COM 452, Building Communication Theory

Syllabus

Spring 2007

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<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Tom Kelleher, Ph.D.</th>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tkell@hawaii.edu">tkell@hawaii.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Times and Place</td>
<td>Tuesday and Thursday, 9-10:15 a.m. George Hall 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Crawford Hall 314, 956-9944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>Monday, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. By appointment.</td>
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Resources

Required Text


Strongly Recommended Texts (if you don't buy/own one of these, make sure you have access for reference)


Other Assigned Readings

Outside readings and research may be assigned from the Web, library resources and handouts throughout the semester.

Course Overview

General Description

As described in the UH Manoa course catalog, we will cover "major theories of communication in terms of requirements for a theory, theory development, associated research, and application." COM 201 is a prerequisite, as is junior standing as a COM major.

You might be familiar with a handful of broad communication theories from COM 201 (for example, agenda setting or cultivation) or theories from other communication courses you have taken in interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, or international communication. In this class we will study communication theories in greater depth. We will look at how people have developed and tested these theories over the years, and how the theories can be applied to real work in communication careers such as public relations, journalism, multimedia design, video production, and organizational communication training. Of course, the theories we discuss also will apply in your life as a student, scholar and member of a wide range of communities.

Objectives

We will study the process of theory-building, and the reasons for doing so. We will study communication theories, and we will work to apply them in class activities and projects. If things go really well, we help develop some theory ourselves. You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the material covered in this course through exams, activities, class discussions, written assignments, and presentations.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- Define theory
- Analyze various communication theories
• Apply communication theories to your everyday life
• Apply communication theories to work you will encounter in communication careers
• Write a theoretical literature review
• Form sound hypotheses or focused research questions to advance theory
• Design ways to test hypotheses or answer focused research questions
• Critically evaluate communication theories
• Consider theoretical options for a thesis study

**Expectations**
Your final grade will be based on exams, presentations, written assignments, participation and attendance.

**Exams**
Two exams will cover material from class lectures, class discussion, activities, handouts and assigned readings. Exams may include multiple-choice, short-answer and essay questions. THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UP EXAMS without proper documentation for your absence, which must be provided before the absence if at all possible. A missed exam will count as a zero.

**Written Assignments**
Written assignments -- mainly the literature review and pilot study report -- must be typed and double-spaced using APA style. Effective scholarly writing requires careful attention to editing, so refine your writing through several drafts. Check spelling and punctuation. One letter grade (or 10%) will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.

**Participation**
The participation portion of your grade will include scheduled activities as well as unannounced opportunities and day-to-day, in-class discussion. Your participation in class discussions should reflect your reading and preparation. From time to time, short homework assignments might be required. For example, I might ask you to bring an article to discuss, to complete a brief survey, or to bring a typed outline of one of your assignments. Though these assignments won't be graded on an A-F scale, missing the assignment will result in at least a one-point deduction from your participation score at the end of the semester.

**Attendance and Punctuality**
I also will consider class attendance and punctuality when I assign your class participation grade. Failure to attend class will result in a zero for any assignments collected that day. In case of absence due to emergencies (e.g., death in family or serious illness), you must notify me and provide appropriate documentation within a week after first missing class. Excuses for planned absences must be given to me in writing and must be approved one week in advance of the missed class period.

Come to class on time and meet deadlines. If you miss an in-class assignment because you are late or absent, you will not be given the opportunity to make it up without a documented, university-approved excuse.

**Respecting Your Fellow Students**
You and your fellow students will have many opportunities to contribute to this class. Information provided by students may be used as material for assignments and exams. Contributions to in-class activities and discussions will be considered favorably in participation grading. "Negative" contributions such as arriving late, engaging in distracting side-conversations, and making off-topic comments and non-collegial remarks will hurt your participation grade.

**Grading Weight**

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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Term paper (including presentation)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class activities and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Final Grade Requirements**
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D = 60-69%

http://www2.hawaii.edu/~tkell/452/452syllabus.htm
F = Below 60%

There will be absolutely no adjustment of grades on an individual basis (e.g., "I'm only one point away from a B, and I must get a B because I'm on probation.") Any requests to do so will be seen as an attempted breach of fairness to the rest of the class.

Special Accommodations
Students requiring special accommodations must notify the instructor and present appropriate supporting documentation by the end of the second week of class.

Seeking Help
This course should provide a great learning experience for all of us. The success of the course depends largely on effective student-teacher interaction. Don't feel like you have to have a pressing problem to talk to me. I look forward to hearing your input. I'll be available during my office hours unless announced otherwise, and I'm also willing to set up an appointment if the office hours don't fit your schedule.

The phone number for the School of Communications is 956-8715. The school chair is Professor Gerald Kato.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. I take cheating issues very seriously, and I've already had some unpleasant experiences dealing with cases of plagiarism this academic year. Please see me if you have any questions about academic honesty, and I'll be more than receptive to discussion of such issues in advance of you submitting your work.

Preliminary Class Timeline
Please make a careful note of the exam and assignment dates. Make sure that you do not have any scheduling conflicts. The exam dates are very unlikely to change. Other topics and readings are subject to change by the professor. Additional readings and assignments may be added as we go.

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<th>Class Days</th>
<th>General Topics</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| Jan. 9, 11     | • Introduction to the course  
                 • Expectations and syllabus review  
                 • Description of course projects, self-introductions, personal goals for course | Read syllabus and introduction to "Part I" (pp. 1-2) by 1/11 |
| Jan. 16, 18    | • Introduction to studying communication                                      | Read Chapter 1 by 1/16                                   |
| Jan. 23, 25    | • Points of view about theory                                                 | Read Chapter 2 by 1/23                                   |
| Jan. 30, Feb. 1| • Paradigms and communication theory                                          | Read Chapter 3 by 1/30                                   |
| Feb. 6, 8      | • Contexts, traits and states                                                 | Read Chapter 4 by 2/6                                   |
| Feb. 13, 15    | • Persuasion                                                                  | Read Chapter 5 by 2/13                                   |
| Feb. 20, 22    | • Review and Exam 1                                                           | Exam 1 on February 22                                    |

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<th>Date</th>
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| Feb. 27, March 1 | • Conducting literature searches using various social scientific databases  
• Workshop on conducting literature reviews in communication studies | Field trip Tuesday to Hamilton Library (Room 113)  
APA Style, reading TBA |
| March 6, 8    | • Group contexts                                                    | Read Chapter 9 by 3/6                                                  |
| March 13, 15  | • Organizational contexts  
• Bibliography for pilot study                                       | Read Chapter 10 by 3/13  
Draft bibliography due 3/15 |
| March 20, 22  | • Mass media contexts  
• Lit review outlining                                                   | Read Chapter 11 by 3/20                                                 |
| Spring Break, March 26-30 |                                                                      |                                                                      |
| April 3, 5    | • Applied contexts  
• Discuss project progress                                             | Read Chapter 12 by 4/3  
Outline and RQs/hypotheses due 4/5 |
| April 10, 12  | • Review and Exam 2                                                  | Exam 2 on April 12                                                     |
| April 17, 19  | • Supervised work on literature review, re-outlining if necessary, pilot study | Lit review draft due 4/17  
Methods for pilot study due 4/19 |
| April 24, 26  | • Conduct pilot studies, individual meetings as needed               | Draft "discussion" section due 4/26                                   |
| May 1         | • Discuss pilot studies                                              | Complete written paper due 5/1                                         |
| Tuesday, May 8 (9:45 - 11:45 a.m.) | • Final exam period - Poster session                             |                                                                      |