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COURSE SYLLABUS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION & THEATRE ARTS

COMM 401
INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY
SPRING 2016

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.
  - ◦ ePortfolio
  - ◦ Exams

- Establish an integrative framework that will provide a context for each theory and show relationships among them.
  - ◦ ePortfolio

- Stimulate application of the theories outside of the classroom.
  - ◦ ePortfolio

- Develop ability to analyze and explain a variety communication theories.
  - ◦ ePortfolio

COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- **A.** Required Materials
  Griffin, E. (2013). *A First Look at Communication Theory* (8th ed).
    ISBN-13: 9780073534305 (I will also accept the 7th & 9th editions)

  Note: Course material is not in your textbooks can be found in the LMS.

- **B.** PLE, LMS, and email
  Students in this course need to ensure their technology (computers, software, Internet access) functions effectively. We use three technologies extensively: the PLE, a Learning Management System (LMS—such as Blackboard or Canvas), and

to a lesser extent, email. Each student enrolled in this course is required to have fully functioning accounts that you check daily. Please be sure to read each email or posting thoroughly—questions about matters that have been covered in the syllabus or the LMS do not make a positive impression, and will not be answered. Questions related to the course should be posted to *LMS > Discussions > Questions for the Professor*, so all students have the benefit of the answer. Email should be reserved for items relevant to the individual alone, and should include the CRN so you may be easily identified. Email sent from an email account outside the ODU system will not be acknowledged. Please adhere to formal email protocol (salutation, full sentences, proper grammar, closing, signature). Students will be held accountable for all material on the LMS and via email.

        Note: Attachments to e-mail are not accepted..

C.   Adobe Connect
This course may utilize Adobe Connect for a variety of purposes, including my Office Hours, and occasionally class meetings. Adobe Connect is accessed through the LMS. Instructions will be provided as needed.

D.   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 dictionary nor Wikipedia are allowed as sources*.

E.   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.

F.   Feedback
Your instructor will give feedback in order to help you improve, however, success is dependent on the student. There are no draft reviews, resubmissions, or other practices that do not realistically reflect what individuals encounter in life. Students who need assistance should contact the Writing Center or otherwise work to improve themselves.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A.   Textbook readings

B.   Lecture
For each theory, a 20-30 minute lecture will be posted. Lectures are available during the module only (they will open and close with the modules).

C.   ePortfolio
An ePortfolio is a way for students to establish a professional presence online and showcase some of the knowledge and skills they have acquired. In this course, the ePortfolio will be divided into four main projects:

Prerequisite - *Create or Curate*
The creation of a website is something of a prerequisite—you are expected to have a website built on Wix in order to be able to complete the work for this class. If you have done an ePortfolio for another class, you'll want to be sure it's polished (curated); if you haven't, you'll need to invest a few hours in website creation so you are prepared to submit the assignments required in this class. The overall quality of the website will be graded when the first assignment is submitted according to the standards posted on the LMS, and failure to meet average (C) standards at minimum will negatively affect the grade for your assignment.
    Audience: Employers, colleagues, student peers, and instructor

Problem Posing
This assignment will ask you to complete a case study related to two different approaches to communication theory.
    Genre: Case Study
    Audience: Employers, colleagues (peers), instructor

Problem Solving
This assignment will ask you apply communication theories to real-life experiences (personal or professional).
    Genre: Application
    Audience: Instructor, colleagues (peers), prospective employers

Public Presentation
This assignment will ask you to design, edit, and post a video discussing the usefulness of communication theory (the discipline, not the course) on YouTube.
    Genre: YouTube presentation
    Audience: Employers, colleagues (peers), instructor

Reflection
This assignment will ask you to write a Reflection on what you have
learned during the semester. Quality of entire website will be graded.
>   **Genre:** Blog Post
>   **Audience:** Student peers, instructor

D.   Deadlines
This course is designed to reflect what happens in our professional lives,
when deadlines are fixed and missing them means damage to reputation, not
getting the job/paid, etc. Instructions and deadlines for all course
requirements will be posted on the LMS. There are no late or emailed
submissions for any reason, including problems with your technology. *Do
not wait until the last minute to submit your work*.

E.   Exams
There will be two exams designed to measure your understanding of the theories
covered during the semester. Exams will be administered on the LMS using the
Lockdown Browser (LDB). It is your responsibility, as the student, to find a
reasonably quiet place in which to take the exam, and to make sure your technology
is functioning properly. There are *no* makeups of missed exams.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

A.   Points

ePortfolio		200 points
Exams		100 points
	Total	300 points

B.   Scale (Grades are truncated, not rounded)

Final Grade	Points	Grade Points
A	94-100	4.00
A-	90-93.9	3.70
B+	88-89.9	3.30
B	84-87.9	3.00
B-	80-83.9	2.70
C+	78-79.9	2.30
C	74-77.9	2.00
C-	70-73.9	1.70
D+	68-69.9	1.30
D	64-67.9	1.00
D-	60-63.9	0.70
F	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.	Grades
Consistent with ODU's policy on appealing grades, in this course the basis for a grade appeal is that the grade was awarded through prejudice or caprice. The burden of proof rests with the student. Therefore, any request to discuss a grade must be done within one week of its entry on the LMS, and must include the following:

1. An outline of the assignment's requirements, including direct reference to the syllabus and material on the LMS.
2. An explanation of how the submission/performance specifically met (and/or exceeded) those requirements.
3. How, specifically, the assigned grade does not accurately reflect the *quality* of the submission/performance, a*nd the objective standard* you used to ascertain said quality.
4. Evidence of prejudice or caprice.
5. Format and tone that demonstrate an understanding of effective communication (e.g., an understanding of hierarchy, effective persuasion, and standards of scholarly excellence).

Failure to follow this procedure will result in refusal, and subsequent submissions will not be considered.

D.	Accommodations
Students are encouraged to self-disclose disabilities that have been verified by the Office of Educational Accessibility by providing Accommodation Letters to their instructors early in the semester in order to start receiving accommodations. Accommodations will not be made until the Accommodation Letters are provided to instructors each semester.

E.	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."

F.	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 that 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 5% deduction per occurrence from the course total.
[http://studentservices.odu.edu/osja/ccc_pamphlet.pdf]

G. 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.

H. Academic Integrity
Solid character is imperative, not only in this class but in every aspect of our lives. As ambassadors of Old Dominion University, interns must hold themselves to the highest behavioral standards. Integrity requires us to approach everyone—self and others—with an ethic of respect that is reflected in our behavior and includes courtesy, self-discipline, restraint, honesty, and integrity. Off-color, offensive, insulting, or rude language, behavior, or dress shows a very poor grasp of effective communication, and can damage the reputation of the internship program. 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 minimum 5% deduction per occurrence from the course total; egregious infractions will go before the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
[http://studentservices.odu.edu/osja/ccc_pamphlet.pdf]

As a student of Old Dominion University, you have pledged 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, if you utilize Cliff's Notes

or an equivalent, or if you claim to have submitted work that you did not. 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. For guidance on how to avoid plagiarism, *see the final page of this syllabus.*

Items submitted electronically—written work and tests—have the Honor Pledge as an understood condition of submission. 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 Conduct and Academic Integrity. Please see your student handbook for information.

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.

This syllabus is subject to change with notice.

Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA, 23529

December 1, 2015

About Plagiarism: A Guide for College of Arts and Letters Students[1]

What is plagiarism?

The ODU *Catalog* defines plagiarism as follows: "A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she reproduces someone else's work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group."

Hints for Avoiding Plagiarism:

* *More than three words copied in sequence is plagiarism.* This is ordinarily a good yardstick to use when wondering whether or not quotes are appropriate; they are, if you are copying more than three words in sequence that are not part of a common phrase (e.g. "up-to-date").
* *One source is not "common knowledge."* Common knowledge does not require citation. But something is not common knowledge if you have found just one source for the information.
* *When in doubt, cite!* If you have any doubt about whether or not to cite a source, err on the side of making the attribution.
* *If your co-author sounds surprisingly eloquent, make sure the contribution is his/her own.* We often work in groups and co-author papers and projects. You should ask the question of your co-author if you doubt the work is his/her own. In group work, you are responsible for the project/ paper in its entirety.
* *Look away.* When you are writing, do not have open books or papers in front of you as you type. Read your sources, and then put what you have read into your own words.
* *Writing is hard work.* Paraphrasing is relatively easy, writing is hard. Learning to be a good writer is part of what your college education is about. Staring at an empty screen does become less daunting over time!
* *Just because it's on the Internet, doesn't mean it's yours.* The Internet is a fantastic resource and search engines are terrific research tools. But what you find on the Internet was written by someone. You must cite Internet web sites, and if you use a quote, use appropriate quotation procedures.
* *Paraphrasing is more than changing a verb tense or reordering a list.* Essentially, paraphrasing is used to summarize another author's text. A paraphrased passage must be cited.
* *Use a Style Guide.* Purchase a style guide and refer to it. Your instructor may suggest one that is specific to an academic discipline. You may also ask a reference librarian for recommendations.

The High Cost of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can ruin your reputation and cost you your professional career, along with the respect of your peers and family. Plagiarism at Old Dominion University is an act of academic dishonesty that has serious consequences. Note that plagiarism is specifically covered in the ODU Honor Pledge. Refer to your course syllabus and the Student *Handbook* and the Office of Student Affairs for details about sanctions and penalties for this behavior.   07/16/08

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[1] This information is adapted from a guide developed by Old Dominion University's College of Business and Public Administration.