

THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

SP 416 ? Winter 2007

Social Construction of Reality

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Winter Office Hours:
T & Th 3-4 p.m.
W by appointment

Required

- *Course Packet*

Clean Copy
1704 SW Broadway Avenue
Telephone: 503.221.1876

- *Writing Literature Reviews*

J. Galvan, Pyrczak Press
PSU Bookstore

- Access to WebCT for SP416
- Blue books for tests
- Large paper clips or heavy duty stapler for class papers

Prerequisites

- Sp100, Sp311 and a writing course

Highly Recommended

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
(APA Style Manual, current edition)
(Available by request at the PSU bookstore)

The Plagiarism Handbook

R. Harris
Pyrczak Press

Course Objectives

The purpose of the course, according to the University Bulletin is to: "Examine the major lines of theoretical development in the study of human communication, as well as examining their diverse and alternative assumptive bases for theory construction and critical analysis."

Here's what this means

Successful students will:

1. Gain insight into a range of communication theories, including individual, group, organizational and cultural
2. Learn about theory construction, the body of literature and epistemology
3. Apply theory to case studies
4. Make linkages with theory and research methods

You will also learn by doing. You will:

1. Examine in depth a theoretical area of choice
2. Complete a literature review
3. Learn vocabulary associated with theory
4. Apply a theory of choice to a real-life case study

Theme: Social Construction

Theme for the course is the *social construction of reality*. The theme provides you with a way to draw analogies between theory and its applications.

For example, social expectancy theory suggests that, in interpersonal communication, people have certain expectations about how language and situations affect their behavior. You will be inclined to *pay attention* to your boss if she or he is evaluating your work performance. You expect that your relationship is a formal one, and that you will be more likely to comply with her or his suggestions because of your boss's status. You have certain expectations about what your boss says about you, and when, where and how the conversation takes place.

Social expectancy theory can be applied to the construction of reality. The interpersonal conversation about your work performance is a type of reality that takes place in a formal setting, with a certain degree of seriousness. The language spoken and the behaviors of the parties will be relatively formal.

**Preparation for
This course**

All students must have already taken SP100, a requirement and **prerequisite**. Students are also expected to have taken **SP311** and a writing course. The course is designed for senior-level students.

Class Issues

Students will arrive on time. Please do NOT walk in and out of class when we are in session. One short break is offered mid-way during class to eat lunch. **No food is allowed during class**, but drinks are permitted.

**Philosophy &
Expectations**

My philosophy is that your learning is an intersection of reading the materials, actively participating in class discussion, listening to lectures and presentations, and attending to social issues that are relevant to the studies.

I encourage participation and discussion based on knowledge you have gleaned attending class.

Class attendance is mandatory. If you miss a class you will need to borrow the notes from a friend: lecture notes are NOT posted on WebCT.

Students will need to check for messages, discussions and news on WebCT on a regular basis, and all students are required to use their pdx email accounts for in-class communication.

Most classes are structured to include both lectures and discussions. Students will also be members of micro-groups that are organized to foster in-depth discussion on topics of special interest.

Class discussions foster learning that is not necessarily covered in the readings but may be included in the tests. Professors differ in their approach to class attendance, so let me be clear: attendance and active participation are expected and required.

My expectation is that you are thoroughly engaged in class: that you come to each class prepared, enthusiastic, ready and open.

Writing & Presentation

Your work should be error-free, clean, written in excellent English style and grammatically correct. You are required

to use the stylistic guidelines of your discipline (APA style). Buy the required APA style manual for writing papers.

Homework

You are required to complete homework each week for the readings. Homework must be handed in the first 5 minutes of class and is due every Tuesday. Homework counts for 15% of your grade.

Late homework will not be accepted.

Tests

Blue books are required for tests. Bring 1-2 blank blue books to class, which will be redistributed to students. Tests are based on assignments, lectures, readings and discussions. Tests include short answers, long answers and essays. Tests are cumulative.

Tests are closed book. **Make-up tests are not provided.** In the extraordinary circumstances that a crisis beyond your control prevents you from taking a test, you are required to inform the professor immediately. In addition, your absence must be documented *in writing* to the satisfaction of the professor.

Students who make arrangements with the Disability Services for Students office must take the initiative and make arrangements with the professor in advance.

Papers

Three papers are required, and they are all inter-related. The first is an annotated bibliography (15%) of your theoretical issue of interest. The second paper is a literature review (20%) based on the annotated bibliography. The final paper is a case study (25%) in which you apply your literature review to a case at hand, using the social construction of reality.

Do not write any papers until you have thoroughly read the paper requirements.

Keep a Copy

You **must** keep a copy of what you turn in. Keep a hard copy and make a disk or CD. This is especially important because when you hand in your Literature Review paper, your Annotated Bibliography (which you completed earlier) must be attached. And when you turn in your Case Study, you must attach your Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography.

Deadlines

Papers and assignments are due on the dates outlined in the Syllabus. **There is no provision for late papers.** My philosophy is that you have been given deadlines with ample time to plan effectively. And your classmates who get their work in by deadline deserve full credit.

Email

You are encouraged to contact the professor via or drop by during office hours. However, e-mail is not an acceptable method for turning in papers or projects for this class. All students are required to hand in assignments on the dates required. Professor Coleman does not accept homework or papers online.

Special Circumstances

Students with documented **disabilities** who need accommodation must contact Disability Services for Students for assistance and inform the professor the first week of class in order to receive accommodation.

Students who are requesting to be excused from class because of a **religious** holy day or practice must let the professor know the first week of class.

Inform the professor of any anticipated absence due to special circumstances. Documentation will be required.

Assistance

The University has several resources to assist students, and I encourage you to take advantage of these. Some include: help from University librarians; writing assistance from the Department of English; and assistance from the Communication mentor program. **Mentors** provide assistance with paper and research. The mentor office is located in Neuberger Hall.

My Policy

Courses and professors vary, so be mindful that the grading requirements for this course will vary from other courses you are taking. Great care is taken in the course to ensure fairness in grading. For example, all paper assignments are graded blind, meaning; **students are identified by their ID number**, rather than their name. The grading policy also ensures that grades are fair. Grading is based on objective, quantifiable methods. In the rare case when a grade is disputed, students must deliver a written report with justification to the professor within a week's time.

Acceptable passing grades for Communication undergraduate students are A, B and C. The mean grade

achieved for this class is a C, which is considered both average and acceptable. If you want to earn a higher grade, then read through this packet and plan your strategy.

Students cannot take this course for pass-no credit, and Incomplete grades are given only in super extraordinary circumstances beyond all perceived control. A signed contract must be on file for any incomplete, which must be finished within one academic term (including summer) following the term the course was offered.

Ethical Issues

You are welcome to work with classmates on the literature reviews or case studies, but each student will have her/his *own unique* paper and case study. That is, each paper must be the individual student's work---the paper itself cannot be collaborative.

All papers turned in for the class must be the result of your original work in this class specifically: you are not permitted to hand in an assignment you wrote for another class. Similarly you are not permitted to use assignments from this class for any other class.

Plagiarism

It is essential that all students thoroughly understand that any work written by someone else—whether spoken, obtained on the internet, found in magazines, or located within texts---**cannot** be reproduced in your written materials without attending to copyright, fair use, and citation standards followed in scholarly research. Do not use any information from a source unless you have properly reported and cited the source.

If the professor or grader finds a paper that is suspect, the student may be asked to present documentation to demonstrate that the work is her or his own. Anyone who plagiarizes will receive a zero (0) on that assignment. You may be reported to the dean for students.

Whether or not you are familiar with these standards you are still responsible for upholding them. When in doubt, review your plagiarism handbook. For citation standards is located in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA Style Manual). See also <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Housekeeping

Return of papers. Papers and tests will be returned to students within 7 days. The exception is the final paper, which will be available for pickup in the communication department office March 29.

Grading Policies

Assignments:

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Homework	150	15%
Tests	200	20%
Annotated Bibliography	150	15%
Literature Review	200	20%
Case Study	250	25%
Participation, Engagement & Attitude	50	5%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1000 points	100%

Final Grading Assessment

A	950-1000 points
A-	930-949
B+	910-929
B	870-909
B-	840-869
C+	800-839
C	750-799
C-	720-749
D+	690-719
D	630-689

REMEMBER: A passing grade for Communication majors is a minimum grade of C.