

COURSE NUMBER: COMS 1310
COURSE TITLE: FUNDAMENTALS OF COMMUNICATION

THIS COURSE FULFILLS THREE HOURS OF THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AREA OF TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY'S CORE CURRICULUM.

TEXT:

Alberts, J. K., Nakayama, T. K., & Martin, J. (2015). *Human communication in society* (4th ed.). Upper Sadler River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introductory survey of the field of communication studies, including communication models, the rhetorical tradition, interpersonal and relational communication, and organizational and small group communication.

COURSE PURPOSE:

This course is designed to provide an orientation to the fundamental concepts and theories of human communication in a variety of contexts such as, but not limited to, organizations and small groups, interpersonal and intercultural relationships, health and science, and media and technologies. This is *not* a skills-based course in oral communication such as public speaking. Rather, consistent with the student learning objectives in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Core Area, students in this course will develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility by examining how humans communicate, as well as how their communication behaviors actively shape and influence attitudes, values, and beliefs. These objectives are accomplished through the careful study of social scientific research in the field of communication.

THECB CORE CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTION:

The objective of the Social and Behavioral Sciences in a core curriculum is to increase the student's knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity. Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to demonstrate the ability to assess critically claims about social issues, human behavior, and diversity in human experiences. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate the following:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT):** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 4, 6

Throughout this course, students will learn different theories of communication aimed at explaining, describing, and/or predicting human interaction from diverse communication paradigms using various communication research methods that provide distinct explanations for the same human interaction. Assignments in this course are designed in such a way to encourage students to assess communication phenomena from multiple perspectives and provide evidence for their claims. In this course, students will be asked to particularly focus on those human communication contexts in which critical thinking skills are being discouraged and/or suppressed (e.g., how social media may discourage independent thought). Assessment of student learning for this objective will include writing an analytical essay about communication, which will foster creativity and innovation by applying existing theories of human communication, deriving connections between previous communication research and the topic at hand, and demonstrate the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events to support acceptance or formulation of an opinion or conclusion. Additional student learning concerning this objective will be assessed via participation in class discussions and activities, labs, annotated bibliography, and graded exams.

2. **Communication Skills (COM):** To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

Assessments used: 1, 5, 6

This course is designed to assist students in refining and cultivating their communication skills. Students will have an opportunity to articulate their ideas, opinions and assessments of the course concepts in class discussions and activities, lab work, and writing an analytical essay about communication. Strategies used to teach students to effectively develop and express their ideas orally, visually, and in writing will include exposure to different writing, oral, and visual technologies (e.g., communication scholarship of different genres and styles). One part of the lecture on Rhetorical Communication will be dedicated specifically to developing oral and visual communication skills. Additionally, once throughout the semester a writing workshop will be scheduled to introduce students to formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields. Assessment of student learning for this objective will include class discussions and activities, graded exams, and an analytical essay about communication.

3. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS):** To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 4

In this course, students will be exposed to the social science paradigm and quantitative research methods to learn how communication scholars gather data in numerical form. Students will learn how to interpret descriptive statistics in communication research that measure human behavior in terms of quantity, frequency, and amount. They will also analyze empirical data or observable facts to develop informed conclusions about human communication. Students will also learn about various research methodologies employed in communication research: experiments, surveys, instruments, questionnaires, or interviews that measure how people feel, think, act, etc. Assessment of student learning for this objective will include class discussions and activities, lab work, and annotated bibliography assignment.

4. **Social Responsibility (SR):** To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 5

Throughout this course, students will be exposed to communication concepts that pertain to notions of cultural identity, cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, and intergroup relations in contexts spanning from small groups to global relations. These concepts will enable students to become effective communicators in our increasingly diverse society in meaningful, productive, and ethical ways. Students will learn concepts in intercultural communication to help cultivate their cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. Each topic in this class will have a section dedicated to foster students' knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the individual, intercultural communication, and society by attending to broad political and historical forces that have the power to influence the perceptions, understanding, and communication patterns of contemporary intercultural interactions on all relationship levels. Additionally, one week of classes will specifically be dedicated to understanding the role of power and privilege in communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, providing guidelines for communicating more ethically with people whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, and discuss the ways to improve intercultural communication skills and competence. Assessment of student learning for this objective will be ongoing and will include class discussions and activities, lab work, and exam responses.

THECB CORE FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENT AREA CRITERIA DESCRIPTION:

1. Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 6

TTU COLLEGE-LEVEL CORE COMPETENCY STATEMENT:

1. Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to demonstrate the ability to assess critically claims about social issues, human behavior, and diversity in human experiences.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 5, 6

Pedagogical interventions in this course aimed at addressing this objective include lectures that provide evidence and illustrations of the intricate relationship between human communication and social issues. Throughout this course students will have an opportunity to learn different communication theories, concepts, practices, and scholarship and be exposed to a variety of historical and contemporary examples that highlight the diversity of human experiences particularly based on one's social location. Students will learn how communication theory, best practices, and scholarship address and inform social issues and human communication between diverse individuals and across diverse contexts. Assessment of student learning for this objective will include class discussions and activities, lab work, exam responses, and writing an analytical essay about communication.

TTU CORE CURRICULUM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

1. Identify and critique alternative explanations for claims about social issues and human behavior.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 5, 6

Pedagogical interventions in this course aimed at addressing this objective include lectures that provide evidence and illustrations of the intricate relationship between human communication and social issues. Throughout this course students will have an opportunity to learn different communication theories, concepts, practices, and scholarship and be exposed to a variety of historical and contemporary examples that highlight the diversity of human experiences particularly based on one's social location. Students will learn how communication theory, best practices, and scholarship address and inform social issues and human communication between diverse individuals and across diverse contexts. Assessment of student learning for this objective will include class discussions and activities, lab work, exam responses, and writing an analytical essay about communication.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate and ethical methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition

Assessments used: 1, 2, 5

In this course, students will be exposed to the social science paradigm and quantitative research methods to learn how communication scholars gather data in

numerical form. Students will learn how to interpret descriptive statistics in communication research that measure human behavior in terms of quantity, frequency, and amount. They will also analyze empirical data or observable facts to develop informed conclusions about human communication. Students will also learn about various research methodologies employed in communication research: experiments, surveys, instruments, questionnaires, or interviews that measure how people feel, think, act, etc. Students will also be exposed to ethical dimensions of human interaction as ethical issues are one of the unifying themes in the field of communication. Each lesson will end with outlining moral guidelines for human interaction highlighting ethical principles applicable to a specific communication context covered in that lesson. Additionally, students will be exposed to ethical questions in communication (e.g., the American Psychological Association maintains strict standards of ethics for social science researchers, requiring that all participants receive full information about the research study). Assessment of student learning for this objective will include class discussions and activities, lab work, and annotated bibliography.

COURSE SPECIFIC EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

1. Describe the history and context of the study of human communication.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 6

2. Distinguish among the major perspectives on and models of human communication.

Assessments used: 1, 6

3. Explain how communication creates identities, relationships, and realities.

Assessments used: 1, 2, 3, 6

4. Improve communication skills across interpersonal, group, organizational, and public communication contexts.

Assessments used: 1-6

5. Analyze and assess actual communication phenomena in the world using appropriate theories of communication.

Assessments used: 1-6

6. To cultivate an appreciation of the ethical dimensions of communication across interpersonal, group, and public contexts and to appreciate the fundamental role of communication in exercising citizenship

Assessments used: 1-6

ASSESSMENT OF EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Class Discussion and In-Class Activities

This course is designed to foster an appreciation and understanding of the role of communication in contemporary society. During each class students will be required to contribute ideas, provide examples, make connections, and clarify material from the reading and lectures. Occasionally, in-class activities will be assigned where students will work in groups.

2. Labs

There will be 10 labs over the course of the semester each worth 10 points. The labs are designed to evaluate students' understanding and facility of the terms and concepts introduced and discussed in class.

3. Communication Analysis Essay

For this assignment students will write an essay (4-5 pages) in which they will explore and critically analyze a topic of your choice relevant to the class. Students will demonstrate understanding of a contemporary issue related to human communication. The assignment will require students to articulate diverse perspectives and the appropriateness of using certain communication theories or practices to address or analyze the contemporary issue topic. Students will consider the role of diverse identities, relationships, and realities affected by and/or constructed within human communication related to a contemporary social issue. This assignment is a three-part assignment, which means that two other assignments (Topic Paper and Annotated Bibliography) are part of this essay. Students will demonstrate adherence to a recognized writing format (e.g., APA 6th edition) to ensure ethical presentation of ideas.

4. Topic Paper

For this assignment students will briefly identify (not more than 2 pages) the communication event or concept you wish to analyze and answer the central critical questions they wish to investigate attending carefully to

5. Annotated Bibliography

For this assignment students will identify academic sources relevant to the topic (no less than 5); offer a brief summary of each source; and explain how these sources inform your critical essay. Students will analyze and evaluate sources for quality of information, relevance to topic, interpret the method sections of empirical studies to draw informed conclusions about their topic and how the conclusions from the study may inform their communication analysis essay.

6. Exams (I, II and III)

The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions designed to measure student comprehension of communication theory and practices, application of theory to human interaction, and synthesis of theory and practice.

GRADING:

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| 1. Participation and In-Class Activities | 10% |
| 2. Labs | 20% |
| 3. Communication Analysis Essay | 20% |
| 4. Topic Paper | 10% |
| 5. Annotated Bibliography | 10% |
| 6. Exams (3 exams at 10% each) | 30% |

Final Grades are determined according to the scale detailed above. Total points valuing 90-100 will equal an A, 80-89 will equal a B, 70-79 will equal a C, 60-69 will equal a D, and 0-59 will equal an F.

REQUIRED SYLLABUS LANGUAGE:**Academic Honesty (OP 34.12)**

It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and high standard of integrity. The attempt of students to present as their own any work not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

“Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but it not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act.

The full policy is available at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.12.pdf>

Special Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (OP 34.22)

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

The full policy is available at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.22.pdf>

Student Absence for Observance of a Religious Holy Day (OP 34.19)

1. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20.
2. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.
3. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

The full policy is available at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.19.pdf>

SCHEDULE/OUTLINE:

Week 1	Course Introduction	
Week 1	Introduction to Human Communication	Due: Read Chapter 1
Week 2	Perspectives on Human Communication	Due: Read Chapter 2
Week 2	LAB #1	
Week 3	Rhetorical Communication	Due: Read Chapter 12
Week 3	LAB #2	
Week 4	Communicating Identities	Due: Read Chapter 3 & http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/unmournable-bodies
Week 4	LAB #3 & Exam I Review	
Week 5	Perceiving and Understanding	Due: Read Chapter 4
Week 5	Exam I	
Week 6	Verbal Communication	Due: Read Chapter 5 & Topic Paper
Week 6	LAB #4	
Week 7	Nonverbal Communication	Due: Read Chapter 6 & http://www.newrepublic.com/article/119546/accents-can-influence-perception
Week 7	LAB #5	
Week 8	Communicating in Close Relationships	Due: Read Chapter 9
Week 8	LAB #6 & Exam II Review	
Week 9	Annotated Bibliography Writing Workshop	
Week 9	Exam II	

Week 10	Communication Across Cultures	Due: Read Chapter 8
Week 10	Communication Across Cultures	
Week 11	LAB #7	
Week 11	Mass Media and Communication	Due: Read Chapter 13
Week 12	LAB #8	Due: Annotated Bibliography
Week 12	Communication and New Technologies	Due: Read Chapter 14 & Hasinoff, A. A. "Sexting as media production: Rethinking social media and sexuality"
Week 13	LAB #9	
Week 13	Organizational Communication	Due: Read Chapter 11
Week 14	Organizational Communication	
Week 14	Small Group Communication	Due: Read Chapter 10
Week 15	LAB # 10 & Exam III Review	
Finals Week	Exam III	
Communication Analysis Essay Due: TBD		