Communication 201 - Communication and Community

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Classroom: AL 101; 9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

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Office Hours: Mondays, 10 am-noon; Tuesdays, 11 am-1 pm and by appointment.

Course Description: Communication as an academic and professional discipline, its associations and journals, history and traditions, relationships to other disciplines, research methodologies, and careers for graduates.

Welcome to the communication and community course! In this class, we will cover the various traditions, practices, research strategies, and professional linkages to the discipline of communication studies. This class will expose students to major branches of academic thought and method relating to communication, including, but not limited to: communication as an “art” versus a “science,” rhetorical studies, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, ethnographic research, critical theory, and the major sub-divisions of communication such as interpersonal, group, and mass communication.

Effective communication skills are one of the most valued strengths that modern employers and professional discourse communities seek in their employees. The ability to effectively communicate and understand complex communication processes, affords citizens the ability to interact with others, command the attention of large and small audiences, deconstruct messages to expose motives and/or “agendas,” and increases the ability to think and speak critically about a variety of important issues. As I often tell my students, in the digital marketplace of document production, anyone can be made to look good. The ability to speak with eloquence, understand others, ask critical questions, craft intelligent and effective documents or multimedia designs is what helps to distinguish exceptional students and employees from a sea of mediocrity.

Required Course Text


Important Note: Due to the uniquely large size of the COMM 203 class, students must be self-motivated and self-engaged to adequately navigate the breadth of topics and concepts covered in class. As your instructor, I will try to promote class discussions on important topics whenever time permits. This class is designed around the text, and 60% of the total course grade will come from 3 tests that reflect the sequential chapters in the book.

Major Course Assignments

Project One - 10%

For the first communication project for this class, students will be asked to construct a flyer or banner for an organization, group, or team they are part of. Students will be asked to consider the three major rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos when creating this communication artifact. Students will
be also asked to complete a 1 page document that explains the thought process, design, and intended argument behind the flyer. The total 2 page document will be uploaded onto Blackboard and will be visible for the class to review.

Project Two - 10%

For the second project in the class, students should conduct research into the communication styles and techniques of their desired professional discourse community. Students should analyze the common verbal, non-verbal, ethical, and/or other operational “techniques” used by those within this profession. For example, for students wishing to go into the field of medicine, there are many terms, expectations, and rules that govern how medical professionals communicate (e.g. “doctor speak”). Students will be asked to write a 2 page document that explores these issues, and applies concepts from class to better understand specific communication and behavior patterns unique to their desired profession.

Bi-Weekly Blackboard responses – 25%

Throughout most of the semester, students will be asked to construct one original post relating to a concept, topic, or theory covered in the last two chapters, in order to apply that concept to real-world examples, to determine its academic worth. Additionally, students will be expected to respond to two comments from their peers. Original comments should be about 1 paragraph long and are worth 3 points. Response comments are worth 1 point each. Total bi-weekly points possible for Blackboard discussions is 5. There will be 5 discussion periods, making “discussions” 25% of the total student grade for this course.

Test One – 20%

The first test in this class will cover material from the first 5 chapters covered in class and any information provided in class lectures.

Test Two – 20%

The second test in this class will cover material from the second 5 chapters covered in class and any information provided in class lectures.

Test Three – 10%

The third test in this class will cover material from the final 5 chapters covered in class and any information provided in the class lectures.

Participation – 5%

Participation will be based on attendance, alertness, punctuality, a positive attitude towards learning, and general class involvement (e.g., direct oral participation and routine completion of weekly assignments).
Weekly Overview of Course.

Week One: Read Chapter 1. Introduction to the discipline of communication. Introduce “Sender/Receiver Model” and discuss concept of “noise.” Introduce field of communication for class, provide overview for qualitative, quantitative, critical, and rhetorical criticism. Introduce Toulmin model of argument to class (theory section).

Week Two: Read Chapter 2. Make one original post to the discussions section on Blackboard, and respond to two of your peer’s posts by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m. Expand on field of communication and related professions. Introduce history of rhetoric, sophistry, argumentation, and communication.

Week Three: Read Chapter 3. Project One Due on last class day of the week by 5:00 p.m. Introduce notions of perception, understanding, and cognitive factors that influence the communication process.

Week Four: Read Chapter 4. Make one original post to the discussions section on Blackboard, and respond to two of your peer’s posts by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m. Introduce concepts from verbal communication and establish the power of language to influence constructions of “reality.”

Week Five: Read Chapter 5. Introduce non-verbal communication principles to class. Exam One at end of week.

Week Six: Read Chapter 6. Introduce notions of listening and responding to the class. Discuss the idea of critical listening and techniques to enhance critical listening and revisit the concept of “noise” introduced in first class. Make one original post to the discussions section on Blackboard, and respond to two of your peer’s posts by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

Week Seven: Read Chapter 7. Introduce the notion of “communication climates” with special emphasis on organizational and institutional communication patterns.

Week Eight: Read Chapter 8. Explore the fields of culture, intercultural communication, cultural imperialism, neo-colonization, and dominant narrative discourse (e.g., hegemonic ideologies). Project two due by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m. Make one original post to the discussions section on Blackboard, and respond to two of your peer’s posts by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

Week Nine: Read Chapter 9. Introduce section on communication and personal identity.

Week Ten: Read Chapter 10. Introduce field of interpersonal communication and explore principles of interpersonal communication patterns. Exam Two. Make one original post to the discussions section on Blackboard, and respond to two of your peer’s posts by Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

Week Eleven: Read Chapter 11. Introduce the field of group communication and explore principles of group communication dynamics.

Week Twelve: Read Chapter 12. Introduce the field of organizational communication and expand on the ideas established in week 7.
Week Thirteen: Read Chapter 13. Introduce the topic of public deliberation and communication contexts, methods, and strategies.

Week Fourteen: Read Chapter 14. Introduce the field of mass communication with special emphasis placed on advertising, popular culture, and entertainment. Discussion of logical fallacies and how the advertising industry utilizes fallacious reasoning to persuade consumers to buy or “buy into” products.

Week Fifteen: Read Chapter 15. Introduce digital media and the multi-media design theory. Final Exam.

*Homework will be assigned in class. Come to class to get assignments and be prepared for tests and discussion responses (bi-weekly) on Blackboard.

Course Policies

1. Unless specified by your instructor, all documents should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and produced in a hard-copy (paper format). Emailed documents will not be accepted without prior permission from your instructor.

2. This communication course will cover many areas of controversy, where your views and opinions may vastly differ from those of your peers. Please be respectful of others perspectives, even if you disagree, as this is essential to create a safe, dynamic, and challenging learning environment. Students are free to disagree with any and all perspectives, but should remain respectful in how they present counter-ideas and concepts.

3. Please refrain from using cell phones or other forms of technology that are not essential for note-taking while present in class.

4. Please bring your required textbook to class daily.

5. Students are allowed a total of 4 unexcused absences in class before experiencing a grade reduction. After 4 absences, students grades will be lowered by one full letter grade for every 2 absences (e.g., at 6 absences, an otherwise “A student” could only receive a “B”). For all students who travel for sports, music, or other team or organizational purposes, you must inform me verbally of your trip in advance to receive reasonable accommodations. Traveling students must provide documentation such as an official university academic excuse form prior to travel. After-the-fact excuses, even if university sponsored, will not be recognized by your instructor, and missing assignments will be marked as late or receive a failing grade. Bottom line: Communicate with your instructor!

6. Please come to class prepared, ready to learn, and exemplify a positive and open-minded attitude each day.

7. Plagiarism – Plagiarism is perhaps one of the most serious offenses that instructors are trained to look for in their student’s work. We will extensively cover what constitutes plagiarism in class. Students caught plagiarizing work will: a) receive a failing grade on the immediate assignment, b) be reported to appropriate academic review boards, c) may receive a failing grade for the course, and d) may be subject to expulsion from the university. Do not steal other’s work. Give credit where credit is due, and enhance your overall ethos by citing credible sources in the field.
8. Please refrain from talking during class. Even quiet discussions with neighboring “peer” students can quickly add to “noise” in the classroom, making student learning and instructor lecturing very difficult.

9. Please stay awake in class. Students who perpetually fall asleep in class are not prepared, or have clearly taken on a work/learning load that they cannot manage. As such, routine violations of this standard will result in significantly lower participation points at the end of the semester. Being alive, alert, and ready to learn is a prerequisite for this class and should be maintained.

10. At a minimum, Blackboard will be used to post official grades so that students may verify grades received for hard-copy assignments. At times, I will post information about assignments onto Blackboard, but under no circumstances will I replicate the information provided in lectures onto Blackboard. This means that students must come to class to retrieve important information. Do not send your instructor email messages via Blackboard.

11. Due to the nature of the assignments in the Communication and Community class, some projects may take longer to complete than others. As such, your instructor reserves the right to cancel, make alterations, or postpone any of the regular assignments from the course. Any changes or alternations will be verbally cited in class a minimum of 1 week before any regular project would be due.

THE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property. It is one of the highest forms of academic offense because in academe, it is a scholar’s words, ideas, and creative products that are the primary measures of identity and achievement. Whether by ignorance, accident, or intent, theft is still theft, and misrepresentation is still misrepresentation. Therefore, the offense is still serious, and is treated as such.

Overview:

In any case in which a Professor or Instructor identifies evidence for charging a student with violation of academic conduct standards or plagiarism, the presumption will be with that instructor’s determination. However, the faculty/instructor(s) will confer with the director to substantiate the evidence. Once confirmed, the evidence will be reviewed with the student. If, following the review with the student, the faculty member and director determine that academic dishonesty has occurred, the evidence will be submitted to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The report “identifies the student who was found responsible, the general nature of the offense, the action taken, and a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office.” (CSSR Website[1]).


Intellectual Property:
The syllabus, lectures and lecture outlines are personal 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.

Proper Source Attribution:

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. Text that is identical with another source but without quotation marks constitutes plagiarism, regardless of whether you included the original source. Specific exemplary infractions and consequences:

a. Reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials (whether represented by: (i) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (ii) by percentage of assignment length) without proper attribution, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course, and a report to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

b. Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks but source citation, or subsets of visual images without source attribution, will minimally result in an “F” on the assignment. Repeated or serious cases will result in assignment of an “F” in the course, and a report to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Self-plagiarism:

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 that a writer simply ‘cuts-and-pastes’ exact text from former papers into a new paper without proper attribution, 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.

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 basis for the claims the student intends to make in the assignment. For example, assume that 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.

Solicitation for ghost writing:

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 in this course. 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.

TurnItIn.com

The papers in this course may be subject to electronic auditing for plagiarism via Turnitin.com and/or other intellectual defense programs.

“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)
Specific exemplary infractions and consequences

Course failure: 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, or solicitation of a ghost writer, 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 (CSRR2).

Assignment failure: Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks, but with source citation, or subsets of visual 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.

Exceptions: Any exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and only under exceptional circumstances.

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