

COMM 970B SEMINAR IN FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Fall Semester, 2013

Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite

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Office Hours: Drop in and by appointment (in-person or phone appointments welcomed)
Course Web Site: Blackboard: <http://courseinfo.unl.edu> (readings, project & writing handouts, assignments, updated calendar)

Required Readings:

Braithwaite, D. O., & Baxter, L. A. (Eds.), (2006). *Engaging theories in family communication: Multiple perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vangelisti, A. (2013). *The Routledge Handbook of Family Communication*. NY: Routledge.

Additional readings TBA

MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The role and mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies are 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 particular attention to understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Family research has been going strong across social science disciplines for at least 50 years. The study of family communication in our discipline began later, largely as part of the study of interpersonal communication (especially of marital couples). Family communication research grew exponentially as graduate courses in the topic sprang up and the Family Communication Commission of the National Communication Association was founded in the mid-1980s, becoming a Division in 1989. The *Journal of Family Communication* began in 2001 and represents the growth and maturity of this area of study. At present, the study of family communication in the discipline is vibrant and there is cross-disciplinary research on the topic. In addition, family communication scholarship is of relevance to professionals, the media, government, organizations, students, and family members themselves. We will examine family communication research and theory centered in the communication discipline and explore what is, or should, be the unique focus and contribution of family communication. We have an excellent base of literature on which to draw and much work that needs to be done. In addition we will explore the role and potential of translational scholarship in family communication. This is an advanced graduate level seminar. While participants may or may not have a background in family communication, we will take a doctoral-level approach and pace to the course.

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 posted if you are not going to be in class.

It is important that members are prepared for class by completing all readings deeply, taking effective notes, thoughtfully integrating the material, and bring prepared to discuss and work with the reading material in class. Excellent attendance and meaningful class participation are expected and are part of the final evaluation.

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 not to shy away from challenging discussions and, at all times, treat respectfully the opinions and experiences of others in the class. One does not need to agree with someone to treat them respectfully. If you have concerns, please come and talk with me.

Completion of work. Assignments are due at the time and date assigned. This policy is enforced in fairness to all class members. 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 and disks.

Technology. Sadly, it has become necessary to articulate policy on technology use, even for graduate students. Students are welcome to use *laptop computers* in class to take notes for our class. Any other use of a computer or technology during the class period (other work, email, internet sites, etc.) is prohibited as it takes away from the academic atmosphere, your quality participation in the class, data indicate that it distracts others, and in case you've wondered, class colleagues do come and talk with professors to express concerns. If you cannot abide by this policy, take handwritten notes. Turn off ringers on *mobile phones* and do not check them or text during class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know in advance. If you wish to use *recording devices* in class, please talk this over with me 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 before the end of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

Exams: There will be one or two essay exams covering class discussion and reading materials.

Semester Project: To help class members meet their goals in this course, several 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.

Expanding Theory Assignment. Each doctoral student will choose two theories in the Braithwaite & Baxter book (or talk with me about another) on which they have not done substantial work previously (other students will choose one theory). You will read primary and secondary sources about your theories, focusing on updating the information in the chapter (these chapters were completed in 2005), and help lead the discussion in class on the night your theory is presented.

Sharing Resources: I will create a *Dropbox* for this class and you'll receive an invitation. You'll post your Expanding Theory Assignment and readings in the dropbox for your colleagues to share. I'll be doing that as

well. I will create some other folders in there and talk with you about it in class. I'll encourage you to put other resources in the Dropbox that you'd like to share with others, e.g., could be additional articles (scholarly or popular press), materials that we could use if we teach family communication, etc.

Style Manual. All written work is to be formatted conforming strictly to the American Psychological Association 6th ed. style. (or a style manual from another discipline- talk with the professor). Purchase an APA manual and/or there are good websites for general issues, e.g.: <http://www.icahdq.org/publications/apacrib.pdf> http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html I am very serious about conformity to APA for graduate students.

Evaluation is based on this general breakdown:

Exams	30%
Semester Project	40%
Theory Discussion Leading	20%
Contributions	10%

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, questionnaires, interview audio and video recordings, field notes) and be prepared to present them to the professor when requested. xasske

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. Use the most recent version or the APA (American Psychological Association) style manual (or, if using another let me know). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing and citing 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 will add that 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. 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 UNL Writing Assistance Center: 472-8803, Andrews Hall 129.