

## COMM 970A- INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Spring Semester, 2018

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*Office Hours:* Drop in and by appointment (in-person or phone appointments welcomed)

### Required Readings:

Braithwaite, D. O., & Schrodt, P., (Eds.). (2015). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional required readings will be assigned and available

### MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The 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, technology, and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts. The department's research and teaching devote particular attention to scholarly initiatives aimed at understanding and explaining the role of communication in (a) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing for social change, (b) constituting individual and family health, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The research, theory, and practice of interpersonal communication represents a vibrant area of our discipline and Communication scholars are part of the core of the interdisciplinary study of personal relationships. This semester we will study multiple theoretical, conceptual, and methodological approaches to understanding interpersonal communication in personal relationships. We will cover historical roots to current approaches in the development and study of interpersonal communication and the blend of research, theory, and applications important to understanding and practicing effective interpersonal communication in our various relationships. We'll place a particular focus on theories used to undergird research, on interpersonal communication. We will engage with several theorists from the Braithwaite & Schrodt book via Skype. We will also consider how IPC functions to co-create, constitute, and remake selves and relationships and we will unpack this concept which many scholars cite as central to their work. We will apply our knowledge by examining a series of discourse dependent relationships and will think these through from a variety of perspectives. In all we do we will consider the central role of interpersonal communication to our three departmental scholarly foci of Health and Well-being, Identity and Difference, and Civic Engagement as we work to expand our repertoire of communicative choices as scholars, teachers, and persons. *Important note:* As you are taking seminars from our tremendous IFH faculty, I am not covering theories they author and/or engage in those seminars as I know these will appear as prominent in your education and work here. Thus, I am choosing to focus on rounding out your education with other theories you will not have read or worked with as prominently.

### EXPECTATIONS OF CLASS MEMBERS

**Attendance & Contribution:** Leland Griffin said that knowledge + experience = learning, recognizing learning as *active*, rather than passive. Especially in a graduate course, we are all teachers and learners together. Therefore, your thorough and thoughtful preparation, presence, and active, meaningful participation are expected and are central to your own learning and that of your class colleagues as well. Class members are expected to be in attendance for all class sessions and to attend entire class sessions. Inform the professor if you are not going to be in class, will be late etc.

It is important that members are *thoroughly prepared* for class by completing all readings, making effective notes (which I have found seems to be a *challenge* for those reading electronically), *thoughtfully integrating* the material, and are prepared to discuss and work with the reading material in class. While I don't expect you to memorize every detail in a reading, I do expect that you come with very a *good working knowledge and some notes from your reading*. Please bring questions about the readings, notes about points of disagreement, and links with other readings you are doing. Meaningful class contribution is expected and part of the final evaluation of your performance this semester.

**Perspectives.** We may be exposed to perspectives different than our own in our readings, class experiences, or from what class members discuss in the class. Class members are asked argue effectively and to treat with respect the opinions and experiences of others in the class. One does not need to agree with someone to treat them respectfully. Talk with me if you have concerns, please.

**Completion of work.** Assignments are due at the time and date assigned. This policy is enforced in fairness to all class members. If you have an emergency, of course keep me posted. Deductions are taken for late work (10% per 24 hours late, weekends included), except in extreme circumstances and when arrangements are made prior to due dates. All work is to be submitted electronically. Computer, email, printer, or transportation problems do *not* constitute an excuse for late or incomplete work. Class members must complete *all* assignments and exams to pass this course. Class members are encouraged to keep a copy of all work handed in and to make *regular* backups of computer files.

**Technology.** It has become necessary to articulate policy on technology use for graduate students. Students are welcome to use laptop computers in class to take notes for our class. Any other uses of a computer (other work, email, internet sites, etc.) take away from the academic atmosphere (and colleagues do notice and are affected) and is prohibited. If you cannot abide by this policy, take notes with paper and pen. Turn off ringers on mobile phones and do not check them or text message during class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know in advance. I think it is fine to keep phones reachable in case there is an emergency in or around the classroom. If you wish to use recording devices in class, you are required talk this over with me and receive my permission in advance.

**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 for academic accommodation. 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 accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

**Incompletes** are rarely given and must be negotiated prior to the end of the semester.

**Pass-Fail:** Class members taking the course Pass/Fail must earn a grade of 80% or better to receive credit.

**Style Manual.** *All* written work is to be formatted conforming strictly to the American Psychological Association 6<sup>th</sup> ed. style. (or a style manual from another discipline- talk with the professor). APA manuals are available in the bookstore (comm. doctoral students should own one) and there are good websites for general issues, e.g.:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> <http://www.icaheadq.org/pubs/apacrib.pdf>

I am *very* serious about conformity to APA. It is an important academic skill and habit that communicates careful work.

## ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

**Exams:** There will be one essay exam, covering class discussions and readings, partly open book and notes. You will receive a detailed review list and may bring some notes with you. If the class needs it, we will add a second exam.

**Semester Project:** To help class members meet their goals, three options for the format of the project are offered. A complete description of the projects will be provided. Each project will consist of two related papers. These papers are designed to help to develop and hone research and writing skills as well as learn about the specific topic and content.

**IPC Theory Assignment:** Each student will lead a discussion and highlight one theory in Braithwaite & Schrodt book and identify a study for us to read. Goal is to gain deeper knowledge and give us additional perspective on the theory. Prepare a short outline and presentation.

**Evaluation** is based on this general breakdown:

Exam	25%
Theory Assignment	20%
Semester Project	40%
Contribution to Class/Colleagues	15%

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will result in automatic failure of the class, and referral to the proper university officials. The work a student submits is expected to be the student's own work and must be work completed for that particular

class and assignment. 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. 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 written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes, books, flash drives, phones, the internet, or other study aids, 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. You must keep all your original data for projects (i.e. articles read, questionnaires, interview audio recordings) and be prepared to present them to the professor when asked.

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 such as APA (American Psychological Association). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing and attribution is not an acceptable excuse.

I appreciate the perspective Dr. Stephen Cooper of Marshall University articulates on plagiarism: "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."

I believe strongly that academic dishonesty hurts us all. It makes a mockery of what we are all doing here together. The penalty is severe and it will hurt you now and in the future and this professor will pursue academic dishonesty vigorously and all violations will be reported to the university as well. Please do not do it. No one wants to see you have these kinds of problems with your work, so please 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 the campus UNL Writing Assistance Center: 472-8803, Andrews Hall 129.