



COMM 305-500 Theories of Communication

Spring 2020

Tuesday 2:20-3:35 pm

HECC 108

Th online

Instructor: Dr. Lu Tang

Email: ltang@tamu.edu

Office: BLTN 209D

Office hours: 10 am-noon Tuesday or by appointment. I will also hold online office hour on skype every Thursday between 11-noon. (my skype handle is: germanica_tang).

Alternatively, you can ask questions in our private Facebook group. (More details will be provided in class.)

Course Description

Theoretical approaches to human communication, including selected theories of language behavior, interpersonal and small group interaction, and persuasion.

Prerequisite: Any lower-division communication course, or junior classification, or approval of instructor.

This course is a hybrid class, which is a combination of face-to-face (FTF) classes and online classes. We will meet face-to-face every Tuesday in our assigned classroom and have online classes every Thursday. (There are a few exceptions during weeks of first football game and instructor's conference traveling. Please see course schedule at the end of the syllabus for detailed information). Typically, you will watch a recorded lecture on eCampus during online classes. During the FTF classes, we will further investigate the theories through class activities, case studies, group discussions, etc.

Learning Outcomes

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory," wrote Kurt Lewin, one of the founders of modern communication studies. The process of theory development is intellectually challenging and rewarding. By the end of the course, students will:

1. Have a comprehensive understanding of influential theories in communication.
2. Be able to make use theories in reflecting on practical problems and situations.

Textbook

Daninton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2018). *Applying communication theory for professional life: A practical introduction*. Sage. (4th edition).

(The 4rd edition is significantly different in organization and content than previous editions and contains, among other items, updated case studies. So, students need the 4rd edition of this book. It has a purple cover.)

Course Assignments

Exams (180 points in total):

There will be three exams, each worth 60 points. Exams will only include multiple choice questions. You need to bring a scantron sheet to each exam. In each exam, there will be 2-3 questions whose answers cannot be found in our textbook. Instead, I will supplement information related to these questions during my lectures regularly. You need to come to class, pay attention, and take notes in order to answer these questions correctly. These three exams are not cumulative. I will provide you with a study guide before each exam.

Quizzes (60 points in total)

After each online lecture, you will need to complete an online quiz. These quizzes include multiple choice questions and/or T/F questions. You will need to complete the quiz by the end of that Thursday. Each quiz is 5 points. There will be 12 quizzes in the semester.

YouTube Video (60 points)

You are going to make a video (3-5 minutes). Imagine that you are a vlogger or influencer with an emphasis on fashion, beauty, health, or games, etc. Your video should teach your followers one theory and relate it to your subject matter. Your video should also be able to show that the theory of your choice is useful. More detailed instruction will be given in class.

Grading Policy (Total 300 points)

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 270-300 | A |
| 240-269 | B |
| 210-239 | C |
| 180-209 | D |
| 179 or below | F |

Attendance policy

Class attendance is required. If you want to learn and do well in this course, there is no substitute for being in class. This course is structured so that those who attend and participate in class have a better chance of performing well. Assignments will be explained in class. Often I will cover materials in class that is not in your textbook --- these materials are subject to testing. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and additional information presented on that day from a classmate. Full participation in this course includes: reading the text carefully; completing all

assignments on time; participating in class discussions and activities; listening to others; sharing current events that relate to our course content.

Make-up Policy:

If an absence is excused, the instructor will either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor. If the instructor has a regularly scheduled make up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have a university approved excuse. The make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence.

The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for the absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the university are the following (see Student Rule 7 for details <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). The fact that these are university-excused absences does not relieve the student of responsibility for prior notification and documentation. Failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence. Falsification of documentation is a violation of the Honor Code.

- 1) Participation in an activity that is required for a class and appears on the university authorized activity list at <https://stuactonline.tamu.edu/app/sponsauth/index>
- 2) Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- 3) Illness of a dependent family member.
- 4) Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- 5) Religious holy day. NOTE: Prior notification is NOT required.
- 6) Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
 - a) Injury or illness of three or more class days:
Student will provide a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider within one week of the last date of the absence (see Student Rules 7.1.6.1)
 - b) Injury or illness of less than three class days:
Student will provide one or both of these (at instructor's discretion), within one week of the last date of the absence: (i.) Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at <http://attendance.tamu.edu> (ii.) Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.
 - c) An absence for a non-acute medical service does not constitute an excused absence.
- 7) Required participation in military duties.
- 8) Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- 9) Mandatory participation as a student-athlete in NCAA-sanctioned competition.
- 10) In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Texas A&M University shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false

pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the instructor.

In cases where prior notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.

Accommodations sought for absences due to the observance of a religious holiday can be sought either prior or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence.

Grievance

If you disagree with a grade, there is a 48-hour period in which you must write out and email to me all of your objections, including references to course materials to substantiate your complaint.

Disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in White Creek Complex, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy. "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." For additional information, please visit:

<http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. Students convicted of academic dishonesty in COMM 305 will receive an F on their transcript for this course.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University and the College of Liberal Arts are committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws provide guidance for achieving such an environment. Although class materials are generally considered confidential pursuant to student record policies and laws, University employees — including instructors — cannot maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues that jeopardize the health and safety of our community. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me, even if you do not want the disclosed information to be shared:

- Allegations of sexual assault, sexual discrimination, or sexual harassment when they involve TAMU students, faculty, or staff. These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In many cases, it will be your decision whether or not you wish to speak with that

Updated Jan 15, 2020

individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the Student Counseling Service (<https://scs.tamu.edu/>). Students and faculty can report concerning, non-emergency behavior at <http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu>.

Class Schedule (Subject to change)

| Date | Topic | Reading |
|---------------|---|----------------|
| 1/14 (FTF) | Course Introduction | |
| 1/16 (Online) | Introduction to communication theory | Chapter 1 |
| 1/21(FTF) | Continued | |
| 1/23 (Online) | Theory development | Chapter 2 |
| 1/28 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 1/30 (Online) | Individual and social approaches to communication | Chapter 4 |
| 2/4 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 2/6 (Online) | Interpersonal communication | Chapter 5 |
| 2/11 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 2/13 (Online) | Review session | |
| 2/18 (FTF) | Exam 1 | |
| 2/20 (Online) | Culture | Chapter 6 |
| 2/25 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 2/27 (Online) | Persuasion | Chapter 7 |
| 3/3 (FTF) | Persuasion (continued) | |
| 3/5 (Online) | Group communication | Chapter 8 |
| 3/10 | No Class. Spring Break. | |
| 3/12 | No Class. Spring Break. | |
| 3/17 (FTF) | Group Communication (continued) | |
| 3/19 (Online) | Review session | |
| 3/24 (FTF) | Exam 2 | |
| 3/26 (Online) | Organizational communication | Chapter 9 |
| 3/31(FTF) | Continued | |
| 04/2 (Online) | Continued | |
| 04/7 (FTF) | Mass communication | Chapter 11 |
| 4/9 (Online) | Continued | |
| 4/14 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 4/16 (Online) | Mediated communication | Chapter 10 |
| 4/21 (FTF) | Continued | |
| 4/23 (Online) | Review session Due: YouTube video presentation | |
| 5/5 (FTF) | Final exam (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.) | |