

COMMUNICATION STUDIES 20223: Communication Theory

MWF 2:00 PM-2:50 PM, Class #75184

MWF 3:00 PM-3:50 PM, Class #75185

Syllabus, Fall Semester 2022

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Ledbetter

Phone: 817-257-4524

E-mail: a.ledbetter@tcu.edu

Twitter: @dr_ledbetter

Office Hours: MWF 1:00-1:50 PM; by appointment

Course Text: Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2023). *A First Look at Communication Theory* (11th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. The Kindle version of the book may be the cheapest way to obtain it. It is available for rental (\$55) and purchase (\$69): <https://www.amazon.com/First-Look-Communication-Theory-ebook-dp-B09VQ2G6SS/dp/B09VQ2G6SS/>

Course Description

From TCU's course catalog: Applies communication theory and practice to a broad range of communication phenomena in intrapersonal, interpersonal and public communication settings.

You are about to embark on an exciting adventure through the world of communication theory. In some sense, you already inhabit this “world”—you communicate every day, and you may even be very good at it. But, if you're like me, sometimes you might find yourself wondering: *Why did she say that? Why did I say that in response? Was there something that I could have said that would have been more effective? How could I communicate better with my friends? My parents? At school? At work?* If you've ever asked any of these questions—and it would be hard for me to believe that there is anyone who hasn't!—then this course is for you! By the end of our time together, I hope you will come to a deeper, fuller understanding of the power and importance of human communication. For a list of communication questions we'll explore in this course, see the last page of the syllabus.

This is a knowledge-based course rather than a skills-based course. We will talk about application of the ideas, and understanding this knowledge will prepare you to practice communication skills in future courses. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the essential features of prominent theories of human communication.
2. Interpret communication scenarios with communication theory.
3. Compare and contrast insights provided by multiple communication theories.
4. Critique communication theories according to the standards appropriate for the theory's metatheoretical tradition (i.e., scientific, interpretive, or both).

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS MET BY THIS COURSE

- This course does not fulfill any TCU Core requirements.
- This course fulfills credit toward a minor in communication studies, but is not required for the minor.
- This course is required for a communication studies major. You must achieve a C grade or better and a 2.5 GPA average between this course and interpersonal communication (COMM 20113) in order to enroll in organizational communication (COMM 30163), which is also a required course for the communication major.
- This course serves as a prerequisite for several other communication studies courses. See the university catalog for more information.

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. Class Attendance and Participation: Course attendance is a critical way to learn the course material. As a teacher, I commit to making class time valuable for you as a student. Likewise, I hope you will believe that attending class is a valuable use of your time! I will take attendance every day, and if you are not attending class regularly, I may contact Campus Life to inform them of this.

Note that this is an in-person class. That means that Zoom will not be an option for remote participation. This policy follows SGA's resolution on in-person classes

(<https://www.tcu360.com/2020/09/sga-resolution-passed-to-support-in-person-class/>) and the directive of Provost Teresa Dahlberg that TCU emphasize the in-person class experience. I

understand that situations may arise that make it impossible for you to attend class (such examples include serious illness, death of a family member or close friend, jury duty, cultural and religious holidays, and university-sponsored events such as participation on a sport team). If you miss class, I recommend contacting a classmate to get notes from the day. If you missed a graded activity due to an excusable absence, please contact me as soon as possible so we can plan how you will make it up.

For the good of others in the class, if you are engaging in any behavior that is disruptive to me or other students, I will ask you to stop such behavior. If you do not do so, you will be asked to leave the class for the day.

2. Deadlines: These are specified in the details about each assignment (see below). I will accept late work, but an assignment's tardiness will influence how I read and grade the assignment. As a general rule, assignments turned in within 24 hours of the due date will receive approximately half credit, and assignments submitted over 24 hours late will receive minimal or no credit.

I understand that legitimate situations arise when work cannot be submitted on time (see the list of reasons for excusable absences above). If such a situation arises, please notify me **as soon as possible!** Specifically, for situations that can be anticipated in advance (e.g., a religious holiday), you should notify me sometime during the first week of class. My willingness to grant an extension will be based on (a) the legitimacy of the situation (including ability to document it upon request) and (b) your timeliness in notifying me of it. Please note that assignments administered prior to your enrollment in the class cannot be made up under any circumstance.

TCU's policy for religious observances and holidays: "Students who are unable to participate in a class, in any related assignment or in a university required activity because of the religious observance of a holy day shall be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make up the examination or assignment, without penalty, provided that it does not create an unreasonable burden on the University." For more details, see <http://faith.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/TCU-Religious-Holidays-Policy.pdf>

3. Recording Class Sessions: Class sessions contain my own and others' intellectual property. Except in the case of accommodations requirements, I will only record classes for student viewing in extreme and unusual circumstances (e.g., death of an immediate relative) verified through Campus Life. By attending class, you consent to being recorded. Such a recording would be created solely for the use of students currently enrolled in this class during this semester. Except when I or the university have granted prior written approval (e.g., accommodations requirements), recording audio or video from class sessions is prohibited and will be treated as academic misconduct. Any other use or distribution of class recordings violates the course syllabus and the TCU Student Code of Conduct, and may also violate United States copyright law.

4. Grade discussion and changes ("24/7 policy"): If you have questions about any grade you receive in the course, I am more than willing to discuss your grade with you! However, I find that such discussion tends to be more effective after some time has passed since when you learned your grade—thus, I have a "24/7" grade discussion policy. Unless the issue is minor, I ask that you please refrain from discussing your grade with me until after 24 hours have elapsed after receiving the graded copy of your assignment. Be sure to check returned papers on a computer—I offer feedback using the track changes feature in Word, and such comments don't always show up on mobile devices. After you receive your graded assignment, you have one week (7 days) to discuss your grade. After that week has elapsed, the grade is final and will not be changed for any reason. Note that the 24/7 policy does not preclude your right to initiate a grade appeal according to procedures outlined in the TCU Student Handbook (http://www.studenthandbook.tcu.edu/student_handbook.pdf; pp. 26-27). (For grade changes on assignments/exams at the end of the term, please see the note below.)

Grade changes for completed assignments are rare. Such changes only will occur when, with clear, logical argumentation, you can show me that the grade I assigned is inconsistent with the expectations laid out in the assignment sheet and rubric, the course materials (e.g., the readings), and your submitted work. **Grade changes will NEVER be given based on external circumstances (e.g., loss of scholarship money or ability to graduate), the amount of effort invested in the assignment (grades are assigned by the quality of the submitted work, not effort), or simple desire (e.g., wanting to earn a "B").**

Please also note: Individual requests for extra credit will always be denied. If extra credit is available, it will be offered to the entire class.

5. My commitment to ideological diversity. Academia cannot function properly unless all of its members experience freedom to express their views without fear of personal attack. In order to create a classroom environment that supports respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas, the following principles will guide our work:

- Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
- Reasonable minds can differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;

- Because constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is not just encouraged, it is expected;
- All viewpoints are welcome;
- No ideas are immune from scrutiny and debate;
- The purpose of this classroom is to discover, explore, and debate ideas, not to engage in political activism or political persuasion;
- You will not be graded on your opinions.
- (Drawn from Debra Mashek, <https://heterodoxacademy.org/teaching-heterodoxy-syllabus-language/>)

6. Communication with parents: In high school, your parents likely had complete access to your academic record. As a college student (and for most of you, as legal adults), by federal law that is no longer the case. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; also known as the Buckley Amendment), passed in 1974, requires that colleges and universities keep your academic records private, even from your parents, unless you give consent. For information on TCU's compliance with FERPA, and how to grant your parents or others access to your academic information, see <http://www.reg.tcu.edu/privacy.asp>.

Please also note that waiving FERPA restrictions for a parent (or another person) only means that a professor may discuss your grade with the parent—it does not require a professor to do so. Therefore, I will not discuss your academic performance in this class with your parents or other individuals under any circumstances, even if you have waived your FERPA rights. You are an adult, and I believe that your personal growth as an adult will only occur as you take initiative and responsibility for your own academic career, including discussing concerns with me in a timely fashion. If you do have questions about your academic record in this class, of course I am more than happy to speak with you individually about it.

7. Changes to the Syllabus: Although I've made every effort to craft this syllabus as accurately as possible, sometimes unforeseen events arise, including but not limited to inclement weather days, instructor illness, relevant current events that merit class discussion, or the availability of guest speakers. I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus as the semester progresses, including but not limited to changes in the course schedule, grading criteria, and attendance policies. Substantive syllabus changes will be communicated to you via e-mail, and/or via announcement in class, and/or on some occasions also by announcement on TCU Online. You are responsible to check your e-mail, come to class, and visit TCU Online to receive such announcements.

In all cases, the most recent version of the syllabus posted on TCU Online supersedes all previous versions. Also, a change in one portion of the syllabus does not invalidate any other portion of the syllabus. Likewise, if one portion of the syllabus is found to be invalid by a university or legal authority, that decision shall apply to that portion of the syllabus only, and the validity of the remainder of the syllabus shall remain intact.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Section Exams (4 exams; 100 points each, 400 points total) – You will complete four exams, one for each module. These will be administered via paper while present in class. The exams are not cumulative.

Application assignment (100 points) – You will write a paper that connects two theories to an example that you choose from popular media. See the assignment sheet on TCU Online for more details.

Quickwrites (11 quickwrites; 8 points each, 80 points) – At eleven times throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to write briefly about the topic of the day or engage in a related activity. Details on these prompts and activities will be provided during the class period when they are assigned. The dates and times of these activities will not be announced beforehand. Note that you may miss one quickwrite and still earn full credit. If you are not in class that day, **quickwrites may only be made up in the case of an excused absence with documentation.** If you leave class immediately after completing the quickwrite, you will receive no credit for the quickwrite.

Logos/pathos/ethos analysis assignment (20 points) – I will give you a speech to watch, and in a one-page paper, you will do four things: 1) Identify the speakers appeal to logos, and 2) pathos, and 3) ethos. Then, you will briefly argue which mode of proof you think is most important. The speech to watch will be posted on TCU Online under the section for The Rhetoric. This paper is due by 5 PM on Friday, 11/18.

Grading

There are 600 points possible, with the grade breakdown as follows:

<p>Excellent Work: A = 540-600 points</p> <p>Good Work: B = 480-539 points</p> <p>Satisfactory Work: C = 420-479 points</p>	<p>Poor Work: D = 360-419 points</p> <p>Failing Work: F = 0-359 points</p>
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Please note:

- You may examine your grade at any time by logging into TCU Online and checking the gradebook.
- “A”- and “B”-quality work goes above and beyond the formal requirements/expectations of an assignment; in other words, an “A” or a “B” is an above-average grade. “C”-quality work meets the expectations for the assignment; in other words, “C” is an average grade. “D”- and “F”-quality work fails to meet the expectations for the assignment; they are below-average grades. For more information about the formal requirements/expectations for major course assignments, see the assignments sheets and grading rubrics posted on TCU Online.
- Because “A” and “B” grades are above-average, some students will not receive them. **Do not take this course with the expectation of an easy A or B.**

- After completing the final exam, you cannot complete additional work in order to increase your grade.
- To be fair to all students, I will not round point totals up or down at the end of the semester. **In other words, the point breakdown listed here is the standard for determining grades for everyone in the course.** Please also note that grades are assigned by points, *not* by percentages.
- If you wish to discuss grades for work that was completed and graded at the very end of the course (e.g., the final exam), I am more than happy to do so; however, such discussion and review may have to wait for the start of the next major (i.e., Fall or Spring) academic term.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Part 1: Introduction to Communication Theory

Date	Topic (Reading)
M 8/22	What is communication theory?
W 8/24	Launching your study of communication theory (ch. 1)
F 8/26	Launching your study (cont.) Objective and interpretive approaches (ch. 2) Application assignment preferences due by the start of class
M 8/29	Objective and interpretive approaches (cont.)
W 8/31	Social penetration theory (ch. 8)
F 9/2	Social penetration theory (cont.) Symbolic interactionism (ch. 5) Final day for application assignment topic & due date preferences
M 9/5	Labor Day: No class
W 9/7	Symbolic interactionism (cont.)
F 9/9	Communication privacy management theory (ch. 12)
M 9/12	Communication privacy management theory (cont.) Weighing the words (ch. 3)
W 9/14	Exam #1, over chapters 1, 2, 8, 5, 12, & 3

Part 2: Interpersonal Communication

Date	Topic (Reading)
F 9/16	Expectancy violations theory (ch. 6)
M 9/19	Expectancy violations theory (cont.) Uncertainty reduction theory (ch. 8)
W 9/21	Uncertainty reduction theory (cont.)
F 9/23	Face-negotiation theory (ch. 26)
M 9/26	Face-negotiation theory (cont.) Communication accommodation theory (ch. 25)
W 9/28	Communication accommodation theory (cont.)
F 9/30	Social information processing theory (ch. 10)
M 10/3	Social information processing theory (cont.) Relational dialectics theory (ch. 11)
W 10/5	Relational dialectics theory (cont.)
F 10/7	Exam #2, over chapters 6, 8, 26, 25, 10, & 11

Part 3: Group and Organizational Communication

Date	Topic (Reading)
M 10/10	Co-cultural theory (ch. 27)
W 10/12	Co-cultural theory (cont.) Family communication patterns theory (ch. 7)
F 10/14	Family communication patterns theory (cont.)
M 10/17	Fall Break: No class
W 10/19	Functional perspective on group decision making (ch. 20)
F 10/21	Functional perspective on group decision making (cont.) Cultural approach to organizations (ch. 22)
M 10/24	Cultural approach to organizations (cont.)
W 10/26	Communicative constitution of organizations (ch. 23)
F 10/28	Communicative constitution of organizations (cont.) Critical theory of communication in organizations (ch. 24)
M 10/31	Critical theory of comm in orgs (cont.)
W 11/2	Exam #3, over chapters 27, 7, 20, 22, 23, & 24

Part 4: Persuasion

Date	Topic (Reading)
F 11/4	Social judgment theory (ch. 14)
M 11/7	Social judgment theory (cont.) Elaboration likelihood model (ch. 15)
W 11/9	Elaboration likelihood model (cont.)
F 11/11	Cognitive dissonance theory (ch. 16)
M 11/14	Cognitive dissonance theory (cont.) The Rhetoric (ch. 17)
W 11/16	The Rhetoric (cont.)
F 11/18	NCA Convention: Out-of-class activity Logos/pathos/ethos assignment due by 5 PM
M 11/21 to F 11/25	Thanksgiving Break: No class
M 11/28	Dramatism (ch. 18)
W 11/30	Dramatism (cont.) Narrative paradigm (ch. 19)
F 12/2	Narrative paradigm (cont.)

Conclusion & Synthesis

M 12/5	Mapping the territory (ch. 4)
W 12/7	Mapping the territory (cont.)
Final exam Period	Exam #4, over ch. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, & 19 2 PM section: Wednesday, 12/14, 2-3:30 PM 3 PM section: Friday, 12/16, 2-3:30 PM

COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

Here are a few of the communication questions we'll explore together in this course. Notice that each question contains a form of the word *communication* or *message*—that's how you know these are communication questions in a communication course! Which of these most interest you?

1. How do we communicate to draw close to other people? (Social Penetration Theory)
2. How does language shape the self? (Symbolic Interactionism)
3. How do people communicate to control information about themselves? (Communication Privacy Management Theory)
4. How do we react to nonverbal communication that we don't expect? (Expectancy Violations Theory)
5. How and why do people communicate to get information about other people? (Uncertainty Reduction Theory)
6. How do we communicate to manage our own and others' self-image? (Face-Negotiation Theory)
7. How do we adapt our communication behavior to those with whom we're communicating? (Communication Accommodation Theory)
8. How does the nature of a communication medium change how relationships develop? (Social Information Processing Theory)
9. How does communication create and manage tension between people in relationships? (Relational Dialectics Theory)
10. How do members of marginalized (i.e., co-cultural) groups adapt their communication when interacting with members of dominant cultural groups? (Co-Cultural Theory)
11. How do family messages create a shared reality that shapes how children experience the world? (Family Communication Patterns Theory)
12. How can groups communicate to best solve problems? (Functional Perspective)
13. How does communication create organizational culture? (Cultural Approach to Organizations)
14. How does communication speak organization into being? (Communicative Constitution of Organizations)
15. How does communication shape participation and power in organizational decisions? (Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations)
16. What messages change attitudes? (Social Judgment Theory)
17. How do we process persuasive messages? (Elaboration Likelihood Model)
18. How do we respond to messages that produce a feeling of internal contradiction? (Cognitive Dissonance Theory)
19. By what means can a speaker communicate to persuade an audience? (The Rhetoric)
20. How does a speaker generate a sense of identification with an audience? (Dramatism)
21. How can a speaker tell a story that effectively persuades an audience? (Narrative Paradigm)