COMM 495: Communication Capstone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>COMM Bldg 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>TTh 10-11:30, Th 1-2, &amp; by Appt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Phone</td>
<td>619.594.7097*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* email preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:spitz@mail.sdsu.edu">spitz@mail.sdsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule #</td>
<td>20954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>PSFA-325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mailbox in:</td>
<td>COMM BLDG. 236/237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>Tue 7:00-9:40 p.m.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students are expected to be familiar with relevant contents, policies, and announcements on the School website: http://communication.sdsu.edu/

Texts

1. The textual materials for this course are “in the process of being written and compiled”. Most of the reading materials for this course will be made available for no cost to students. Whenever possible, additional readings will be selected on the basis of their availability through standard no-cost search processes.

2. i>clicker “clicker” (or i>clicker GO subscription) and current semester registration (register through Blackboard!). See: http://clicker.sdsu.edu/
## COMM 495: Communication Capstone

### Purpose & Learning Objectives

**OVERVIEW:**
This course seeks to both refresh and assess knowledge competencies in regard to the field of communication, especially as represented in the SDSU School of Communication. Think of it as “The 150 things every student should know about communication,” covering the following:

**I. TOPIC-SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES:**
- **DISCIPLINE:** Demonstrate knowledge of key persons and events in the history of the discipline of communication;
- **COMMUNICATION:** Specify and differentiate key principles regarding the definition and nature of communication, language, nonverbal communication, and several of their most prominent contexts of application;
- **THEORIES:** Specify and differentiate the nature of theories, their criteria for evaluation, and paradigms;
- **METHODS:** Specify and differentiate key assumptions and practices of the major methodological paradigms in the field of communication;
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** Specify and differentiate key principles of core societal relationships formed through communication;
- **SOCIETY:** Specify and differentiate key principles of societal uses of communication (e.g., persuasion, political communication, rhetorical movements, intercultural communication).

**II. CORE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:** Demonstrate the following competencies.
- **ABILITY TO WRITE:** Demonstrates proficiency in grammar, syntax, semantics, academic voice, application of APA style guidelines.
- **ABILITY TO FORMULATE CLAIMS:** Demonstrates ability to articulate researchable claims specifying the interrelationship among variables.
- **ABILITY TO ARGUE COMPETENTLY:** Demonstrates ability to articulate comprehensive arguments that include relevant and appropriate claims, warrants, and evidence, and argue ethically (i.e., originality/avoiding plagiarism).
- **ABILITY TO CONDUCT SCHOLARLY RESEARCH:** Demonstrates ability to locate and appropriately cite and list recent, relevant, and reasonable scholarly research, consisting mostly of peer-reviewed journal sources.
- **ABILITY TO SELECT RESEARCH TOPICS RELEVANT TO THE COURSE:** Content demonstrates relevance to the assignment and to the communication-based focus expected of the assignment.

### Scope
The scope of this class is to survey the primary learning objectives from most of the curricula representing the general communication major.

### Course Design
This is a traditional realspace didactic classroom course. The primary mode of instruction is lecture, combined with questions and answers in class. Learning outcomes are assessed predominantly by objective examinations and by a written research paper assignment.
## COMM 495: CAPSTONE SCHEDULE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date F:14</th>
<th>FALL 2014</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>08-26</td>
<td>Course Overview; ESSENTIALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>09-02</td>
<td>ESSENTIALS, Quiz on plagiarism and APA reference style Disciplinary History</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>09-09</td>
<td>Architecture of The Discipline: Theories, Paradigms (“Understanding,” “Islands” both by Spitzberg); Cont.</td>
<td>Ch. 1-2, 16 Powers</td>
<td>Th: Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>09-23</td>
<td>Theories &amp; paradigms cont. <a href="http://danielciurel.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/21stcenturycommunication2.pdf">http://danielciurel.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/21stcenturycommunication2.pdf</a></td>
<td>Chs. 3-4</td>
<td>Scheibel; Agne &amp; Tracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>09-30</td>
<td>Verbal &amp; Nonverbal Communication Codes: Verbal/Nonverbal, Symbols, Codes, Interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10-07</td>
<td>Interpersonal/Relational Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>Interpersonal/Relational Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>Midterm; Discussion of prop paper assignment</td>
<td>(syllabus)</td>
<td>Th:MIDTERM</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10-28</td>
<td>Argument &amp; Persuasion</td>
<td>Ch. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11-04</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11-11</td>
<td>Organizational Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>Veterans day—no class</td>
<td>Ch. 20</td>
<td>Th: PAPER**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11-25</td>
<td>Political Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12-02</td>
<td>Health Communication</td>
<td>Spitzberg (Bb)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12-09</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Careers IMPACCT</td>
<td>Ch. 34-35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Tuesday Dec. 16</td>
<td>Final Exam***</td>
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</tbody>
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* This Schedule may be revised as the semester ensues. Fair notice will be announced in class and Blackboard, and students are responsible for abiding by the most recent version of the schedule. Paper submission is due (through Blackboard Turnitin, by the beginning of class)

** NOTE: This is the final exam date! Inform family, friends, and the people who are getting married that travel during this time on this date is not possible because it is scheduled as of the first day of class!

*** Caveat: This syllabus is intended to provide a general set of guidelines and expectations, but it does not bind the instructor to specific details. The instructor retains the right to adjust the course design. Detailed instructions, or changes to expectations, will be made and announced (in class and on Blackboard) with as much preparatory time as the instructor can manage based on the development of the course and
## COMM 495: Assignments & Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Overview</th>
<th>This is a ‘total point’ grade system—a point, is a point, is a point. You are competing for overall points in the course. The points are accumulated from the following assignments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Participation and Readings Comprehension:</strong> For participation in clicker activities, there are 2 points per class day for <em>any</em> participation, and up to another point for any “correct” responses that may or may not be presented (e.g., on assigned readings), up to a maximum 50 points for the semester, starting on the first day of classes. There are 26-28 potential “clicker-eligible” lecture days, so a student can miss 3 class periods without any effect on participation points (and some of those points can be made up by the assigned readings points on other lecture days) (up to &amp; not to exceed 50 points). There will be substantially more than clicker items across the semester, so you will be able to miss a class, or forget a clicker, and still make full points. There is no “making up” of clicker points due to unexcused absence, malfunctioning clicker, dead batteries, or other reasons. See: <a href="http://clicker.sdsu.edu/">http://clicker.sdsu.edu/</a> <em>(50 points)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>APA/Plagiarism Quiz:</strong> A 10-item objective exam on the APA style of references format for scholarly journals, chapters in scholarly edited books, and scholarly books, and the indicators of plagiarism. <em>(50 points)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Brief Proposition Paper:</strong> A 2-page (not including references page) version of the final proposition paper, with 2-3 hypotheses, and 5 relevant scholarly journal citations. Submitted online to course Blackboard Turnitin assignment site. Detailed instructions provided <em>(100 points)</em>.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam:</strong> objective/multiple-choice, on lecture/text <em>(100 points).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam:</strong> objective, multiple-choice, covering lecture/text <em>(100 points).</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Extra credit:</strong> Because the School of Communication seeks not only to distribute knowledge through teaching, but also generate it through original research, and because participation in such research provides important insights into this process of knowledge generation, students in this class will be allowed up to 10 extra credit points during the semester, out of the total number of points available, based on participation in research projects explicitly authorized and originating from the School of Communication. Extra credit cannot be guaranteed as it is dependent on the NEED of research participants in departmental research. If extra credit opportunities are made available, students can receive 2 points for each half-hour of research participation. Research opportunities are presented on the SONA Research Recruitment System which can be accessed through the School of Communication Research Participation website, <em>(&lt; 10 points).</em> Site: <a href="https://sites.google.com/site/commsdsuresearch">https://sites.google.com/site/commsdsuresearch</a> <em>(max. 10 points)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## COMM 495: Assignments & Assessment

### Grade Scale

Grades are based on a total point system, in which ‘a point is a point, is a point’. Letter grades are assigned based on .60, .70, .80, .90 main cuts, with .x3, and .x7 mid-grade cuts. There is no normative curving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>372-400</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>348-359</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>308-319</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-371</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>332-347</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>292-307</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-331</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>280-291</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>240-251</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000-239</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>220-239</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Late Work

Any paper turned in late will be reduced 10 points per weekday that passes beyond the scheduled due date, excepted only for university or professor recognized excuses. The credibility of excuse will depend in part on diligence in apprising the instructor of the situation. In all instances in which an assignment is late, an email should be sent to the instructor as soon as possible, with a Word version of the assignment attached.

### Incompletes

An ‘I’ grade is assigned when a faculty member concludes that a student cannot meet a clearly identifiable portion of course requirements within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. An incomplete is not provided because a course or schedule is too difficult or because time was not managed sufficiently.

### Writing Style Guide

This course, like the entire School of Communication, requires all written assignments to use the APA (6th ed.) style guide for references, headings, and other format considerations not otherwise specified by the course assignment. Students are recommended to possess an APA style guide. GRADING WILL TAKE USE OF APA STYLE INTO ACCOUNT.

### Attendance & Participation

Attendance is counted as participation in clicker activities. Excuses are recognized for personal illness serious enough to see a physician (thus, warranting an appointment slip), family crisis, or participation in school-related activities (thus, warranting an official notification from the activity coordinator). The latter requires that prior arrangements be made. The former two are more credible with calls on the day of absence, and personal conference as soon as possible thereafter. Record the date of your final exam NOW, and plan travel schedules accordingly. DO NOT SCHEDULE ANYTHING AGAINST THIS DATE! Please be on time for class and stay for the entire period. If you should need to excuse yourself early from a class session, let me know ahead of time. Should you need to miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. You should get the notes from a classmate – the instructors will not “share” their notes with a student for any reason. Afterward, you can come to an instructor’s office hours to discuss the material covered in class.

### Reevaluations

If you feel your written assignment was unjustly evaluated, please notify your instructor within 2 weeks after the return or posting of your assignment grade. Please note, asking for an appeal and providing a rationale for concern does not secure, nor imply, a change of grade. Further, any reevaluation implies a complete reevaluation, meaning that new concerns will be identified that were not initially identified in the assessment, thereby potentiating a grade increase, no change, or a grade decrease.
### COMM 495: Assignments & Assessment

| CLASSROOM COMPORTMENT | The School of Communication, as a representative of SDSU and higher education, expects students to engage in behaviors enhancing classroom learning environments. The Instructor is responsible for optimizing learning not only for individual students, but for all students comprising a class. Behaviors disruptive to the classroom instruction are thus not tolerated. Among the actions that are considered disruptive to the learning environment are:  
- The use of cell phones, and/or computers/laptops/tablets, not directly related to the course and its instructional objectives, materials, or contents.  
- Conversations with other students, during class lectures and related activities, that are distracting to shared attention and collaborative learning.  
- Reading, sleeping, harassing, bullying, or related activities exhibiting disrespect to the instructor or fellow students.  
- Consistently entering late, leaving early, or leaving often from class.  
- Activities that are grossly inappropriate, threatening or dangerous, including the use of language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, or contains other forms of personal insults.  
- When students’ actions distract from learning objectives, instructors may be required to intervene to minimize disruptive conduct.  

Certain other activities may be acceptable, but only with permission or by direction of the Instructor, who retains the authority to specify relevant restrictions. Such activities include:  
- Filming, taping, or otherwise recording the class (without instructor permission);  
- Accessing the Internet during class;  

The Instructor reserves the right to establish additional reasonable expectations deemed necessary to maintain optimal learning conduct in the classroom. Each faculty member is the primary arbiter of classroom comportment. The faculty member has the authority to enforce this policy in a manner deemed suitable to the particular class in question. Should repeat offenses occur, with fair warning, each faculty member will determine fair and appropriate consequences for these behaviors. Should an emergency occur or require monitoring, or if students observe violations of this policy, they are encouraged to inform the instructor as soon as possible. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPORTMENT WITH PROFESSOR</td>
<td>Communication Etiquette. Should you need to contact me at any point during the semester, the best alternative is to see me in person. I have regularly scheduled office hours and am frequently available on campus outside of these scheduled times (it is best to make an appointment to see me in this case). The next best alternative is to send an email. I check email very often during weekdays and periodically on weekends. To be respectful of the instructor’s time, it is expected that students will be fully prepared when meeting the professor in the office, with an agenda of specific issues to address, and relevant materials ready for the instructor to examine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sensitive Subjects & Potential Stressors

Throughout the course of this semester, we will be touching on a number of very sensitive issues including violence, sexuality, family, and loss. Our goal this semester is to create an open dialogue where we can discuss how the theories and concepts analyzed in research become real through lived experience; therefore, I ask that you keep the information shared in class privileged. Please be respectful of your classmates by treating their stories with care and sensitivity.

Issues of personal violence and loss can be particularly difficult to manage. If you find yourself in need of extra care, counseling, or support this semester, please feel free to take advantage of one or more of the services listed below:

- **At SDSU:** Students who require immediate psychological help are seen on an emergency basis by calling C&PS at (619) 594-5220 during business hours.
- **After hours,** students can call the San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at (800) 479-3339. Other emergency services include: Student Health Services Nurse Advisory Line at (888) 594-5281; or University Police at (619) 594-1991.
- **Other Therapist referral lines:**
  - Counseling Referrals: 619.232.9622
  - Psychiatrist Referrals: sandiegopsychiatricsociety.org
  - Psychologist Referrals: 619.291.3451
  - Psychotherapists Referral: 619.296.9011

### Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at **(619) 594-6473**. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### Caveat

This syllabus is intended to provide a general set of guidelines and expectations, but it does not bind the instructor to specific details. The instructor retains the right to adjust the course design. Detailed instructions, or changes to expectations, will be made and announced (in class and on Blackboard) with as much preparatory time as the instructor can manage based on the development of the course and semester. It is the student's responsibility to obtain information announced in class in a timely manner.
## COMM 495: Assignments & Assessment

**Clickers See:**  
http://clicker.sdsu.edu/

- Either i>clicker OR i>clickerGO is required for this course! This semester in this class, you have the option of using either the >Clicker2 remote or i>clickerGO. i>clickerGO enables you to vote via a web-enabled device, like a laptop, or use a downloadable app on your iOS or Android smartphone. >Clicker2 is a handheld remote which you must purchase and bring to class every day. The SDSU Bookstore offers discounts for both of these.
- If you already have an i>clicker2 remote, you can use it in this class. i>clicker (either version) will be used every day in class, starting with the first day of class, and you are responsible for registering and bringing your device every day.
- [Note: Don’t buy i>clickerGO if you are enrolled in another class that requires an i>clicker2 remote!! Not all Faculty are allowing i>clickerGO.]
- To receive participation credit in the course:
  - i>clicker2 remote: register your remote on any of your SDSU courses by going to Tools => i>clicker Registration => Enter your remoteID which is on the back of the remote => Submit. **MAKE SURE YOU SEE A REGISTRATION DATE** or your clicker might not be registered.
  - Successful registration generates a registration date. Once registered, your i>clicker2 remote can be used in all classes that require i>clicker and should not need to be re-registered.
  - i>clickerGO: You can purchase activation codes from the SDSU Bookstore. Go to https://www.iclickergo.com or download the iOS or Android app from your app store. Create an account login using a simple username and password. Your REDID is your StudentID in i>clickerGO. Enter your activation code.

**IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES & POLICIES:**
- First, **DO NOT CHANGE FROM ONE SYSTEM TO ANOTHER.** This confuses the system with more than registration code for you, and may jeopardize your participation points.
- Second, **MONITOR YOUR PARTICIPATION POINTS REGULARLY.** Your points will begin showing up within days of the third class period. **COMING TO ME AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER TO DISCUSS YOUR SUDDEN DISCOVERY THAT YOU DON'T HAVE POINTS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.**
- Third, if you are caught clicking in for an absent student, that is a form of academic dishonesty, and will be reported to the Office of Student Rights & Responsibility as an infraction to be placed in your academic record.

- If you have more questions about i>clicker, visit http://clicker.sdsu.edu or http://support.iclicker.com.

Come prepared to use your clicker on the first day of class.
### Extra Credit

**Rationale:** Because the School of Communication seeks not only to distribute knowledge through teaching, but also generate it through original research, and because participation in such research provides important insights into this process of knowledge generation, students in this class will be allowed up to a total (not to exceed) 10 extra credit points during the semester, out of the total number of points available for the course, based on participation in School of Communication authorized research projects. Points will be provided upon evidence of completed participation, with 2 points for each half-hour of research participation. So, for example, if you engage in 3 projects accumulating to 1.5 credit hours, that would equate to 6 extra credit points (3 half-hours x 2 points = 6), added to the total number of points for the semester.

1. **Extra Credit:** Students may obtain extra credit from participation in approved departmental research if research opportunities are made available. Extra credit cannot be guaranteed as it is dependent on the need of research participants in departmental research. If extra credit opportunities are made available, students can receive 2 points for each half-hour of research participation (max. 10 points). Research opportunities are presented on the SONA Research Recruitment System which can be accessed through the School of Communication Research Participation website: [https://sites.google.com/site/commsdsuresearch](https://sites.google.com/site/commsdsuresearch)

2. **Eligibility:** Only research projects approved and listed on the site listed above are eligible.

3. **Announcement of Opportunities:** It is the students' responsibility to avail themselves of such opportunities—ongoing announcements and solicitations on the part of the instructor may or may not be made during the semester as opportunities arise.

4. **Availability of Opportunities:** Research in a program ebbs and flows. Participation is only available during the active windows of time specified by each study. Opportunities for participation may or may not be available in any particular semester, or at any particular time of the semester.

5. **Record of Participation:** It is the responsibility of each individual researcher to generate a valid list of student participation to return to the instructor of record. It should be apparent in each research project how the student's participation is to be recorded and evidenced.

6. **Grade:** No more credit is available than is indicated above—there are no "additional" projects or sources for achieving extra credit in the course.

7. **Ethics:** Any attempt to falsify participation in research for the sake of receiving unearned credit, or to surreptitiously claim credit for more than one course, are forms of academic dishonesty, and will be a basis for failure of a course and initiation of proceedings with the office of Student Rights & Responsibilities.
## COMM 495: Exam Tips

### Exam Grading
Items that are overly difficult, not discriminating or unreliable are adjusted based on statistical analyses (overall item discrimination, item reliability, item difficulty, response options with greater reliability than the keyed option). There will be no curving of grades after these adjustments are made. Grades are uploaded to Blackboard only after these adjustments are made.

### Exam Retention
Please note that exams in this class will not be returned. However, you are welcome to make an appointment to see and review your exam. All exams and answer sheets will be destroyed at the end of the following semester.

### Exams
Exams are objective format (multiple-choice, true/false), covering lecture, and any materials distributed to the class. The final exam may be cumulative and comparative across topics of the semester. Detailed review sheets will be made available prior to each exam. Optical scanning answer sheets (ParSCORE “small red”) and No. 2 pencils are the student’s responsibility on exam days. No electronic devices (i.e., cellphones, earphones, MP3 devices, cameras, tape recorders, calculators, e-books, e-tablets, laptop computers, or electronic dictionaries) are permitted during exams. Any evidence of any such device in sight of a student will result in that student’s failure on that exam, and if there is evidence of any attempt at recording or copying exam materials, or making use of other stolen materials, the student may be failed for the course and reported to Student Rights & Responsibilities.

### Tips for Studying for Exams
First, study comparatively. A multiple-choice good item has to present a condition (i.e., root) that one and only one answer (i.e., stem) correctly fulfills. However, the remaining stems (i.e., foils) must seem correct to the unstudied mind. For foils to seem correct, they often use words and concepts that are legitimate content for the course, but that do not uniquely fit the condition identified in the item root. A student who merely skims or memorizes materials will see several stems that “look” correct, when only one stem actually legitimately fulfills the item root. In order to know which stem is correct requires not only that the stems are recognized, but also what makes the concepts distinct and different from one another, and how they relate to the condition specified in the root. This means studying comparatively, which in turn suggests several study techniques.

- Memorization is important, but only a small part of the picture. Memorization helps with definitions, lists, model components, and stages or sequences. However, it does not help much with comparison, contrast, analysis and synthesis.
- When studying a concept, ask how it relates to other similar but different concepts. It is important to analyze the differences between concepts, rather than just understanding the concept by itself.
- Successive integrative outlining may help. This means to outline the class notes into a more concise set of notes, and then outline text chapters into a concise set of notes, and then combining student outlines. This activity leads to compare and contrast “where things belong in relation to each other.” The resulting integrative outline can then serve as a final study document. This practice is time-consuming, but can also be very beneficial.

Also, study your own past exams before taking the next one. The professor permits students to look over their own exams. Finally, use study groups to assess preparation, but not to study. This is clearly only an opinion, but study groups can be very inefficient, and are not likely to do much good unless the members have studied hard prior to studying as a group. The value of the group is to provide different ways of seeing the material, to test knowledge with questions any given student would not ordinarily derive, and to occasionally correct errors in thinking.
Additional Readings

The following readings are listed in the schedule above, and are required readings. They are not available in the bookstore, and must be located by the student using standard research techniques associated with a research university education.

Note: The following reading can be located through the library search engines. Learning to use these search engines is part of the competency assumed by this course:


Note: The following readings can be located through the URL provided in the schedule above, and it is also in the library as a reference work. The following are listed in the order in which they are required:

| **Overview** | In any case in which an instructor identifies evidence for charging a student with violation of academic conduct standards or plagiarism, the presumption will be with that instructor’s determination. The instructor(s) will confer with the School Director to confirm the evidence. Once confirmed, the student will be informed and presented with the evidence. Some conditions and terms below clarify the School policy and procedure. |
| **SDSU Definitions** | “**Cheating:** Cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by the use of dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to
  - copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other examination; discussing answers or ideas relating to the answers on a test or other examination without the permission of the instructor;
  - obtaining copies of a test, an examination, or other course material without the permission of the instructor;
  - using notes, cheat sheets, or other devices considered inappropriate under the prescribed testing condition;
  - collaborating with another or others in work to be presented without the permission of the instructor;
  - falsifying records, laboratory work, or other course data;
  - submitting work previously presented in another course, if contrary to the rules of the course;
  - altering or interfering with the grading procedures;
  - plagiarizing, as defined; and
  - knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above.

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the university as one's own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to:
  - submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another;
  - omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another;
  - omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof;
  - close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another;
  - submitting another person's artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and
  - submitting as one's own work papers purchased from research companies.” (source: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html) |
## THE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual contents</th>
<th>Intellectual contents include all forms of ‘text’ produced by another person or persons. It includes: writings, course syllabi, course lectures and recordings of lectures, visual information such as models, videos, lyrics, software, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
<td>The syllabus, lectures and lecture outlines are personally-copyrighted intellectual property of the instructor, which means that any organized recording for anything other than personal use, duplication, distribution, or profit is a violation of copyright and fair use laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper source attribution</td>
<td>Proper attribution occurs by specifying the source of content or ideas. This is done by (a) providing quotation marks around text, when directly quoted, and (b) clearly designating the source of the text or information relied upon in an assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-plagiarism</td>
<td>Students often practice some form of ‘double-dipping,’ in which they write on a given topic across more than one course assignment. In general, there is nothing wrong with double-dipping topics or sources, but there is a problem with double-dipping exact and redundant text. It is common for scholars to write on the same topic across many publication outlets; this is part of developing expertise and the reputation of being a scholar on a topic. Scholars, however, are not permitted to repeat exact text across papers or publications except when noted and attributed, as this wastes precious intellectual space with repetition and does a disservice to the particular source of original presentation by ‘diluting’ the value of the original presentation. Any time a writer simply ‘cuts-and-pastes’ exact text from former papers into a new paper, it is a form of self-plagiarism. Consequently, a given paper should never be turned in to multiple classes. Entire paragraphs, or even sentences, should not be repeated word-for-word across course assignments. Each new writing assignment is precisely that, a new writing assignment, requiring new composition on the student’s part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation for ghost writing</td>
<td>Any student who solicits any third party to write any portion of an assignment for this class (whether for pay or not) violates the standards of academic honesty. The penalty for solicitation (regardless of whether it can be demonstrated the individual solicited wrote any sections of the assignment) is F in the course and reporting to Student Rights and Responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Secondary Citations

Secondary citation is not strictly a form of plagiarism, but in blatant forms, it can present similar ethical challenges. A secondary citation is citing source A, which in turn cites source B, but it is source B’s ideas or content that provide the unique basis for the claims the student intends to make in the assignment. For example, assume there is an article by Jones (2006) in the student’s hands, in which there is a discussion or quotation of an article by Smith (1998). Assume further that what Smith seems to be saying is very important to the student’s analysis. In such a situation, the student should always try to locate the original Smith source. In general, if an idea is important enough to discuss in an assignment, it is important enough to locate and cite the original source for that idea. There are several reasons for these policies: (a) Authors sometimes commit citation errors, which might be replicated without knowing it; (b) Authors sometimes make interpretation errors, which might be ignorantly reinforced (c) Therefore, reliability of scholarly activity is made more difficult to assure and enforce; (d) By relying on only a few sources of review, the learning process is short-circuited, and the student’s own research competencies are diminished, which are integral to any liberal education; (e) By masking the actual sources of ideas, readers must second guess which sources come from which citations, making the readers’ own research more difficult; (f) By masking the origin of the information, the actual source of ideas is misrepresented. Some suggestions that assist with this principle:

- When the ideas Jones discusses are clearly attributed to, or unique to, Smith, then find the Smith source and citation.
- When the ideas Jones is discussing are historically associated more with Smith than with Jones, then find the Smith source and citation.
- In contrast, Jones is sometimes merely using Smith to back up what Jones is saying and believes, and is independently qualified to claim, whether or not Smith would have also said it; in such a case, citing Jones is sufficient.
- Never simply copy a series of citations at the end of a statement by Jones, and reproduce the reference list without actually going to look up what those references report—the only guarantee that claims are valid is for a student to read the original sources of those claims.

### Useful Aides

A good place to learn about plagiarism is the tutorial on academic integrity at [http://plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/](http://plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/); and at [http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/caseintro.html](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/caseintro.html)

A good place to learn about APA writing and citation style is: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

A good place to learn about making better arguments is: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/)
THE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY OF
THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TurnItIn.com</th>
<th>The papers in this course will be submitted electronically in Word (preferably 2007, .docx) on the due dates assigned, and will require verification of submission to TurnItIn.com. “Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to TurnItIn.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the TurnItIn.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to TurnItIn.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material” (source: language suggested by the CSU General Counsel and approved by the Center for Student’s Rights and Responsibilities at SDSU).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Consequences of Plagiarism or Cheating | • **Course failure:** Soliciting or reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials without proper attribution, whether represented by: (a) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (b) by percentage of assignment length, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course in which the infraction occurred, and a report to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR).  
  • **Assignment failure:** Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks, but with source citation, or subsets of images without source attribution, will minimally result in an “F” on the assignment, and may result in greater penalty, including a report to the CSRR, depending factors noted below. In this instance, an “F” may mean anything between a zero (0) and 50%, depending on the extent of infraction.  
  • **Exacerbating conditions—Amount:** Evidence of infraction, even if fragmentary, is increased with a greater: (a) number of infractions; (b) distribution of infractions across an assignment; or (c) proportion of the assignment consisting of infractions.  
  • **Exacerbating conditions—Intent:** Evidence of foreknowledge and intent to deceive magnifies the seriousness of the offense and the grounds for official response. Plagiarism, whether ‘by accident’ or ‘by ignorance,’ still qualifies as plagiarism—it is all students’ responsibility to make sure their assignments are not committing the offense.  
  • **Assistance:** Evidence that the student was not the original author of the work, due to soliciting the assistance or composition of another person or persons.  
  • **Exceptions:** Any exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and only under exceptional circumstances. |
### THE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

**THIS IS SERIOUS!**

- THERE ARE NO EXCUSES ALLOWED BASED ON IGNORANCE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM, OR OF WHAT THIS POLICY IS.

- PLAGIARISM IS A CRIME OF CONDUCT, NOT OF INTENT.

- THIS COURSE WILL HAVE ZERO-TOLERANCE FOR PLAGIARISM!

**WHY? BECAUSE:**

1. A PLAGIARISM POLICY IS PUBLISHED IN THE UNIVERSITY CATALOG;

2. THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION PLAGIARISM POLICY, COMPLETE WITH ELABORATED EXAMPLES, DEFINITIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES FOR TYPES OF PLAGIARISM, IS:
   
   a. ON THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION BLACKBOARD SITE,
   
   b. ON THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION WEBSITE, AND
   
   c. IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS;

3. A POWERPOINT LECTURE PRESENTED IN THIS COURSE ON “THE ESSENTIALS” FURTHER SPECIFIES THE NATURE OF PLAGIARISM;

4. YOU CAN TURN IN YOUR PAPER BEFORE IT IS DUE, SEE ITS ORIGINALITY RATING, FIX IT, AND TURN IT IN AGAIN BY SUBMISSION DEADLINE;

5. FINALLY, YOU SHOULD SIMPLY KNOW THAT IT IS UNETHICAL AND A ‘HIGH CRIME’ IN ACADEME TO MISREPRESENT ANYONE’S WORDS OR IDEAS, THROUGH IMPLICATION, WHETHER INTENDED OR NOT,
   
   a. THAT THEY ARE YOUR OWN, OR
   
   b. THEY ARE SOMEONE ELSE’S WHEN THEY ARE NOT.

   A final analogy:
   
   If you are taking a driving test to get a license,  
   And you run a stop sign while the instructor is in the car,  
   You fail the test then and there,
and must wait for an opportunity to re-take the exam another time. So it is with plagiarism.

THEREFORE, THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR PLAGIARISM, AND NO EXCUSE WILL BE ACCEPTED. YOU ARE FOREWARNED. IF YOU PLAGIARIZE, YOU WILL FAIL THIS COURSE.

Each of the 10 most common types of plagiarism are defined below. The types are ranked in order of severity of intent.

**#1. CLONE**
Submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own

**#2. CTRL-C**
Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations

**#3. FIND - REPLACE**
Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source

**#4. REMIX**
Paraphrases from multiple sources, made to fit together

**#5. RECYCLE**
Borrows generously from the writer’s previous work without citation

**#6. HYBRID**
Combines perfectly cited sources with copied passages without citation

**#7. MASHUP**
Mixes copied material from multiple sources

**#8. 404 ERROR**
Includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources

**#9. AGGREGATOR**
Includes proper citation to sources but the paper contains almost no original work

**#10. RE-TWEET**
Includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure

Source: http://plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE “PROP” PAPER

A Propositional Parable

D: Daddy, what is an instinct?
F: An instinct, my dear, is an explanatory principle.
D: But what does it explain?
F: Anything – almost anything at all. Anything you want it to explain.
D: Don't be silly. It doesn't explain gravity.
F: No. But that is because nobody wants "instinct" to explain gravity. If they did, it would explain it. We could simply say that the moon has an instinct whose strength varies inversely as the square of the distance . . .
D: But that's nonsense, Daddy.
F: Yes, surely. But it was you who mentioned "instinct," not I.
D: All right – but then what does explain gravity?
F: Nothing my dear, because gravity is an explanatory principle.
D: Oh. Do you mean that you cannot use one explanatory principle to explain another?
F: Hmm . . . hardly ever. That is what Newton meant when he said, "hypotheses non fingo."
D: And what does that mean? Please.
F: Well, you know what "hypotheses" are. Any statement linking together two descriptive statements is an hypothesis. If you say that there was a full moon on February 1st and another on March 1st; and then you link these two observations together in any way, the statement that links them is an hypothesis.
D: Yes – and I know what 'non' means. But what's 'fingo.'
F: Well, 'fingo' is a late Latin word for 'make.' It forms a verbal noun 'fictio' from which we get the word 'fiction.'
D: Daddy, do you mean that Sir Issac Newton thought that all hypotheses were just made up like stories?
F: Yes – precisely that.
D: But didn't he discover gravity? With the apple?
F: No, dear. He invented it.
D: Oh.

Adapted from: Heinz Von Foerster (1981).

Rigor and imagination: Essays from the legacy of Gregory Bateson.
DON'T PANIC

“Hypotheses are the scaffolds which are erected in front of a building and removed when the building is completed. They are indispensable to the worker; but he must not mistake the scaffolding for the building.”

J. W. von Goethe, Maxims and reflections, 1893 (in Kaplan: Science says)

“For every fact there is an infinity of hypotheses. The more you look, the more you see.”

R. M. Pirsig, Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance, 1974.

“Hypothesis, where successful, is a two-way street, extending back to explain the past and forward to predict the future. What we try to do in framing hypotheses is to explain some otherwise unexplained happenings by inventing a plausible story, a plausible description or history of relevant portions of the world.”

(Quine & Ullian, 1980, “Hypothesis,” p. 197)

“The purpose of models is not to fit the data but to sharpen the questions”

(in Kaplan: Science says)

“Being able to examine our models, critically evaluate them, and even discard them is far more scientifically literate than being able to regurgitate facts for a standardized test. … Ultimately, our models and descriptions of reality must be subject to two overriding criteria. How useful is this model, and how much does this model resemble our observations? Scientific literacy requires an understanding that science is only a model. We have to be able to jettison our models when our critical thinking leads us to that conclusion.

Seed, (Sept/Oct), 77-78.

“Without a sense, or without the thought, a proposition would be an utterly dead and trivial thing.”

Wittgenstein, Blue and Brown Books, 1958, p. 4

“The meaning of exactness best founded in intellectual history is the possibility of constructing a theoretical system of idealized models containing abstract constructs of variables and of relations between variables, from which most or all propositions concerning particular connections can be deduced.”

Machlup, 2004, Readings in the philosophy of social science p. 11

“All possible knowledge is only an approximation and does not reach ultimate reality. It only reflects certain aspects of reality in more or less appropriate models.”

von Bertalanffy, 1975 Perspectives on general system theory, p. 114
Overview

The purpose of a proposition (i.e., hypothesis) paper is to develop a number of theoretical propositions, a significant proportion of which concern communication in relationship to the course topic (e.g., conflict, relationships, dark side of communication, communication theory, etc.). The paper in some ways is a review of literature; it is different from typical literature reviews in a few important ways. Most reviews just summarize research to provide a sense of ‘what is known’ in an area. In contrast, the proposition paper attempts to develop explanatory arguments in support of a number of hypotheses.

Papers are primarily graded on four areas: (1) Writing: Good writing, composition, style, voice, and format (APA); (2) Proposition wording: Conceptual soundness of the propositions and their wording; (3) Scholarly research: Quality of the scholarly journal research brought to bear; and (4) Explanatory argument: The quality of the explanatory arguments developed for each proposition. For graduate student papers only, a fifth grading component is (5) Model value: The quality of the visual model in summarizing or generating the hypotheses. It is very important to emphasize that “evidence” and “argument” are separate elements of the assessment—evidence backs an argument, but the argument itself has to explain the proposition, independent of the evidence. Of course, papers must also be topical; that is, they must be relevant to the course content.

Hypothesizing

A hypothesis is a verbal or symbolic statement of relationship between two or more variables (e.g., Trust is positively related to the likelihood of using cooperative strategies during conflicts). A variable is any construct or concept that can be observed to take on different values (e.g., trust, anxiety, self-disclosure, assertiveness, strategy use, etc.). It takes the form of \( X = f(Y) \) (i.e., “The value of ‘X’ is a function of ‘Y’”). A definition (e.g., self-esteem is the degree to which self is perceived positively), in contrast, characterizes the nature of a variable, but not its relationship to other variables. It takes the form \( X = Y \).

All of this is just a fancy way of saying that the proposition paper attempts to develop, through review of scholarly research and personally formulated argument, a series of hypotheses on a given topic. Many of these hypotheses may be already in the existing research literature, they may be derived from conceptual models, or the products of creativity and imagination. There are two keys to this assignment: (1) Developing well-conceived and well-worded hypotheses, and (2) developing reasonable arguments for each hypothesis. Like any argument, it is made credible through the use of causal analysis, strong reasons, evidence, citations, and example. The most important thing is that every hypothesis should be carefully worded (read all these instructions to understand this warning) and arguments should answer two “why” questions: (1) Why are the variables related this way? (2) Why is the hypothesis likely to be true? The word “because” should figure prominently in every explanation.

To explain a hypothesis means to make sensible how and why things are related the way they are. Hypotheses themselves explain nothing—they simply describe a relationship between two or more things—not why the relationship exists. Theories are basically sets of interrelated hypotheses that collectively provide an explanation for a phenomenon or process. For example, a
person may want to explain the hypothesis: “As jealousy increases, the likelihood of relational violence increases.” Guided by an understanding of argument (e.g., see recommendations for writing that follow later in these instructions), this hypothesis could be argued thusly: Jealousy is a complex blend of emotions based on the perception that a person’s valued relationship is threatened by a third party or rival. [Backing]: Retzinger (1991) has reviewed evidence [Grounds]: that violence is likely to result from a combination of anger and shame, but neither alone [Backing]. Because [Warrant]: anger creates an inner sense of expressive frustration and arousal, and shame provides a target for this expression (i.e., the partner and/or the rival), the jealous person is much more likely to engage in violence than non-jealous persons. [Claim]: This hypothesis may not apply to contexts in which strong moral, religious, or public restraints are in place (e.g., even jealous persons tend not to be overtly violent in public places). [Rebuttal]: The rebuttal is not necessary, but sometimes illustrates relative objectivity and openness of the author.

In this explanation, other concepts (i.e., the theory of rage as proposed by Retzinger, with its components of anger and rage) are used to make the link between jealousy and violence sensible. More explanation could be provided for these concepts, more evidence reviewed in favor of Retzinger’s hypothesis, and so forth, but the basic elements of explanation and argument are there. The point is that explanation is neither mere restatement nor mere review of research or expert opinion. Please note, there is no need for quotations. CITE OFTEN, QUOTE SPARINGLY (AND PREFERABLY, NOT AT ALL).

Form, Organization and Style

(1) Use normal 1-inch margins;
(2) Use 11-point Calibri or 12-point Times Roman font;
(3) With double spacing throughout;
(4) With no more than 2 pages text (not including reference page);
(5) With the top 3 lines of the first page of the paper with five pieces of information (name, course, email address, date, and title);
(6) With headers programmed into the paper, indicating a brief title and pagination;
(7) With 2 to 3 propositions—if 3 are developed, they must be in the form of a valid syllogism; otherwise, just develop 2 propositions;
(8) With a minimum of 5 relevant scholarly journal publication references, all of which must be cited in text, and properly listed on the third page “References” list, all in proper APA style. There may be additional references to scholarly books or chapters in scholarly books, or other sources deemed vital to the paper.
(9) Appendix: A screen-print of the primary search engine summary (see example)
(10) The assignment will be submitted to Turnitin—no hardcopy is needed. It is recommended you submit your paper at least 3 days early to receive a Turnitin originality report so it is possible to correct and re-submit if there are any problems.

Use A.P.A. throughout (6th ed.), except for format specifications above. Do not leave big blank spaces between sections or hypotheses. The text should run continuously. Save your work often during writing—there are no excuses for late work. Use the insert running head procedure
in Word—do not just type the header at the top of the page for each page. Learn to use internally formatted hanging indents for the references and hypotheses (as opposed to hitting ‘enter’ at the end of a line and tabbing in from the next line), and page and section breaks for new pages (as opposed to just hitting ‘enter’ a bunch of times). There is no excuse for ignorance about Word—learn to use its formatting resources and tools!

There is no “Title Page;” instead, at the top of the first page insert the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last name, First name</th>
<th>Course #: Brief course title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title of Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, some form of introduction is presented. An introduction may briefly examine the history and importance of the concepts, discuss the relevance of these concepts to the course subject, introduce relevant theories, and/or explain any basic terms, assumptions, or limitations that may be important. Assume this class as the audience, which means that the writing should be clear enough for them to comprehend fully the content, and intent, of the paper.

Next, the body of the paper consists of the propositions and the arguments for each proposition. This section of the paper proceeds by presenting a proposition and then developing a paragraph (or two) of explanatory argument (warrants; explanations) and support (evidence). The propositions should be numbered and set off from the text (e.g., bolded and/or italicized). Propositions are never prima facie; that is, they never stand on their own. Propositions always require some degree of explanation.

Next, the conclusion section develops any of several points, such as a brief summary, a consideration of the limitations of the analysis, a critical conjecture about the status of the theory and/or research associated with the concepts examined, future implications of the analysis, or the importance of the analysis.

Finally, the References section will provide the complete citations in A.P.A. style.

Please save the paper with the following nomenclature: “C495-PROP-semester-year-Lastname-BriefTopicTitle. For example, if it is the Fall 2014 semester, and the paper is on sexual coercion, and your last name is Johnson, then the file would be saved as: “C495-PROP-SP13-Johnson-Sexual Coercion”

Submission

The final version of the paper will be turned in electronically, in Word 2007, through Turnitin in Blackboard. If difficulties are experienced turning it in online, it is essential to send an email to the professor with the paper attached, by the time the assignment is due. No hard-copy is required. Papers may be turned in 2-3 days early to check originality and resubmit if needed.

Types of Hypotheses

Below is a series of hypotheses to illustrate how they can differ. These hypotheses may seem sophisticated right now. However, research of a topic has begun, hypothetical relations will begin
to emerge either stated directly (i.e., in the form of hypotheses being tested) or indirectly (i.e., implied by the explanation and discussion of the concepts).

The simplest, and weakest, form of hypothesis is a "non-directional" statement of relationship. For example:

**H1:** Self-esteem is related to communication competence.

While this is a hypothesis, it provides minimal information regarding the precise nature of the relationship. Avoid such statements in the paper. A more precise form is:

**H2:** Self-esteem is positively related to interpersonal communication competence. (Note: This can be reworded as: “Persons high in self-esteem are significantly higher in communication competence than persons low in self-esteem”).

Hypotheses can also vary by the form (or shape) of the relationship:

**H3:** Motivation, knowledge and skills are curvilinear to perceived communication competence. (That is, they are positively related up to a moderately high range of competence, after which higher values lead to lower perceived competence).

Finally, deductive construction allows the development of stronger, and more tightly controlled, theoretical arguments. For example,

**H4:** As [TV exposure] increases, [verbal skills] decrease.

[A] [B]

**H5:** As [verbal skills] decrease, use of [physical violence] in conflict increases.

[B] [C]

**H6:** As [TV exposure] increases, use of [physical violence] in conflict increases.

[A] [C]

On the Art of Explanation

“We cannot infer the events of the future from those of the present. Belief in the causal nexus is superstition” (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.1361)

Explanation implies the identification of some “bridge” (i.e., warrant, “because...,” etc.) that serves as an account of why one concept is related to another concept. It is an “animating mechanism,” that gives life to a concept. For example, one popular concept is that exposure to violence in the media causes violence in society. The natural question is why. Answering the “why” question gets at the concept of explanation. Even though seeing or hearing the equation: “media violence causes societal violence” seems like an explanation, it is not. It is missing the bridge, or animating mechanism.
To illustrate, consider a few “non-explanations.” It is not an explanation to say media violence causes societal violence because: (1) media depictions of violence are increasing; (2) societal violence is increasing; (3) some people have engaged in crimes they saw on TV (“copy cat crimes”); (4) people believe what they see on TV; (5) research shows media violence increases societal violence. Each of these merely suggests correlation (rather than causation), repeats the original assertion, or simply provides backing for an explanation that is itself missing.

To illustrate legitimate explanations, consider the following:

**Cultivation:** Social learning theory claims that people learn both by direct experience (e.g., touching a hot stove) or observation of others (e.g., observing one’s sister touch a hot stove). Since we cannot or do not always directly experience things (e.g., robbing a bank), we look to real and imaginative role models (e.g., media figures and narratives). Thus, the crime and violence in the media provide models, and rewarding ones at that, for us we otherwise would not have had.

**Cognitive Availability:** Our brain can be viewed as a library. If 90% of this library is filled with science fiction, and we are asked to respond to someone’s question for information, we are most likely to give them a fanciful piece of information, because that is what is most represented in our mind’s library. If, in watching media, most of the acts or ways of dealing with conflict we observe are violent in nature, it simply supplies more acts of violence to store in our mental repertoires, and thus, when we find ourselves in a conflict, violent acts are the most “available” to draw upon.

**Disinhibition:** Growing up in a culture is largely about learning what one cannot or is not supposed to do. The very nature of culture is conformity and normative action within a given body of beliefs and behaviors. Exposure to violence in the media may make violence appear more normative than it is, and thus, make engaging in violence seem less deviant. In essence, it is not making violence seem more rewarding (cultivation) or available, but merely makes the violence within a person more acceptable.

**Fantasy Fulfillment:** Freud and others might argue that daily life, as well as the normal tortures of growing up, fill us with tensions that are constantly repressed. These tensions struggle to “get out,” managing to manifest themselves mainly in the form of fantasy. Media violence may give form to these fantasies, making them more vivid and “real,” thereby stimulating the enactment of fantasies in life (e.g., who has not “fantasized” about hitting someone in the face—seeing it done may both “suggest” it, but stimulate the enactment of it).

**Desensitization:** One of the reasons people avoid violence is that it hurts others. However, when violence is everywhere in the media, it can numb one’s sensibilities, and lower one’s ability to empathize. Further, the more cartoonish the violence, the more it seems it does not really hurt anyone. Such exposure to violence may take the “brakes” off using by making violence seem less hurtful, and thus, less costly to use.

**Excitation:** Violence is a thrill. Through 5 million years of evolution, we have come to find violence a potential threat, a potential path to victory, and therefore, arousing. Thus, seeing violence in the media is itself, arousing, and this arousal stimulates our own arousal. Our arousal (adrenaline, muscular tension, etc.) needs to find an outlet, and is expressed in violence.
Peer Group Mediation: Research on sexual violence indicates that people who engage in sexual violence are much more likely to have friends who approve of, and have engaged in, sexual violence. The suggestion is that peer groups mediate the transfer of violence. That is, if a peer group watches violence in the media, this peer group may then become self-reinforcing through its interaction, thereby serving as the proximal stimulus to its members’ violence.

Spillover: Violence in the media provides models of behavior in certain contexts that are then available for generalization to contexts experienced in everyday life, both directly comparable to those observed in the media, as well as contexts largely unrelated. Thus, for example, a person may “copycat” behaviors witnessed in the media, but may also extend the function of the behaviors observed in one context (e.g., a drop kick in a professional wrestling program) to another context (e.g., a dispute with one’s brother).

Cultural Chaos: Violence in the media may reflect the very breakdown of society, norms, and culture. If everyone is violent to everyone in the media, then this communicates a sense of despair, hopelessness, alienation and angst to the viewing public. This has the effects of both (1) inciting some to exploit the lawlessness (e.g., looting during natural disasters), (2) join the crowd (e.g., mob violence during the L.A. riots), (3) bystander apathy providing a permissive environment for violence.

Each of these explanations offers slightly and sometimes substantively distinct sources of causation. For example, fantasy fulfillment, excitation and disinhibition tend to assume that we are by nature violent, and all that is needed is something in the media to take the restraints of society away. Cultivation and availability argue media instills violence in us. Peer-group mediation and cultural chaos tend to view media as having an effect on society at large, which only then affects our individual behavior.

In all these examples concepts are elaborated to make sensible the link between violence in the media and in society. Co-occurrence makes no sense without an explanation, and it matters which explanation is offered. Do all of the explanations above seem equally believable? Were a politician to make a speech on fantasy fulfillment would it seem as reasonable as the cultivation explanation? Why? The “theory” cannot be evaluated until its explanatory rationale has been specified, and the brief examples above illustrate how significant, and distinct, such explanations can be.

Finally, use theories, use concepts discussed in class, use concepts, rather than personal experience, anecdotes, examples, or intuitive explanations. The concepts and theories discussed in class represent an attempt to provide explanatory frameworks specifically to explain hypotheses. So use theories when possible to help explain the hypotheses.

As Another Example

Some explanations seem, on the surface, to make complete sense. For example, the following argument was offered by a student:

First-born children often reach a vocabulary of 50 words at a faster rate than later born children, with a range variation of 14 to 21 months (Pine, 1995). First-born children develop a greater range an understanding of respective words at a younger age, while later born children tend to develop “frozen phrases.” “Frozen phrases” are utterances that contain two or more words that have not previously occurred alone in the child’s vocabulary, or that contain one such word, provided
it has not occurred in the same position in a previous multi-word utterance (Pine, 1995). Since first-born children achieve a greater vocabulary earlier, they tend to take on a mentor role with younger siblings, thus mentally stimulating themselves (Travis & Kohli, 1995). (Source: Anonymous.)

Here the student did a good job of evidencing that first-born children develop a higher vocabulary level, but the student offered no explanation for why they do so. In this case, the student could have provided explanatory arguments such as the following: Given an assumption of a relatively fixed amount of time available to the parents, first-born children receive more parental attention and interaction, which later born children may be relatively deprived of, as larger numbers of children shrink the available time for any one child. Further, it is reasonable to assume that parental vocabulary resources are more valuable than sibling resources, due to the relatively advanced nature of parental grammar, and given the “mistakes” that might be built into a sibling’s vocabulary. Further, an older sibling will play some role in mentoring the younger sibling’s linguistic development, and the process of reflection and rule-conformity involved in teaching another person is likely to reinforce self-learning. Finally, the competition brought about by potential older sibling resentment of younger siblings may interfere with the learning of the younger sibling, as conflict and emotional disturbance distracts attention away from the more fundamental aspects of vocabulary building. These explanations build a conceptual substrate or foundation that bridges, or warrants, the claim that first-born children develop higher levels of vocabulary, and prevent such a claim from being purely tautological (i.e., tautology: first born children develop higher levels of vocabulary earlier than later born children because first born children mature faster than later born children). So explanations are the conceptual ladder that bridges evidence and claim so as to make their relationship sensible. They answer the question why.

Yet Another Example

A student argued in a paper: “Berger and Calabrese (1975) also believe that uncertainty plays a significant role in the preservation and dissolution of close relationships.” My question to the student was: WHY do they say uncertainty is important? Because uncertainty means not being able to predict things. Not being able to predict things means not knowing what effects behaviors have in the world. Not knowing what effects behaviors or actions have means not knowing how to control the world, or make the world work better through self-initiated actions. This results in the potential for bad things to happen, which creates anxiety. So, Berger and Calabrese say that uncertainty creates anxiety, and therefore we are motivated to reduce this uncomfortable state of anxiety by reducing our uncertainty. This is what is meant by an explanatory argument. It answers why people seek to reduce uncertainty, and it does this through a chain of causal predicates, each of which is linked thematically, coherently to the next, until a logical framework exists in which the proposition—the relationship between concepts, is sensible and satisfies the question: “but why?”
SELECTED EXAMPLES OF PUBLISHED HYPOTHESIS PAPERS


SELECTIONS FROM SPITZBERG'S "CHAMBER OF HORRORS"

Try to avoid the following pitfalls: (1) avoid statements of non-relationship (e.g., 'X is not related to Y'); (2) avoid including explanations in the hypothesis itself (e.g., "X is positively related to Y because of theory Z's rationale that..."); (3) avoid using prescriptive (e.g., "S's should do X when Y occurs") or purely descriptive non-probabilistic (e.g., "X may/can be related to Y") wording; (4) avoid introducing terms into the hypothesis that have not been adequately explained or defined yet; and (5) avoid introducing categorical variables that distort the form of the relationship (e.g., "LOW X is positively related to HIGH Y's"); (6) avoid introducing set/subset redundancies in multiple hypotheses (e.g., P1: Females disclose more than males; P2: Androgynous females disclose more than androgynous males). Below are some of the "best of the worst" that have crossed my tired eyes.

H₁?: Knowledge also relates to mindlessness in an inverse parabolic function, in that they are positively related to each other until the mindlessness ceases to be mindless.

H₂?: Empathizing with co-workers strengths, weaknesses, and working style relates negatively towards escalating conflict resulting in an inability to see another’s view.

H₃?: Equity restoring to a relationship is negatively related to low self-esteem individuals.

H₄?: Reactions in adolescents relate back to anxious, neurotogenic, disparaging, masochistic, and manic depressive parents.

H₅?: Individual’s interaction with a caregiver as a child affects their relationship bondage with a potential partner as an adult.

H₆?: The purpose of negotiation is to resolve a disagreement between two or more parties.

H₇?: In certain negotiation circumstances nonverbal aspects of communication assume a greater significance than does verbal language.

H₈?: Levels of immediate physical and psychological trauma suffered by victims will vary.

H₉?: Child abuse is determined by the factors involved.

H₁₀?: The use of threats as an influence tactic does not exacerbate conflicts in general, but is limited to the occasions on which they are used.

H₁₁?: Conflicts are likely to be influenced by power.

H₁₂?: Sex differences are loosely related to relationship goals.

H₁₃?: Attraction is positively related and influential in choice of sexual partners.

H₁₄?: Males are negatively related to female interviewers of equal status; whereas females are not affected significantly to status and the sex of the interviewer.
H_{15}? : Mindlessness is negatively related to information processing in interactions.
H_{16}? : Deception is negatively related to the truth.
H_{17}? : Proximity increases physical closeness.
H_{18}? : Viewing the mediator’s role as folkloric trickster is positively related to their job title.
H_{19}? : Guests of a television talk show depend on the reaction of the audience for support of their heinous actions, therefore after the show is over whether or not they take the advice of the audience and change their way, depends on the reaction they received.
H_{20}? : Family hour will need to be changed back to true family hour.
H_{21}? : Hip hop is a response to conditions of property and disempowerment.
H_{22}? : Media coverage of the violent topics in Rap music helps alert people to the possible problems.
H_{23}? : Families no longer have a need for face-to-face communication.
H_{24}? : Self-esteem of men and women in a romantic relationship.
H_{25}? : The way that conflict is managed in marriages can lead to divorce if not managed in the right way.
H_{26}? : Preoccupied attached individuals have a negative correlation with self-perception.
WHAT NOT TO DO WITH HYPOTHESES

What follows are examples of flawed hypotheses taken from previous student papers. Each hypothesis is analyzed to illustrate common mistakes observed in the conceptualization and verbalization of hypotheses. Students are responsible for studying these examples, and thereby avoiding the types of mistakes indicated. If there are questions about any of the issues raised, please raise them at the appropriate time in class or professor office hours.

Recall that a hypothesis is any statement of relationship between or among variables. A variable is a concept that takes on different values. The entire function of science is to make the nature of the relationships among things understandable. The more precise the statement of relationship, the more understandable the hypothesis is. What follows is an effort to assist in making the hypotheses more precise.

1. MOOD IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO SEXUAL INITIATION.

Overly generic variables: "Mood" may be positive or negative. Since mood is not specified, the hypothesis, as worded, implies that any increase in mood state will correspond to an increase in sexual initiation. Thus, as worded, an increase in depression increases sexual initiation, as would sadness anger, and so forth. The key is to understand that the term "mood" is a concept that can take on different values or levels (e.g., low to high, negative to neutral to positive, etc.). A hypothesis is an attempt to specify how their values or levels correspond to the values or levels of another concept, in this case, the occurrence of sexual initiation. The hypothesis intends to say: "The experience of positively valenced or labeled states is positively related to the likelihood of sexual initiation."

2. LOW SELF-ESTEEM IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO INTERPERSONAL HOSTILITY.

Mixing variable labels: This is one of the most common, yet subtle problems in writing hypotheses. By specifying only "low" self-esteem, this hypothesis ignores "medium" and "high" self-esteem. When two-thirds of a variable's possible values are removed, its ability to "relate" to anything is eliminated because there is no real opportunity for the variable to vary beyond a very narrow range of values. The above statement intends to say simply: "Self-esteem is negatively related to interpersonal hostility" or "Low self-esteem persons are significantly more interpersonally hostile than high self-esteem persons." Think about what the terminology means! If something is categorized as "low" it needs to be compared to something that is "high." As an additional note, it is unclear if self-esteem relates to the frequency with which all hostile actions occur, the intensity of hostile actions, the duration of hostile actions, all three, some combination, or some other aspect of hostility. Hostility is likely to take on many different features. It assists the hypothesis to make these features clear in the hypothesis. Thus, "Self-esteem is negatively related to the frequency and breadth of interpersonally hostile behaviors."
3. SELF-DISCLOSURE IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO INTIMACY.

Overly unidimensional concepts: On the face of it, this is sensible, right? Yet, this hypothesis is deeply flawed. First, anyone looking into the two concepts involved here, self-disclosure and intimacy, should soon find that they are multidimensional. This means that a valid use of the term actually implies many distinct but related concepts. For example, self-disclosure has been found to vary importantly in terms of breadth (number of topics), depth (intimacy of topics), reciprocity (degree to which partner discloses in response), honesty, and valence (positive or negative). Similarly, intimacy can be viewed in terms of domain (e.g., recreation, sexual, social, emotional, etc.) or type (e.g., caring, commitment, interdependence, physical, etc.). The point is not that student papers have to agree with "the" view with which I am familiar, but that any responsible research effort will uncover the complexity (i.e., multidimensionality) of the concepts. In this case, the hypothesis implies that all forms of self-disclosure are equally related to all forms of intimacy. Is this sensible? It seems unlikely that as disclosure of negative information increases that sexual intimacy increases, yet this is exactly what the hypothesis implies until it is specified. Second, this is a perfect candidate for a curvilinear relationship. That is, extremely low or extremely high amounts of disclosure are likely to impede or inhibit intimacy respectively. Yet, this hypothesis implies that even at extremely high levels of disclosiveness that intimacy will also be extremely high. Third, would this hypothesis apply reasonably to all contexts? For example, does it apply to task-oriented groups, or superior-subordinate, or disengaging, relationships? Unlikely.

4. MALES ARE POSITIVELY CORRELATED TO APPRECIATION OF OBSCENE HUMOR.

Concepts not variable: "People" are not variables; their characteristics are. This hypothesis intends to compare 'maleness' to "femaleness. It makes the mistake of correlating categories. Categories are nominal level variables, whereas correlation requires ordinal level variables (recall COMM 350?). Gender, religion, ethnic group, etc. are categorical variables, and as such, should be framed as "difference" hypotheses rather than correlational hypotheses. Thus: "Males appreciate obscene humor significantly more than females."

5. FRIENDSHIPS ARE HIGHLY VALUABLE TO OLDER MALES AND FEMALES.

Overly definitional: This is overly definitional in form. First, does it imply the friendships are more valuable to older persons than younger person? (e.g., "The value of friendships for males and females increases as age increases"). Second, if a relationship is being identified that holds for all members of a set (i.e., persons), there is no need to specify all categories of that set (i.e., "males and females"). Thus, "The value of friendships increases as age increases." Third, to what is friendship "valuable"? Valuable in psychological health, physical health, social health, etc.? Thus, for example, "As age increases, the perceived value of friendship in preventing depression and loneliness increases."
6. ADULTERY, ALCOHOL ABUSE, AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES ARE POSITIVELY RELATED TO DIVORCE.

‘NS’ hypothesis: This qualifies in the realm of an “NS” hypothesis (“No Shit!”). Technically there is nothing wrong with this hypothesis. However, it is about as unsurprising, and therefore, uninformative, as a statement can be. It’s a little like saying “Oxygen is important to human life.” Science has a healthy respect for demonstrating what is supposed to be true actually is true. But come on! Put a little imagination into the paper and come up with a statement that allows parents to think their children are learning something not already known without the degree.

7. AS MISUNDERSTANDINGS INCREASE, POOR COMMUNICATION INCREASES.

Tautology: It is a little like saying that “X is true because it is X” (i.e., something is taken to be true because of the way in which it is defined). In this hypothesis, the question arises because for most commonsense notions, “misunderstanding” would be viewed as a form or subset of “poor communication.” Thus, if X “includes” Y, then it tends to make little logical sense to say that with more X, there will be more Y, since this is virtually true by definition of X.

8. A COWORKER WILL USE MORE INDIRECT COMPLIANCE-GAINING STRATEGIES WHEN ADDRESSING A SUBORDINATE.

Lacking comparative condition: This sounds sensible. However, it is incomplete. Whenever the words “more” or “less” are used, the question arises “less (or more) than what?” In this case, it is not entirely clear which of the following phrases should be added to the end of the hypothesis: “...THAN WHEN ADDRESSING A SUPERIOR,” “...THAN DIRECT STRATEGIES,” or “THAN A COWORKER.” Complete the comparison implied by “more” or “less.”

9. SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT ALCOHOLISM IS A DISEASE, WHILE OTHERS BELIEVE IT TO BE A BAD HABIT.

Descriptive, not relational: This fails in three important senses. First, although it sounds like it is saying something substantive about the nature of alcoholism, it really is only saying something about what certain people believe about alcoholism, which was not the point of the paper. Second, it is not about communication, and therefore is not very topical to the assignment or major. Third, the hypothesis is definitional in content, not a hypothesis. There is no “relationship between variables” being described here. This hypothesis is stating something about what alcoholism is rather than what it is related to and how it is related.
A NOTE ABOUT STRUCTURALLY CORRECT SYLLOGISMS THAT ARE NOT THEORETICALLY SOUND.

A student constructed the following propositions in syllogistic form:

- **H₁:** A strong relationship with in-laws is positively related to the quality of a marriage.
- **H₂:** The quality of a marriage is positively related to the similarity of the partners’ socioeconomic status.
- **H₃:** Therefore, a strong relationship with in-laws is positively related to the socioeconomic status of the couple.

This is a structurally sound syllogism (i.e., [A] → [B] → [C]), but it makes no conceptual or explanatory sense as a coherent whole. It makes sense that similarity in socio-economic factors might lead to a ‘stronger’ (e.g., more satisfying) relationship, but it makes little sense to suggest that a stronger relationship would lead to a partner who was previously uneducated, poor, or from male to become educated, rich, and female. SES factors (sex, education, wealth, etc.) are distal variables—variables that have long duration and tend to precede current relationship status. So the implicit order of the syllogism could easily be made more sensible:

- **H₁:** Similarity in partners’ SES is positively related to partner relationship satisfaction.
- **H₂:** Relationship satisfaction is positively related to satisfaction with in-law relationships.
- **H₃:** Therefore, similarity in partners’ SES is positively related to satisfaction with in-law relationships.

Or:

- **H₁:** Similarity in partners’ SES is positively related to likelihood of satisfaction with in-law relationships.
- **H₂:** In-law relationship satisfaction is positively related to satisfaction with relational satisfaction.
- **H₃:** Therefore, similarity in partners’ SES is positively related to relational satisfaction.

The point is to consider the validity of a syllogism both at a structural (i.e., formal logic) and explanatory (i.e., narrative) level.
YOUR PAPER TITLE HERE (e.g., “IT’S ALL ABOUT ME”: NARCISSISM, ENTITLEMENT, AND SURVEILLANCE)

In mythology, Narcissus was a hunter renowned for his beauty and very self-aware of this feature. Feeling himself so attractive, those who loved him were viewed as undeserving. Nemesis, realizing this personal flaw, lured Narcissus to a body of water in which Narcissus was able to gaze at his own reflection. Falling in love with the reflection, Narcissus perishes, unable to remove himself from the gaze of self-love. In modern parlance, narcissism is a personality trait indicating a grandiose sense of self, and it influences a variety of interpersonal behaviors.

H₁: Narcissism is positively related to relational proprietariness and entitlement.

New media have introduced the potential for anyone to construct an idealized identity in online environments. In such a context, narcissism is both enabled and reinforced. Narcissism is a grandiose and exaggerated sense of uniqueness, need for recognition, and entitlement (Salzman, 1993). This need for love and recognition leads paradoxically to a defensiveness to criticism or deprivation, resulting in reactionary aggression toward any source perceived as threatening the face of the narcissist (Twenge & Campbell, 2003). Narcissistic defensiveness is commonly manifest in strategies such as confrontation and derogation of others, while reactions to a lack of positive feedback are often characterized by threats and antagonism (Twenge & Campbell, 2003). Narcissism is likely to lead to a lack of empathy for partners, and a belief that the partner is obliged to serve the narcissist’s needs. As such, narcissism is expected to produce a tendency to view a partner as a type of relational object, or property. Therefore:
H2: Relational proprietoriness and entitlement are positively related to romantic cyber-surveillance of relational partner(s).

Proprietariness refers to a set of beliefs and values that view a partner as a form of property (Hannawa, Spitzberg, Wiering & Teranishi, 2006). Statements as benign as “you belong to me,” can co-occur with more chilling statements such as “you’ll never escape from me.” Closely related are beliefs representing rights or responsibilities that obtain to property, such as “I have a right to know where you are all the time” and “if I can’t have you, no one can” (Hannawa et al., 2006). The underlying beliefs and values reflect various forms of entitlement.

Entitlement is a belief that, like property, a person can legitimately control a partner’s behavior, access and use information and social relationships. One way in which such entitlement could find expression is cyber-surveillance, a process of frequent or obsessive monitoring of another’s social network site(s) for the purposes of uncertainty reduction. It is distinct from cyber-stalking, in which the intent is to evoke fear or communicate threat (Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002). Instead, cyber-surveillance is primarily intended to provide the ‘lurker’ information about a potential partner’s activities, commitment, or relational intentions. Therefore:

H3: Narcissism is positively related to romantic cyber-surveillance of partner(s).

Cyber-surveillance is likely to increasingly become a source of conflict in people’s relationships. Such surveillance not only potentially provides information that permits a partner’s commitment to a relationship to be questioned, but when a partner’s surveillance is discovered, it may communicate a lack of trust. The negotiation of self and of relationship will likely continue to become a contested site for the emergence of relationship problems, as people adjust to the ‘brave new world’ enabled by such media.
References


Appendix: Search History

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Comprehensive search history details in the image.