COMMUNICATION THEORY (JOUR 515 EA)

Instructor: Tatyana Dumova, Ph.D.
Course: Wednesday 6:00-9:00 P.M.; Academic Hall Room 408
Contact Info: Thayer Hall 913; tel. (412) 392-4701; e-mail tdumova@pointpark.edu
Office Hours: M 4:30-6 P.M., 9-10:15 P.M.; W 4-6 P.M., 9-10:15 P.M.

Course Description
This course surveys contemporary theories in the field of communication including theories of mass communication, media and society, media content, new media, social construction of technology, and the impact of media on audiences. Theories and models originating both in the social sciences and the humanities are examined.

Course Rationale & Objectives
This course will provide you with a comprehensive overview of the major theoretical approaches to studying communication that have evolved over the last several decades. By taking this course, you will be able to:

• Deepen your knowledge of communication theories, models, theoretical perspectives, approaches and frameworks;
• Increase your ability to understand and explain communication phenomena;
• Understand the major debates that have shaped communication research agendas during the past decades.
• Build a foundation for conducting sound research in communication;
• Contribute towards your intellectual growth in preparation for a future professional career as a communication practitioner, researcher or teacher.

Required Readings
Additional required course readings will be available electronically through Blackboard learning management system.

Course Assignments & Assessment
Weekly Synopses of the Readings (1 single-spaced page each) 15%
Theory Presentation & Group-Lead Discussion 15%
Theory Critiques (3 critiques total, 4-5 pp. each) 24%
Theory Wiki (4 contributions to class wiki, in small group) 12%
In-Class Assignments (theory games, quizzes, etc.) 10%
Final Research Paper (12-15 pp.) and Presentation 24%
Total: 100%

Extra Credit: The New York Times Assignment (4-page essay, extra 3%)
Examine an issue related to media or technology by looking at how it is treated in The New York Times and comparing it with treatment in social media outlets. Analyze the different approaches to the issue and the ways in which the issue is framed. NYTimes.com Academic Passes is a service from
The New York Times that gives you full, complimentary access to NYTimes.com. The New York Times is a unique and invaluable resource, and I encourage you to take advantage of this new service as often as you like. Visit NYTimes.com/Passes on any web-enabled device and follow the instructions to create a NYTimes.com account using your school e-mail address. If you have questions about using the passes, visit the FAQ’s for Academic Pass Users.

**Course Policies & Expectations**

*Grading Policy:* A: 92-100%; B: 80-91%; C: 70-79%; F: 60-69% or lower

*Deadlines:* To be successful in this class, you may want to attend all class sessions and submit all the assignments on time. Keep backups of all submissions. For each day a project is late 5% of the grade will be deducted. In-class exercises are due at the end of each class period and cannot be made up.

*Instructional Technology Requirements:* Students enrolled in this class will utilize various forms of instructional technology to achieve competency with the course objectives including but not limited to the Blackboard learning management system and PowerPoint presentation tools.

*Academic Integrity:* A student and a teacher are bound with a mutual compact of academic honor and integrity. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade (“F”) for the assignment, exam or the whole course. According to the Point Park University’s academic regulations, besides plagiarism, other forms of academic dishonesty carrying the same penalties for the same reasons include, but are not limited to: 1) fabricating data, evidence, facts, including but not limited to laboratory results and journalistic interviews or observations; 2) obtaining prohibited assistance from another student, regardless of whether that other student is aware of it, by looking at another student’s paper (in or out of class) during a quiz, exam, or during work on an assignment; 3) turning in the same work in two or more different courses, regardless of whether the two courses are taught by the same professor, in the same degree program, or even at the same institution, without explicit prior approval from both instructors, because students should not obtain credit twice for doing work once; 4) forging or altering documentation of an illness and/or absence that has been requested or required by an instructor.

*Disability Accommodations:* If you have a disability or chronic medical condition, you may be entitled to receive individualized accommodations intended to assure you an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the course. To request disability accommodations, please make an appointment to see the instructor. For more information and assistance, please call the Program for Academic Success (PAS), 701 Lawrence Hall, (412) 392-3870. The PAS Office will provide specific information on the Point Park College ADA Policy and application procedures to the student. PAS will also contact individual instructors to verify a student’s eligibility and to make arrangements for individualized accommodations.

*Non Discrimination Statement:* Point Park University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, ancestry, disability, or sexual orientation. In addition, the instructor pledges to not discriminate in the courses based on veteran status, political affiliation/philosophies/beliefs; marital status; parental status; or socioeconomic origin or status.

*Fire Drills:* Should a fire alarm occur during the class hours, please leave the classroom in an orderly manner and evacuate the building through the appropriate exit.

*Smoking Policy:* According to the Smoking Pollution Control Ordinance passed by the Pittsburgh City Council in November 1987, no smoking is permitted in the classrooms, hallways, or lobbies, or any other public area at Point Park University.
The Library is located in the University Centre at 414 Wood Street. Many resources are available 24/7 through the Library’s Web page and if you are off campus, you can access the databases and e-books by using your Point Park University e-mail password and log in. Librarians are available to help you find the resources you need for your research. Contact the Library at 412 392-3171, in person, by e-mail at library@pointpark.edu, or by texting to 66746 and starting your question with pointlib.

Course Schedule at-a-Glance

Unit 1. Key Issues and Concepts in Communication Theory
Jan 14 Introduction to the Course; Defining Theory
Jan 21 History of Communication Study; Integrating Theory and Research Models of Communication; Theory Wiki: Contribution 1 Due

Readings: Rogers, 1997; Stacks & Salwen, Ch. 1, 2, 5

Unit 2. Theories of Mass Communication
Jan 28 Agenda Setting/Media Framing Theory/Priming
Feb 4 Five Levels of Media Gatekeeping; Cultivation Theory Theory Wiki: Contribution 2 Due
Feb 11 Uses & Gratifications Perspective; Social Learning/Social Cognitive Theory Theory Critique 1 Due

Readings: Stacks & Salwen, Ch. 6, 7, 8, 10, 13; Rogers, 1997; Griffin, 2012; Shah, 2009; Matheson, 2004; Cassidy, 2006; Sparks, 2012; Rubin, 2009; Pajares, 2009

Unit 3. Theories of Persuasion, Media Effects, Message Content, and Audiences
Feb 18 Theory of Cognitive Dissonance; Social Judgment Theory; Theory of Planned Behavior; Theory of Reasoned Action
Feb 25 Rhetorical Theory/Hermeneutics/Phenomenology/Semiotics
Mar 4 Spring Recess, no class
Mar 11 Media Effects Tradition; Narrative Paradigm; Theory Wiki: Contribution 3 Due
Mar 18 Critical/Cultural Studies; Audience Reception Tradition; Theory Critique 2 Due

Readings: Stacks & Salwen, Ch. 4, 15, 16, 17, 19, 30; Carey, 1983; Griffin, 2012; Metzger, 2009; Miller, 2009; O’Keefe, 2009; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Carey, 1983; Walton, 2012

Unit 4. Theories of New Media and Technology
Mar 25 Information Theory; Technological Determinism; Diffusion of Innovations Theory
Apr 1 Theories of Computer-Mediated Communication
Apr 8 Social Information Processing/New Media Theories/Convergence/Participatory Culture; Theory Wiki: Contribution 4 Due
Apr 15 Virtual Community; Network Theory; Social Capital; Theory Critique 3 Due

Readings: Stacks & Salwen, Ch. 25, 27, 28; Griffin, 2009; Rice, 2009; Werbin, 2011; Sundar, 2009; Walther, 1996, 2011; Cohen, 2009; Baym, 2012; Holmes, 2009; Schonboon, 2011; Potter, 2013; Lin, 1999; Luoma-aho, 2009; Granovetter, 1983; White, 2003; Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004

Unit 5. The Theory-Research Link
Apr 29 Research Presentations. Final Research Paper Due

Readings: Stacks & Salwen, Ch. 34, 35; Anderson, 2011; Reese, 2007
## Detailed Reading Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Communication Theories</th>
<th>Course Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>Key Issues and Concepts in Communication Theory</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 1; Burgoon, 2001</td>
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<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>History of Communication Study</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 2, Ch. 5; Rogers, 1997</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>Agenda Setting Theory</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 7; Rogers, 1997, pp. 233-235; Griffin, 2012; Shah, 2009; Scheufele, 2007 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Gatekeeping Theory</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 6, Ch. 8; Cassidy, 2006; Matheson, 2004; Shoemaker, 2009 (recommend.)</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Uses &amp; Gratifications Theory</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 10, Ch. 13, p. 183; Rubin, 2009; Sparks, 2012; Griffin, 2009; Pajares, 2009; Stefanone, 2010 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Theory of Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 14 (recommended), Ch. 17, Ch. 30; O’Keefe, 2009; Lawson-Borders &amp; Kirk, 2005; Shrum, 2009 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Rhetorical Theory/Hermeneutics/Phenomenology/ Semiotics</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 4, Ch. 16; Griffin, 2012; Berger, 2011</td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Spring Recess, no class</td>
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<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Media Effects Tradition Narrative Paradigm</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 13, Ch. 29, pp. 459-460; Griffin, 2012; Metzger, 2009; Jensen, 2011 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>Critical/Cultural Studies Audience Reception Tradition</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 19 (recommended); Carey, 1983; Walton, 2012; Griffin, 2012; Miller, 2009; Jensen, 2002 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Information Theory</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 27; Griffin, 2009; Rice, 2009; Werbin, 2011; Greenhalgh et al., 2004 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Theories of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 28; Sundar, 2009; Walther, 1996, 2011; Cohen, 2009 (recommend.)</td>
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<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Social Information Processing New Media Theories</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 25; Baym, 2012; Holmes, 2009; Schoneboom, 2011; Potter, 2013; Scolari, 2009 (recommended)</td>
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<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Virtual Community (Social) Network Theory Social Capital</td>
<td>Feenberg &amp; Bakardjieva, 2004; Granovetter, 1983; White, 2003; Lin, 1999; Luoma-aho, 2009</td>
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<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>Future of Theory and Research in Communication</td>
<td>Stacks &amp; Salwen, Ch. 34, Ch. 35; Anderson, 2011; Reese, 2007; Research Presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 29</td>
<td>Final Exam Time</td>
<td>Research Presentations</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper Due</td>
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Note: This course schedule is subject to change.
ADDITIONAL READINGS

Recommended Textbooks


Further Readings

Advertising Theory


Applied Communication


Communication Theory – General


Critical and Cultural Studies


**Gender Communication**

**Information and Communication Technology**


**Integrated Marketing Communications**

**Human Communication**

**Mass Communication**


**Media Effects**


**Persuasion**


**Public Relations**


**Science Communication**


**Social Capital**


(Social) Network Theory


Theory Building