



## ***COURSE SYLLABUS***

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION & THEATRE ARTS**

**COMM 401  
INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY  
FALL 2014**

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

*Instructor: Dr. Lefever  
E-mail: slefever@odu.edu*

**You are required to read and to have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. It is your responsibility to address any questions or concerns to the instructor.**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**COMM 401 Introduction to Communication Theory** - An overview of general and contextual theories of communication. Focus is on the nature of communication theory, the role of theory in communication inquiry, and the relationships among theory, research, and practice (ODU Course Catalog).

## **RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is designed to enhance student knowledge of communication theory, which, in turn, can increase the students' communication competence. Throughout the semester, students will gain appreciation for the various approaches to studying communication, and how each approach can offer a unique perspective on the ways human beings attempt to share meaning with each other. Students taking the course are expected to have the appropriate pre-requisites.

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

- Develop an understanding of the essential features of a variety of theories that seek to illuminate the communication process.
  - Application logs
  - Research paper
  - Exams
- Establish an integrative framework that will provide a context for each theory and show relationships among them.
  - Application logs
  - Case study
- Stimulate application of the theories outside of the classroom.
  - Application logs
  - Research paper
- Develop ability to analyze and explain a variety communication theories.
  - Application logs
  - Research paper

## **COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**

### **A. Required Materials**

Griffin, E. (2011). *A First Look at Communication Theory (8th ed.)*. McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 9780073534305

### **B. Blackboard and E-mail**

Each student enrolled in this course is required to have fully functioning email and Blackboard accounts. It is imperative that you ensure your ODU e-mail and Bb accounts are fully operable, and that you *check them daily*. Please be sure to read each email or posting thoroughly—questions about matters that have been covered in the syllabus, email, or on Bb do not make a positive impression. *Email should be sent through the Bb system, which automatically includes the CRN so you may be easily identified.* Email sent from an email account outside the ODU system will not be acknowledged. Be sure to sign all emails with first and last name. Students will be held accountable for all material on Bb and via email.

Note: Attachments to e-mail are *not* accepted, unless permission is granted in advance (*rare*).

- C. University Library and Internet  
Students should expect to make use of the wide variety of services and resources provided by the ODU Library as they conduct research for projects assigned in this course. In addition, Internet resources may be useful, however, because the Internet is also an abundant source of bad information, students should be prepared to look at Internet sources (i.e., websites, as opposed to academic databases) with a critical eye. As a rule, academic sources should significantly outnumber non-academic sources. *Neither a standard dictionary nor Wikipedia are allowed as sources.*
- D. Writing Requirements  
Writing must adhere to the current version of the APA Manual. Deviation from APA format will result in *significant* point reductions or a complete refusal of your submission and a grade of zero (0), at the instructor's discretion.

Note: Style guides for APA that are published by other companies frequently have errors; it is therefore inadvisable to use a book other than the APA manual.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

- A. Textbook readings
- B. Lecture  
For each theory, a 20-30 minute lecture will be posted. Students are required to watch and respond to lecture on Bb according to the semester schedule.
- C. Application Logs  
For assigned communication theories, you will write 3/4 - 1 page (single spaced) making a specific application of the theory to your own life (see schedule and instructions on Bb). What insight does it provide to help you understand previous communication behavior? What prediction does it make or advice does it offer for

the future?

Students will submit a total of ten logs chosen from among the designated theories (see course schedule for theories).

Students should realize that it is the instructor's intention to peruse the logs for general completion of the assignments, and for thoughtful reflection, not to focus on personal details. It is unlikely you will receive feedback other than a grade. The logs will provide an opportunity for you to show that you grasp the theories' practical implications and can apply them in specific situations. Submissions will be through Bb. *Late submissions will not be accepted*, and there are no make-ups of log submissions. Application logs are worth 20% of the final grade.

D. Research paper

Select one of the theories covered in the Griffin text that is not covered as one of the Modules. Your selection should be informed by your personal interests, previous familiarity with the theoretical concepts, and the 50-word abstracts in Appendix A. The written paper will be based upon your research. The intent of the project is for you to discover information about the theory that is not presented in the text.

Pursue one of the following options:

- a. Select an important proposition, construct, or variable within the theory and investigate this portion of the theory in greater depth or beyond the treatment in the text. No more than 20% of your paper's material should overlap with the textbook.
- b. Discover and describe an important part of the theory that is not included in the chapter. Make a case for its centrality and show its relationship to other components of the theory.
- c. Focus on recent (within the past ten years) empirical research that supports or casts doubt upon the theory's ideas, concepts, or assumptions.

For this project, draw upon the primary and secondary resources cited in the textbook, as well as your own research of academic sources (academic journal articles or books **only**, *no websites or textbooks*). Not counting the time you spend reading about the theory in the text and the time you spend writing the paper, plan on investing 8-10 hours researching the theory you choose. Beyond the textbook, you will need to explore at least 5 research sources

Your paper must be 7-10 page long, not including references (double-spaced, TNR-12 font). All bibliographic references must conform to

current APA style. You should only cite works that you've actually consulted. The paper will be evaluated on the basis of depth and breadth of research, organization, coherence of ideas, clarity of prose appropriate for a research report (and a 400-level communication course), accuracy of information and interpretation, and the extent to which your written presentation conforms to standard best practices of grammar, spelling, layout, and APA format. This paper will be worth 30% of the final grade.

- E. Quizzes There will be twelve quizzes during the semester based on the assigned readings. You must be present to take the quizzes—which utilize Turning Technologies apps/clickers—and *there are no makeups for any reason (including absence or malfunctioning equipment)*. Students will bring their quiz forms to every class; any student who does not have the correct quiz form (and folder) will be unable to take the quiz and will receive a zero score. Students who leave class early will lose the quiz score for that day. There will be a drop of the two lowest-scored quizzes. Quizzes are worth 20% of your final grade.
- F. Exams  
There will be mid-term and final exams designed to measure your understanding of the communication topics covered during the semester (covered chapters will be listed on Bb). Each exam will consist of questions in any combination of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and/or essay. Exams will be administered on Blackboard utilizing the Lockdown browser. The final exam will be given per the ODU Final Exam schedule, *There is no make-up of the missed exams unless your instructor deems circumstances dire and exceedingly rare such as your hospitalization, a death in your immediate family, or other grave circumstances outside your control. Such decision is entirely at the instructor's discretion*). This exam is worth 30% of your grade for the course.

## EVALUATION AND GRADING

A.	Points	
	Application logs	20%
	Research paper	30%
	Quizzes	20%
	Final exam	30%
	Total	100%

B. Scale

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points Range</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Grade Points</i>
A	372-400	93-100	4.00
A-	360-371	90-92.9	3.70
B+	348-359	87-89.9	3.30
B	332-347	83-86.9	3.00
B-	320-331	80-82.9	2.70
C+	308-319	77-79.9	2.30
C	292-311	73-76.9	2.00
C-	280-291	70-72.9	1.70
D+	268-279	67-69.9	1.30
D	252-267	63-66.9	1.00
D-	240-251	60-62.9	0.70
F	0-239	0-59.9	0.00

**Communication Majors:**

Departmental policy states that you must earn a grade of C (2.00) or better in this course for this class to count towards the completion of your major hours. If you are repeating this course, remember that the grade forgiveness policy indicates that your second grade will be averaged into your GPA, whether it is higher or lower than the first grade.

C. Tracking scores

Blackboard allows you to keep track of your scores throughout the semester. If you believe there is a grade entry error on Bb, you must address it within two weeks of entry, otherwise, the grade stands as entered. Note: Errors in Bb's tallies occasionally occur—you are held to the standards stated above.

There is no “rounding” of scores—your total points for the course translate into your grade for the semester. Requests to adjust scores will not be acknowledged.

**Note:** Grades are an alpha-numeric assessment of your *level of mastery* of course materials and concepts throughout the course. They are not based upon subjective ideas of how hard you've tried. A “C” grade represents average work. A “B” grade represents good work. A “B+” acknowledges very good work. An “A” represents outstanding work, i.e., work that goes well beyond the basic expectations of the course, demonstrating active engagement, interest, and application. Consequently, “A” scores are relatively infrequent.

Professors do not “give” grades. We assess student performance from a level of expertise, and report that assessment. My assessment is both educated, experienced, and objective. Therefore, any request to discuss a grade must include *all* of the following, otherwise, it will be refused:

1. An outline of the assignment's requirements, including direct reference to the syllabus and material on Bb.

2. An explanation of how the submission/performance specifically met those requirements.
3. How, specifically, the assigned grade does not accurately reflect the *quality* of the submission/performance, *and the objective standard* you used to ascertain said quality.
4. Format and tone that demonstrate an understanding of effective communication (e.g., an understanding of hierarchy, effective persuasion, and accepted standards of scholarly excellence).

D. Incompletes

Evaluation periods and assignment deadlines are fixed. Documented illnesses, deaths in the family, car accidents, or other traumatic occurrences call for flexibility and good judgment on the part of the student and instructor. These situations are *rare* and are handled individually. Per ODU policy, an incomplete (“I”) grade “may be awarded only in exceptional circumstances *beyond the student's control*, such as illness, and only after 80% of the time allocated for the course has elapsed and substantial progress has been made toward completion of course requirement.”

E. Student conduct

As in physical classrooms, participants in online courses create an environment. In this class, we approach everyone—self and others—with an ethic of respect, which will be reflected in our behavior and includes courtesy, self-discipline, restraint, honesty, and integrity. Off-color, offensive, insulting, or rude language or behavior are disrespectful and disruptive to the teaching-learning process, and show a very poor grasp of effective communication. Each individual is accountable for his/her choices in person, online, and in email. Inappropriate conduct, whether online or via email will result in a 25-point deduction *per occurrence* from the course total.

[\[http://studentservices.odu.edu/osja/ccp\\_pamphlet.pdf\]](http://studentservices.odu.edu/osja/ccp_pamphlet.pdf)

F. Application of policies

All course policies apply equally to every student. *Do not ask for exceptions*, including extra credit. No extra credit options are available in this class—in no area of life is there “extra credit.” In this vein, in no area of life is there a do-over. *Everything* in life counts, and everything in this class counts.

G. Academic Honesty

Solid character is imperative, not only in this class but in every aspect of our lives. Students are on their honor to complete assignments with integrity. As a student of Old Dominion University, you have signed a pledge taking responsibility to abide by the Honor Code, which states: “We, the students of Old Dominion University, aspire to be honest and forthright in our academic

endeavors. Therefore, we will practice honesty and integrity and be guided by the tenets of the Monarch Creed. We will meet the challenge to be beyond reproach in our actions and our words. We will conduct ourselves in a manner that commands the dignity and respect that we also give to others.” (*Old Dominion University Catalog, p. 14*). This is an institutional policy approved by the Board of Visitors and enforced in this class.

Your work in this class is expected to be original, reflecting your own thought, research, and expression. Cheating and plagiarism are serious ethical problems. You will have committed plagiarism if you reproduce someone else’s work, in total or in part, without acknowledging the source. In your papers, you must account for your ideas, and you must include a bibliography. You are involved in academic dishonesty if you present a paper written by someone else, if you present concepts gained through research as if they were your own, if you present work presented in another class unless you have the instructor’s approval, or if you utilize *Cliff’s Notes* or an equivalent. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group fails to do the group’s work and/or participate in the group’s activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group. All work submitted for academic credit must include “Honor Pledge” with your signature—this means outlines, papers, and tests. *Items submitted electronically have the Honor Pledge as an understood condition of submission.* For guidance on how to avoid plagiarism, *see the appendix to this syllabus, posted on Bb.*

Students found guilty of any type of dishonesty will be penalized to the fullest extent including, *at minimum*, a zero score for the assignment. *All* cases of suspected dishonesty will be immediately referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Please see your student handbook for additional information.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [ODU Library Resources for Distance Students](#)
- [Distance Learning Student Support](#) (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- [Technical Support](#)
- [ODU Bookstore for Distance Learners](#)
- [Distance Student Orientation](#)
- [Career Management Center for Distance Students](#)
- [Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#)
- [Owl Purdue](#) (useful for APA citation help)

### **ODU HONOR PLEDGE**

I pledge to support the honor system of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community, it is my responsibility to turn in all suspected violators of the honor system. I will report to Honor Council hearings if summoned.

Last Updated: 12/15/14

***This syllabus is subject to change with notice.***

Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA, 23529

**COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AS EVENTS WARRANT)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b> 09/26	Introduction to class	<b>Discussion board introductions</b>
<b>Week 2</b> 09/02	Communication Theory Overview (1-4)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 3</b> 09/09	Symbolic Interactionism (5)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb Postman discussion on Bb</b>
<b>Week 4</b> 09/16	Expectancy Violations Theory (7) Social Penetration Theory (9)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 5</b> 09/23	Relational Dialectics (12) Communication Privacy Management (13)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 6</b> 09/30	Interpersonal Deception Theory (Bb)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb Postman discussion on Bb</b>
<b>Week 7</b> 10/07	<b>Exam 1 - Blackboard</b>	<b>Exam 1 (SI, EVT, SPT, RD, IDT)</b>
<b>Week 8</b> 10/14	The Rhetoric (22, incl. introductory pages) Narrative Paradigm (24); "America's Honor" (Bb)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 9</b> 10/21	Cultivation Theory (29)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb Postman discussion on Bb</b>
<b>Week 10</b> 10/28	Agenda-Setting Theory (30) Spiral of Silence (Bb)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 11</b> 11/04	<b>Exam 2 - Thursday class time on Blackboard</b>	<b>Exam 2: R+, NP, CT, AST, SoS</b>
<b>Week 12</b> 11/11	Media and society (no reading)	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Week 13</b> 11/18	<b>Postman</b>	
<b>Week 14</b> 11/25	TBA <b>Thanksgiving holiday - No class</b>	
<b>Week 15</b> 12/02	Genderlect	<b>Discussion topic(s): See Bb</b>
<b>Classes end 12/06</b>		

Grade: 75

Grading notes:

Catchy first sentence. Unfortunately, there is a significant lack of clarity that makes this cumbersome to read (e.g., on the first page, I don't know what "perspectives are documented as threads that weave the fabrics..." "perspectives define variances," or "coagulates the deductions of the marginalization" mean). Academics are notorious for cumbersome writing, which is something that needs to be discouraged rather than emulated (do some research on the "Sokal hoax"). Some interesting points ("the foundation of Christianity is restoration, in this case to restore God [sic] intention for oneness"), but they got a bit lost in verbiage. Strive for brevity ("For generations after generations..." becomes "For generations..."). And, because theories are about explaining behaviors, theory itself cannot propose solutions--people do that.

Some incorrect word choices that proofreading aloud might help you catch. No use of first names in APA (not only authors, but ~~Karl~~ Marx and ~~Friedrich~~ Engels); APA has a "References" page (not Works Cited), other citation errors. Do not right justify—left only.

\* \* \* \* \*

One issue I have with Standpoint Theory is it is based on assumptions (as are most "critical theories"). There are many assertions without support, e.g., "the male social group tends to be socialized from the standpoint that it is morally, socially and political proper to capitalize on male dominance and the subjugation of women..." Those who make the assertion have the burden of supporting it, but critical theorists rarely, if ever, do this. Who says the Old Testament favors males? What about Miriam, Deborah, Salomone, Jael, Judith, Sarah, Esther, and Susanna (the names of the latter three were sung in Gregorian chants)? Often the Bible is descriptive (it is proscriptive in areas such as laws), describing what people did and the outcomes (which were many times disastrous and meant to serve as a warning about what happens when you do your own thing rather than what God tells you to do—*think Jonah*). You are not graded on whether I agree or not, but it is something for you to think about.

### Standpoint Theory - Of Biblical Proportions

“A penny for your thoughts!” is a catchy conversational piece that is trying to make its way back into mainstream culture. Although it puts a miniscule value on human contemplation, thoughts captured in the form of perspectives are documented as threads that weave the fabrics of the history of humanity. Perspectives define variances across cultures and regulate the choices, directions, values and believes of all people across all times and civilizations. Perspectives, or standpoints, are perhaps the greatest influencers on the compilations of history and they tell us what we know of our past, affect how we interpret the present, and guide the future. According to Sandra Harding and Julia T. Wood’s Standpoint Theory (SPT), standpoints are socially constructed and they, more so than absolute reality, account for much of history and its interpretations and applications. SPT argues that left unchecked, the standpoints of more powerful social groups will dominate the constructs of common knowledge, which can significantly marginalizes less powerful groups. It also postulates that marginalized groups arguably have broader awareness because of their social position (Harding, 2004). Specifically, a main focus of SPT is the marginalization of women throughout history by a more powerful male social group. Much of this marginalization, especially in western cultures, derives from male-favored, socially constructed biblical interpretations that create standpoints that have become morally acceptable norms over centuries. These male-centric standpoints empower dominance of the male social group and oppression of the female counterpart.

With the same breath, however, it is imperative to note that the same historic accounts of the Bible, when interpreted from a different standpoint, actually justifies equality for women and significantly coagulates the deductions of the marginalization of women in SPT. While the Bible may not necessarily ascribe to scholarly and scientific methodologies, it does, like every other major world religion, hold profound secular and sacred influence on history, culture and

communication. Religion greatly influences the standpoint from which social groups derive knowledge and formulate worldviews. These groups in turn shape the standpoints of the individuals within them. Therefore, it is critical that SPT not exclude or minimize the effects of religious interpretations and applications that social groups use to cultivate standpoints (Bartkowski, 2014; Harding, 2004; Kee, 2013; Sterk, 2010). This is especially applicable when considering the effects of the biblical interpretations and applications that socially constructed platforms from which people view the world. This is important because biblical views dominate western worldview, and the western world, particularly America, sets much of the standards from which most of the world gauges and develops standpoints (Groenendyk, 2006; Sunshine, 2009).

According to SPT, standpoints are the positions from which people view and interpret the world. Standpoints are generated from a specific place in time, and shape thinking to the extent that it determines what is or is not focused on. SPT proposes that because standpoints are generally framed within social groups, individuals within social groups are thereby socialized to accept the standpoints of the group as morally proper and acceptable behaviors or beliefs. Standpoints in essence determine what social groups know and do not know, and by extension, it can deeply influence what the individual knows and does not know as well. Social groups are categorized most commonly according to variables like sex, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, socioeconomic status, education, religious affiliations, generation, peer groups, and other personal experiences like illnesses and addictions (England, 1992; Kee, 2013). These groups help individuals interpret, interact, communicate and make sense of the world.

Social groups especially allow humans to fulfill the need to belong; however, individuals within the groups tend to develop like-mindedness in their standpoints. Although there are many positives to like-mindedness, some downsides are the development of bias, prejudice, close-

mindedness, groupthink, apathy and alienation (Kee, 2013; Rayburn-Reeves, 2013). Such traits can create hierarchical relations and power distance between groups in society, and foster inequalities wherein more powerful groups bare down on less powerful ones. According to SPT, inequalities also cause these groups to have vastly different interpretations and standpoints on social, political, moral and other such issues. Groups therefore develop fundamentally different worldviews. These different interpretations, standpoints and worldviews are commonly and collectively passed down to the individuals within the groups – a trend that can persist for generations and over centuries. Over time a trend of acceptable inequality can cause significant oppression for some groups and can create unmerited privileges for others. SPT argues this has happen in society wherein a more powerful male social group has been socialized to dominate and repress the female social group.

But precisely where in time and space could the imbalance in power and standpoint have spawned? Or better yet, what evidences give birth to the socially accepted standards that seemingly placed men superior to women? According to history, the inequality between sexes has overwhelmed humanity for centuries. For generations after generations the male social group tends to be socialized from the standpoint that it is morally, socially and politically proper to capitalize on male dominance and the subjugation of the female social group in order to gain more powerful societal positions (Groenendyk, 2006; Harding, 2004). In western values, male dominance and female subjection are classically rooted in certain *interpretations* of the Bible. Meanwhile, and because of such interpretations, standpoints for the female social groups have modulated somewhere between accepting the oppression as divine retribution or fate for a moral infraction that deemed the sex cursed, or radically objecting to social repressions and gender discrimination. In more recent history, the standpoint of sex and gender equality, inherent to SPT, has been working its way into western thinking. These are all profoundly different standpoints on

gender inequality and every person can be socialized to assume one of these standpoints, contingent upon social positioning and social group affiliations. The genesis of the classical differences, however, can be traced back to the commonly accepted male favored interpretation of the Old Testament narrative of the curse, a point discussed later in this essay (Bartkowski, 2014; Johns, 2008).

In the meantime, central to SPT is the premise that the less powerful social group possesses a more objective, inclusive and broader worldview than the standpoint of the more powerful (Harding, 2004; Sterk, 2010). Primarily because this view, SPT emerges as a feminist epistemology that derives from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' "ideal knowers." Marx and Engels focus their theory primarily on different standpoints within social classes and their profoundly different views of inequalities within society. Marx and Engels drafted the initial theory that argue more powerful social groups have little vested interest in the perspectives and views of those in less powerful groups, and thereby the more powerful groups are less sensitive or aware of the need to consume the perspectives of those deemed less powerful. However, less powerful groups most often must take on the perspectives of the more powerful group as a matter of survival (Harding, 2004; Engels, 2014). Converging on this premise, Harding and Wood concentrate their theory on the role of gender inequality and the different social standpoints between the sexes on the issue.

Because gender roles are socially constructed, Harding and Wood further postulate that it is the social groups within societies that construct the messages, or instructions, that men and women use to define what to accept and reject as gender norms and values. Notably, the instructions and messages that define gender roles and expectations today derive from those that have cumulated from generations ago, dating as far back as early biblical times. Furthermore, these instructions, even the biblical accounts, are heavily laden by a male-centered

interpretations and standpoints. For centuries these male-favored accounts have dictated the parameters for gender roles, determining levels of power and authority for the sexes, and ultimately subjugating and marginalizing women while elevating men even beyond the scope of their God given authority (England, 1992; Groenendyk, 2006). These male-centered interpretations establish the premise upon which standpoints are produced for both men and women.

It is further reasonable to argue that SPT did not introduce religion and the Bible into gender inequality and socialization. Rather, male dominated biblical interpretations, whether intentionally twisted or unintentionally misinterpreted, cultivate the premise of gender inequality over the centuries and embedded its roots in biblical theology (Bartkowski, 2014; Groenendyk, 2006). For this reason, it is not far reaching for SPT to employ scripture to reconstruct social equalities. Matter of fact, it is imperative that SPT use scripture to defend its premise for leveling the playing field between men and women. After all, many gender role ideologies that oppress women are unfortunately largely rooted in the Christian-Judaic male-oriented standpoints that our society is built on. Although SPT is often negatively typecast as a feminist theory, its concept that scholarly inquiry ought to begin from the standpoint of the less powerful group, demands women take the lead to postulate another, more inclusive worldview, especially the ones that realigns biblical interpretations and applications that form standpoints (Groenendyk, 2006, Harding, 2004; Sterk, 2010). Traditionally, men have not have interest in a paradigm shift in gender equality issues, for a change in standpoint requires giving up position, power, and authority. Moreover, a change will require the humble undertaking of coming to terms with the misapplications of the biblical narratives and principles.

For instance, male-centered biblical interpretations tend to ascribe male dominance as a God given right, while a boarder standpoint assigns this dominance to a curse from God. The

Genesis 3 account for the fall of humans is perhaps the most widespread biblical narrative commissioned to substantiate male dominance and promote the male-centered standpoints on gender inequality as a morally acceptable principle. Specially, the second portion of Genesis 3:16 gives the account of the Creator cursing the woman and declaring that her “desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over” her. A closer look at this declaration would reveal two key principles of the curse. First, the consequence of the woman’s actions was that her desire for oneness with the man would remain very central to her being, while the man’s desire for oneness would be removed. He will instead “rule” over her. Together, the woman’s bent for oneness will clash with the man’s bent to “rule.” Arguably, this one word – rule – has caused more gender issues for women than any other word or phrase in history. Somehow, as the Bible had been translated and interpreted to different languages, the meaning of the word morphed into a principle that men are superior because the Creator gave men the right to dominate.

However, careful analysis reveal the second key, which show the initial intention of the word asserts that the consequence of the man’s action was that he would have a heart to dominate, suffocate and bully (Henry, 2014). He will no longer have a natural bend to effortlessly achieve the oneness he desires with his mate; rather he will have to work for it – relationships become a job. Hence, a major part of the curse is that both man and woman would be subjected to disharmony and frustration within the most fundamental and most desired relationship nearly every mature human being long for. Unfortunately, the traditional male standpoints typically fail to classify male dominance as part of the curse and an antithesis to the solidarity the Creator intended for a man and women. Male dominance is not God’s intent for humanity. It is the curse’s intent for human.

Furthermore, blind and animalistic adherence to male dominance (and female marginalization) robs the man of his commission to work in closeness with his mate to establish

agreement and togetherness. This certainly is a more subservient and humble perspective, but acquiescing to this standpoint fosters gender equality, as well as the Creator's intent for harmony and friendship. It further rejects the curse of male dominance and female oppression. This viewpoint should not be dismissed as merely a religious narrative because it has significantly frames standpoints on gender power and authority through out the world and across centuries. To accept the classic male-centered premise is to accept the curse of man as a foundation of God's intent for gender relations (Henry, 2014). Christianity itself would argue against this, in that, the foundation for Christianity is restoration, in this case to restore God intention for oneness. The center of Christianity, which frames western worldview, should demand an interpretation that places the focus of God's plan as a priority rather than the plan of the curse. To reverse the order is to make the plan of the curse greater than the purposes of God, which contradicts the entire purpose of the Bible, particularly the New Testament - and the foundations of western civilization.

Perhaps more dangerous than this focus on the curse, however, is the male-centered societal standpoint that has emerged from this passage that asserts that men are to rule over women. Repeatedly, the misinterpreted meaning of rule has been extracted from the context of marriage and applied to all men and all women across societies. Meaning, according to the narratives of history, the prevailing standpoint that has been constructed over the centuries to govern gender roles gives all men an authority to rule over all women. However, this biblical account of the curse, regardless of interpretation, is issued within the context of a marriage relationship, between wife and husband, not between men and women (Henry, 2014). To this end, the prevailing worldview of male-centeredness and dominance often employs biblical accounts as justification. This makes it even more important for SPT to consider the effect religion has on standpoints; particularly those that bear negatively on gender construct and adversely effect

communication between women and men. Likewise, SPT can significantly help reconstruct biblical interpretations and promote “high-quality work by women [and men] scholars” to assist in reshaping the framework of history and advance the struggle against gender inequalities (Sterk, 2010).

Ultimately, SPT offers the incredibly humble opportunity to consider the other perspective, particularly that of a least powerful position. While the theory continues to make its way in the halls of the feminist movement, SPT can significantly mainstream gender equality by employing scholarly arguments that encompasses the very religious influences and interpretations that marginalized women in the first place. Such scholarly approaches that consider the standpoints of the oppressed female social group from a biblical perspective can in essence produce a more balanced definition of equality for both men and women. It will offer men and women the opportunity to interrelate from a God-intended perspective rather than a curse-intended perspective. Moreover, by engaging biblical applications and interpretations, SPT would not have to overreach or relegate the male social group to accomplish its goal of gender equality. Hence, SPT can and should expand the Bible accounts that once served to empower male dominance and oppress women, as well as use these accounts as powerful tools in the journey to offset gender discrimination and write a more inclusive history for humanity. However, in our society that gives little value to humility and other-centeredness, less powerful social groups will have to continue their battle to be heard and their fight for equality. Therefore, much of the marginalizing of women that derives from male-favored biblical interpretations that have become morally acceptable standpoints will have to be countered by scholarly reproofs that offers a biblical standpoint against male dominance and female oppression.

### Works Cited

- Bartkowski, J. P. & Shah, S. (2014). Religion and Gender Inequality: From Attitudes to Practice. In L. Keister & D. Sherkat (Eds.), *Religion and Inequality in America: Research and Theory on Religion's Role in Stratification* (pp. 173-194). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Engels, F., & Untermann, E. (2014). *The origin of the family private property and the state*. New York, NY: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- England, P. (1992). Theories of labor market. In *Comparable worth: Theories and evidence*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Groenendyk, K. and Janel, C. (March 2006). "A communal perspective: Women, faith, and nature." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 29(1), 18-37. Retrieved from: <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=35&sid=163f1a9c-4778-4b06-a6ee-4a0b077ed74c%40sessionmgr4001&hid=4208&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=ufh&AN=20745934>.
- Harding, S. (2004). *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Henry, M. (2014). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible* (11th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 25-27). Peabody, MS: Hendrickson.
- Johns, B. (March 2008). "Hidden Strategies of Resistance in Female Mormon Missionary Narratives: Two Case Studies." *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 31(1), 54-81. Retrieved from: <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/resultsadvanced?sid=163f1a9c-4778-4b06-a6ee-4a0b077ed74c%40sessionmgr4001&vid=20&hid=4208&bquery=Hidden+Strategies+%22of%22+Resistance+%22in%22+Female+Mormon+Missionary+Narratives%3a+Two+Case+Studies&bdata=JmRiPXVmaCZjbGkwPUZUJmNsdjA9WSZjbGkxPVJWJmNsdjE9WSZjbGkyPURUMSZjbHYyPTIwMDYwMS0yMDE1MTImdHlwZT0xJnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl>.
- Kee, K. F., Sparks, L., Struppa, D. C., & Mannucci, M. (2013). Social Groups, Social Media, and Higher Dimensional Social Structures: A Simplicial Model of Social Aggregation for Computational Communication Research. *Communication Quarterly*, 61(1), 35-58. doi:10.1080/01463373.2012.719566.
- Rayburn-Reeves, R., Jennifer, W., Wilson, S., Kraemer, B., & Kraemer, P. (2013). Do As We Do, Not As You Think: The Effect of Group Influence on Individual Choices in a Virtual Environment. *Journal Of Virtual Worlds Research*, 6(1), 2-11. Retrieved from:

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=15&sid=163f1a9c-4778-4b06-a6ee-4a0b077ed74c%40sessionmgr4001&hid=4208&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=ufh&AN=91754907>.

Sterk, H. M. (2010). Faith, Feminism and Scholarship: The Journal of Communication and Religion, 1999-2009. *Journal Of Communication & Religion*, 33(2), 206-216. Retrieved from:

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=d94b01d2-ba47-491a-88a6-d419120568e6%40sessionmgr4003&hid=4113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=ufh&AN=65118937>.

Sunshine, G. (2009). *Why you think the way you do: The story of western worldviews from Rome to home*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Grade: 88

Grading notes:

Included some interesting studies. I'm not entirely sure which option you chose--my guess would be A, that people will change their opinions to fit their circumstances, but it would be good to make it clear in the first paragraph ("Within Cognitive Dissonance theory, the research on \_\_\_\_\_ is of particular interest"). Solid writing.

Incorrect APA (cover, in-text citations using multiple authors, reference page indentation & spacing). Was this paper original to this class? If so, why does it say "COMM 240" on the cover?

Parker Cherlin  
Comm. 240

An Empirical Examination of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory

In 1957 social psychologist Leon Festinger presented his Cognitive Dissonance theory. In terms of this theory, cognitive dissonance is a negative mental state brought about by a discrepancy between an individual's two cognitions, ideas, or beliefs, or between these cognitions and their own actions. According to Festinger, humans have a need to avoid cognitive dissonance much like they have a need for food or shelter. This omnipresent aversive drive, Festinger argues, is the catalyst that causes change in people. The theory states that when cognitive dissonance arises, people must proactively change either their behavior to match their beliefs, or change their beliefs to match their behavior (Griffin, 2012, p. 217). Festinger is backed up by studies and experiments on a variety of topics, including infidelity, parents reaction to child alcohol consumption, illegal music downloads, other regarding behavior, and exercise. Ultimately, empirical evidence gained through these experiments serve to support Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, the process of conducting these experiments has added to the understanding of cognitive dissonance as a whole, and the implications of the evidence suggests that researching a topic through the theoretical framework of cognitive dissonance is a new way to look at previously examined issues.

A study on infidelity, focusing on cognitive dissonance experienced by the perpetrator of an act of adultery, was conducted as a way of better understanding both infidelity and the cognitive dissonance theory on a whole. Researchers believed that infidelity "is discrepant with how most individuals see themselves and theoretically should produce cognitive dissonance" (Foster, Misra, 2012, p. 836). The experimenters hypothesized that committing adultery would cause the perpetrator to experience cognitive dissonance, and that they would trivialize the importance of the act in an effort to reduce this dissonance (Foster, Misra, 2012). Participants were made to believe that their own actions were or were not relatively adulterous (this was

achieved by manipulating the participants view on infidelity) and the results of how the participants felt about committing adultery and how they coped with this revelation were recorded.

The first hypothesis was that infidelity would cause cognitive dissonance, or more specifically “that participants in the unfaithful condition would report higher self-concept discrepancy, psychological discomfort, and poorer affect than participants in the faithful condition” (Foster, Misra, 2012, p.845). Participants in the unfaithful condition were in actuality faithful, but for the purpose of the experiment researchers manipulated them into thinking they had engaged in an act of relative infidelity. This sensation of counterattitudinal behavior, or an action that goes against your beliefs, is something that Festinger identifies as causing cognitive dissonance(Foster, Misra, 2012). When surveyed, the unfaithful participants exhibited the symptoms of cognitive dissonance, which supports Festinger as well as the experiment’s hypothesis.

The next round of hypothesis testing in the experiment examined the manner in which these unfaithful participants would cope with this cognitive dissonance caused by their counterattitudinal behavior. The researchers hypothesized that unfaithful subjects would trivialize, or minimize, their unfaithful act. The cognitive dissonance theory states that a person must change their belief or behavior to alleviate dissonance. Since it is easier to change the significance of a single act of an infidelity than it is to change ones entire attitude regarding fidelity, “when participants received feedback that they had been unfaithful, they responded by downplaying the importance of their behaviors” (Foster, Misra, 2012, p.847). Further supporting the hypothesis, and transitively Festinger, is evidence suggesting participants who were not given

a chance to trivialize experienced higher levels of symptoms associated with cognitive dissonance than those who did (Foster, Misra, 2012).

This study proved to be a good example of the versatility in application of the cognitive dissonance theory. According to the researchers “cognitive dissonance theory can lead to a unique frame of reference for research, this was one of the few social experiments that focused on the perpetrator of infidelity rather than solely the victim, the theory of cognitive dissonance gives an age old topic a refreshing insight” (Foster, Misra, 2012, p. 836). The experiment was important in that it used the cognitive dissonance theory as a means to gain a unique perspective and new information while at the same time adding additional breadth to existing empirical evidence supporting the theory.

Another experiment framed through the perspective of cognitive dissonance was a study on the way parents react to their children consuming alcohol. Parents were surveyed about children alcohol consumption, their level of worry, and other factors related to underage drinking. Researchers hypothesized that “after encountering their youths intoxicated, parents with strict attitudes against youth drinking would be more likely to change their opposition to youth drinking than to increase control of their youths’ whereabouts and activities” (Glatz, Stattin, 2012, p. 631). This hypothesis is heavily influenced by the cognitive dissonance theory, backed by the logic that an attitude or behavior must change in the presence of cognitive dissonance. The empirical evidence gained through this experiment supports the hypothesis. Researchers found that “the results for parents’ attitudes showed that parents generally became less opposed to youth drinking over time...were consistent with our hypothesis that when encountering their youths intoxicated parents would become [more] tolerant to youth drinking rather than increasing their control attempts” (Glatz, Stattin, 2012, p. 635)

The second hypothesis tested was “among parents who encountered their youths intoxicated, those who maintained their opposition to youth drinking would experience more discomfort than those who became more tolerant to youth drinking” (Glatz, Stattin, 2012, p. 636). Again, the hypothesis was supported, with the evidence showing that the shift to an accepting attitude resulted in less discomfort (Glatz, Stattin, 2012).

This study, and the empirical evidence it produced, not only reinforce the validity of the theory, but the versatility in application of the theory. In this experiment, the theoretical framework of cognitive dissonance can be used to study parents’ reactions to their children drinking rather than the traditional focus on the adolescent. This is especially important considering the study notes “parents’ attitudes about youth drinking have been shown, in an intervention program, to play a significant role in reducing youth drinking (Glatz, Stattin, 2012, p. 638). This is another example of empirical evidence supporting the cognitive dissonance theory on one level, while on another level providing an example of how its application can be used to gain a new, and in this case crucial, perspective on an important issue.

Another issue researchers have tried to understand through the framework of cognitive dissonance is illegal music and movie downloading. The experiment was based on the logic that “according to cognitive dissonance theory, downloaders who never pay are in a state of cognitive disequilibrium because they simultaneously exhibit two dissonant actions...they download copyrighted creative works and...they never pay any compensation to the creators/producers, whose creative works are protected by intellectual property laws (Charron, Redondo, 2013, p. 2038). The experiment itself yielded data that was of a more technical than communicative nature, and ultimately the significance of the study lies with its incorporation of the cognitive

dissonance theory into a framework of understanding, as well as the insight the study authors provide as to how their experiment was shaped by the cognitive dissonance theory.

They described cognitive dissonance as “one of the best documented theories in social psychology, both in terms of quantity and variety of practical applications... that can harmoniously incorporate various principles to better explain specific aspects of downloader behavior” (Charron, Redondo, 2013, p. 2045). This study is unique in that the future implications of the study, rather than the evidence, is what lends credibility to the cognitive dissonance theory. It is also the first time downloader behavior has been examined through the theoretical framework cognitive dissonance, adding another proverbial notch in the belt of the theory’s functionality (Charron, Redondo, 2013).

On the other end of the spectrum is a study on “other regarding behavior”, conducted with a focus on a specific aspect of the cognitive dissonance theory, selective exposure. Selective exposure is “the tendency people have to avoid information that would create cognitive dissonance because it’s incompatible with their current beliefs” (Griffin, 2012, p.219), which is essentially a front-end coping mechanism. To explore this concept of selective exposure, study “Participants...know that their behavior affects others, but they can ignore the exact consequences of this behavior. They can—but do not have to—find out which of several possible effects their behavior has on others” (Matthey, Regner, 2011, p. 115) A monetary incentive was then added to change the participants’ normal course of action.

The results identified two different labels for a person in this situation based on their actions. Those who followed their behavioral norms regardless of the situation were labeled “genuine”, and do not experience cognitive dissonance. Those who acted according to their norms only when receiving full information, but not when they remain ignorant, were labeled as

“ignoring”. The ignoring “experience cognitive dissonance—a negative drive state—but the monetary gain outweighs that” (Matthey, Regner, 2011, p. 115). The majority of the participants fell into the ignoring category, which is in line with the logic of the cognitive dissonance theory. The participants, using selective exposure, were able to take the money without feeling the dissonance of negatively impacting another by being willfully ignorant to the outcome of their decision. Additionally, the cognitive dissonance theory provided a deeper insight to the researchers, allowing them to “shed some more light on the actual process that leads to behavior that is perceived as ‘other-regarding’” (Matthey, Regner, 2011, p. 114).

Another process that has been studied through the theoretical framework of cognitive dissonance is the psychology of exercise. In this context, cognitive dissonance occurs when a person realizes that their sedentary lifestyle is inconsistent with the cognition that a sedentary lifestyle is bad for their health (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, 2008). The researchers in this experiment suggest that in order to relieve this dissonance, “his/her initial position and report that exercise is not that boring after all (or that physical exercise is interesting). In this way, the dissonance has effected an attitude change” (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, 2008, p.98). This sentiment was elaborated in the form of the hypothesis that participants freely choosing to perform a boring exercise task would report a more positive attitude toward the task than those who were pressured into exercising. Ultimately the experiment found that those individuals who were forced to exercise experienced no change in attitude towards the boring exercise, while those who were in a position to freely choose noted that the exercise experience was a positive one (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, 2008).

This experiment is another example of how a person changes attitude to avoid dissonance. Rather than living with the dissonance experienced by choosing to waste time

on a boring exercise, participants changed their attitude towards the exercise itself. This empirical evidence gained in this study is perfectly in line with Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. Additionally, the results of this experiment expose an avenue for applying the cognitive dissonance theory to impart societal change. Researchers noted that "one implication of cognitive dissonance theory is that exercise interventions that minimize pressure and enhance sense of choice are more likely to facilitate attitude and behavioral change than interventions that pressure sedentary people to adopt a physically active lifestyle" (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, 2008, p. 101).

Ultimately, these types of studies and experiments, in addition to the empirical evidence gathered, reveal the value of the cognitive dissonance theory. The range of topics that can be viewed through the lens of cognitive dissonance points to the theory's versatility. The theory also provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of why people change their attitudes or actions, and even when the field of study changes, the empirical evidence gathered consistently supports the cognitive dissonance theory across the board. Another strong point of the theory is its longevity; it is impressive when a theoretical model developed in the 1950's is the basis for an experiment exploring the psychology of illegal music downloading on the internet.

In addition to its versatility, scope, and longevity, the results of these experiments often give a new or deeper insight into all parties involved in some sort of social encounter or dilemma. While the focus may normally be on the feelings of the partner who has been cheated on, or the teen who turns to alcohol, the cognitive dissonance theory explores the other end of these issues, which yields a fuller, more complete understanding of a seemingly one-sided issue. On a whole, the empirical evidence gained through the variety

of topics and types of experiments bolsters the theory's support, exemplify its versatility, and the analysis of the evidence points to the real-world positive implications of the understanding and application of the cognitive dissonance theory.

## References

- Charron, J., & Redondo, I. (2013). The payment dilemma in movie and music downloads: An explanation through cognitive dissonance theory. *Computers In Human Behavior*, 29(2037-2046). doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.04.015
- Chatzisarantis, N. D., Hagger, M. S., & Wang, J. K. (2008). An Experimental Test of Cognitive Dissonance Theory in the Domain of Physical Exercise. *Journal Of Applied Sport Psychology*, 20(1), 97-115.
- Foster, J. D., & Misra, T. A. (2013). It did not mean anything (about me): Cognitive dissonance theory and the cognitive and affective consequences of romantic infidelity. *Journal Of Social & Personal Relationships*, 30(7), 835-857. doi:10.1177/0265407512472324
- Glatz, T., Stattin, H., & Kerr, M. (2012). A Test of Cognitive Dissonance Theory to Explain Parents' Reactions to Youths' Alcohol Intoxication. *Family Relations*, 61(4), 629-641. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2012.00723.x
- Griffin, E. (2012). *A First Look At Communication Theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill
- Harmon-Jones, E. (2012). Cognitive Dissonance Theory. In *The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*. (Vol. 1, pp. 543-549). Academic Press.  
(Harmon-Jones, 1998)
- Matthey, A., & Regner, T. (2011). Do I Really Want to Know? A Cognitive Dissonance-Based Explanation of Other-Regarding Behavior. *Games (20734336)*, 2(1), 114-135. doi:10.3390/g2010114

Grade: 20

Page number **1**

Grading notes:

Although there is some interesting information, much of this is inappropriate for a research paper. It should not involve/mention you at all, but a significant amount of this paper was about you, your experiences, and your opinions.

Incorrect references page, some weird formatting issues involving page numbers (this is a formal paper, which should comply with APA requirements).

Positive Divergence: Developing a Sense of Strength

Page number **2**



Positive Divergence: Developing a Sense of Strength

Communication Theory 401

Professor Lefever

Nico T. Chubb

Old Dominion University

The Communication Accommodation Theory of Howard Giles is based upon a simple aspect of communication. As inherent communicators, humans often use strategic communication methods to ensure their messages are felt and received in the proper manner. In this paper, I will explore one strategic concept: divergence, which plays a vital role in supporting the Communication Accommodation Theory. Divergence in concept is quite simple; Em Griffin's text (2012) describes divergence as "a communication strategy of accentuating the differences between you and another person" (p. 396). In an individual effort to achieve better communication, every communicator has, at one time, engaged in divergence in hopes of delivering a clear and meaningful communication. My quest is to explore why divergence, as a form of counter-accommodation, is useful in communication. The answer may not be so obvious; why would one want to maximize the difference between themselves and another speaker in communication? To dig deeper, I'll start with my own personal experience of divergence and how I've observed divergence play a vital role in business interaction.

Divergence can be used as a tactic to distance oneself from another communicator in order to deliver a strong message and set strong boundaries within a relationship. I've always been intrigued by the method in which my mother expertly employs the act of divergence. Throughout my childhood, despite not knowing what was going on, I've luckily picked up these skills. I grew up exclusively with my mother and thus observed several behavioral and communication patterns in her, enough to say, with which I may write a ten page paper. The strongest elements of divergence were always obvious when my mother engaged in a business purchase. Sales people, in an effort to achieve their own sales priorities, use the concept of



*convergence* to become “one” with their customers and make them comfortable enough to “buy in” to their sales tactics. My mother has never been one to fall for the convergence game plan of a sales person. In my opinion and based upon our experiences, this use of divergence has a specific, positive and gainful outcome.

According to Jonah Berger (2008), “people often diverge from dissimilar outgroups to avoid the costs of misidentification” (p. 593). In my mother’s case, she may have easily been perceived as a member of a group of easily targeted customers. Helping me purchase my first vehicle was an excellent way to teach me that salespeople are bred to distinguish tastes by observing people, listening to their speech and judging them by their appearance. In this sales perspective assessment, you effectively belong to a group, one of which the doctrine of sales probability dictates that you may easily be won over by capitalizing on the weaknesses of the group you represent. My mother’s lesson was simple: don’t become enchanted by a salesperson and never let them “sell” you. Thus; my strongest lesson in divergence came when I stumbled upon my dream car and a not so dreamy cast of sales characters, *foaming at the mouth* and willing to do anything to sell me the vehicle I so desired. I lost my cool immediately, pupils growing wide at the glossy paint and immaculate interior of the vehicle. I fell for the probes for self-disclosure which the sales team used to determine how they may use my perspective to team up with me and convince my mother to do whatever it took to get me that car. Luckily, my mom was very observant of their attempts to converge with me and after seeing me get roped in too far, she pulled me away.

Our conversation was brief; she explained to me that their priority was to sell. My mother explained to me that I must maintain myself and *distance* myself from them personally in order



to achieve a successful business deal. Rather than let them easily group me in with the persistent and ignorant rants of a teenager lusting over their first vehicle, she expressed our need to remain calm and collected, reserved and specific.

Of course, when we returned, my mother did all the talking. The difference between our first interaction and the unfolding encounter was that my mother took a different stance. Her strong northern accent become more prevalent, her posture became rigid and her tone became very stern and direct. Unlike the warm, welcoming smiles being offered by the sales people, my mother used divergence to dispel any indication that her priorities and their priorities were similar at all. My mother's verbal and nonverbal changes in behavior are precisely what can be observed in divergence. Much to my surprise, we had won the upper hand and effectively gained bargaining power to not only purchase my car, but receive several other complimentary services to keep our business coming.

Giles' theory speculates that divergence correlates most often to individuals need to establish social identity. In my most defining experiences, divergence does indeed point toward elaborating upon a social identify, though in contrast to Giles' explanation, divergent communication, specifically in the relationship between a customer and sales person, does not relate *so often* to social acceptance. Rather, divergence can be used to effectively gain power, distinguish an individual and yield *positive* outcomes.

By placing emphasis on distinctiveness, individuals may affect culture, attitudes, and social norms. In a study focused on ethnolinguistic communication, Lawson-Sako and Sachdev, divergence was observed as a method in which individuals accentuated their linguistic



differences, in an environment amongst several differing cultures to establish their own individual identities. Some speculation cites Giles' writings about accommodation to attribute convergence as positive and divergence as negative. In regards to society's that reflect an individualistic or collectivistic culture, there are some observable truths to this speculation. Page number 6

As I've stated before, I tend to think in contrast and believe that divergence is not necessarily a negative interaction. Take, for example, our individualistic culture in America, in which convergence is generally observed by a unity in our common interest of freedom, capitalism and the pursuit of happiness. The ideology of "loving they neighbor" and "peace" all form a concept in which we set aside our differences.

I find it interesting that such convergence is relied upon to construct the identity of an American though divergence is so equally involved in serving our individualistic nature. Michael Rothschild may have reached this same level of thought in his journal piece "Why it's So Hard to Sell Brotherhood like Soap". Rothschild's speculations are associated with the fact that nonbusiness groups, such as our American government, are attempting to converge with society in offering a close relational distinction between their needs and ours. Divergence again moves out of the realm of constructing a social identity and, in support of my assertion, becomes a key method in avoiding becoming an "easy target".

Perhaps the reason that divergence is generally viewed as negative is due to its natural tendency to appear as a defensive technique. A person under certain speculation and appearing to belong to a certain group may defend their own interests by diverging, appearing to have strong differences from said group. Likewise, divergence can be used as an offensive tactic. In



proactive counter of overaccommodation, or “excessive concern paid to message simplification or repetition”, an individual may use their knowledge of another communicating party to purposefully diverge and create a stir. Much like the ideas presented in *Language Convergence and Meaning Divergence: A Meaning Centered Communication Theory (1996)*, “divergence is often used to avoid the misconception and illusion of shared meaning” (p. 61).

Divergence, in my opinion serves a far better purpose than convergence. While convergence promotes a “we-ness” and sense of shared meaning and belonging, it also carries an implication that some manner of pandering could be present. Divergence is the not so obvious contrast which dispels any type of bonding through convergence and centers certain situations upon establishing an individual’s strengths through defining our differences. Only recently, America has become more accepting and open towards the differences that have socially degraded our cultural for decades. With this new emerging culture, divergence in act can be used to support the accommodation of differing cultures. Our differences in this sense are no longer things we must look past but aspects of our individual lives that must be honored and frequently referenced to keep our perspectives and mentalities in check.

In reference to our interpersonal interactions, divergence need not be a negative experience. In my opinion, divergence can inspire, inform and create a more functional form of “we-ness” in the world. As stated in many different communication theory journals and studies, divergence can make some parties uncomfortable, as the methods in which emphasis is placed on the stark contrast between certain cultural communicative tactics are used. With social media and other venues available as a means of creating social identity, divergence can easily become a more comfortable and perhaps anticipated aspect of interpersonal communication. In this sense,

certain barriers are broken by individuals who put their differences at the forefront of relationship forming and interaction. Once we reach a level in which divergence becomes a stronger and more comfortably used method of communication, we may begin to observe how divergence is slowly competing with the concept of convergence in the realm of “good communication”.





References:

Berger, J., & Heath, C. (2008). Who drives divergence? Identity signaling, outgroup dissimilarity, and the abandonment of cultural tastes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(3), 593.

Griffin, E. (2012). *A First Look at Communication Theory* (8th ed., pp. 394-406). New York: David Patterson.

Lawson-Sako, S., & Sachdev, I. (1996). Ethnolinguistic communication in Tunisian streets: convergence and divergence. *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, Richmond: Curzon, 61-79.

Rogers, E. M., & Chaffee, S. H. (1993). The past and the future of communication study: Convergence or divergence?. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 125-131.

Rothschild, M. L. (1979). Marketing communications in nonbusiness situations or why it's so hard to sell brotherhood like soap. *The Journal of Marketing*, 11-20.

Chicago

Grade: 85

Grading notes:

Finally, someone who looks at some of a theory's weaknesses! Don't get carried away in this--an undergraduate paper can examine some of them, but calling Uses & Grats antiquated (even partially) indicates a lack of familiarity with the research (and please don't say you are going to determine if the theory is null--stand back and think about how presumptuous sounds).

Reliance on self-reporting is not a "discrepancy"--although it has limitations, as do all research methods, it is a foundation of social science and absolutely useful. This is not a "major shortcoming" of any theory--it is something we consider as we evaluate results. If U&G is looking at why people choose what they do (their preferences), how will third-party observations be relevant? A third party can only observe the choice, not determine the reason.

Some of your discussion indicates a lack of awareness of the large body of research on U&G done since "media channels were limited to handful of mass communication outlets"--there was renewed interest in U&G in the 1990s (when there were arguably more than a "handful" of outlets), and U&G has been widely used studying Internet use. You make some excellent points, and you write well, but some of your statements seem to indicate that you don't recognize the theory has been studied and refined since its introduction (something that happens with all theories). There is certainly room to criticize U&G--just keep in mind your own limitations when doing so.

APA: No first names; no unidentified sources ("one author refers..."); no "eight (8)" expression of numbers; generally good APA in references (check capitalization, and Strasberger citation is confusing--is "Children, etc." what the volume is called?).

Uses and Gratifications in Digital Media Communication:

Revitalizing a Flawed Theory

Abigail M. Miller

Old Dominion University

### Abstract

This paper explores the communication theory of “uses and gratifications”, and presents an analysis of recent communication research that shows room for growth and improvement in four main areas of this theory in order for it remain relevant and applicable in a society of digital mass communication. In order to thoroughly examine the four main flaws found in the original uses and gratifications research, this paper reviews recent research reviving the theory of uses and gratifications, as well as several media-effects studies and research on selective exposure. This paper assesses the partially antiquated theory of uses and gratifications through a modern lens in order to point out the inconsistencies in the original research due to an historical gap, and suggests a more balanced view of the theory of uses and gratifications in the age of digital media communication.

## Uses and Gratifications in Digital Media Communication:

### Revitalizing a Flawed Theory

Uses and gratifications theory of communication revolves around the central idea that audiences select what communication media they will consume based upon their preferences, as well as what is useful and gratifying to their own goals and interests, hence the name “uses and gratifications” (Katz, 1973). The original research, published by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, but begun years earlier, was quite revolutionary for the time. Katz et al emphasized the concept of a “strong audience” (Griffin, 2012), able to choose what media to consume, as well as when and how they consume it, which was fairly divergent from the previous mainstream opinion that audiences were simply unwilling sponges, with no say in the fact that they soaked up whatever the media threw at them. One author likens this contrast to a child being force-fed by a parent, versus an adult strolling through a cafeteria deciding what to eat based upon their particular desires or cravings at a particular time (Griffin, 2012). Katz et al believed that to study media effects accurately, it was crucial to understand the needs an individual was seeking to satisfy by consuming that particular bit of media.

### **Theory Analysis and Discrepancies**

Katz et al’s research presents a list of uses and gratifications, heavily based on the self-reports of the individuals who participated in studies and surveys. The eight (8) reasons Katz et al cited that the average individual consumes media are: passing time, companionship, escape, enjoyment, social interaction, relaxation, information, and excitement. In effect, Katz et al’s study of communication was based almost completely on the psychology of the consumer, and the psychology principle of selective exposure.

The crux of uses and gratifications theory of communication is that people are active participants, able to choose what media to consume based upon what will satisfy their particular desires, and that those same people can choose how the media they consume affects them.

Several problems arise when analyzing the original uses and gratifications research in light of new digital media as well as subsequent studies. This analysis seeks to outline and address each problem, determine if this theory can be applied to the current and future generations of media consumers, or if it is null because of outdated concepts, ideas and information, and present a plan for furthering effective research and the transformation of uses and gratifications theory.

### **Reliance on Self-Reporting**

The first discrepancy in uses and gratifications theory is the research's heavy reliance on self-reporting. This is a challenge for the majority of research that utilizes the extremely common telephone interview or online or paper survey methods of polling study participants. The fact that people do not always provide accurate or honest information about themselves or their habits has been the focus of multiple studies in the fields of psychology and sociology. One study, the findings of which could readily be applied to many cases of less than accurate self-reporting, explores why people dramatically over-report news exposure. Reasons cited for this include a lack of effort in fully understanding the questions asked, recalling their own experience, and answering the question completely accurately, as well as the idea of social desirability, or the individual's desire to portray him or herself to a researcher and to themselves as what they perceive to be socially desirable (Prior, 2009). A major shortcoming of uses and

gratifications theory is that Katz et al's list of uses and gratifications is gleaned solely from individuals reporting these as their reasons for media usage, rather than from more objective, third-party, observatory research. The consequence of this is a potentially limited scope of the reasons people choose to use media, and perhaps an overly positive representation of reasons for media consumption.

### **Lack of Media Study**

The second weakness of uses and gratifications theory lies in its focuses only on the psychological factors of media consumption, rather than spreading attention equally to the study of the media itself. This issue can be attributed almost completely to the time in which the original research was conducted; an era in which media channels were limited to a handful of mass communication outlets – television, radio, film, newspapers. Therefore, this weakness is less a fatal flaw and more an opportunity for innovation and adaptability of the tenets of the theory to current digital media. This issue is explored in more recent research that seeks to fully develop uses and gratifications for a new generation of consumers. One study presents four new categories of uses and gratifications because as stated, “it is problematic to conceptualize convergent media like the Internet as a single monolithic source. Instead, it is more useful to disaggregate such media in their constituent affordances (e.g., interactivity) and study the uses and gratifications obtained from each of those affordances” (Sundar, 2013). In essence, the Internet has transformed almost every element of mass communication, but most notably, how people consume media, and the reasons why people consume that media. These reasons absolutely extend beyond Katz et al's eight cited categories. For example, many people utilize the Internet because they profit financially from e-commerce. By focusing

only on social or psychological aspects of media choices, this theory limits itself in the current age of digital media by assuming the position that the actual neutral medium through which mass communication is transmitted has no effect on the consumer's choice, and this is simply no longer the case.

### **Individual's Power to Determine Media Intake**

A third area that must be addressed is Katz et al's central idea that the individual can determine how media affects them. This needs to be considered in light of the current climate of concern about negative media effects on individuals and society as a whole. Government and non-governmental agencies, medical groups, and scholarly organizations alike have conducted research, released studies, promoted campaigns, and hosted summits raising concerns on the perceived negative impact of the media. Ranging from alarm over depicted violence, pornography, drug and alcohol abuse, to distaste for poor celebrity role models and the fashion industry's negative impact on body image in adolescents, the concerns over the effects of the media on the individual do not reconcile with Katz et al's concept of people as active participants in complete control of media choice and outcomes. Numerous studies have been conducted that point to direct impacts of harmful media consumption on individual development, relationships, social interaction, and psychological wellbeing, especially in younger individuals at crucial stages of growth and development (Strasburger, 2012). There is a disparity caused by the idea that the consumption of this media is always a choice, and not sometimes a passive, osmosis-like effect that occurs without the consumer realizing it (Hastall, 2013). This is especially true of infants and young children, the newest generation of which is exposed to all types of media communication without their permission or any real awareness or

participating in the decision-making process. Additionally, passive intake of stimuli is still consumption of media even by adults, and the impact of these stimuli on the brain must be considered in the study of media intake, and just how much control individuals have over that intake. As with the second weakness of the uses and gratifications theory, this third problem can be traced back to the date and origins of the original research, and the fact that the volume of mass communication media was miniscule in the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies compared to the open informational floodgates of the current digital age.

### **Individual's Power to Determine Media Effects**

The fourth and final flaw in the uses and gratifications theory is somewhat tied to the previous issue of negative media impacts on the individual. The last concern to be addressed tackles Katz et al's very central idea that individuals can determine what effects the media they consume has on them. Uses and gratifications theory is humanistic in that its very axis is the individual person, their desires, yearnings, powers, and weaknesses. While some studies and research choose to focus on the actual channels of communication, uses and gratifications is based upon the idea that media effect is actually determined by the personal desires of the individual choosing that media. Again, because of the historical gap, it is necessary for this theory to not only be updated, but to face the possibility of a very structural change. Numerous studies show that it is simply not possible for an individual to control the exact ways media, especially new digital media, affect the brain, as well as health, habits, opinions, memories, and ideas (Wang, 2012). While absolute control, autonomy and respect should be given to each individual consumer of media, it is nearly impossible to argue that every consumer can control the

exact outcome of each interaction with a piece of information disseminated through mass media communication.

### **Conclusions and Future Study**

While this paper has presented an argument against several of the key components of the communication theory of uses and gratifications, it is possible that this theory can be adapted to explain, explore, and predict the behavior and impact of a new generation of consumers in a new digital age. While an individual may not be able to fully control or decide all of the media they consume, or all of the effects of that media, the current age of the Internet and accessibility in many ways empowers the individual consumer to have more control over what media they consume. For a future expansion of uses and gratifications theory, there is benefit in taking the more balanced view that while individuals can and should attentively work to monitor and control their response to their own media consumption, the effects of modern media consumption are not always known and cannot always be controlled, and thus they should develop an even higher awareness of the first half of Katz et al's theory, e.g., their own choice and selection in their exposure to media communications. It is necessary to conduct a study combining uses and gratifications research with media-effects studies and selective exposure research to gain a well-rounded understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the modern consumer of media communication in the digital age, and the applicability of the theory of uses and gratifications in a modern society.

## References

- Griffin, E. (2012). Uses and Gratifications. In *A first look at communication theory* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Hastall, M. R., & Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2013). Caught in the Act: Measuring Selective Exposure to Experimental Online Stimuli. *Communication Methods & Measures*, 7(2), 94-105.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and Gratifications Research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509.
- Prior, M. (2009). Improving Media Effects Research through Better Measurement of News Exposure. *Journal Of Politics*, 71(3), 893-908.
- Strasburger, V. C., Jordan, A. B., & Donnerstein, E. (2012). Children, Adolescents, and the Media: Health Effects. *The Pediatric Clinics Of North America*, 59(Children, Adolescents, and the Media), 533-587.
- Sundar, S., & Limperos, A. (2013). Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 57(4), 504-525.
- Wang, Z., Tchernev, J., & Solloway, T. (2012). A dynamic longitudinal examination of social media use, needs, and gratifications among college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 1829-1839.

Grade: 20

Grading notes:

Although you did not make clear which option you selected, I would guess it was C, however, the idea of "linguistic profiling" makes me question whether it was in fact B. The fact that I can't tell is a problem. In any case, the majority of your paper seemed to be describing the theory and making unsupported assertions about "linguistic profiling." (Incidentally, are you aware of Putnam's extensive research demonstrating that "diversity" is actually a distinct negative, and seems to poison everything it touches? He sat on his findings for a decade because he was uncomfortable with them, but finally concluded that integrity demanded he address them). This is more an opinion essay than a research paper.

A number of mechanical issues (punctuation, sentence fragments, structure [only four paragraphs in a 6-1/3 page paper]). No use of first names in APA; do not discuss yourself--the reader should be unaware of your existence. Only two in-text citations in entire paper, which means that your bibliography should have listed only two sources. References page has a number of problems (indentation, spacing, capitalization).

### **Characteristics of speech codes and their effects on discrimination**

There have been many instances in society where individuals were characterized according to the color of their skin and the dialect of their speech. Society sometimes has a way of segmenting these individuals based not only upon their social or economic status but also according to their perceived cultural language. Gerry Philipsen, Professor of Communication at the University of Washington states that an individual's culture can be used as an accurate determination when predicting how they will speak. Although, many theorists and interpretive scholars argue in the negative and state the contrary, that it is not possible to form such a conclusion without a degree of stereotyping or profiling. An individual cannot be categorized to a certain speech code solely based on their culture without involving factors such as race, appearance, ethnicity, and gender. Philipsen's mindset on speech prediction reduces cultural equality and individuality in our society. This notion can ultimately lead to an increase in racism and segregation by making brash generalizations about the individuals within a specific culture. By generalizing characteristics of an individual solely based on a prejudice, undermines their personality, character, identity, and self. Despite Philipsen's notion, transcending the cultural divide and encouraging cultural diversity within our communities and truly accepting the variance between our cultures can eradicate the underlying issue of segregation and discrimination.

Philipsen, based his premise on research conducted as an ethnographer while doing youth work on the south side of Chicago and later while in California. His purpose was to watch listen and record communication in a natural environment in order to accurately understand the customs of a specific culture. This led to the development of two segments of people or cultures he dubbed as Teamsterville and Nacirema. The Nacirema consisted of many individuals from Santa Barbara or Seattle with a way of speech that was intelligible, consistent with and practiced by a majority of Americans. Teamsterville on the other hand, consisted of blue collar, low-income whites that share a cultural outlook on communication (Philipsen, 1975). Although this sect of people spoke English, their way and pattern of speaking was very much different from what is practiced throughout America. After a few years of study his findings led to become what is now known as speech code theory, in which he highlighted six general propositions. In his first proposition he states that there is always a distinctive speech code where a culture exists. Due to the exclusive nature of speech codes to a given culture or community it can be viewed as foreign to outsiders or people not of that culture or ethnicity. His second proposition argued that there are many speech codes in a given community. As human beings we can maintain dual speech codes at the same time, such as communication between students in a classroom versus communication between the students and the professor. The third proposition maintained that there is a specific psychology, sociology, and rhetoric behind each speech code. Philipsen states that every speech code defines people as a grouping of social roles and therefore can inform us about the people and society who use them. He also argues that speech codes inform us

Gregory A. Rogers

00707375

Comm 401: Research Paper

Theory: Speech Codes Theory

about how a community views individuals and who is most valued. While the sociology aspect on the other hand, tells us how individuals function within a specific culture. His fourth proposition involves interpretation. Philipsen states that the manner in which a speech code is interpreted is contingent upon the listener and the speaker. In order to truly understand a speech practice, knowledge of how the people talk and the associated responses must be ascertained. The fifth proposition involves the site of the speech code. Simply stated, the terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are displayed within the ecology of that specific culture. The final and most controversial proposition involves the discursive force of speech codes in discussions. As stated previously Philipsen argues that a prediction can be made about how a person will communicate based on their cultural background. Philipsen's argument is one of commonality, and the idea of shared speech code providing sufficient grounds for predicting, explaining, and controlling what others will say and how they will say it. Such a premise ultimately leads to stereotyping.

According to Webster's dictionary a stereotype is to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same. Therefore according to proposition six, myself and another individual of my culture will exhibit the same speech code solely based on our cultural similarities, regardless of our upbringing, education, and personality. Undoubtedly, this mindset embodies an idea of classification that unfortunately can lead to actions of a discriminatory nature for individuals who are of a minority. Following Philipsen's premise, knowledge of how a person speaks can then lead to determinations of their race, through linguistic profiling. Linguistic profiling is the practice of utilizing speech or dialect to determine a speaker's race, religion, or social

Gregory A. Rogers

00707375

Comm 401: Research Paper

Theory: Speech Codes Theory

class. Philipsen's sixth proposition and linguistic profiling are two sides of the same coin, because they both fall under the tier of stereotyping. Linguistic profiling takes the speech, dialect, or accent of an individual and seeks to withhold rights and/or privileges based upon the perceived race, social class or culture of the speaker. Proposition six on the other hand, is the first half of the process. Proposition six takes the culture and assimilates all individuals within that culture to one pattern of speech. Both directives embody stereotyping of some degree. Linguistic profiling has been a major issue within our minority communities, specifically the African American, Latino, and Mexican communities. There have even been noteworthy judicial cases where the verdict was dependent upon the perceived racial identities of the parties involved that were strictly determined from auditory cues. Case in point, California v Orenthal James Simpson. In the case, Mr. Cochran objected to the notion that racial identity can be ascertained from speech, a proposition made by Mr. Darden when asking if a voice was thought to be that of a young white male (Makoni, 2003). There have also been many other judicial cases where linguistic profiling was used to reach a verdict. In the Supreme Court case of Clifford v Kentucky an African American male was convicted and sentenced based upon accounts of a lay witness and their determination that the appellant "sounded black". Moreover, there have even been cases where linguistic profiling has sought to identify the particular region said individuals may be from based upon their accent and use of words. Undoubtedly, certain accents, slang and or twang are prevalent in specific regions of the country, but to draw conclusions to a race or nationality without definitive ethnic proof is asinine, regardless if it is proved to be valid in the end. In the case of People v Sanchez the Superior Court noted that the lay witness was able to determine the difference

Gregory A. Rogers

00707375

Comm 401: Research Paper

Theory: Speech Codes Theory

between a Dominican accent as opposed to a Puerto Rican accent. To speak from personal experience I know very many people who are from other countries that change their accent based upon the type of conversation they are having and with whom they are speaking. Old Dominion University is a very diverse college, and affords students the opportunity to interact with individuals of other cultures. For some cultures it is customary to speak in an English accent and completely mask their native accent when speaking with Americans. While on the other hand, it is deemed appropriate to speak in their native accent when conversing with individuals of the same culture. The New York Superior Court in the case of *People v Sanchez* seemed to completely overlook linguistic accommodation, by where speakers adjust their accent or diction according to the diction of the listener. Such a consideration would nullify a witness' ability to accurately determine the nationality and race of an individual based on auditory cues alone. Linguistic profiling has been witnessed in many aspects of our society besides criminal cases such as in the housing and real estate industry. There have been many documented occurrences of linguistic profiling that prohibited certain races from receiving accurate information about the availability of apartment complexes. This became such a widespread issue that organizations such as the National Fair Housing Alliance were formed to eliminate housing discrimination based on race and elicit equal opportunity for all. Last and possibly the most recent of linguistic profiling cases that garnered national attention involved the case of Trayvon Martin in 2012. Many can recall the accounts of Martins friends Rachel Jeantel who took the stand to testify as to the events that transpired just before Martins death. Many people such as John Rickford, a Stanford linguistics professor and expert on African American Vernacular English (AAVE), argue

that Jeantel was misunderstood and discredited by the jury because of the way she talks

(Rigoglioso, 2014). These are a few of the many examples where an individual was discriminated against based upon prejudices toward language and cultural differences.

In order to bridge the gap between distinctive cultures and communication we must first collectively seek to understand the dichotomy that exists between the cultures and their respective speech codes. As a result of spending significant time analyzing the Teamsterville culture and Nacirema culture, Philipsen was able to conclude that each community had very distinct views on dominance and communication. Within the Teamsterville community, dominance and solidarity are heavily based upon the role of the male and how effectively he chooses the appropriate situations to communicate. The manliness of the Teamsterville male is contingent upon his form of speech, the amount of communication he uses in specific situations, as well as his response to conflict. While on the other hand, the Nacirema community values shared communication and deem it appropriate amongst all members of the society. Nacirema value what they consider to be real communication and the idea that each individual of the society is unique. You are characterized by who you are on the inside as opposed to a collectivist mindset where you are categorized according to external factors such as dialect, or presiding culture. If we as a nation are to reduce the effects of linguistic profiling we cannot adopt the separationist mentality of the Teamsterville community. This mentality conveys one of discrimination because they are apprehensive toward receiving any culture other than their own. The Teamsterville community has a mentality where they define their way of speaking by contrasting it with other codes. We must not seek to compare speech codes,

Gregory A. Rogers

00707375

Comm 401: Research Paper

Theory: Speech Codes Theory

but equally accept the individuality of every culture. One practice to reduce the effects of linguistic profiling is to properly educate society on the cultural diversities and speech patterns that exist within our nation. In order to truly appreciate something one must first understand it. By understanding the cultural background of individuals who use a certain dialect, or speech code can help society become more receptive to those who are different. The government can even take steps to reduce linguistic profiling by continuing to adopt equal opportunity and fair practice laws that encourage cultural and racial diversity. But ultimately, cultural diversity has to be fostered at early levels such as the time beginning education. Intercultural relationships can help eliminate linguistic discrimination because the individuals are continually exposed to the cultural differences that such diversity becomes the norm. So if we are to reduce linguistic profiling, or stereotyping, we have to reduce our acceptance of the idea that an individual's speech can be predicted based upon their culture. We have to fight proposition six!

## Citations

Philipsen, G. (1975). Speaking "like A Man" In Teamsterville: Culture Patterns Of Role Enactment In An Urban Neighborhood. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61, 13-22.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2011). The Invisible Weight Of Whiteness: The Racial Grammar Of Everyday Life In Contemporary America. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35, 1-22.

Rickford, J. (n.d.). An early study of the speech of young black children in California: why it matters. *American Speech* 2014, 89(2), 121-142.

Makoni, S. (2003). *Black linguistics: Language, society, and politics in Africa and the Americas*. London: Routledge.

Lewis, S., & Russell, A. (2011). Being embedded: A way forward for ethnographic research. *Ethnography*, 398-416.

Philipsen, G. (2000). Permission to Speak the Discourse of Difference: A Case Study. *Research on Language & Social Interaction*, 33(2), 213-234.

Rice, Patricia. "Linguistic Profiling: The Sound of Your Voice May Determine If You Get That Apartment or Not." Washington University Newsroom (2006): n. pag. Web. <http://news.wustl.edu/news/Pages/6500.aspx>

Rigoglioso, M. (2014). Stanford linguist says prejudice toward African American dialect can result in unfair rulings. *Stanford Report*. Retrieved from <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/december/vernacular-trial-testimony-120214.html>