

**COM 691: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
SURVEY OF THEORY AND RESEARCH
COURSE SYLLABUS - SPRING 2015**

INSTRUCTORS

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This seminar surveys some of the most popular theories that interpersonal communication scholars use in their research. Course content focuses on both theory and research. The course is structured to expand your knowledge of important theories of interpersonal communication and familiarize you with research that supports and challenges those theories. As such, we will focus on the connections between theory and research throughout the course. By the end of the course, you should be better able to critique theory and research, and you should have a better understanding of how programs of research in interpersonal communication develop and evolve. The course is organized so that a general overview of each theory will first be presented in lecture format, followed by student-led discussions of research articles related to each theory. The readings related to the general overviews will come from the course textbook, whereas the other readings will be journal articles selected by students. Thus, course content is created by the instructor and the students.

BOOK

Braithwaite, D. O., & Schrodtt, P. (Eds.) (2015). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple Perspectives* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Seminars provide graduate students with unique opportunities to participate in and shape their own learning experiences. A seminar is a better learning experience when students come prepared to participate and share their ideas. Therefore, it is essential that readings are completed before class. Discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard a week before each discussion to help facilitate preparation and participation. Please look at the discussion questions before reading and think about how you would answer each question if it was on an exam. Your participation grade will be based on both the quality and quantity of what you contribute to class discussion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is required of all Arizona State University students. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and can result in failing an exam or the entire course, as well as disciplinary action at the college or university level. In addition to “traditional” forms of cheating and plagiarism, it is unacceptable to turn the same paper into two classes. If you have not received the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication’s document regarding plagiarism and academic integrity, please see the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication website at <http://clas.asu.edu/current-students/student-academic-integrity-resources>

GRADES

Grades will be based on points as follows:

Article Critiques (3 @ 75 points each) -----	225 pts.
Discussion Leadership (3 @ 25 points each) -----	75 pts.
Discussion Questions (3 @ 10 points each) -----	30 pts.
Prolific Scholar Paper -----	100 pts.
Prolific Scholar Presentation -----	50 pts.
Theory Critique Paper -----	100 pts.
Participation in Class Discussion -----	100 pts.
Participation in Class Workshops (2 @ 10 points each) -----	20 pts.

Final grades will be calculated based on the following scale (total points possible= 700)

651-700	A	560-580	B-
630-650	A-	539-559	C+
609-629	B+	490-538	C
581-608	B	420-489	D

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Readings</u>	
Tu 1/13	Course Overview	
Th 1/15	Theories and Research in Interpersonal Communication	Ch. 1
Tu 1/20	Social Exchange and Stage Theories	Chs. 29 & 30
Th 1/22	Research on Social Exchange and Stage Theories*	TBA
Tu 1/27	Uncertainty Management Theories	Chs. 8, 11, & 28
Th 1/29	Research on Uncertainty Management*	TBA
Tu 2/3	Privacy Management Theory	Ch. 25
Th 2/5	Research on Privacy*	TBA
Tu 2/10	Communication Accommodation Theory	Ch. 12
Th 2/12	Research on Communication Accommodation*	
Tu 2/17	Prolific Scholar Paper Workshop—Bring Outline	
Th 2/19	Expectancy Violations Theory and Interaction Adaptation Theory	Ch. 16
Tu 2/24	<i>No Class—WSCA Conference</i>	
Th 2/26	EVT and IAT Research*	TBA
Tu 3/3	<i>Prolific Scholars Presentations</i>	
Th 3/5	<i>Prolific Scholars Presentations</i> Prolific Scholar Papers Due by 11:59 pm	
<i>Happy Spring Break 😊</i>		
Tu 3/17	Identity Theories	Chs. 13, 17, & 20
Th 3/19	Research on Identity*	TBA
Tu 3/24	Relational Dialectics Theory	Ch. 21

Th 3/26	Research on Dialectics Theory*	TBA
Tu 3/31	Theories on Affectionate and Supportive Communication	Chs. 4, 23, & 10
Th 4/2	Research on Affection*	TBA
Tu 4/7	Research on Supportive Communication *	TBA
Th 4/9	Attachment Theory	Ch. 24
Tu 4/14	Research on Attachment*	TBA
Th 4/16	Theory Critique Paper Discussion and Workshop	
Tu 4/21	Interpersonal Deception Theory	Ch. 26
Th 4/23	Research on Deception*	TBA
Tu 4/28	Mediated Interpersonal Communication: Media Multiplexity Theory and Social Information Processing Theory	Chs. 27 & 31
Th 4/30	Research on Mediated Interpersonal Communication*	TBA
Tu 5/5	<i>Theory Critique Paper Due by 2:00 pm</i>	

ASSIGNMENTS

Article Critiques and Discussion Leadership

One of the goals in this seminar is for you to gain a more in-depth knowledge of the types of research being conducted in the area of interpersonal communication, especially as related to theory. To that end, you will sign up to present and discuss three research articles connected to different theories listed in the syllabus. The article that you select should apply the theory you choose (e.g., dialectics theory, uncertainty management theory) to some aspect of interpersonal communication. You will then write a critique of your article and discuss the article in class, as described next.

Article Critique. The goal of this assignment is for you to be able to critically analyze a theory-based research article. Some issues to consider are:

- How does the study test the theory?

- Do the author(s) of the study make sound arguments for their hypotheses and/or research questions?
- Are the variables conceptualized and operationalized in line with the theory?
- Are the methods appropriate given the goals of the study, and how might they be improved?
- What are the study's strengths and limitations?
- How does the study support, extend, or challenge the ideas in the theory?
- What future research does the study suggest?

These questions should be used as a guide for critiquing the articles that you select, but you do not have to answer all of these questions. Choose the questions that are most relevant for critiquing your article. If other issues seem relevant, you can address those questions instead or in addition to some of the questions above. **Your article critique should not exceed 5 pages of double-spaced text (not including the cover page and reference page).** Be sure to include a citation to your article in the reference page. You should also refer to the core class reading (from Braithwaite and Schrod's book) when critiquing your article. **Your critique must be turned into Safe Assignment by 11:59 the day before your assigned "research day."**

Discussion Leadership. You are also required to discuss your article in class. On each "research day," two or three articles will be presented by different students (with each student presenting one article), so you have approximately 20-25 minutes to discuss your article. Your classmates will have read your article prior to coming to class and should be ready to discuss it. To help facilitate discussion, you will need to:

- post 3 thought-provoking questions on the Blackboard Discussion Board. These should be posted ONE WEEK before your assigned research day.
- post a link to your article so that students can download and read it. This must also be posted at least ONE WEEK before your assigned research day.

As soon as you know which article you are going to critique and present, you should post it on the Blackboard Discussion Board. By doing so, you "claim" your article. Be sure to check the discussion board before looking for your article to see which articles (if any) have already been claimed. It is also a good idea to chat with the other students presenting on that day to make sure that you are not planning on using the same article. You will receive a grade for your questions (with deductions applied if they are not posted on time) as well as for the quality of your leadership during the discussion.

Prolific Scholar Paper and Presentation

Another goal for this seminar is for you to understand and appreciate how programs of research in interpersonal communication develop and evolve. The prolific scholar paper and presentation are designed to facilitate that goal. *To ensure that everyone focuses on a different scholar, please post your choice on the prolific scholar discussion board as soon as you decide. Before posting your choice, check the discussion board to make sure that no other student has already claimed your scholar.*

Prolific Scholar Paper. This paper involves writing a detailed summary of an interpersonal communication scholar's program of research, including the contributions that this program of

research has made to the field of communication. The scholar you choose must be a communication scholar (who holds a Ph.D. in communication or works in a communication department) and cannot be someone affiliated with ASU. For this assignment, you are to choose a program of research that focuses on a specific topic or concept, rather than a theory per se. For example, if you were allowed to choose a scholar from ASU, you could summarize Dr. Mongeau's work on first dates, Dr. Floyd's work on affection, Dr. Alberts' research on work-life balance issues, or my work on jealousy or emotion. Many scholars have more than one program of research. For example, I have examined issues related to attachment, emotion, and nonverbal communication. If this is the case for your scholar, choose one of their programs of research. The only other requirement is that the scholar must have published a minimum of five research articles within the program of research you summarize. For this paper you should focus on:

- defining the program of research, including its scope and depth (e.g., what is included?)
- summarizing the major studies and findings from this program of research
- explaining the major contributions this program of research make to the field of interpersonal communication, including how it has influenced other scholars (hint: you might want to check out who has cited your scholar ☺)
- commenting on how the program of research developed and evolved over time (e.g., what directions has it taken?)
- evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of this program of research, including where it should go next

Again, these are guidelines for writing your prolific scholar paper. You do not necessarily have to answer all of these questions, but your paper should provide an in-depth analysis of a scholar's program of research. **This paper should include 8-10 pages of double-spaced text (not including the cover page and reference page) and must be submitted to Safe Assignment by 11:59 pm on March 5th.**

Prolific Scholar Presentation. You will also summarize the conclusions from your prolific scholar paper in a presentation. Imagine that there is a panel at a conference honoring some of the most influential interpersonal communication scholars. You have been asked to summarize your scholar's work and contributions. Prepare a presentation (approximately 10 to 12 minutes long) that highlights the most important findings and contributions of your scholar's work. You should use Powerpoint slides to organize your presentation, but present the information in a conversational fashion. Please upload your Powerpoint presentation to the Blackboard site for this course prior to giving your presentation in class.

Theory Critique Paper

The final project is to critique one of the theories that we discussed in class. For this assignment, you are to evaluate a theory based on criteria such as scope, explanatory power, predictive value, heuristic value, generalizability, pragmatic application, and parsimony (among other possible characteristics). This assignment involves finding examples of research that has tested the theory, and citing those studies as examples of how the theory has been applied and extended. You can also discuss how the theory has changed over time, including how you expect it to evolve in the future, as well as challenges or controversies to the theory (if there are any). Overall, your paper should provide an objective assessment of the strengths and weakness of the theory. **This paper cannot be on the same topic as your prolific**

scholar paper. Some students choose their favorite theory and argue why it is a strong theory. Other students choose a theory that they see as flawed and discuss that theory's weaknesses. Still other students choose a theory that is somewhere in the middle. Be sure to have a thesis statement about the strength of the theory and to support that statement. **This paper must be submitted to Safe Assignment by 2:00 pm on May 5th.**

Workshops

Tara and Chiao will be conducting workshops on February 17th (for the prolific scholar paper) and April 16th (for the theory critique paper). You need to bring an outline of your papers to each of those workshops. Tara and Chiao will be sharing their papers (from when they took this seminar) with you, and providing suggestions that should help you do well on these papers. They will give you a participation grade for attending this workshop and having an outline prepared. Your outline should contain the main points that you plan to discuss in your paper.

Good luck! Hope you enjoy the course!!! 😊