**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION**

**COM 111: Introduction to Communication Theory, 3 hrs.**

Meets: Tues 6:30-8:20 EDW 235 (Capen Aud.)

**Course Description:**

We spend our days communicating. We talk, we write, we text, we email, maybe we use ESP. We communicate privately and publicly with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Why do we communicate? What is happening “behind the scenes” that explains this process of communication? You will have the opportunity to find answers to those questions.

**So What? (What’s In It For Me?)**

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| **Result from Course** | **Benefit to You** |
| Understand the process of theory development and basic theory evaluation | You will understand how we come to arrive at the knowledge we have about communication – the knowledge that drives our entire major! |
| Understand the main paradigms under which communication theorists operate and perform research | You will understand *why* we study various ideas about communication, and *how* we go about studying these things. This will help you understand all of those things about communication that we learn in class (e.g. how the media affect us; why we feel nervous when someone acts oddly around us; why our company tells us they’re ‘employee focused’ when clearly, they are not; how we can predict people’s behavior, etc.). This will also help you succeed in COM 297. |
| Understand and recognize communication theories in the areas of Interpersonal Communication, Mass Communication, Organizational Communication, Leadership, and Public Relations and demonstrate an ability to apply them to everyday situations and messages | Suddenly communication situations you have experienced in life will make perfect sense! You will ultimately understand others better, you will notice things that you couldn’t see before when you go to work, interact with your friends, or even consume the media. You’ll understand the media better, be able to persuade people to do or think something, and understand better why people from different cultures (or even your own!) communicate the way they do.  You will also become prepared to engage in the content presented in the rest of the classes in our major. |

**Steps for Success:**

1. **Get Involved: Read and Discuss:** There is no textbook this semester; all readings are provided on Reggienet.
2. **By attending class and taking good notes.** Communication is not just about talking, but also about listening and remembering. If you’re like me, you have trouble remembering. Good note taking is essential to success so you remember everything we go over, because if you don’t remember then you can’t use the skills we learn!
3. **By participating in class discussions – both when you’re called on and when you’re not!** It’s a communication class, so I encourage communication. I know talking in class can be hard, and that sometimes life gets in the way of preparation, so you may not be fully prepared each day. That’s OK. We will help you to engage in the classroom discussion, to ask your questions, to share your perspectives. We want you to feel comfortable and safe communicating. It takes practice.

**The Boring Stuff:**

If you’re interested in getting a good grade, then complete all the readings and watch all the videos (including all the optional readings), reach out to me to clarify anything, complete all the review materials, watch all the videos posted on Reggienet, and finally, study like crazy for the exams. This class is out of 1000 points. Here is the breakdown and grading scale:

Exams (3@200 points each) 600 points

Readings Quizzes 100 points

“Better than a Test” assignments (2) 200 points total

Other Small Assignments 100 points total

Research Summary 30 points

APA Citation Practice 10 points

Article/Source Worksheet 25 points

Flex Points 25 points

Total 1000

Grades will be distributed normally: 90/80/70/60.

(Note – the computer DOES round up at .5 or higher, so if you earn 69.5, the computer will give you 70. However, 69.4 never, ever rounds up higher.)

**There are no extra credit points available in COM 111 ever again*…ever*.**

**Details**

**Exams:**

There are 3 exams in this class. All are True/False and Multiple-Choice questions only. Study guides are provided   
for exams well in advance of each exam. In addition, out-of-class review sessions are available.

**Quizzes:**

Readings quizzes can be found on Reggienet. There’s a readings quiz for just about every reading. The quizzes   
draw from question pools so that no two quizzes are identical. There are usually 10 questions found on each quiz; questions are worth one-half point for a total of 5 points per quiz in most cases (a few are worth more). Obviously, given their online nature, these quizzes are open book/open note/open Google.

**“Better than a Test” assignments:**

In this creative opportunity to work with theory, you will first briefly explain a theory and then clearly apply it to a   
concrete example (remember to let the theory drive this paper). You will explain how the theory can be used to solve practical problems or how it can be used in an organizational setting. Then, finally, you will explain briefly how the theory has been examined in 3 recent research studies. Provide an APA citation for each of these studies at the end of the assignment. More details on this assignment can be found on Reggienet.

**Small assignments:**

Small assignments are activities in which you will learn or apply theory. These will be assigned by your lab   
instructor and fall under the “flex points” category of requirements.

**How to win:**

You **can** succeed in this class. You have been given the fantastic opportunity to learn about communicating. This is a very important skill that can set you apart from others in the workplace. If you want to get ahead in your career you can take the first step in this class. Please communicate with me (about confusions, problems or anything else) in a professional manner, and please engage and try your hardest in this class. You should feel safe sharing your opinions in class. You should be excited about reading, discussing, studying, and applying what we will cover in class.

**How to contact your professor:**

**Jodi Hallsten Lyczak**

Office Hours: Wed from 11-3 in 417 Fell: (Note: **No office hours week 1, finals week, or spring/fall break.)**

Office Phone: 309-438-7741

Email: [**jlhalls@ilstu.edu**](mailto:jlhalls@ilstu.edu?subject=COM%20111%20Question)(🡨 best way to contact me)

Due to the large number of students assigned to me, it is mandatory that you reserve office time with me if you would like to meet me outside of class. You can reserve a slot of time with me – there’s a link on the front page of Reggienet that will bring you to a website where you can make a reservation.

Our Outstanding GTAs:

Mallorie Latora ([mlatora@ilstu.edu](mailto:mlatora@ilstu.edu)) (309-438-3672)

Office Hours noted on Reggienet

Viraj Patel ([vpate14@ilstu.edu](mailto:vpate14@ilstu.edu?subject=Q%20from%20COM%20111%20student))

Office Hours noted on Reggienet (309-438-3672)

Our Outstanding Undergraduate TA:   
 Bobby Selzer [(rfselze@ilstu.edu)](mailto:rfselze@ilstu.edu?subject=Q%20from%20COM%20111%20student)

Our Schedule: (which may change; you need to come to class so you know when we’ve changed the schedule – you’re responsible for knowing all changes).

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|  | What we’re covering in lecture | What you need to complete BEFORE Tuesday night lecture | What’s going on in lab sections on Wednesday |
| **Unit 1: Learning about theorizing (aka: Metatheory)** | | | |
| 8/20 | Metatheory | In this order, do the following:   * Watch the syllabus video * Read syllabus   Complete the readings and do everything (!) under “Intro to Metatheory” in Reggienet. This includes a   * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Metatheory Exercise: Asking the Right Questions |
| 8/27 | Critical Theory and Qual Research | See Reggienet “Critical Theory” for readings and videos   * READINGS QUIZ DUE | How to Read a Research Article  APA Lesson |
| 9/3 | Quantitative Research  Exam 1 Prep | See Reggienet “Scientific Research Methods” for readings   * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Source Worksheet Due  Introduce BTAT project |
| **Unit 2: Mass Media Theories** | | | |
| 9/10 | **Exam 1**  This exam covers Metatheory | | |
| 9/17 | Diffusion of Innovations Theory | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | More on the project  How to summarize research |
| 9/24 | Cultivation Theory | * READINGS QUIZ DUE * **Cultivation Theory Video Quiz Due** | Cultivation Theory video in lab (don’t run late today!)  Research summary worksheet due in lab |
| **Unit 2: Rhetorical Theories** | | | |
| 10/1 | Rhetoric  Narrative Paradigm (Viraj lectures! ☺ ) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Narrative Activity?  APA Citation Worksheet Due |
| **Unit 3: Persuasion Theories** | | | |
| 10/8 | Cognitive Dissonance Theory  Elaboration Likelihood Model | * READINGS QUIZ DUE * **Better than a Test Project #1 (Media Theories) Due** | Exam Review Day |
| 10/15 | **Exam 2**  This exam covers Media, Rhetorical, and Persuasion Theories | | |
| **Unit 4: Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication Theories** | | | |
| 10/22 | CPM  (Mal lectures! ☺) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | RDT / RDT 2.0 |
| 10/29 | Communication Accommodation Theory  (Viraj lectures! ☺ ) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Face Negotiation Theory  Politeness Theory |
| 11/5 | Standpoint Theory  Muted Group Theory  (Mal and Viraj lecture! ☺ ) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions |
| 11/12 | Asiacentric Communication  (Dr. Baldwin Lectures! ☺ ) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE * **Better Than a Test Project #2 (Interpersonal/Intercultural Theories) Due** | Unit Review |
| **Unit 5: Organizational Communication Theories** | | | |
| 11/19 | Organizational Communication (XYZ) | * READINGS QUIZ DUE | Activity/Assignment TBA |
| 12/3 | Final Exam Review | | |

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| The Final Exam will include test items on interpersonal theories, intercultural theories, organizational communication theories, and metatheory. We will meet in our normal lecture room for the final. |

Our Final Exam Date Will Be Posted by The University on Week 4. You can check your final exam schedule by visiting this website: <https://registrar.illinoisstate.edu/faculty_staff/finals/>

**Other Stuff:**

**Cheating:** Simply put: don’t do it. Don’t be tempted. Don’t risk it. *Cheaters will immediately fail this course and will be reported to the office of Community Rights and Responsibilities*. Professors are allowed to advocate for a course of action by CRR: I automatically advocate for academic probation on a first violation; I advocate for expulsion on a second violation.

**Exams:** Exams must be taken on their scheduled date. **No** exceptions will be made to this rule, unless you somehow end up missing your head; when they reattach it, we’ll work something out for you. Pictures of your headless self will qualify as documentation for this excuse.

**Late Work:** Late work is never accepted. Technical difficulties are not a valid excuse for late work; there is no acceptable excuse for late work. **Ever.**

**Special Needs:** *Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.*

**Message from ISU legal about recording:** Students may not photograph or use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions or visual materials that accompany them (e.g., lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations). Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University’s Code of Student Conduct.

**Classroom Rules** (just bear with me – we need these to create the most productive learning environment possible)

* We all treat each other with respect.
* I understand how tempting your phones are when your mind wanders off during class. To help you resist the temptation, I am kindly requesting that our classrooms be a “no phone” zone. Please put your phone on “mute” during class and tuck it away in your book bag. Thank you for your cooperation.
* We (our glorious GTAs and I) love to hear from you. When we do, we ask you to use appropriate professional format: a greeting, appropriate grammar/ spelling/punctuation, a closing statement, and be signed with your name. One of the main topics we will hear about from you will likely be regarding grades. Please do that within a week of the particular exam in question.

* Please don’t pack your bags before I’ve finished lecturing. I can’t help but take personal offense to this. I promise I’ll never waste your time in my classroom – I need you to trust me on this and just be patient until the end. Dropping desktops and packing up early is a nasty habit easily acquired in college. I know you wouldn’t do that if you were at work and your boss was speaking, so please: don’t do it here, either.
* Please know that it makes no sense for you to come to me after week 13 because you’re “concerned about your grade.” Around 70% of the coursework has been completed by then and I **never** offer extra credit for individuals just because their grades are low. In short: it’s too late to be “concerned” after week 13 because the only advice I can offer you at that point is to attend class every day and participate in all lab experiences and do your very best on the final exam. Thank you for understanding this.
* Please understand that I am not allowed to communicate with you via email about grades.
* Please understand that there’s nothing you can do in our class to improve your grade except what is in the syllabus. Inevitably, many of you will be tempted to email me at the end of the semester when you realize you’re only 2 or 3 percentage points away from the grade you desire and beg me for some kind of extra work to make up those points. While I understand your disappointment and desperation, I cannot give you an opportunity to make up points and not offer it to everyone in the class.
* If you are a student registered with Student Access and Accommodation Services, you must comply with their rules for test taking. If you do not arrange in advance to take your exams there on the scheduled exam day, you may not take your test late; you’ll have to take it in the classroom with the rest of the class.
* Late work is never, ever, ever accepted. Ever. Not even with the best excuse in the world. Similarly, exams must be taken on the exam date unless other arrangements have been made before the test. There are no exceptions to this rule.

**Learning More About Your Grades:**

Grades will be posted on ReggieNet. If you have an “issue” with an exam question or with a project grade, you may write an individual rebuttal on that test item or on the project grade. You must do this within one week of being informed of your grade for a particular exam. Your rebuttal must be typed. Please include your name and indicate:

1. The item number and the form of the test you took;
2. The letter of the key answer or the answer given in class for the question;
3. The letter of the answer you put;
4. A coherent, well-articulated, grammatically correct paragraph explaining why you believe your answer should be counted as correct (caution: do not just complain, rather explain!).

You may not copy test questions into your notes for rebuttal consideration. To write a rebuttal you must see the teaching assistant or me to get the information you need to make your case. Rebuttals that cite pages of the text or dates of the lectures prompting your answer will be given preference. Rebuttals are voluntary and compulsive students should avoid rebutting every question missed. If you recognize an answer as obviously wrong, do not write a rebuttal for it.

If you have a question about a quiz item on the textbook website, please make an appointment with one of us to sit down and go through the question with you. Individual quiz items are not released to students, but you can look at them on one of our computers

235 points

Application Papers (2) = 100 points

Utility Worksheet (2)= 50 points

Research Summaries (1) = 25 points 🡪 a worksheet where they improve 2 research summaries

Theory summary paper (1) = 25 points

APA Citation Practice (1) = 25 points

Article and Source Worksheet (1) =10 points