

**COMM 370- FAMILY COMMUNICATION Fall 2021 (online nonsynchronous)**  
**Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite** 8/17/21

**Professor: Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite**, Willa Cather Professor of Communication

**Pronouns:** she/her/hers

**Office:** 353 Louise Pound Hall (teaching and holding office hours *remotely* this semester)

**Phone:** 472-2070 (main Communication Studies office).

**Email:** [dbraithwaite@unl.edu](mailto:dbraithwaite@unl.edu) (email encouraged and usually the fastest way to reach me. I try and respond within 24 hours or sooner Monday-Friday)

**Office Hours** Wednesday 1-3 PM via Zoom <https://unl.zoom.us/j/93009206655> and by appointment (email me @ [dbraithwaite@unl.edu](mailto:dbraithwaite@unl.edu))

**Course Web Site:** Canvas (find syllabus, calendar, and assignments in first module on Canvas. All are dated and the professor will inform you if updates are made)

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Galvin, K. M., Braithwaite, D. O., Schrodt, P., & Bylund, C. L. (2018). *Family communication: Cohesion and change* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Routledge. [**\*\*make sure you have the 10<sup>th</sup> edition** as there are important changes from earlier editions]

Additional readings will be in weekly Canvas modules

**COMM 370 Course Description & Objectives:**

Across our lives, family communication, in all its forms, represents the most foundational aspects of our relationships and who we are as individuals. How we choose to communicate and relate with family are some of the most important choices we make. The study of family in the discipline of Communication Studies has a strong social science core and humanities core, making unique and important contributions to (a) interdisciplinary research and theory in the study of family, (b) professionals and organizations intersecting family, and (c) family members themselves. Together this semester we will study family communication theory, research, and practice, taking a special focus on how relationships and selves within families are made, re-made, and legitimized; talked into being in interaction across a variety of family forms.

Our class theme is to work together to "*expand our repertoire of communicative choices*" by studying a blend of research, theory, and skills that are important to understanding and being able to practice family communication to help us make competent, and our best, decisions we can about how to communicate. We will accomplish these goals by reading, watching video-recorded interviews with different family communication scholars, reflecting our understanding on weekly quizzes, and completing a semester project that helps students better understand and translate for a lay audience what they are learning about communication in family relationships.

**Learning in an Asynchronous Online Class:**

Learning involves knowledge + experience; it is *active, rather than* passive, in both face-to-face and distance learning. We are teachers and learners together. *As a student your job* is meaningful participation via thorough preparation and making an ongoing effort to engage the material mindfully and applying what you are learning to your life and experience. Your job involves reaching out for assistance when you need it.

*As the professor my job is to provide the materials and structure for you to be able to read, watch, learn, and apply the material each week to be ready for your weekly quiz and to work on your semester project. I believe strongly in what we are doing here together. I want you to learn and succeed. I am here to guide and help you in any reasonable way I can. Please visit my office hours, contact me via email, or set up an appointment to meet.*

**Reaching Out.** I do understand we still find ourselves in somewhat uncertain and unprecedented time with Covid and other stressors. Please reach out to me and/or to other campus resources as needed: <https://caps.unl.edu/2019-novel-coronavirus-and-covid-19-response> <https://covid19.unl.edu/information-students#health-support>

**Mission of the Department of Communication Studies:**

The role and mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, and societies. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages. The department's research, teaching, and service devote attention to understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities.

**The Department of Communication Studies is committed to achieving inclusive excellence** as outlined by the university's Office of Diversity and Inclusion <https://diversity.unl.edu/diversity-home>. As Communication scholars and teachers, we believe communities and relationships are enriched when we give voice and value to diverse perspectives based on “group and social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and (disability) <http://www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/demographics-identity/dkaplanpaper.htm>, historically underrepresented populations, and cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations.” We are committed to continual reflection and refinement of curriculum, scholarly endeavors, and community engagement to achieve goals of inclusiveness and equal opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to discuss these with your instructors, the chair of the department, Dr. Jody Kellas <https://comm.unl.edu/directory-group>, or members of the department's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion: <https://comm.unl.edu/committees>, or the UNL Office of Diversity and Inclusion (linked above).

**Student concerns and feedback:**

Your experience with remote learning in this course is important to me. If you have questions, concerns, or positive feedback, please contact me at [dbraithwaite@unl.edu](mailto:dbraithwaite@unl.edu) or leave me a phone message at 402 472-2070 (I usually receive messages within 24 hours during the work week). I will provide you a feedback survey for the class early in the semester to see how things are going for us as a class. If I am unable to respond, or you believe I have not adequately addressed your concerns, you may contact the department chair Dr. Jody Kellas (contact info: [jkellas2@unl.edu](mailto:jkellas2@unl.edu)).

**COMM 370 Meets ACE Learning Outcome #6:** Use knowledge, theories, and research perspectives, such as statistical methods or observational accounts, appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate social systems or human behaviors.

**ACE Objectives Include:**

- (a) an enhanced understanding of the complexity and consequences of defining family,
- (b) a greater knowledge of the theories and models guiding family research,
- (c) greater familiarity with research on a variety of family processes and contexts, and
- (d) a recognition and appreciation of the diversity of family forms and experiences.

(e) a better understanding of your past, present, and future family interactions and expectations of family functioning.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CLASS MEMBERS

**Completing Work.** Assignments are due by the date and time assigned, out of fairness to all class members. Late work deductions are 10% per 24 hours late, weekends included. Class members are encouraged to keep a copy of all work and to make regular backups of computer files (computers and flash drives can crash). Class members must complete *all* work to pass this course. If you have an emergency surrounding the due date, contact the professor *before* work is due: [dbraithwaite@unl.edu](mailto:dbraithwaite@unl.edu)

**Pass/No Pass:** Class members taking the course Pass/Fail must earn a grade of 74% (“C”) or better to receive credit for the course. C- grades are not passing grades. *For Fall 2022, the deadline to change a course to Pass/No Pass is October 15 and to withdraw is November 12.*

**Perspectives.** In our class readings or interactions, we may be exposed to perspectives that are new or different than our own. Class members, students and professor included, are asked to treat respectfully the opinions and experiences of others in the class. One does not need to agree with another person to listen, try and understand their perspectives, and treat others respectfully. Please talk with me if you have questions or concerns.

**Accommodations.** The professor has a long scholarly and personal commitment to issues surrounding disability. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive services by SSD or accommodations in this class, students *must be registered* with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 117 Louise Pound Hall, (402) 472-3787 (voice or TTY).

**Contesting Grades on Quizzes and Assignments.** Learning and evaluating work is an inherently communicative process. You are welcome to ask questions after you have received work back and have first taken the time to read the feedback against the assignment and rubrics.

If you are asking me to reconsider an evaluation of a paper or quiz, submit an argument in writing. Arguments are clear, specific, well-supported reasoning for your perspective that will help the me understand your thinking. Submit your argument to Dr. Braithwaite via email *within one week* of the quiz grade posting or receiving a paper grade: [dbraithwaite@unl.edu](mailto:dbraithwaite@unl.edu). *No arguments accepted after one week of grades being posted for a quiz or assignment.*

**Incompletes** are used rarely and must be negotiated and approved by the professor *before* the end of the semester. I will write up an agreement for us.

**Communication with you:** I will send a weekly overview via email and Canvas announcement. I will send other periodic messages and updates out via email and Canvas announcement, including changes to the syllabus or calendar or clarifications on assignments. Be sure to check your email and Canvas announcements regularly.

## ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

**Weekly Questions** for each assigned reading, the interview, and some thinking and application questions are provided in your weekly module on Canvas. All quiz questions will come from the answers to the Weekly Questions. Use this document as you read (suggestion: do the readings and watch the video first and then go back and answer the questions). *You do not turn in the Weekly Questions.*

**Weekly Quizzes:** To help students check their comprehension and to spread testing out weekly rather than in large exams, we will have 12 weekly quizzes via Canvas (all but weeks 1, 9, 14, 16, 17). *Quizzes open Wednesdays 5 PM and are due no later than Thursdays at 11:59 \*PM\*.* Quizzes will include multiple choice, true-false questions, short answer and/or fill-in questions. Note: Canvas will post a quiz score from the multiple guess answers before I grade any short answers.

Students have ample opportunity to ask questions over the material in office hours (Wednesday 1-3 PM), via email, or via a zoom appointment. Consult with the professor *early* in the semester if you are not doing well on quizzes and we can talk about strategies for preparation and taking quizzes.

There will be (a) one practice quiz on Week #2 (not counted toward the final grade), and (b) 11 additional quizzes. *We will drop the two (2) lowest quiz scores* in case a student does not fare well on a quiz, is ill, or is absent. With dropping two scores there are *no make-up, early, or late quizzes given.*

**Semester Project:** There is one semester project consisting of four (4) assignments that build on each other. The project is designed to give you the opportunity to study family communication topic and concepts that is meaningful to you and to apply this knowledge to your own family communication, ending up preparing a translational strategy where you are writing and analyzing a blog post or infographic presenting your understanding and well-supported advice. My goal is for this to be a very practical and useful project. Find the full assignment and complete sample papers for all four assignments is in the top course module called “Couse Materials” on Canvas.

| Assign | Title   | Focus  | Points | Due   |
|--------|---|--|--------|---|
| #1     | What I Want to Study: Project Concept Worksheet/Meet with Dr. Braithwaite | Identify family communication concepts to be addressed; Planning for project                                       | 20     | Saturday September 11th, no later than 11:59 PM           |
| #2     | What the Experts Think/ Survey Draft                                      | Read and report on research literature and theories; Draft of survey questions for “real people” for Assignment #3 | 75     | Saturday October 9 <sup>th</sup> , no later than 11:59 PM |
| #3     | What Real People Think: Survey Results/ blog or infographic Plan          | Report results of survey analysis; Plan for blog or infographic for Assignment #4                                  | 75     | Saturday November 6th, no later than 11:59 PM             |
| #4     | What I Think: Translation and Analysis                                    | Write blog or infographic; Analysis of blog or infographic and conclusions   | 75     | Saturday December 11th, no later than 11:59 PM            |

**Extra Credit:** There will be different extra credit opportunities announced at the end of the modules on Canvas. Students may earn up to 10 points of extra credit. All extra credit must be completed **no later than Tuesday December 14th 11:59 PM.**

## EVALUATION OF WORK

Communication Studies faculty assume that all students enter courses with the ability to earn at least a “C” grade in the course. Students who meet *minimum* requirements will earn a “C” for that work. Students who earn “B” and “A” grades *exceed* the minimum requirements. Students will be graded based on expectations appropriate for their class level and the program.

**A= EXCELLENT.** *Greatly exceeds* requirements. Shows outstanding creativity, skill, initiative, effort

**B= GOOD.** *Exceeds* requirements. Shows substantial creativity, skills, initiative, and/or effort

**C= AVERAGE.** *Meets* the requirements in *every* respect, but does not exceed requirements

**D= BELOW AVERAGE.** Meets *some* requirements, but *deficient* in others

**E= POOR.** Deficient in *most or all* requirements

### Grading Scale:

|           |                      |
|-----------|----------------------|
| A+        | 98-100%              |
| A         | 94-97%               |
| <b>A-</b> | <b>90-93%</b>        |
| B+        | 88-90%               |
| B         | 84-87%               |
| <b>B-</b> | <b>80-83%</b>        |
| C+        | 77-80%               |
| C         | 74-77%               |
| <b>C-</b> | <b>70-73%</b>        |
| D+        | 68-70%               |
| D         | 64-67%               |
| <b>D-</b> | <b>60-63%</b>        |
| F         | <b>59% and below</b> |

| POINTDISTRIBUTION  | Points     | Due  |
|--|------------|--|
| Quizzes 9 @ 20 points<br>Week 2 Practice Quiz +<br>11 additional quizzes<br>( <i>dropping</i> two lowest<br>scores) (20 points each) | 180        | Weekly no later than Thursday 11:59 PM       |
| Meet with Dr. Braithwaite during<br>Week 2 (15 minutes)  | 10         | Schedule by Saturday 8/28 11:59 PM           |
| Assignment #1  | 20         | Saturday September 4, no later than 11:59 PM |
| Assignment #2  | 75         | Saturday October 9, no later than 11:59 PM   |
| Assignment #3  | 75         | Saturday November 6, no later than 11:59 PM  |
| Assignment #4  | 75         | Saturday December 4, no later than 11:59 PM  |
| <b>Total Points</b>  | <b>435</b> |  |
| Extra Credit <i>Optional</i><br>(maximum of 10 points)   | 10         | Tuesday December 14, 11:59 <u>PM</u>         |

## ACADEMIC & PERSONAL INTEGRITY

**Violations of academic integrity are serious and will result in automatic failure of the assignment and/or the class, and referral to the proper university officials.**

Dr. Stephen Cooper of Marshall University articulates my position on academic dishonesty: “Don't do it. Plagiarism is a fool's shortcut. Not only do you cheat yourself of the opportunity to learn and grow, but also you expose yourself to severe academic penalties. Plagiarism is dishonest. In the I Ching there is a saying that sincerity inspires respect. Earn your self-respect through your own efforts.”

**All work a student submits is expected to be the student's own and must be work completed for this class and assignment.**

**Academic dishonesty includes handing in another's work or part of another's work as your own, turning in one of your old papers for a current class, turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, presenting a group project as your work solely, purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers, using of those materials written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes, books, flash drives, phones, the internet, or other study aids, if prohibited in a class, or otherwise obtaining another's answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity. Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not.**

**Students wishing to build on an old project or work on a similar topic in two classes must discuss this with both professors. If starting with work done by a group, students must have permission of those group members to use that work.**

**You must keep all your original data for projects (surveys or contact information for respondents) and be prepared to present them to the professor when requested.**

**Plagiarism** means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This includes your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources, and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual of the American Psychological Association). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing and attribution is not an acceptable excuse.

*I believe strongly that academic dishonesty hurts us all. It makes a mockery of what we are all doing here together. This professor will pursue academic dishonesty vigorously and all violations have serious consequences. The penalty is severe, and it will hurt you now and in the future. Please do not do it. No one wants to see you have these kinds of problems with your work; start tasks early and seek help when you need it. Come to a faculty member for help if you are at all unsure about any of these issues or seek help at the campus UNL Writing Assistance Center, see <https://www.unl.edu/writing/home> for info and appointments*