

SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULES

While constructing your course schedule, the single most important point to keep in mind—a point emphasized by Griffin in his *Preface for Instructors*—is that each chapter is designed to be covered in a minimum of approximately sixty minutes. Take our word for it—it's true. We strongly urge you not to attempt to exceed the speed limit of one chapter per hour. Although the chapters are brief, the material is dense. Books such as *A First Look at Communication Theory*, which summarize vast quantities of information in very short spaces, must necessarily leave out far more than they include. (In saying this, we do not mean to imply that Griffin's text truncates theoretical explanation more drastically than others. All communication theory books are similarly space challenged.) Thus, the kind of brevity Griffin achieves requires the instructor to “unpack” and elaborate upon key paragraphs and sentences. In order to give these theories their due, do not rush through the book. If your course meets twice a week in ninety-minute sessions, of course, then you can reasonably expect to cover more than one chapter per class meeting. With ninety-minute sessions, in fact, it's prudent to alternate between assigning two chapters and one chapter per class session. The material unfinished from the first day can be covered on the second before moving on to the third and final chapter. Correspondingly, courses that meet once a week in three-hour sessions can handle three chapters at a time.

Below, we have supplied six sample course schedules: three for a fifteen-week term and three for a ten-week term. For the fifteen-week schedules, we have included readings from Judith Guest's novel *Ordinary People*, which we discussed in our Preface, above. You'll note that only schedules #1 and #3 cover all of *A First Look at Communication Theory* (and for schedule #3 we had to break our one-chapter-per-hour rule to make it). When necessary, we've tried to reduce the book prudently, but a certain degree of arbitrariness is involved in any such cutting. Of course you'll make your own choices.

ESSENTIAL THEORIES

If you include supplementary texts and adhere to the one-hour, one-chapter guideline, of course, you may not be able to complete *A First Look at Communication Theory* over the course of the term. You'll have to make some hard choices about what to cover and what to leave to other courses within your curriculum. In our experience, though, it is better to introduce fewer theories and reinforce them well than to include more theories and skimp on discussion and application. What you sacrifice in breadth you'll gain in depth of understanding and appreciation for theoretical nuance. Again, we refer to Freire; teaching that challenges students to think for themselves is more valuable than instruction that merely fills their heads with “education.” The first time Glen taught *A First Look at Communication Theory*, he used a novel to illustrate and vivify the theory, and he introduced other aspects of his program's curriculum into the course. As a result, he did not finish the book over the course of the semester. Students were so enthusiastic about the text, though, that several took a copy of it

home over the summer to read further. The point is that teaching the book well is more important than covering every word of it.

In 1998, the American Film Institute began producing a yearly “top 100” list featuring the best of their industry, starting with the top 100 films. If you wanted to be well versed in American movies that would be a good place to start. The films that made the list did so by having achieved critical acclaim and sustained popular approval, and are considered to have historical significance and enduring cultural impact. In like fashion, we’ve created our own list of essentials—theories we believe are indispensable to in a course on communication theory. Along with Em, we each created a set of two lists—our top 15 and top 20. If the demands of your semester require you to scale back the number of theories you can teach, these lists may be helpful in determining what to include and what to leave out. In addition, we consider Chapter 1- 3 and 36 essential, no matter how many theories are taught and believe that every section introduction should be assigned, even if only one theory from that context is covered. Not surprisingly, our lists have many similarities but also points of departure based on our own experiences, pedagogical practices, and personal ideologies. The ultimate decision is up to you, but we hope these lists will stimulate discussion.

Our Essential Theories

Chpt.		Em	Emily	Glen
5	Symbolic Interactionism (Mead)	☼	☼	☼
6	Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce & Cronen)	☼	☼	☼
7	Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon)	☼	20	20
8	Constructivism (Delia)	☼	☼	
9	Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor)			
10	Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger)	☼	☼	☼
11	Social Information Processing Theory (Walther)			
12	Relational Dialectics (Baxter & Montgomery)	☼	☼	☼
13	The Interactional View (Watzlawick)		☼	20
14	Social Judgment Theory (Sherif)			
15	Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo)	☼	☼	☼
16	Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger)			
17	Functional Perspective on Group Decision Making (Hirokawa & Gouran)	☼	☼	☼
18	Adaptive Structuration Theory (Poole)		20	
19	Cultural Approach to Organizations (Geertz & Pacanowsky)	20		☼
20	Critical Theory of Comm. Approach to Organizations (Deetz)	☼	☼	20
21	The Rhetoric (Aristotle)	☼	☼	☼
22	Dramatism (Burke)	20	20	☼
23	Narrative Paradigm (Fisher)			
24	Semiotics (Barthes)			20
25	Media Ecology (McLuhan)	☼	☼	
26	Cultural Studies (Hall)	☼		☼
27	Cultivation Theory (Gerbner)	☼	☼	☼
28	Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw)	20		20
29	Spiral of Silence (Noelle-Neumann)			
30	Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles)	20	20	
31	Face-Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey)	☼	☼	☼
32	Speech Codes Theory (Philipsen)			☼
33	Genderlect Styles (Tannen)	☼	☼	☼
34	Standpoint Theory (Harding & Wood)		20	
35	Muted Group Theory (Kramarae)	☼	☼	☼

☼ Denotes a "top 15" ranking
 20 Denotes a "top 20" ranking

Schedule #1

Three One-Hour Meetings per Week for Fifteen Weeks
Covers Every Chapter
(Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Introduction to Course	Open
2.	Launching Your Study	"Introduction" & Chapters 1
3.	Talk about Theory	Chapter 2
4.	Weighing the Words	Chapter 3
5.	Mapping the Territory	Chapter 4
6.	Symbolic Interactionism	"Interpersonal Messages" & Chapter 5
7.	Coordinated Management of Meaning	Chapter 6
8.	Expectancy Violations Theory	Chapter 7
9.	Constructivism	Chapter 8
10.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 1-85
11.	Social Penetration Theory	"Relationship Development" & Chapter 9
12.	Uncertainty Reduction Theory	Chapter 10
13.	Social Information Processing Theory	Chapter 11
14.	Relational Dialectics	"Relationship Maintenance" & Chapter 12
15.	Interactional View	Chapter 13
16.	Midterm Exam #1	Open
17.	Social Judgment Theory	"Influence" & Chapter 14
18.	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Chapter 15
19.	Cognitive Dissonance	Chapter 16
20.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 86-171

21.	Functional Perspective	"Group Decision Making" & Chapter 17
22.	Adaptive Structuration Theory	Chapter 18
23.	Midpoint Integration Discussion	Open
24.	Cultural Approach to Organizations	Chapter 19
25.	Critical Theory of Organizations	Chapter 20
26.	Rhetoric	"Public Rhetoric" & Chapter 21
27.	Dramatism	Chapter 22
28.	Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23
29.	Media ecology	"Media and Culture" & Chapter 24
30.	Semiotics	Chapter 25
31.	Cultural Studies	Chapter 26
32.	Midterm Exam #2	Open
33.	Cultivation Theory	Chapter 27
34.	Agenda-Setting Theory	Chapter 28
35.	Spiral of Silence,	Chapter 29
36.	Communication Accommodation	"Intercultural Com." & Chapter 30
37.	Face-Negotiation Theory	Chapter 31
38.	Speech Codes Theory	Chapter 32
39.	Genderlects Styles	"Gender & Com." & Chapter 33
40.	Standpoint Theory	Chapter 34
41.	Muted Group Theory,	Chapter 35
42.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 172-263
43.	Integration	"Communication Theory"

44. Integration

Chapter 36

45. Final Exam

Schedule #2

Two Ninety-Minute Meetings per Week for Fifteen Weeks
Covers 30 theories
(Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Introduction to Course	Open
2.	Launching Your Study, Talk about Theory, & Mapping the Territory	"Introduction" & Chapters 1-3
3.	Weighing the Words	Chapter 4
4.	Symbolic Interactionism & Coordinated Management of Meaning	"Interpersonal Messages" & Chapters 5- 6
5.	Expectancy Violations Theory	Chapter 7
6.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 1-85
7.	Constructivism	Chapter 8
8.	Social Penetration Theory Uncertainty Reduction Theory	"Relationship Development" & Chapters 9-10
9.	Midterm Exam #1	Open
10.	Relational Dialectics & Interactional View	"Relationship Maintenance" & Chapters 12-13
11.	Social Judgment Theory	"Influence" & Chapter 14
12.	Elaboration Likelihood Model & Cognitive Dissonance	Chapters 15-16
13.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 86-171
14.	Functional Perspective & Adaptive Structuration Theory	"Group Decision Making" & Chapters 17-18
15.	Cultural Approach to & Critical Theory of Organizations	Chapters 19-20
16.	Rhetoric	"Public Rhetoric" & Chapter 21

17.	Dramatism	Chapter 22
18.	Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23
19.	Midterm Exam #2	Open
20.	Semiotics & Media Ecology	Chapters 24-25
21.	Cultural Studies & Cultivation Theory	"Media Effects" & Chapters 26-27
22.	Agenda-Setting Theory	Chapter 28
23.	Spiral of Silence	Chapter 29
24.	Communication Accommodation Face-Negotiation Theory	"Intercultural Com." & Chapters 30-31
25.	Speech Codes Theory	Chapter 32
26.	Genderlects Styles, Standpoint Theory	"Gender & Com." & Chapters 33-34
27.	Muted Group Theory	Chapter 35
28.	Literary Application	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 172-263
29.	Integration	"Communication Theory" & Chapter 36
30.	Final Exam	

Schedule #3

One Three-Hour Meeting per Week for Fifteen Weeks
Covers Every Chapter
(Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Introduction and Overview	"Introduction" & Chapters 1-4
2.	Interpersonal Messages	"Interpersonal Messages" & Chapters 5-8
3.	Literary Application & Relationship Development	<i>Ordinary People</i> , 1-85 "Relationship Development," & Chapters 9-11
4.	Relationship Maintenance	"Relationship Maintenance" & Chapters 12-13
5.	Influence	"Influence," Chapters 14-16
6.	Group Decision Making & Literary Application	"Group Decision Making," Chapters 17-18, & <i>Ordinary People</i> , 86-171
7.	Midterm Exam	Open
8.	Organizational Communication	"Organizational Com." & Chapters 19-20
9.	Rhetoric	"Public Rhetoric," Chapters 21-23
10.	Media & Culture	"Media & Culture" & Chapters 24-26
11.	Media Effects, Media Ecology	"Media Effects," Chapters 27-29
12.	Intercultural Communication	"Intercultural Com." & Chapters 30-32
13.	Gender & Communication, Benhabib & Gilligan	"Gender & Communication," Chapters 33-35, & Ethical Reflections
14.	Integration & Literary Application	"Communication Theory," Chapter 35, & <i>Ordinary People</i> , 172-263
15.	Final Exam	

Schedule #4

Three One-Hour Meetings Each Week for Ten Weeks
Covers 24 Theories
(No Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Introduction to Course	Open
2.	Launching Your Study & Talk about Theory	"Introduction" & Chapters 1-2
3.	Weighing the Words	Chapter 3
4.	Symbolic Interactionism	"Interpersonal Messages" & Chapter 5
5.	Coordinated Management of Meaning	Chapter 6
6.	Expectancy Violations Theory,	Chapter 7
7.	Constructivism	Chapter 8
8.	Social Penetration Theory	"Relationship Development" & Chapter 9
9.	Uncertainty Reduction Theory	Chapter 10
10.	Relational Dialectics	Chapter 12
11.	Interactional View	"Relationship Maintenance" & Chapter 13
12.	Social Judgment Theory	"Influence" & Chapter 14
13.	Elaboration Likelihood Model,	Chapter 15
14.	Functional Perspective	"Group Decision Making" & Chapter 17
15.	Adaptive Structuration Theory	Chapter 18
16.	Midterm Exam	Open
17.	Cultural Approach to Organizations	"Organizational Com." & Chapter 19
18.	Critical Theory of Organizations	Chapter 20
19.	Rhetoric	"Public Rhetoric" & Chapter 21

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| 20. | Narrative Paradigm | Chapter 23 |
| 21. | Media Ecology | "Media & Culture" & Chapter 24 |
| 22. | Cultural Studies | Chapter 26 |
| 23. | Agenda-Setting Theory | "Media Effects," Chapter 28 |
| 24. | Communication Accommodation | "Intercultural Com." & Chapter 30 |
| 25. | Face-Negotiation Theory | Chapter 31 |
| 26. | Speech Codes Theory | Chapter 32 |
| 27. | Standpoint Theory | "Gender & Communication" & Chapter 34 |
| 28. | Muted Group Theory, | Chapter 35 & |
| 29. | Integration | "Communication Theory" & Chapter 36 |
| 30. | Final Exam | |

Schedule #5

Two Ninety-Minute Meetings per Week for Ten Weeks
Covers 24 Theories
(No Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Introduction to Course	Open
2.	Launching your study, Talk about Theory & Weighing the Words	"Introduction" & Chapters 1-4
3.	Symbolic Interactionism	"Interpersonal Messages" & Chapter 5
4.	Coordinated Management of Meaning & Expectancy Violations Theory	Chapters 6-7
5.	Constructivism	Chapters 8
6.	Social Penetration Theory & Social Information Processing Theory	"Relationship Development" & Chapter 9, 11
7.	Uncertainty Reduction Theory	Chapters 10
8.	Relational Dialectics & Interactional View	"Relationship Maintenance" & Chapters 12-13
9.	Social Judgment Theory & Elaboration Likelihood Model,	"Influence" & Chapters 14-15
10.	Midterm Exam	Open
11.	Functional Perspective & Adaptive Structuration Theory	"Group Decision Making" & Chapters 17-18
12.	Cultural Approach to Organizations	"Organizational Com." & Chapter 19
13.	Critical Theory of Organizations & Rhetoric	Chapters 20-21 & "Public Rhetoric"
14.	Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23
15.	Media Ecology & Cultural Studies	"Media & Culture", Chapter 24, 26
16.	Agenda-Setting Function,	"Media Effects," Chapter 28

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| 17. | Communication Accommodation & Face-Negotiation Theory | "Intercultural Communication" & Chapters 30-31 |
| 18. | Standpoint Theory | "Gender & Communication" & Chapter 34 |
| 19. | Muted Group Theory & Integration | Chapters 35-36, "Communication Theory" |
| 20. | Final Exam | |

Schedule #6

One Three-Hour Meeting Each Week for Ten Weeks
Covers 21 Theories
(No Supplementary Literary Reading Included)

Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
1.	Talk about Theory, Weighing the Words, & Symbolic Interactionism	"Introduction," Chapters 1- 5, & "Interpersonal Messages"
2.	Coordinated Management of Meaning, Expectancy Violations Theory, Social Penetration Theory,	Chapters 6-7, 9 "Relationship Development"
3.	Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Relational Dialectics & Interactional View	"Relationship Maintenance," & Chapters 10, 12-13
4.	Constructivism, Social Judgment Theory, Elaboration Likelihood Model,	"Influence," & Chapters 13-15
5.	Midterm Exam	Open
6.	Functional Perspective, Cultural Approach to & Critical Theory of Organizations	"Group Decision Making," "Organizational Communication," & Chapters 17, 19-20
7.	Rhetoric, Narrative Paradigm, & Media Ecology	"Public Rhetoric," Chapters 21, 23-24, "Media & Culture"
8.	Cultural Studies, Agenda-Setting Function, Communication Accommodation	"Media Effects," "Intercultural Communication," Chapters 26, 28, 30
9.	Face-Negotiation Theory, Muted Group Theory, Integration	Chapters 31, 35, 36, "Gender & Communication," & "Communication Theory"
10.	Final Exam	