage you to connect with me outside of our regularly scheduled class meetings! I will have regular office at xxx. I am usually in my campus office before and after class and would be glad to meet with you then. If none of these times work well, please email me with several suggested options to set up an alternate meeting time for in-person, Zoom, or phone.

Course Description

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 we are immersed in 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 Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Define social science, communication, and communication as a social science
- 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
- Recognize the limitations of the body of theory and research in communication that are tied to the historical context they were created in
- Apply theoretical constructs to "real world" communication examples
- Describe recent research studies in communication

Required Texts

Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2022). *Applying communication theory for professional life* (5th ed.). Sage.

Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard and listed by abbreviated citations on the course calendar. These readings are subject to change.

Tentative Course Schedule: [DATES TO BE REVISED]

This is our plan but please keep in mind we may have to make slight adjustments during the course of the semester. I will try to keep all due dates and exam dates in place but the topics may shift from this schedule.

The chapters in this calendar refer to our Dainton and Zellely textbook. Other readings will be found on Blackboard; they are subject to change.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment due before class	Readings for after class
1	Aug 23	Course welcome & introduction		COSSA
	Aug 25	Communication as a social science	Student Info Form	Avoiding plagiarism
2	Aug 30	Evaluating theories; axioms of comm		NCA, 2008; Chapter 1
	Sept 1	Cognition and communication	Academic integrity	Chapter 4 <i>only</i> p. 65-68 (section on five axioms)
3	Sept 6	Attribution theory & Uncertainty reduction		Chapter 2
	Sept 8	Expectancy violations theory	Research paradigm	Chapter 3
4	Sept 13	Cognitive dissonance theory		Burgoon, 2016
	Sept 15	(cont.)		Aronson & Tavris, 2020
5	Sept 20	Exam 1 (bring laptop)	Exam 1	
	Sept 22	Interpersonal comm Politeness theory		Knobloch et al 2010
6	Sept 27	Social exchange theory & relational dialectics theory		Chapter 5
	Sept 29	RDT (cont.)		Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012
7	Oct 4	Comm privacy management		Hammonds, 2015
	Oct 6	Understanding culture		Baldwin et al., 2013
8	Oct 11	Communication accommodation	Theory exploration	Chapter 6
	Oct 13	<i>Fall recess—no class meeting</i>		
9	Oct 18	Face negotiation theory		Giles et al., 2012; Kirschbaum, 2012
	Oct 20	Organizational comm		Koschmann, 2015
10	Oct 25	Exam 2 (bring laptop)	Exam 2	
	Oct 27	Org comm (cont.)		Chapter 9
11	Nov 1	Org comm (cont.)		Graham et al., 2015
	Nov 3	Diffusion and network theory		Chapter 10, pp. 182-191

12	Nov 8	networks (cont.)		Chapter 10, pp. 192-194
	Nov 10	Media richness / persuasion		Chapter 7 (<i>except</i> pp. 132-135)
13	Nov 15	Persuasion (cont.)		Booth-Butterfield
	Nov 17	(cont.)	Application paper	Rumble et al., 2017
14	Nov 22	Mass comm		Chapter 11, pp. 199-213
	Nov 24	<i>Thanksgiving—no class meeting</i>		
15	Nov 29	Mass comm (cont.)		Walther & Whitty, 2021
	Dec 1	Course conclusion		
Dec 13 Final exam 8 – 10 am				

Please note the date of the final exam, no matter how inconvenient, is set by USC. The university requires we hold the final during that time period.

Course Policies

Respectful conversation: We may touch on topics that some students feel sensitive about during class. If you find yourself having an emotional response, please reach out to me. Know that I want everyone to feel comfortable engaging in productive, open conversation, including at the times we don't agree with one another. If I get something wrong, I'd like to hear from you in a respectful way; I have an open mind and like most people, I am still learning and evolving.

I also hope you'll be mindful that we all come to the classroom from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. We can't truly understand another person's perspective, but we can listen with acceptance and empathy.

Attendance and Participation

1. To get the most out of this class, you must show up for our meetings, including both lectures and discussion sections. While it is normal to miss a few times during the course of a semester, you cannot take this class without attending regularly.
2. Of course you may occasionally have to miss class for illness or other reasons. When you are absent, I do not need to hear an excuse. I do not take attendance after the first few weeks of class. However, if you have to miss several classes, I would appreciate your letting me know what is going on, so that I don't worry about you.
3. Participation credit will be given on occasion during lectures and discussion section meetings. If you miss the live session, it will be your responsibility to find the alternative participation opportunity on Blackboard to receive that credit. Your alternative participation assignment must be submitted no later than one week from the date of the missed class, or you will not receive credit for it.
4. If you added the class late, you are still responsible for the material and assignments you missed. Please submit any homework and participation assignments no later than Friday of the fourth week of class.

No laptops or electronics in lecture.

In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to not use your laptops 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. If you are using an iPad or other tablet instead of pen and paper, that is acceptable as long as you keep your device open to the note-taking app only.

The three exams will require use of a laptop, so they will be an exception to the “no laptop” rule.

Communication

Please be sure to read your USC emails and Blackboard announcements daily on weekdays.

I reply to my emails within 24 hours (although on the weekends I may take longer). If you don't hear back from me promptly, feel free to send me a follow-up after a day has gone by.

Timely submission of work: If your assignment 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, 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.

Sometimes a student has a true emergency. Please contact me and your TA as soon as possible if something prevents you from submitting your work on time.

Accidentally uploading the wrong assignment or using a format not accepted by Blackboard is not a valid excuse for a late submission.

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

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.

Blackboard submissions that have uploaded successfully automatically generate an email to the student who submitted them. If you do not receive the email, you haven't submitted your assignment.

If Blackboard has a problem, you may email your assignment as proof that you completed it by the deadline. However, we can only grade in the Blackboard environment so you will still need to upload there as soon as the system is functioning.

Accommodations for students with registered disabilities

Please upload your letter from OSAS to the “assignment” I’ve created for it on Blackboard. If there’s anything specific about your accommodations you’d like me to know, I would be very happy to talk with you and support you however I can.

Grading

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	10%
Theory Exploration	15%
Application paper	20%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Exam 3	15%

Grades are earned according to the following standards:

- A Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
- B Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
- C Satisfactory; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
- D Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
- F Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.
- P/ NP To earn a passing grade, you must have a C- or higher. You also may not omit any assignments. You cannot earn a “P” without completing the theory exploration, the application paper, and all three exams regardless of your average score in the class.

We will do our best to get you feedback on assignments within two weeks of the due date. If you have questions about a grade on an assignment, you have ten days after the grade was posted to inquire about it via email.

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 (or do the makeup participation assignments if you have to miss), and you’ll have an automatic 100% or “A” in ten percent of the class.

Assignments

More information will be given in class and posted on Blackboard, but these descriptions will help you get a sense of our plans.

Homework/In-Class Work (10%)

All homework and in-class work assignments are credited via labor-based grading only. In other words, you merely do the assignment on time and get full credit. These assignments include the following:

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 synchronous class, please check the Blackboard content area called “if you missed synchronous class” to check for alternative participation assignments.

Quiz

At least one quiz will be given to allow you an opportunity to practice for the first midterm. Your performance on the quiz will not affect your grade; you merely have to take the quiz for full credit as it will count as part of your in-class/homework grade.

Research Paradigm Assignment (10%)

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.
4. Be prepared to briefly explain the study you read during your discussion section meeting.

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.

Theory Exploration (15%)

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* you observe. Detailed information about the assignment will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

Exams (three exams at 15% each)

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, even if the two do not overlap.

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, connect with 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).

Honoring Native Lands

Our USC campus is located on the traditional land of the Tongva People. It is a complicated reality that we exist in a space which for many years belonged to the Tongva who have been here for at least 10,000 years. I would like to acknowledge the unjust, violent history that unfolded over many years before and during the establishment of this university, and to show appreciation and humility toward indigenous communities and the sacrifices they have been forced to make.

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

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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](#).” Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school’s policy.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and **has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course**, without approval of the instructor.

b. 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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

osas.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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscsa.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/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

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.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/22/22 – 12/2/22) – needs update for 2023

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20223/calendar/>

Friday, September 9: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change enrollment option to audit for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

Tuesday, September 13: Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

Friday, October 7: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, November 11: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001