

WIP: Theories of Communication, Media and Theatre

CMTC 200 Spring 2010

"Theory and research involve a single integral process by which we attempt to better understand how and why people communicate or fail to communicate."

–Stacks and Salwen, 1996, p. 12

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Office Hours: TTR 3-4, W 11-1, TR 6-7 or by appointment
Prerequisite: Passed ENG 101 with a C or better.

All readings will be posted on Black Board.

Course Description:

This course is a writing intensive experience, designed to introduce students, both majors and other interested students, to the functions and applications of various theories in communication, media and theatre. Students will gain an understanding of the foundations of these disciplines; recognize the broad categories of theoretical perspectives, such as humanistic, social scientific and critical; and evaluate the contributions of various theories in interpersonal, rhetorical, organizational, media, dramatic and intercultural contexts. This course includes formal (graded) and informal writing exercises of varying length and complexity, including but not limited to: free-writing, reading responses, and article critiques, as well as more advanced analysis and application papers.

Whether you intend to major in communication, media and theatre or are just taking the class because it looked interesting, you will benefit from the course in three significant ways: First, the theories we examine equip you with concepts for analyzing both successful and unsuccessful communication events. Thus, the class provides you with an understanding of theories useful for a variety of pragmatic reasons. Second, the class provides a foundation for more advanced study in communication, media and/or theatre. As you complete this class, you will be armed with a breadth of knowledge necessary for many upper-level courses in our disciplines. Finally, this class teaches you requisite skills for successfully completing your degree. This course requires writing skills, analytical skills, and presentation skills all of which will benefit you greatly as you progress through your studies.

This course has been approved as a Writing Intensive course as part of the Writing Intensive Program (WIP). Successful completion of this course fulfills the Writing Intensive graduation requirement for Communication, Media and Theatre majors who entered the university in Fall 2008 or later. Speak to your advisor or visit www.neiu.edu/~wip for more information.

Learning Outcomes: In particular, the following objectives will guide us on our journey of understanding communication theory. You be expected to

1. recognize and explain the differences between major paradigms for understanding communication, media and theater
2. recognize and describe several specific theories relating to the course readings.
3. research, understand and evaluate original research articles related to both social scientific and rhetorical/critical approaches to communication.

4. critically evaluate, orally and in writing, the strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical perspectives of communication, media and theatre.
5. write thoughtful, well-developed papers (both graded and ungraded) that are connected to the disciplines of CMT, formatted in APA style and are also free of grammatical and spelling errors

Assignment	points	approximate %
Application papers 6@ 10 points	60	(28% of total grade)
Article critiques 2 @ 10 points	20	(10% of total grade)
Exams	50	(24% of total grade)
Final synthesis paper	50	(24% of total grade)
Daily participation	30	(14% of total grade)
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Total points possible	210	

Assignment overviews:

Ungraded:

- Daily in class written and oral exercises and discussions that address readings, questions, concerns and/or other individual needs.
- Research and exercise exploring the APA writing format style.
- Drafts: Because this is a writing intensive course, we will engage in the recursive process of writing. You will be required to hand in and revise a draft of your final paper. You will also be required to meet with me to discuss your revisions. I will not accept a final paper that has not been approved through the draft and revision process.

Graded:

- Application papers: you will be responsible for writing six short papers (2-3 paged) that elucidate and apply a particular theory to an event from your life.
- Two article critiques (1-2 pages): The journal article critiques are designed to accomplish several objectives fundamental to research in communication. Specifically, after completing this assignment you should be able to:
 1. Locate research articles covering specific 1) social scientific and 2) rhetorical or critical topics in communication, media and/or theatre.
 2. Read, understand, and summarize that article.
 3. Critically evaluate the research article based on several possible criteria for assessing the quality of original research in these traditions.

These learning objectives serve as the basis for completing other projects in this class as well as projects in other communication classes.

- Essay exams: There will be two take home essay exams during the semester.
- Final paper: This is a formal paper (6-8 pages) that allows you to apply several of the theories we have studied to a particular case study. Your paper and the initial ungraded draft, must follow APA formatting procedure.

All graded assignments will receive a score. Final letter grades will be based on a 90-80-70-60 percent scale. You will be given a form for monitoring your point total throughout the course. At any time you can determine your approximate letter grade by calculating the percentage of points you have earned out of the points possible for each grade assignment.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance: Because this is a course that relies on the comprehension of various theoretical perspectives, in-class discussion of reading assignments, and the application of these perspectives through the analysis of artifacts, your attendance is *essential* for success. You will find the material easier to understand and more interesting when you experience it in class. Therefore, attendance will be taken daily. A maximum of three absences may be excused without penalty. After three absences, your final grade will automatically drop a letter grade. Habitual absence is unacceptable – as is habitual *tardiness*. Please notify me if you must miss class.
2. Class Preparation: To perform successfully in this course, it also is imperative that you keep up with the reading assignments and participate in class discussions. Therefore, you are expected to read assignments *before* each class in order to engage in these discussions. Furthermore, you should be prepared to comment or to give your input concerning readings and theories discussed in class. If you have questions, please ask, and don't allow yourself to fall behind!
3. Class Exercises & Participation: In addition to your written work, you are required and expected to actively participate in class discussions and exercises. This is a lecture-discussion course, and class discussions will help you formulate your interpretations and understanding of course readings. In-class exercises will facilitate the application of the concepts and theories covered in the course.
4. Submission of Work: All work submitted should be TYPED, double spaced and in 12-point type. You are expected to submit grammatically correct and proofread written work. Your assignments will be evaluated in terms of whether spelling, grammar, and punctuation are free of error, in addition to how well you demonstrate an understanding of course concepts and theories. Late assignments will be penalized a letter grade for each day that they are turned in beyond the due date.
5. Exams: All exams will be taken at the scheduled dates and times. Makeup exams will be given only in cases of extreme illness/hospitalization or death in the immediate family. Exams will not be given early.
6. Plagiarism & Cheating: Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will be handled in accordance with University policy on academic misconduct.

Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's original work. This includes 1) the paraphrasing of another's ideas or conclusions without acknowledgment; 2) the lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc., from another's work without acknowledgment; and 3) the submission as one's own work, any work prepared by another person.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR:

Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, cheating, and other acts of academic misconduct will result in, at minimum a failing grade for the assignment, and at my discretion, a failing grade for the course.

Creativity is encouraged and rewarded. This includes the creative application and observations of the concepts discussed. If you have an idea for an activity, assignment, or experience please feel free to discuss it with me. We will try to work it into the scheduled material.

Have FUN! I pledge to make learning in this course a worthwhile and enjoyable experience and I welcome your suggestions for achieving this goal!

GRADING:

Only outstanding performance on the assignments in this course will earn you an “A”; grading in this course is based on the following definition of grades.

A= represents work that is outstanding, far above the minimum requirements necessary for completing this course/assignment.

B= represents work that is significantly above the minimum requirements necessary for completing this course/assignment.

C= represents work that meets the minimum course/assignment requirements.

D= represents work that is worthy of partial credit even though it does not fully meet all the basic course/assignment requirements.

F= work that does not meet the stated requirements

GRADE MONITORING FORM

	Points Earned	Points Available
Exams = 50 points	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Application papers = 60	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Article critique	_____	10
Article critique	_____	10
Draft (ungraded, but required)		
Final paper	_____	50
Daily participation	_____	30
		Total
Points	_____	210

To figure your grade, divide your total points earned (y) by the total points available (x).

$$y/x = \text{_____} \%$$

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
59% & below	F

Theories of Communication, Media and Theatre

Tentative Course Calendar Fall 2009

Week 1 9/1 – 9/3	Welcome and Introductions and Chapter 1 Introduction to Theory
Week 2 9/8 & 9/10	The chicken or the egg: connections of theory and research
Week 3 9/15	Writing in the disciplines: Introduction to APA writing format
Week 4 9/22	APA formatting Interpersonal Communication theories
Week 5 9/29	Interpersonal Communication theories application paper #1 due
Week 6 10/6	Interpersonal Communication theories – Dr. Adams application paper #2 due
Week 7 10/13	Cultural and organizational theories application paper #3 due
Week 8 10/20	Theories of persuasion
Week 9 10/27	Reading and response to scholarly writing Article critique due with discussion Application paper assigned
Week 10 11/3	Theories of Organizing and Leadership application paper #4 due
Week 11 11/10	Group theories Dramatic theory – Rodney Higginbotham application paper #5 due
Week 12 11/17	Draft of final paper due Mediated communication theories Dr. Mun application paper #6 due
Week 13 11/24	Article critique due with discussion Thanksgiving
Week 14 12/1	Individual meetings to discuss drafts
Week 15 12/8	wrap up ch. 10
12/15	Final revisions of application paper due by 12:00 noon.

Additional Suggested Readings :

- Baran, S. (2008). Theories and effects of mass communication. *Introduction to mass communication: Media literacy and culture* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Brandt, G.W. (Ed.) (1998a). Semiotics of theatrical performance. *Modern theories of drama*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____ (Ed.) (1998b). Naturalism. *Modern theories of drama*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Griffin, E. (2006). Mapping the territory: Seven traditions in the field of communication theory. *A first look at communication theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Herrick, J.A. (2001a). Aristotle on rhetoric. *The history and tradition of rhetoric: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- _____ (2001b). Contemporary rhetoric II: The rhetoric of situation, drama, and narration. *The history and tradition of rhetoric: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Johnston, D. D. (1994). Changing beliefs, attitudes and behavior. *The art and science of persuasion*. Madison, WI: Brown and Benchmark.
- Orbe, M. (1997a). An introduction into co-cultural communication. *Constructing co-cultural theory: An explication of culture, power and communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- _____ (1997b). Foundations of muted group and standpoint theory. *Constructing co-cultural theory: An explication of culture, power and communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- West, R., & Turner, L. H. (2007a). Coordinated management of meaning. *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- _____ (2007b). Uncertainty reduction theory. *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- _____ (2007c). Social penetration theory. *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Wood, J.T. (2004). Critical communication theories. *Communication theories in action* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.