

COMM 970B SEMINAR IN FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Fall Semester, 2021 8/18/21

Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite

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

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Office Hours TBA FTF and via Zoom. <https://unl.zoom.us/j/93009206655> t (email me @ dbraithwaite@unl.edu)

Required Readings:

Baxter, L. A. (2014). *Remaking "family" communicatively*. Peter Lang.

Braithwaite, D. O., Suter, E. A., & Floyd, K. (Eds.). (2018). *Engaging theories in family communication: Multiple perspectives*. (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Soliz, J., & Colaner C. W. (2020). *Navigating relationships in the modern family: Communication, identity and difference*. Peter Lang. [will be provided for you]

Additional readings [will be provided for you]

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Family scholarship has been developing across social science disciplines and in clinical practice for over 50 years. 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) research and theory in the interdisciplinary study of family, (b) professionals and organizations intersecting family, and (c) family members themselves. We will study family communication theory and research taking a special focus on how relationships and selves within families are made, re-made, and legitimized--talked into being and co-constructed in interaction--especially across evotypical family forms. This is a graduate-level seminar designed for students across disciplines. We will undertake a seminar style of learning with every member of the seminar contributing to shared learning and insight. Students will have multiple project options available, including mounting and carrying out a small data-based study (which they should launch with the professor prior to the semester), an in-depth literature project, or a project designed by students in conference with the professor (creative options, applied and translational projects welcomed).

* Braithwaite & Suter (in press), National Council on Family Relations *Family Sourcebook*.

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.

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).

EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE SEMINAR MEMBERS

Leland Griffin argued that knowledge + experience = learning, recognizing learning as *active*, rather than passive. Whether electronically or face-to-face, especially in a graduate course, we are *all* teachers and learners together. Therefore, I expect that all of us are *prepared for class by completing all readings deeply, taking effective notes, thoughtfully integrating material, and being well prepared to discuss and work with the readings in class*. Excellent attendance for whole classes and meaningful, engaged, mindful class participation are expected and part of the final evaluation. Talk with me advance if you are not going to be in class.

I want you to learn, grow, and succeed. I am here to guide and help you succeed in any reasonable way I can. Please visit my office hours, contact me via email, or set up an appointment to e-meet. I recognize we are in unprecedented times. Please reach out to me and/or to other campus resources as you need them: <https://covid19.unl.edu/information-students#health-support> <https://caps.unl.edu/2019-novel-coronavirus-and-covid-19-response>

Perspectives. We may be exposed to perspectives different than our own in our readings, class experiences, or from what seminar colleagues discuss in the class. Colleagues are asked to treat

respectfully the opinions and experiences of others in the class. One does not need to agree with someone to engage them respectfully.

Completing Work. Assignments are due at the time and date assigned. This policy is enforced in fairness to all class colleagues. As graduate students we do know that 30 minutes or more of editing can make a difference. Deductions are taken for late work, except in extreme circumstances and when arrangements are made prior to due dates.. Class members must complete *all* assignments and exams to pass this course. Please keep a copy of all work submitted and I always suggest the practice of making *regular* and *multiple backups* of electronic documents and files (oh the heartbreak I've seen).

Technology. It has become necessary to articulate policy on technology use, even for graduate students. Class members are welcome to use *laptop computers* or other devices in class to take notes for our class. Any other use of technology (doing other work, checking email or other internet sites, etc.) takes away from our class and is prohibited. Student colleagues do notice and express concerns to me. 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 or text, I do understand these needs; please talk with me in advance. If you wish to use *recording devices* in class, please talk this over with me in advance. I do not consent to students recording without my approval in class or in our one-on-one meetings.

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 accommodation services by SSD or 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.

Safety. Do be prepared and start by reading UNL's emergency preparedness information: <https://emergency.unl.edu> <https://emergency.unl.edu/procedure/shooting-incident> At minimum, plan at least two emergency exits from our classroom and department (and your own office or other space on campus). If you would need assistance exiting the building in an emergency, talk with me after the first day of class. Please sign up for UNL alert: <https://emergency.unl.edu/unlalert>

Incompletes are rarely given and must be negotiated with me *before* the end of the semester. We will write a contract together guiding completion, including a due date.

ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

Application Assignment: Each student will prepare an outline and resources that highlights one topic/conceptual area in family communication for classroom teaching, a blogpost, or other translational step.

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.

Evaluation is based on this general breakdown:

Exam	25%
Application	15%
Semester Project	45%
Meaningful Contribution	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 *before* starting the project. 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 current work, whether intentional or not. This includes your own 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 correctly paraphrase, quote, and cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to credit sources should consult and use the APA (American Psychological Association) style manual. Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing and attribution is not an acceptable excuse. Seek assistance and master the practices that will serve you well throughout your life and career.

I appreciate the perspective Dr. Stephen Cooper of Marshall University articulates on plagiarism: "The explosive development of the World Wide Web has opened a great many wonderful opportunities to all of us. It has also made it easier than ever to misrepresent someone else's

work as our own. When you're up against a deadline, you might be tempted to copy-and-paste from a journal article into your research paper....Don't do it. Plagiarism is a fool's shortcut. Not only do you cheat yourself of the opportunity to learn and grow, but you expose yourself to severe academic penalties. Plagiarism is dishonest. There's a saying that sincerity inspires respect. Earn your self-respect through your own efforts." *Cited (formatting mine) from:* <http://www.marshall.edu/commstu/files/2013/09/411-511-syllabus-Cooper.pdf>

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 is costly into the future. This professor will pursue academic dishonesty vigorously and all violations will be reported to the university. 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 what is required or seek help from the campus Writing Assistance Center: 472-8803, Andrews Hall 129.