

# COMM 1100 – Communication in Society

**Meeting Time:** Monday / Wednesday / Friday, 12:40-1:35pm

**Location:** Journalism 360

**Instructor:** Simon Lavis (lavis.2@osu.edu)

**Office:** Derby Hall 3049

**Office Hours:** Monday 10:00am-12:00pm | Thursday 12:00-2:00pm | Other times by appointment

**TA:** J.C. Abdallah (abdallah.49@osu.edu)

**Office:** Derby Hall 3056

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 3:00-5:00pm | Wednesday 2:00-4:00pm | Other times by appointment

**Course description:** The purpose of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of what communication science is, and an overview of some of its major theories and methods. It will provide a basic understanding of several communication disciplines: mass communication; political communication; interpersonal communication; intercultural communication; influential communication; and group communication. This course fulfills the GE Social Science – Individuals and Groups requirement.

## **Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of individuals and groups.
  - This will be fulfilled by focusing in lectures on various theories which focus on increasing our understanding of individuals and groups, and the methods utilized. This will be assessed through exams, discussion posts, the poster project, and C-REP research engagement.
2. Students understand the behavior of individuals, differences and similarities in social and cultural contexts of human existence, and the processes by which groups function.
  - This will be fulfilled by providing instruction on a number of theories which aim to explain people and their communicative behavior, as well as focusing on cultural and ethnic influences on communicative behavior, and is assessed through exams and discussion posts.
3. Students comprehend and assess individual and group values and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.
  - This will be fulfilled by focusing on how theories covered help us understand individual or group dynamics, as well as how the media play a role in the maintenance of power relations between various entities. This is assessed by exams, discussion posts, and the poster project.

**Students with disabilities:** This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to contact me privately to discuss your specific needs, or contact the Office for Disability Services to coordinate your documented disabilities. The Office of Disability Services are located at 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue, and can be reached at 292-3307 (TDD: 292-0901).

### Course Requirements:

- **Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2015). *A first look at communication theory*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.**  
NOTE: it may be cheaper to buy or rent the earlier 8<sup>th</sup> edition, however content varies between editions.
- **Additional course readings and materials**, available via Carmen.
- **A Top Hat account** for in-class participation and attendance – see below.

### Methods of Assessment:

Assignment	Grade %	Due date
<b>Midterm #1</b> This will cover all content between (and including) 1/11 and 2/3.	17.5%	Fr 2/5
<b>Midterm #2</b> This will cover all content between (and including) 2/29 and 3/30. This is not cumulative per se, but many of the principles covered by the first midterm will be important to your understanding of the content covered directly.	17.5%	Fr 4/1
<b>Final Exam</b> This will cover all content between (and including) <u>both 4/4 and 4/25 as well as 2/8 and 2/26 with the exception of the theory your poster project covers.</u>	25%	Tue 5/3 12:00-1:45pm
<b>Group Poster Project *</b> In groups of 5 or 6, you will create an academic-style poster which covers one of the theories which we cover in week 5-7. This poster is designed to educate people who have not taken the class about the theory, and allows you to demonstrate the elements of social science research and methods covered at the start of the class. <i>See the assignment description on Carmen for more information.</i>	Proposal (Group) 3% Poster (Group) & Peer Feedback (individual) 17%	Fr 3/11, 11:59pm Fr 4/22, 11:59pm
<b>C-REP Participation</b> All students enrolled in COMM 1100 and 1101 are required to participate in the School of Communication's Research Experience Program – see below.	5%	We 3/2, 9pm & Fr 4/25, 9pm
<b>Discussion Posts *</b> There will be 3 discussion post assignments. You will have an individual due date, which will be communicated via Carmen in the post description.	10%	Various
<b>Attendance/Participation</b> Regular attendance is important to do well in this (and any) class. Attendance will be taken using Top Hat, except on days with a participation activity – see below.	5%	Ongoing

\* Specific guidance on this assignment, including rubrics, will be available on Carmen later this spring.

**Grading policy:** the standard OSU grading scale will be used for assessments on this course, namely:

A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	E	Below 60%
B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		

Note: I can only give you the grade you have earned. *There will be no rounding of final grades*, no matter how close you are. If you are concerned about your grades, be proactive and make an appointment so that you can discuss your progress so far, and identify ways to improve going forward – initiative pays off!

### **C-REP Participation:**

All students in COMM 1100 must participate in the Communication Research Experience Program (“C-REP”). C-REP is designed to give students direct exposure to the topics, goals, methods, and ethical issues of communication research. The purpose of this requirement is to teach you about the empirical research that is conducted in the field of communication by giving you first-hand experience as a participant. Your participation in C-REP counts for 5% of your course grade in this course, and this is NOT extra credit.

Participation can take the form of:

- Completing FIVE hours of C-REP research studies, **OR**
- Completing FIVE C-REP alternative written assignments, **OR**
- Completing a combined total of FIVE hours of research studies and alternative writing assignments.

A few general notes about your C-REP participation:

- **You must complete at least 2.5 hours by 9pm on Wednesday March 2nd** (although you are welcome to complete more than 2.5 hours by this initial deadline).
- **You must complete all participation by 9pm on Monday April 25th.**
  - Note that you should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for studies – there may not be many left by the end of the semester especially. Every semester a handful of students are unable to complete all 5 hours because they leave it too late to sign up for studies. If you put yourself in this situation, there is nothing I can do to rectify it.
- Additionally, at least 2.5 of your hours must be completed in lab-based studies (not online).
  - Again, failure to sign up for enough lab-based studies in time is your responsibility, not mine.

*For information on completing your C-REP requirement, see the relevant documents on Carmen.*

### **Attendance, Participation and Top Hat:**

Regular attendance is important to do well in this (and any) class. Whilst smart students who engage closely with the readings will do well enough in exams, this will be insufficient to pass the class with a high grade. Lectures will invariably review some elements of the reading, but will provide additional content as well – a good grasp of both the reading and the lecture will be needed.

Therefore, attendance is required for this class and will be taken daily using Top Hat. University approved absences are exempt from this policy, and absences due to medical concerns will be excused with appropriate documentation, provided the documentation is submitted *within one week of the absence*. Beyond this, students are permitted to miss up to four classes without penalty. For every class you miss beyond four, you will lose 1 percent of the class grade up to a maximum of 5.

Attendance will be monitored by either (i) simple attendance using Top Hat, (ii) an informal (not-for-credit) pop quiz using Top Hat, or (iii) another participation activity described in class. You will need to sign up for a Top Hat account, which is available free of charge using your OSU name.# at registration. *For information about how to set up an account, register for the course associated with COMM 1100, and general guidance and FAQs, please see the Top Hat documents on Carmen.*

### **General Course Policies:**

1. Email Policy: Because of the size of this class, and the tendency for the affordances that email communication provides us to both limit meaningful contact and stop up from seeking out information which is readily available, I am implementing a limited email policy which has proven successful in past courses. Both the TA and I hold regular office hours, which should be utilized. Any queries which students can answer themselves – check the syllabus first! – will be ignored. Ideally, email should be limited to request a meeting time or give the TA or I a heads up that you are coming in to discuss something in particular. Such emails should include a brief description of

your issue/question, and either the office hours you will be attending or some times when you can meet, if you are unable to attend the scheduled times. We will respond to confirm a mutual time.

**Note:** this policy is not designed to limit or inhibit contact – quite the opposite. It is designed, and has proven to be successful in, promoting both student independence and meaningful interaction. I will happily make accommodations to this policy, however, for students registered with Student Life Disability Services (SLDS) for whom travelling to an additional location is problematic.

If the reason for your contact cannot wait until the next office hours, you are welcome to email us and we will respond as appropriate within 24-48 hours. It is your responsibility to ensure, whether emailing or coming to office hours, that you are not leaving contact to the last possible moment. Emailing the TA an hour before an assignment is due to be handed in does not shift your responsibility to complete a task on time to the TA/instructor.

2. Assistance: If there are circumstances that are affecting your performance in this class, you should inform the TA or myself of them as soon as possible. Ultimately, there may or may not (but probably will) be things we can do to assist you ahead of time, but out of fairness to your peers there is very little we can do after the fact (such cases are referred to Student Advocacy).

We can help you understand the material before assignments are due, but I will not change your grade afterwards. It is always better to come to us with any problems or suggestions early, so that we are able to do something about it. Please email to set up an appointment if this is the case.

3. Classroom Conduct: The classroom is a space for learning and exploring ideas in an open, safe environment. This is only possible if we are respectful of one another, even where we disagree. Harassment, intimidation, discrimination, and any other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Please treat each other as you would like to be treated, and let me know if you have any concerns.
4. Exams: The midterms will be 50 minutes in duration, beginning at 12:45 to give a buffer of 5 minutes should anybody be running behind on the day. Students who arrive after the first person completes and turns in their exam will not be permitted to take the exam, and will only be permitted to retake it upon provision of documentation of a medical or university-sanctioned emergency. As this will rarely be the case, make sure you plan to be on campus in plenty of time. The same applies to the final, which is scheduled for Tuesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12:00-1:45pm. The exam will begin at 12:05, and will last 1 hour and 40 minutes.

### **Academic Misconduct**

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/>). Violations of this code in this class, especially pertaining to 3335-23-04 on Academic Misconduct will be aggressively prosecuted through the procedures the university has set up to deal with violations of the Code. You are responsible for being familiar with the Student Code, and ignorance of the Code is not an excuse for violating it. Examples of violation of the Code of Student Conduct includes cheating on exams (e.g., such as using cheat sheets, providing answers to or receiving answers from another student, sending or receiving electronic communications pertaining to examinable material during the exam period).

**If I believe you have violated the Code of Student Conduct, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM: see <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>).**

If COAM determines you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. The matter of plagiarism as it relates to public speaking is covered in the course text, and will be discussed in our first week.

## Tentative Schedule

(any changes will be communicated via email and Carmen announcements)

Week	Day/Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignment(s) Due
Week 1	Mo 1/11	Course Introduction	Syllabus	
	We 1/13	What is communication and theory?	Ch. 1	
	Fr 1/15	Social science approach to the study of communication	Ch. 2	
Week 2	Mo 1/18	<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day – NO CLASSES</b>		
	We 1/20	Research methods I		
	Fr 1/22	Research methods II		
Week 3	Mo 1/25	Interpretive approach to the study of communication	Ch. 2	Methods Post [Group A] (11:59pm)
	We 1/27	What makes a good theory?	Ch. 3	Post Comments [Group A] (11:59pm)
	Fr 1/29	Symbolic interactionism	Ch. 5	
Week 4	Mo 2/1	Constructivism	“Constructivism”, on Carmen	Methods Post [Group B] (11:59pm)
	We 2/3	Pragmatics	Ch. 13	Post Comments [Group B] (11:59pm)
	Fr 2/5	<b>MIDTERM #1</b>		
Week 5	Mo 2/8	<b>Mass Communication:</b> Uses and gratifications theory	Ch. 28	
	We 2/10	Cultivation theory	Ch. 29	
	Fri 2/12	Narrative and education-entertainment	TBC, on Carmen	
Week 6	Mo 2/15	<b>Political Communication:</b> Agenda setting	Ch. 30	Theory Post [Group C] (11:59pm)
	We 2/17	Priming and framing	TBC, on Carmen	Post Comments [Group C] (11:59pm)
	Fr 2/19	<b>Persuasion and Influence:</b> Social judgment theory	Ch. 14	
Week 7	Mo 2/22	Elaboration likelihood model	Ch. 15	Theory Post [Group D] (11:59pm)
	We 2/24	Cognitive dissonance theory	Ch. 16	Post Comments [Group D] (11:59pm)
	Fr 2/26	Diffusion of innovations theory	“Diffusion of Innovations”, on Carmen	

Week	Day/Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignment(s) Due
Week 8	Mo 2/29	<b>Interpersonal Communication:</b> Social penetration theory	Ch. 8	Theory Post [Group E] (11:59pm)
	We 3/2	<i>Poster project: Assignment overview and in-class group facilitation</i>	Post Comments [Group E] (11:59pm) C-REP deadline #1 [All] (9:00pm)	
	Fr 3/4	Uncertainty reduction theory	Ch. 9	
Week 9	Mo 3/7	Expectancy violation theory	Ch. 7	
	We 3/9	Social information processing theory	Ch. 10	
	Fr 3/11	<b>Intercultural Communication:</b> Communication accommodation theory	Ch. 31	Poster proposal (11:59pm)
Mo 3/14 – Fr 3/18	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES</b>			
Week 10	Mo 3/21	Face negotiation theory	Ch. 32	
	We 3/23	<b>Cultural Contexts:</b> Genderlect styles; standpoint theory	Ch. 34 & 35	
	Fr 3/25	Muted group theory	Ch. 36	
Week 11	Mo 3/28	<b>Group Communication:</b> Groupthink	“Groupthink”, on Carmen	Culture Post [Group F] (11:59pm)
	We 3/30	Functional group theory	Ch. 17	Post Comments [Group F] (11:59pm)
	Fr 4/1	<b>MIDTERM #2</b>		
Week 12	Mo 4/4	Organization as culture	Ch. 19	
	We 4/6	<b>Media and Culture:</b> Semiotics	Ch. 26	
	Fr 4/8	Cultural studies	Ch. 27	
Week 13	Mo 4/11	Cultural Imperialism	“Cultural Imperialism” on Carmen	Culture Post [Group G] (11:59pm)
	We 4/13	<b>Media Engagement:</b> Gatekeeping (guest lecture)	TBC, on Carmen	Post Comments [Group G] (11:59pm)
	Fr 4/15	Mood management theory; affective disposition theory		
Week 14	Mo 4/18	<b>Public Communication:</b> Public communication I	TBC, on Carmen	
	We 4/20	Public communication II	TBC, on Carmen	
	Fr 4/22	<b>Mass Communication II:</b> Spiral of silence theory	“Spiral of Silence”, on Carmen	Poster project (11:59pm)

Week 15	Mo 4/25	<i>Review of mass communication theories (weeks 5, 6 and 7)</i>  <i>*** END OF CLASSES ***</i>		C-REP final deadline (9:00pm)  Project peer review (11:59pm)
Week 16	Tu 5/3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FINAL EXAM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTE: change of day (Tuesday) and time (12:00-1:45pm)</b></p>		