

**University of Maryland, College Park**  
**Department of Communication**

**COMM 250 – Introduction to Communication Inquiry - Spring 2000**

Section: 0301  
Time: MW 2:00-3:15  
Place: HBK 0109

Instructor: Michael F. Meffert, Ph.D.  
Office: Skinner, Rm. 2118  
Office Hours: Monday 3:30-5:00, Tuesday 10:30-12:00, and by appointment  
Phone: 301-405-6533  
E-mail: mmeffert@wam.umd.edu

**Course Description**

The course is designed to provide students with a foundation in communication theory. Important communication theories will be introduced, applied to communicative phenomena, and critically evaluated. Some questions addressed in the course are as follows:

- What is communication?
- What are research areas in communication?
- What are the significant types of theories in communication?
- How have communication theories developed?
- How do theory and research in communication interrelate?
- What are the major theories in the field of communication?
- Definitions, models, functions, and contexts of communication.

**Required Reading**

Griffin, E. (2000). *A first look at communication theory* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Some material is not in the current edition of the book but can be accessed online in the archive of the companion web site at: <http://www.afirstlook.com/>

Additional material might be assigned during the course. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are informed of all changes to class schedule and assignments.

**Requirements**

- 2 Midterm Exams 25% each.
- Final Exam (cumulative) 35%
- Assignments and Exercises (and Quizzes) 15%

The exams will be in multiple-choice format. The due dates and nature of the assignments and exercises will be announced in class during the semester.

### **Attendance/Late Policy**

Except for illness or other emergencies beyond a student's control (university excused absences, see *Schedule of Classes* for further details), any student expecting to miss a quiz, an exam, or any other course deadline must have advance approval by the instructor. Students missing a quiz or exam due to illness or other emergencies should notify the instructor as soon as possible. Failure to take a quiz or exam without the explicit exemption by the instructor will result in a grade of 0.0 for the exam. You can notify the instructor by phone, leave a message at the office, or by email. Failure to submit a written assignment on the specified due date without the explicit exemption by the instructor will result in a grade of 0.0 points.

### **Policy on Incompletes**

The grade of incomplete ("I") is given only to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, when, because of illness or other circumstances beyond his/her control, he/she has been unable to complete some small portion of the course work. In no case will "I" be given to students who have not completed major course assignments. The student will remove the "I" by completing work assigned by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to request arrangements for completion of the course work.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Violations of the University's policies on academic dishonesty will be treated with the utmost seriousness (see *Schedule of Classes* for further details). In particular, in all your written work in this course:

- Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited as to author, page, and source.
- Prompt acknowledgement as to author, page, and source is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words. Acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material.
- Information obtained in one's reading or research, which is not common knowledge among students in this course, must be acknowledged by citing author, page, and source.

### **Format of Written Work**

Please adhere to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Proofread your written work carefully. Errors in spelling, format, grammar, and clarity of thought will affect the grading of all written work.

### **Important Notice**

The University of Maryland is committed to making reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities that have been documented by Disability Support Services (0126 Shoemaker Hall). If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class, please contact the instructor by February 14. Students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an exam or other assignment, to claim, at that time, a disability. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with disabilities to be treated fairly and appropriately.

## Course Schedule

**Please note:** The schedule is tentative and dates, topics, and readings are subject to change. Any change will be announced in class, and it is the students' responsibility to be aware of them.

Date	Topic	Chapter
1/31	Introduction	
2/2	What is Theory? Weighing the Words	Intro, 1, 2
2/7	Communication as academic discipline	3
<b>Interpersonal Communication</b>		
2/9	Symbolic Interactionism, CMM	4, 5
2/14	Expectancy Violations Theory	6
2/16	Interpersonal Deception Theory	7
2/21	Constructivism, Social Penetration Theory	8, 9
2/23	Uncertainty Reduction Theory	10
2/28	Review Session	
3/1	<b>Midterm Exam 1</b>	
3/6	Interactional View, Relational Dialectics	11, 12
3/8	Social Judgment Theory	13
3/13	Cognitive Dissonance Theory	(Web)
3/15	Elaboration Likelihood Model	14
3/20 & 22	<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>Group Communication</b>		
3/27	Functional Perspective, Adaptive Structuration Theory	15, 16
3/29	Information Systems	17
4/3	Group Decision Making	(Web)
<b>Public Communication (Humanistic Approaches)</b>		
4/5	Rhetoric	20
4/10	Dramatism, Narrative Paradigm	21, 22
4/12	Review Session	
4/17	<b>Midterm Exam 2</b>	
<b>Mass Communication</b>		
4/19	Technological Determinism, Semiotics	23, 24
4/24	Cultural Studies, Cultivation Theory	25, 26
4/26	Agenda-Setting	27
5/1	Media Equation, Spiral of Silence	28, (Web)
<b>Cultural Communication</b>		
5/3	Intercultural Communication	29, 30, 31
5/8	Gender and Communication	32, 33, 34
5/10	Integration	35
5/15	Review Session	
5/22	<b>Final Exam (8:00-10:00 am)</b>	

### Revised Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Chapter
<b>Small Group &amp; Organizational Communication</b>		
3/27	Functional Perspective,	15
3/29	Groupthink, Adaptive Structuration Theory	(Web), 16
4/3	Information Systems	17
<b>Public Rhetoric</b>		
4/5	Rhetoric, Dramatism	20, 21
4/10	<b>Group Presentations (Media Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Fl./Hornbake)</b>	
4/12	Narrative Paradigm, Review Session	22
4/17	<b>Midterm Exam 2</b>	
4/19	<b>Group Presentations (Media Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Fl./Hornbake)</b>	
<b>Mass Communication</b>		
4/24	Technological Determinism, Semiotics	23, 24
4/26	<b>Group Presentations (Media Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Fl./Hornbake)</b>	
5/1	Cultural Studies, Cultivation Theory	25, 26
5/3	Agenda-Setting, Media Equation, Spiral of Silence	27, 28, (Web)
<b>Cultural Communication</b>		
5/8	Anxiety/Uncertainty Management, Speech Code Theory	29, 31
5/10	Genderlect Theory, Muted Group Theory	32, 34
5/15	Integration, Review Session	35
5/22	<b>Final Exam (8:00-10:00 am)</b>	