

**CMST 4320–Communication Theories(Lecture)  
COMM 5308-Seminar Comm Theories (Seminar)**  
**We 6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**  
**Instructor: Yezi Hu**  
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**Office Hours: We 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and by appointment**

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to popular theories frequently used in academic research in the communication discipline. In this course, we will discuss various topics, ranging from media and technology to misinformation, explore the underlying theories and their foundations (including the assumptions, key concepts, and development of theory), and learn about the practical applications of these theories by reading academic papers.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explicate the nature of theory in general and communication theory in particular.
- 2) Identify and explain several fundamental communication theories.
- 3) Apply the knowledge of communication theories to “real world” situations.
- 4) Generate preliminary research ideas

**Course Requirements and Recommends**

1. Floyd, K., Schrod, P., Erbert, L. A., & Scharp, K. M. (2022). *Exploring communication theory: Making sense of us*. Routledge.
2. Weekly reading

**Evaluation and Grade Calculation**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>
Weekly reading reflection	30%
Theory Presentation	15%
Research Proposal	15%
Mid-term exam	15%
Final exam	15%
Attendance and In-class Participation	10%

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90% - 100%	A

80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. Weekly reading reflection (30%)

Starting from week 3, students are required to write a 600-word reading reflection each week, which will be worth 3 points. Each reflection should include a summary of the assigned reading and the student's thoughts on the materials. Additionally, students must apply one theory from the week's content to explain a recent real-world event. Reading assignments will be uploaded to Canvas every Thursday, two weeks in advance. Reflection papers must be submitted by Monday of the week. The format needs to follow APA style.

2. Theory Presentation (15%)

- a. For undergraduate students: Starting from week 3, each student needs to present one theory picked from the Course Schedule Table. The presentation and discussion will be 25 minutes long, covering assumptions, key concepts, the development of the theory, and examples in the real world. Students need to send the draft of slides to the professor one day ahead via email.
- b. For graduate students: Starting from week 3, each student needs to present one theory picked from the Course Schedule Table. The presentation and discussion will be 40 minutes long, covering assumptions, key concepts, the development of the theory, examples in the real world, and their application in academics. Students need to send the draft of slides to the professor one day ahead via email.

3. Research Proposal (15%)

- a. For undergraduate students: students are required to write a 1,000 word research proposal, covering the sections of introduction, literature review, research questions and hypotheses, and a brief paragraph of methodology. In week 15, each student will give a 10-minute presentation, and the due date of submission is 4/28.
- b. For graduate students: students are required to write a 2,000-word research proposal, covering the section of introduction, literature review, research questions, research questions and hypotheses, methodology, and research design. In week 15, each student will give a 15-minute presentation, and the due date of submission is 4/28.

4. Mid-term exam (15%)

This is a take-home exam. The questions will be uploaded on Canvas on Feb. 28, and the students have the whole week 8 to answer the questions. The answers need to be submitted by 3/10.

5. Final exam (15%)

This is a take-home exam. The questions will be uploaded on Canvas on 4/17, and the students have the whole week 15 to answer the questions. The answers need to be submitted by 5/1.

6. In-class participation (10%)

Class attendance is required, and in-class class discussions and questions are highly encouraged and appreciated.

### **Classroom Policies and Expectations**

- A. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.
- B. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also have to give effort outside of class.
- C. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
  - 1. You are responsible for your attitude and how you treat others. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with. If you are not treating individuals with respect or are causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- D. Grading – The grading process begins with the assumption that the work is good, which earns a grade within the range of a “B.” To earn an A, you must show exceptional understanding of the material, utilizing additional sources, examples, and original thought. This means going beyond stating the obvious, the simple answer, or what Google says. Additionally, poor organization, not following assignment instructions, grammar/spelling, lack of depth and thought, failing to illustrate an understanding of the material, etc. will result in your grade being lowered.
- E. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.
  - 1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.
- F. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester... getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor... talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.
- G. Hold me to the same standards and expectations that I hold you to.

### Attendance Policy

- A. Students are expected to attend class during each scheduled meeting. If you miss a meeting, it is your responsibility to make up anything you may have missed outside of meeting times, such as completing in-class activities at home, getting any material that may have been handed out during class, and ensuring you are aware of anything that may have been assigned or discussed. Additionally, if you miss a class and want lecture notes, you are responsible for getting these from a classmate (with the exception of special accommodations set up through the university). I will not be recording lectures or utilizing zoom at all this semester.
- B. See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. Be familiar with the university's drop policy. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by the second course meeting.

### Assignment Policy

- A. Assignments do have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
  - a. For many assignments, **not all**, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a deduction in points. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. You are required to utilize APA (American Psychology Association) format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources and AP (Associated Press) format for all photo captions/journalistic stories.
- F. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC, .DOCX, PPT, PPTX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
- G. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, and each due date

will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.

H. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. **A student who is caught doing either will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the course.**

- a. In addition to UT Tyler’s Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes the use of materials previously submitted in my classes or other professors’ classes. I expect you to submit original work created specifically for this class during this semester.
- b. All work (written, photos, videos, etc.) will be examined utilizing plagiarism detection software.

### Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due
<b>Week 1 Course Overview</b>		
W 1/17	<u>Course Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus</li> <li>• Schedule</li> <li>• Assignments</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2 Theory Overview</b>		
W 1/24	<u>Mapping the Territory</u>	-Reading: Chapter 1,2,3 -Theory presentation order
<b>Week 3 Media</b>		
W 1/31	<u>Lecture:</u> Agenda Setting Theory Uses and Gratification Theory Cultivation Theory  <u>Student presentation:</u> Framing Theory	-Reading: Chapter 14 (p.320-332) -Reading: Weekly paper -Reading reflection (1/29)
<b>Week 4 Technology</b>		
W 2/7	<u>Lecture:</u> Diffusion of Innovations Theory Computer-Mediated Communication Theory Technology Acceptance Model  <u>Student presentation:</u> Social Presence Theory	-Reading: Chapter 7 (p.146-150) -Reading: Weekly paper -Reading reflection (1/5)
<b>Week 5 Culture</b>		

W 2/14	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                  Cultural Studies                  Face-Negotiation Theory                  Cultural Cognition Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                  High-context and Low-context communication</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 15 (p.354-365)                  -Reading: Weekly paper                  -Reading reflection (2/12)</p>
<b>Week 6 Interpersonal</b>		
W 2/21	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                  Social Penetration Theory                  Uncertainty Reduction Theory                  Social Exchange Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                  Communication Accommodation Theory</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 8                  -Reading: Weekly paper                  -Reading reflection (2/19)</p>
<b>Week 7 Identity</b>		
W 2/28	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                  Social Identity Theory                  Social Categorization Theory                  Genderlects</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                  Standpoint Theory</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 15 (p.345-351)                  -Reading: Weekly paper                  -Reading reflection (2/26)  <b>-Mid-term exam uploaded on Canvas (2/28)</b></p>
<b>Week 8 Mid-Term Exam</b>		
W 3/6	No class	-Mid-Term Exam submission (3/10)
<b>Week 9</b>		
<b>Spring Break</b>		
<b>Week 10 Persuasion</b>		
W 3/20	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                  Cognitive Dissonance Theory                  Elaboration Likelihood Model                  Social Judgement Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                  Rhetoric Theory</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 10 (p.216-229)                  -Reading: Weekly paper                  -Reading reflection (3/18)</p>
<b>Week 11 Behavior</b>		
W 3/27	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                  Theory of Reasoned Action                  Theory of Planned Behavior                  Social Cognitive Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u></p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 13 (p. 309-312)                  -Reading: Weekly paper                  -Reading reflection (3/4)</p>

	Health Belief Model	
<b>Week 12 Organizational</b>		
W 4/3	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                      Organizational Culture Theory                      Organizational Information Theory                      Deetz’s Multiple Stakeholder Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                      Muted Group Theory</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 11 (p. 256-260)                      -Reading: Weekly paper                      -Reading reflection (1/12)</p>
<b>Week 13 Visual</b>		
W 4/10	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                      Semiotics                      Symbolic Interactionism                      Media Richness Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                      Picture Superiority Effect</p>	<p>-Reading: Chapter 4 (p.64-70)                      -Reading: Weekly paper                      -Reading reflection (1/12)</p>
<b>Week 14 Misinformation</b>		
W 4/17	<p><u>Lecture:</u>                      Gatekeeping Theory                      Propaganda Model                      Selective Exposure Theory</p> <p><u>Student presentation:</u>                      Confirmation Bias Theory</p>	<p>-Reading: Weekly paper                      -Reading reflection (1/12)  <b>-Final exam uploaded on Canvas (4/17)</b></p>
<b>Week 15 Research Presentation</b>		
W 4/24	<u>Final Presentation</u>	
<b>Week 16 Final</b>		
W 5/1	<u>No class</u>	<p><b>-Final Proposal (4/28)</b>  <b>-Final Exam submission (5/1)</b></p>

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus according to the needs of the class.