

CST 300-02: Communication Theory

3 s.h. credit

Fall 2006

Tu, Th 12:30-1:45

Bryan 114

Instructor: Dr. Roy Schwartzman (Dr. Roy)

Office: 109 Ferguson Building

Office Hours: Tu, Th 9:30-11:00
and by appointment

Phone: (336) 334-4540

E-mail: doc_roy@uncg.edu (the best way to reach me—I respond to all e-mails within 24 hours of receipt.)

Course Purpose

Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in early social scientific studies of communication, stated: “There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” Our course demonstrates Lewin’s observation by examining how communication theories help make sense of the often chaotic, puzzling people, objects, and events around us.

CST 300 is a foundational course in the major that provides essential grounding for other advanced coursework. Our course offers a broad survey of major research literature pertinent to communication studies, enabling you comprehend, critique, and apply these ideas to various practical contexts. You will become familiar with primary source research in communication and develop your research skills so you can apply theoretical frameworks to your own experiences. The course is designed for communication majors to become conversant in the major rhetorical, interpretive, and social scientific strands of communication research. As a core course for communication studies majors, CST 300 develops critical thinking, reading, and writing skills as strategic tools in the major and in life as a responsible adult.

The Communication Studies Department mission is: “*To teach students the study of strategic and ethical uses of communication to build relationships and communities.*” Mastery of communication theory allows you to understand, reflect on, sustain, and improve your personal and professional relationships by applying systematic analysis. Borrowing terminology from Kenneth Burke, you progress from random motion to purposive action, from a victim of circumstances to an agent of positive growth.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- describe a broad range of communication theories that reflect the foundations of the discipline;
- demonstrate a working knowledge of the process of theory construction and evaluation for positivist, interpretive, and rhetorical-critical paradigms;
- understand the practical and cultural foundations and implications of various communication theories;
- gain a working knowledge of primary sources, including refereed journal articles and other research publications, as a tool for communication scholarship;
- utilize theory as a vehicle for critical thinking, reflection, reading, and writing regarding our understanding of how communication processes aid in understanding, predicting, and influencing relationships and communities.

Textbooks

Required: Griffin, E. (2006). *A first look at communication theory* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill. ISBN 0073010189

Recommended: American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. (Make sure you get this edition; Amazon.com usually offers the best deal)

- Additional readings will be required via eReserves on Blackboard and for your written projects.

Dr. Roy's Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities

- Article 1. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect as an individual. You are expected to show concern and respect for others, including your fellow students and the professor.
- Article 2. You are entitled to fair and impartial evaluation of your performance. *You* will never be evaluated, but your performance will be.
- Article 3. You have the right to ask the reasons for any grade, assignment, or activity and to receive a straightforward response. Questions about individual grades and other personal issues will be addressed privately. Grades always are determined in relation to assignment standards and guidelines.
- Article 4. You have the right (indeed, the obligation) to ask reasonable, relevant questions, whether in class or outside of class. You also have the right to have them answered (or to be advised where to find the answer).
- Article 5. You have the responsibility to attend class regularly, arrive and depart on time, and to be courteous to others.
- Article 6. You have the responsibility to be prepared for class. This responsibility involves doing the required reading, research, and other tasks that are expected. You are responsible for being attentive, alert, and focused on this class (not engaging in activities unrelated to the class).
- Article 7. You have the responsibility to do your own work and to complete it on time.
- Article 8. You have the responsibility to take pride in your work by preparing carefully and to the best of your ability.
- Article 9. The professor is bound by these same rights and responsibilities.

Instructional Methods

I will strive within the bounds of legality and morality to engage you intellectually and to provide a safe, stimulating environment for creative thought. Class sessions will be highly interactive, with students as well as the professor responsible for generating and sustaining lively interactions. We will concentrate on the applications and implications of theories as well as the theories themselves. My role is that of a Socratic gadfly: to prod you toward going beyond uncritical assumptions and to extend your cognitive capabilities. Prepare to operate beyond your intellectual “comfort zone” by being ready for new ideas. That means you should arrive at every class meeting equipped to ask/answer questions and offer original insights relevant to the course material.

A *vital* component of our course is the electronic collection of resources housed on the Blackboard course site. You are expected to:

- **Check our course site regularly by logging in to <https://blackboard.uncg.edu>**
ALL course documents are housed on that site—no paper copies of the syllabus, assignment guidelines, or other documents will be distributed. The midterm and final also will be administered via Blackboard.
- **Maintain a properly functioning, current e-mail address.** E-mail is the only way I can communicate regularly and efficiently to you beyond class. Make sure your e-mail address is listed correctly in Blackboard, since all class-wide e-mails will be sent through the Blackboard system. Blackboard defaults to your UNCG student e-mail (eSpartan) account. I strongly recommend you keep that account as your Blackboard e-mail setting and **check your UNCG e-**

- **Daily Grades** **50 points**

All Daily Grade/Participation points are earned via in-class activities. There are no make-ups for daily grades; you must be present to win. Activities may be in class or short-range assignments. Always be prepared for chances to earn daily points. Daily grade guidelines are often given orally to improve your listening skills. Sometimes daily grades are offered solely via e-mail as an incentive to check your e-mail. Extra credit opportunities will be available.

Special Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Disability Services located at 215 Elliott University Center (<http://www.uncg.edu/ods>; 334-5440). Accommodations will be made only for students who have documented special needs through the Office of Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services can refer you to appropriate diagnostic testing as well as document existing needs. To assure your needs are met, please register with Disability Services as early as possible.

Attendance

We can learn from each other as much as from a book or a professor. It is, therefore, important to attend and participate. For each absence above two (2) class periods, 10 points will be deducted from your final course grade. A tardy (late arrival or early departure) is equivalent to half an absence; tardies of more than half a class period count as a full absence. Sleeping, engaging in non class-related activity (such as working on assignments for other classes), and offensive or disruptive behavior (including text messaging or your cell phone ringing in class) counts as an unexcused absence. If special circumstances require an exception, please meet with me as soon as possible so we can arrange proper accommodations.

There are four legitimate excuses for absences: personal illness (hangovers and hangnails don't count), mandatory religious obligations, personal emergencies (real catastrophes), and official university-sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate athletics, academic conferences, etc.) that are scheduled in advance. For an absence to be excused, it must be appropriately documented. You are ALWAYS responsible for material covered, assigned, or performed whether you are in class or not on any particular day. This responsibility includes orientation to course policies. If you add the class late, please meet with me as soon as possible to catch up on what you missed. Daily assignments cannot be made up if they are missed. You assume the responsibility to notify your instructor in advance of an absence or, if that is not possible, within one (1) class period after the absence. Excuses offered weeks or months after the fact are not considered favorably and likely will not be acceptable.

Academic Honesty

It is the responsibility of everyone in the UNCG community to understand and uphold the university's Academic Honor policy. All students should become familiar with the Honor policy by reading the appropriate sections of the current *UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *UNCG Policies for Students*. You will sign or (in the case of electronic work) assent to a statement of academic integrity for all major work submitted in this course. Violation of the Honor Policy will result in full and appropriate penalty.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. All students must do their own work to maximize their learning experience. To submit a paper, oral presentation, electronic assignment, or any item that is in part or in whole the work of another unaccredited person is plagiarism. Students found guilty of plagiarism will be penalized to the fullest appropriate extent of university regulations and be reported under the guidelines on academic dishonesty found in the current *Undergraduate Bulletin*.

To avoid plagiarism, those who use words or ideas (including spoken, printed, electronically retrieved, or recorded sources) from another person's work must document the source.

To document a direct quotation in APA style, writers must:

1. include quotation marks around the material or indent it within the text to indicate their use of the source;
2. provide parenthetical notation indicating the date (required), page number (if available); and
3. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either in the introduction to the quotation or within the parenthetical citation.

To document a direct quotation in an oral presentation, speakers must:

1. say the word “quote” to verbally replace written quotation marks; and
2. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either immediately before or after the quotation; and
3. outline oral presentations consistent with the above rules for written material.

Instead of quoting writers or speakers, you may paraphrase the facts and ideas of others by fully digesting the concepts, then stating them in your own words and sentence structure; but you must still credit the sources as in the above notes.

Style Statement

This course requires usage of the APA (American Psychological Association) style as described in the 5th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for all materials submitted for academic credit. Use of another style may result in a reduced grade. APA citation guidelines may be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

How to Win

Students often ask me how to do well in courses. To answer this question, I have compiled a composite list of the characteristics the best students exhibit. Rather than seeking to satisfy minimal requirements (i.e., meeting standards), winning means exceeding standards. Winning performance involves:

- demonstrating curiosity about intellectual issues by raising thoughtful, relevant questions,
- evidence of careful and thorough preparation (e.g., attention to detail, planning and editing, rigorous practice),
- voluntarily making tasks more challenging by focusing on improving performance rather than meeting minimal requirements,
- seeking feedback on ideas from colleagues and offering your insights and abilities to them,
- active class participation by guiding discussion toward issues you find interesting or problematic,
- focusing on how future performance can be improved rather than on how past performance can be excused,
- approaching tasks and discussions from original or inventive perspectives.

CST 300-02: Communication Theory Course Schedule

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Note: Make sure to use the resources within <Course Documents> on Blackboard that correspond to each chapter in the Griffin text. Some of these resources include crossword puzzles, abstracts of theories, examples of applications, and video supplements. You will find these resources *very* helpful!

Foss, Foss, & Trapp = Foss, S. K., Foss, K. A., & Trapp, R. (2002). *Contemporary perspectives on rhetoric* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. (on reserve)

Date	Topics	Activities and Required Reading (should be completed by date specified)
I. Groundwork		
Tu, Aug. 15	Course Orientation	
Th, Aug. 17	The Nature of Theory	Griffin, Ch. 1
Tu, Aug. 22	Theoretical Traditions in Communication; Standards for Evaluating Theories	Griffin, Ch. 2 & 3
Th, Aug. 24	Process of Communication Research	Foss, Foss, & Trapp, Ch. 1
II. Interpersonal Theories		
Tu, Aug. 29	Symbolic Interaction	Griffin, Ch. 4
Th, Aug. 31	Coordinated Management of Meaning	Griffin, Ch. 5
Tu, Sept. 5	Expectancy Violations	Griffin, Ch. 6
Th, Sept. 7	Relational Dialectics	Griffin, Ch. 11
Tu, Sept. 12	Interactional View Constructivism & Cognitive Complexity	Griffin, Ch. 12
Th, Sept. 14	Group A: Conducting & Evaluating Communication Research Group B: Constructivism & Cognitive Complexity	Group A meets in CITI room, 1 st floor of Jackson Library (Bring annotated bibliography guidelines & template!); Group B meets in Bryan 114 Griffin, Ch. 13

Tu, Sept. 19	Group A: Constructivism & Cognitive Complexity Group B: Conducting & Evaluating Communication Research	Group A meets in Bryan 114; Group B meets in CITI room, 1 st floor of Jackson Library (Bring annotated bibliography guidelines & template!) Griffin, Ch. 13
III. Rhetorical/Critical Theories		
Th, Sept. 21	Research Paper Proposal Workshop	<i>Bring Research Paper Proposal Guidelines & Template to class</i>
Tu, Sept. 26	The Rhetoric	Griffin, Ch. 22
Th, Sept. 28	Dramatism	Griffin, Ch. 23
Tu, Oct. 3	Narrative Paradigm	Griffin, Ch. 24 Annotated Bibliography Due
Th, Oct. 5	Jürgen Habermas	Foss, Foss, & Trapp, Ch. 8 Griffin, pp. 420-421
Th, Oct. 12	Critical Theory of Organizational Communication	Griffin, Ch. 19
Tu, Oct. 17	Review for Mid-Term	Mid-Term Exam posted on Blackboard (Watch for e-mail notification; Midterm covers all course material through Oct. 12.)
IV. Media Theory		
Th, Oct. 19	Cultural Studies	Griffin, Ch. 26 Research Paper Proposal Due
Tu, Oct. 24	Cultivation Theory	Griffin, Ch. 27
V. Cultural Context & Diversity		
Th, Oct. 26	Anxiety/Uncertainty Management	Griffin, Ch. 30
Tu, Oct. 31 ☹	Speech Codes	Griffin, Ch. 32
Th, Nov. 2	Gender & Class	Foss, Foss, & Trapp, Ch. 9
Tu, Nov. 7	Genderlect Styles	Griffin, Ch. 33
Th, Nov. 9	Standpoint Theory	Griffin, Ch. 34
Tu, Nov. 14	Muted Group Theory	Griffin, Ch. 35
VI. Synthesis		
Th, Nov. 16	Research Paper Workshop: Group A	<i>Bring written draft of Research Paper to class</i>
Tu, Nov. 21	Research Paper Workshop: Group B	<i>Bring written draft of Research Paper to class</i>
Tu, Nov. 28	Order out of Chaos	Griffin, Ch. 36
Th, Nov. 30	Review for Final Exam	Completed Research Paper due (hard copy)

Final Exam

- Posted on Blackboard Tu, Dec. 5 (watch for e-mail notification); due Th, Dec. 7; covers all course material since mid-term exam