

“He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast.”
-Leonardo da Vinci

“It is the theory that decides what can be observed.”
-Albert Einstein

“It doesn't matter how beautiful your theory is, it doesn't matter how smart you are. If it doesn't agree with experiment, it's wrong.”
-Richard Feynman

“Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve.”
-Karl Popper

COMM 7927: Theory Construction

Spring 2020

Wednesdays 5:30-8:15pm

Derby Hall 3136

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-3pm or by appointment. The best way to reach me is by email, I usually respond quickly, and if need be can set an appointment within a day or two.

Course Overview and Objectives:

This theory construction course is intended to further your development as a social scientist and as a prospective university faculty member. As conceptualized by the Graduate Studies Committee and interpreted by me as the instructor, this course explores the combination of intellectual rigor and creativity in theory development that is the hallmark of good social science.

The first few weeks will be spent laying a conceptual foundation regarding social science theory and theory development. Subsequent weeks will combine discussion of readings with brief updates by students about their progress in their efforts at original theory development, as I believe you will learn a great deal by seeing how others evolve their ideas as well as by going through your own process. Lecture will be kept to a minimum, as I believe one learns to think about theory by actively thinking about and discussing theory and theory-building. Therefore, this class will have a strong “workshop” element, with students developing their ideas in an intellectual community with feedback from fellow students as well as from their mentors and from me.

The focus of this class is on causal process theory, the theory type that predominates in the social sciences. You will develop a theoretical model that advances existing theory. This will be one that can be represented in visual form as a “box and arrow” process or causal model, or as a flow chart that similarly lends itself to empirical test; this will be developed incrementally, with

several rounds of feedback from me and the class. This will be written up with developing the theoretical justification and rationale for your novel claims, and providing a brief outline of several studies which together will make significant progress in testing your model. You are encouraged to include studies which you have already completed or have under way as part of this description of programmatic plans, but you are also expected to outline at least two additional studies to assess other aspects of your theoretical model.

The purpose is to help you conceptualize your work programmatically, as a series of related studies building on one another. You will in all likelihood use your work in this class to help structure and organize your candidacy exam and eventual dissertation proposal and to begin the kind of thinking that will help you structure a job talk, and hopefully you will in time conduct some version of at least some of the studies you outline and propose. Therefore, you should be talking about your ideas and directions with your advisor. However, *please do not ask your advisor to review your written assignments for this class until after you've handed them in and gotten my comments.*

Learning Objectives:

- To review foundational readings on theory construction in social science in general and communication research in particular
- To be able to identify various approaches through which one can make an original contribution to communication theory
- To be better able to assess the theoretical contribution of research articles in the literature, and to critique and improve research ideas of others and one's own
- To practice the collaborative, brainstorming environment in which much social science theory development is evolved
- To develop a theoretical process or causal model that has the potential to advance communication theory in your area of interest, explain how your existing work has begun to examine aspects of the model (if that is the case already), and outline a series of studies that would permit you to systematically examine your model
- To improve skills at presenting theoretical ideas and proposed research in written and oral form
- To help prepare you for developing your second year research talk and later your "job talk" in which you present your research efforts and program to potential employers
- In so doing, to advance your development and maturity as an analytical thinker, researcher and scholar.

Summary of Course Requirements (each component described in further detail below):

- Short papers as described below, see also class schedule (5% each, 45% of class grade total)
- Final paper: proposed causal process theoretical model and discussion of support from your prior research, current studies, and future plans (30% of grade)
- Presentation of your causal model and related research plans (10% of grade)
- Class attendance and participation including discussion questions from readings (15% of grade)

Short papers (45pts)

These papers should be at least one page but no more than two or two and a half pages double-spaced (unless otherwise noted), APA style, not including references. All papers should include citations where appropriate. I may on occasion share some of this work with the class, if it helps clarify issues under discussion. You will draw on many of these papers in writing your final project paper and presentation.

I am “front-loading” these assignments, so most come in the first half of the course, to plunge you into thinking about your research program systematically. You will then have breathing time to pull all these ideas together for your final paper, and have most of the groundwork laid for your final paper and presentation based on these short papers. This should balance workloads in other classes which tend to be heaviest late in the semester.

Often, these papers will be discussed in small groups with fellow students who share an interest in the general subfield, to help in brainstorming and idea development in a workshop environment. The paper assignments are described in the class schedule below.

Final paper (30pts)

The heart of this paper will be an updated version of the box-and-arrow process model you handed in earlier that is intended to advance theory in your domain of interest. The paper will begin with a section that explains the theoretical significance and context of the model you will propose. This section will clearly describe the underlying research question or questions, and identify relevant theory on which you are drawing. It will conclude with a paragraph in which you describe the intended contribution(s) to theory of your model. You can draw as needed from your short papers. However, rewrite for clarity, flow, and based on the thinking and feedback you have received in the meantime. This section should be about a page and a half, and will take a few drafts at least to do well.

You will then provide the box-and-arrow causal process model, including examples of mediation and moderation as relevant, updated and refined based on your further thinking and feedback you’ve received since you handed in your earlier draft. You don’t have to walk me through all the paths and relationships in the accompanying text. Describe the theoretical justification and rationale for your *novel* claims, and explain why these claims, if supported, will advance theory. The model will require a page, and the text to accompany it will typically be about two pages. Provide brief definitions of variables that are not otherwise obvious.

The final section should be four or five paragraphs (a page and a half or so). It is quite unlikely that the relationships in your model can be fully examined in a single study. Tell me what aspects of the model would be examined in at least two separate (new) studies, with very general information about what that study might look like (a survey or experiment, what would be

manipulated in an experiment, etc). You can mention research you've already conducted testing part of the model as well.

Have a concluding paragraph that summarizes the impact you hope to have, theoretically and substantively, by conducting this research program.

If you run a bit long, especially in the model description or future research section, it is fine *IF* the extra length is needed to help you articulate ideas you want to work through. If the problem involves difficulties in expressing yourself clearly and concisely, the extra length may work against you. Please spend some time polishing this paper so it is the best expression of your ideas you are capable of at present--you've drafted a lot of this already, so you should be able to provide a reasonably polished product here.

This is an initial effort to outline where your research program may be going and some larger research ideas you hope to pursue over the course of your graduate career. *I therefore expect that you discuss your ideas and plans with your advisor.* In other words, make sure to “bounce” your ideas off your advisor and to have his/her support regarding your research ideas and directions for a research program. If you are working with another faculty mentor on this idea also, that's ok too.

Yes, this is early in the program, and yes, you can expect your plans and ideas to evolve and change. The purpose of this class is to help you start to think systematically and programmatically about your research and what you are trying to contribute as a scholar. For some of you, the ideas articulated in this class may frame much of your early career. For others, it will be practice, and you will apply these approaches to theory construction and development to different theories and questions as your interests and research foci change. Either outcome is fine. You may not know for some years how this will unfold for you.

Grading Rubric:

Theoretical Significance (3pts)

Theoretical Contribution (3pts)

Box and Arrow Model (6pts)

Theoretical Justification (12pts)

Proposed Studies (3pts)

Writing Style/Clarity (3pts)

Presentation of your theoretical model and research program plans (10pts)

You will have 20 minutes to present your larger theoretical causal process model and research plans on PowerPoint, for class discussion and critique. You should follow the suggested format from Kelly Garrett that he outlined in his in-class PowerPoint presentation (posted on Carmen) four talk. This is in effect an outline for your final paper, and gives you another opportunity to get feedback from me and from the class. This will be followed by 20 minutes for Q&A. If you run over by more than a minute, I'll deduct credit; five minutes and I'll also have to cut you off. Arrange to have someone help you by giving you a 5 minute, 2 minute, times-up, and 1-minute-over warning (this is what you will typically experience presenting at conferences, by the way.

More details on the presentation are in the class schedule.

Grading Rubric:

Originating Question (1pt)

Specifying Question (1.5pts)

Argument/Justification (3pts)

Formal Predictions (4pts)

Presentation Style (1pt)

Class attendance, participation, brief presentations, and posted discussion board questions (15pts)

Participation in class is expected. I want to hear your ideas, questions, possible confusions, and your constructive comments and suggestions when fellow students present their ideas. To support such participation, I will expect the following.

Posted discussion board questions regarding readings: I want to receive from each of you a Carmen discussion board posting the day before any class (hard deadline—8AM the day of class) in which reading is assigned with at least one thoughtful question from each reading, unless a short paper is assigned instead. These questions and papers will be the foundation of class discussion. Given the nature of this material, discussion and applying these approaches to your own work is far more useful than lecture and the quality of class sessions will depend largely on the thoughtfulness of your questions and your willingness to ask for clarification about anything you find confusing. (5pts)

Class attendance is required; absences must be excused in advance (e.g., illness, family emergency, conference travel). *However, if you are sick and potentially contagious, just email me to let me know in advance, and do yourself and us the favor of staying home. Excused absences are not penalized.*

(10pts)

Policies and Procedures:

- Any late assignment will have half a grade deducted *each day* it is late if I have not cleared a changed deadline in advance. An assignment is considered late when it is submitted after the stated deadline (if no time is stated for the deadline, the deadline is before midnight the day the paper is due), and deductions will be taken beginning with the missed deadline. Exceptions may be made for emergencies or other well-documented issues (family situations, conflicting deadlines in other classes). I am usually flexible if the situation is discussed with me by email in advance, but I do not tend to respond positively to last-minute requests or retrospective excuses.
- All written assignments must be typed and conform to guidelines established in the most recent edition of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Publication Manual.

Special Accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the professor to arrange an appointment by the end of the second week of classes. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so. The Office for Disability Services is located in: 098 Baker Hall 113 W. 12th Ave Phone 614-292-3307 <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

Grades

This is a graduate course, which means we expect most students to be in the A- to B+ range. I grade using the GPA scale as noted below. If you are concerned that you may be making below a B+ in the class, please come see me as soon as you can so that we can see what sort of problem we're dealing with and how to resolve it.

Points/Percentage	Letter Grade
93-100%	A
90-92.9%	A-
87-89.9%	B+
83-86.9%	B
80-82.9%	B-
77-79.9%	C+
73-76.9%	C
70-72.9%	C-
67-69.9%	D+
60-66.9%	D
Less than 60%	E

Plagiarism

Presenting ideas and text as if they are your own when they are in fact taken from others' work is plagiarism, and grounds for failure in this class and for academic misconduct hearings. Clearly indicate the ideas of others via citation and language that expressly indicates attribution; text taken from others should be indicated both by quotation marks and citation, and such direct quotation should be used sparingly if at all in social science research write-ups. If in doubt about how to present ideas on which you are building, come talk to me about how best to do this. I also recommend reviewing the APA manual with regard to citation, attribution, and quotation.

Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Writing Assignments:

Turnitin.com Students agree that in taking this course, all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Any submitted papers may be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

School of Communication & Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures

READINGS

Required texts:

Jaccard, J. & Jacoby, J. (2010). *Theory construction and model-building skills*. NY: Guilford.

Shoemaker, P.J., Tankard, J.W., & Lasorsa, D.L. (2004). *How to build social science theories*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings available through CARMEN.

Recommended:

Reynolds, P.D. (1971/2007). *A Primer in Theory Construction*. NY: Pearson. (An “Allyn & Bacon Classic”; i.e., a reprint of the ’71 book).

Assigned Carmen Readings (in order of assignment):

Pavitt, C. (2016). *A survey of scientific communication theory*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Hawking, S. and L. Mlodinow. (2012). *The Grand Design*. New York: Bantam

Schwandt, T.A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln’s (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pgs. 118-137; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Weinberg, S. (1998, October 8). The revolution that didn’t happen. *The New York Review of Books*.

Comte, A. (2016). *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. Wentworth Press.

Popper, K.R. (2002). *The Logic of Scientific Discover*. New York: Routledge

Chaffee, S.H. (1991). *Explication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Slater, M.D. and Rasinki, K.A. (2005). Media exposure and attention as mediating variables influencing social risk judgments. *Journal of Communication*, 55(4), 810-827

Slater, M.D., Hayes, A.F., and Ford, V.L. (2007). Examining the moderating and mediating roles of news exposure and attention on adolescent judgments of alcohol-related risks. *Communication Research*. 34(4) 355-381.

Holber, R.L. and Stephenson, M.T. (2008). Commentary on the uses and misuses of structural equation modelling in communication research in A.F. Hayes, M.D. Slater, and L.B. Synder’s (eds.) *The SAGE Sourcebook of Advanced Data Analysis Methods for Communication Research*, pgs. 185-210; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Eveland, W.P., Hayes, A.F., Shah, D.V., Nojin, K. (2005). Understanding the relationship between communication and political knowledge: A model comparison approach using panel data, *Political Communication*, 22(4), 423 – 446

Hayes, A.F. (2017). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach 2nd edition*. New York: Guilford Press.

Bucy, E.P. and Tao, C.C. (2007). The mediated moderation model of interactivity. *Media Psychology*, 9, 647-672.

Cooper, W.H. and Richardson, A.J. (1986). Unfair Comparisons. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 71(2) 179-184

Doty, D.R. and Glick, W.H. (1994). Typologies as a unique form of theory building: Toward improved understanding and modeling. *Academy of Management Review* 19(2), 230-251

Roskos, B., Ewoldson, D.R., and Davies, J.J. (2004). Implication of the mental models approach for cultivation theory. *Communications* 29(3) 345-363

Anderson, C.A. and Bushman, B.J. (2001). Effects of violent video games on aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and prosocial behavior: A meta-analytic review of the scientific literature. *Psychological Science*. 12(5), 353-359

Kaplan, A. (1964). *The Conduct of Inquiry*. Chandler Publishing.

Stroud, N.J., Muddiman, A., and Lee, J.K. (2014). Seeing media as group members: An evaluation of partisan bias perceptions, *Journal of Communication*. 64, 874-894

Michael D. Slater & Laurel S. Gleason (2012): Contributing to theory and knowledge in quantitative communication science. *Communication Methods and Measures*. 6(4), 215-236

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1/8 Part One: Review syllabus, readings, and assignments.

Looking ahead: Soon (see below) a description of the general areas and research questions you are interested in is due. *Speak to your advisor about the idea or ideas you want to explore in this class for your class project before you hand in your ideas to me.* I'll also be available after class for this purpose on Wed 8/31 for as long as need be, and will be available in my office by appointment, or by email anytime. It is easier to reach me by email than by phone.

Part Two: Early positivism and critiques (In the next few classes, we will briefly review movement in thinking about social science from logical positivism to post-positivism and quasi- or model dependent realism—or—can you defend what it is you are doing, and recognize both its limits and the significance of empirical social science research?)

Comte *Positive Philosophy* Chapter 1 (skim, this is a fairly loose translation of 1853)

Pavitt Chapter 5 Perspectivists (focus on section on Kuhn, quickly skim the rest)

Essays on Kuhn (Note: I encourage you to read Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific*

Revolutions; given the time constraints of this course, I am only assigning some brief essays providing intelligent critical summaries; you need provide only one question on Kuhn across the Pavitt chapter and the essays on Kuhn, not one for each—ie, three questions today, on Comte, on Kuhn, on constructivism).

Schwandt "Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 1994. (can skim)

Readings on posted on Carmen.

Don't forget to provide by 8AM posted to the discussion board a question that you'd like to have discussed regarding each of the required (not the recommended) readings. This is expected every class for which we have readings, unless we have a short paper due that day (in which case no discussion questions need be posted to the board) or I explicitly say it isn't needed.

Due before midnight, Monday 1/13- Short paper 1: What is the general topic and domain of the research you are interested in pursuing? What are the two or three theories that are most influential on your thinking? What is it you hope to contribute through your research?

Remember to talk with your advisor about ideas you are developing this semester! Please submit this and other short papers via Carmen. This assignment will be graded based on the clarity with which you've thought about and clearly expressed your ideas and their context, not on some judgement of mine about the quality of the ideas—those will be evolving throughout the semester, anyway!

1/15 Part One: Scientific realism, quasi-realism, and model dependent

realism Popper chapter 1

Pavitt chapter 6 (read section on Suppe, quickly skim the rest)

Hawking and Mlodinow, *The Grand Design*, Chapter 3.

“typical scientist” web excerpt is fyi, no need for question on discussion board.

Don't forget discussion board questions re readings by 8AM day of class.

Part Two: Some more background readings on theory in social science ... what is empirical social science theory, anyway, and why bother?

Readings:

J&J, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Shoemaker, Chapter 1.

Reynolds, Chapter 1 (recommended, not required).

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 1/15- Short paper 2: How would you articulate your own position and understanding with respect to issues such as positivism, constructivism, realism, objectivity, and the purpose of empirical theory and research?

What I'm looking for is an effort to articulate your own stance, as of now, regarding these issues and what you understand is a rationale to defend the practice of empirical theory and research (that is, if you are inclined to defend it).

Draw on and cite as appropriate readings from the last two classes as well as today's readings. I may ask you to expand on your thinking and comments in class today, and perhaps explore these issues in small group discussion.

1/22 Part One: Concepts, variables,

explication Readings:

J&J Chapter 5

Shoemaker, Chapter 2

Chaffee, (review Concept Explication from your first theory class)

Reynolds, Chapter 2 (recommended)

Part Two: Epistemic relations (possible slippage between concept and operationalization)

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 1/22- Short paper 3:

In lieu of questions on readings: This paper should be a bit longer than most of your short papers as I want you to address TWO parts of your theorizing

- A. Identify one to three concepts that appear at present most central to your evolving research direction or program.

Provide a brief concept explication of one concept that you regard as the most important or central to your work, with citations. This can be an update of work you have done previously in other classes or research projects, but should reflect your best current thinking. Where your concept explication is still a work in progress and needs development, that's fine, you can say so. If you can at this point, highlight conceptual problems or issues in the existing literature that you hope to address in your research, and how you hope to address it (through new measures or manipulations, redefining or reconceptualizing the concept, etc).

- B. In your area of interest, describe at least one study in which you have concerns about the epistemic relationship—where you aren't sure if the measure or manipulation really captures the concept in the way the authors claim. What are the implications of this epistemic problem for their theoretical claims? Alternatively, you can identify a concept that has been operationalized with different measures or manipulations that seem to produce inconsistent results. Describe these different approaches, and what you think these different approaches and findings mean. If you can't identify any of these, describe some measures or manipulations of key concepts in your research area that you think are ok but can be improved (with cites), and the theoretical implications of improving these operations.

Be prepared describe your key concepts to the class, and how they relate to your evolving research program (we may divide into interest-based small groups on this instead for discussion) and then we will We will break up into shared-interest small groups to discuss the problems and issues identified for at least part of class. See if you can come up in discussion with ideas on how to address some of the problems you've found that your group can report back to the class as a whole.

1/29 Part One: The process of generating new theory-development ideas. Class discussion of readings.

Readings:

J&J, chapter 4

Shoemaker, chapter 8

Reynolds, chapter 7 (recommended)

Part Two: The process of generating new theory-development ideas part II. Presentations from three faculty. Readings to be assigned based on faculty presentations.

Panelists: Jesse Fox, Teresa Lynch, Silvia Knoblock-Westerwick

Due 8 AM Discussion Questions Wednesday 1/29- Don't forget questions re readings on discussion board. Questions on discussion board should ask about how theoretical ideas were conceived and developed. Are you curious about how specific elements of these ideas arose and were developed?

Note: Look ahead to future short papers and start doing thinking and reading needed to prepare them (list of variables relevant to your research direction, and possible mediators and moderators).

2/5 Part One: Types of theory and the importance of causal process models in communication research Readings:

Reynolds, Chapter 5
Powerpoint slides with theory examples from Prof. Eveland

Part Two" Review of basic hypothesis construction, predictive relationships

Readings:
J&J, Chapter 6 to page 114, Appendix 12A.
Shoemaker, Chapters 3 and 4.
Reynolds, Chapters 3 and 4 (recommended).

If time permits we will discuss hypotheses we are working on in small groups.

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 2/5- Short paper 4: What are the relevant independent variables in your research program (predictors, possible mediators, moderators, and key control variables) that you have identified so far? What are key or typical dependent variables? Why, in a sentence or two, is each relevant to your research direction? What is at least one hypothesis you are planning or would like to test?

2/12 Part One Intro to constructing causal process (aka box and arrow) models

Readings:
J&J, chapter 6 p. 114 to end, chapter 7 (this is long and worth your attention, but 150-156 you can pretty much glide over, we'll get back to it next week, and 162-173 is something just to eyeball—you'll need to take a class in structural equation modeling to understand these issues—but important to see how SEM can help in thinking through a theoretical model); glance at Appendix 6B, p. 133
Shoemaker, Chapters 5 and 6

In both J&J and Shoemaker, note carefully their use of box-and-arrow models showing the relationships between variables in a causal model. Start sketching out your own. If you are working with an advisor/mentor, you may want to get input on this. You are also welcome to meet with me.

We will discuss in class when such models are fine-grained extensions or syntheses of theory and when they are more fundamental theoretical contributions.

Part Two: Causal process models II...Thinking about mediating processes and mechanisms Reading: same as for prior class.

Slater & Rasinski 2005 (Media use as mediating variable, controls as exogenous). Skim.

We will discuss some key issues as a class then break up into shared-interest groups to discuss your specific mediation ideas: do they make sense? Alternative explanations or processes? Are relations correlated or causal? How much do these proposed relations contribute to theory and/or substantive understanding?

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 2/12 Short paper 5: Describe a key bivariate relationship involving two of these variables that is established either in the literature or by your research to date, and explain why it is a theoretically and important relationship. Propose a mediating variable that might help explain that relationship that hasn't to your knowledge been previously proposed or tested as a mediator, and explain why testing this mediation would help increase theoretical understanding of the relationship.

2/19 Part One: Moderation and moderated mediation in building theory about process, causal modeling part III

Readings:

J&J p 150-156

Bucy & Tao (2007)—skim

Hayes, 2017 – pages 3-22.

You will discuss these in small groups in the latter part of class.

Part Two Anticipating and considering alternative explanations and causal orders for proposed theoretical relations, and brief introductory discussion of SEM

Readings:

Holbert & Stephenson (2008) chapter on uses and misuses of SEM for theory testing in communication research

Eveland et al. (2005) (skim)

Slater, Hayes, & Ford (2007) (skim)

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 2/19- Short paper 6-Do the same as in the prior paper, but this time propose a novel moderator variable, either for the same bivariate relationship or for a different one among the variables you've mentioned relevant to your evolving research program. Again, explain why examining this moderator relationship is theoretically and substantively valuable.

2/26 Part One: Theory comparisons, typology

Theory Readings:

Cooper & Richardson (1986)

Doty & Glick (1994)

Part Two: Importing/adapting theory from other disciplines; frameworks and meta-analyses

Readings:

Roskos-Ewoldsen, et al.

Witte (1994)

Anderson & Bushman meta-analysis, *Psychological Science*

Shoemaker chapter 7

Due 8 AM Discussion Questions Wednesday 2/19- Don't forget questions on both sets of readings on discussion board.

3/4 Part One Reading theoretical contributions part I

Readings:

Shoemaker chapter 9 on evaluating theories

Kaplan

J&J chapter 12

A recent article we will look at together (to be posted)...instead of a question, comment briefly on strengths and weaknesses of theoretical contribution given criteria discussed

Part Two: Class and group discussion of students' proposed initial models.

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 3/4- Short paper 7. Draft an initial box-and-arrow causal process model illustrating the process you propose may represent the phenomena you are interested in studying, highlighting in accompanying text the main relationships proposed in this model that aren't already established in the literature, and also note the relationships you are still thinking about. This should involve all the variables you mentioned in **paper #4**.

Weekend: Look ahead to find paper to comment on for short paper 8.

3/18 Part One: Reading theory Part II: Typology of approaches to theory-building in communication research

Readings

Slater & Gleason on Carmen

These will be discussed in in class and in interest-based small groups.

Part Two: Qualitative research/grounded theory, mathematical modeling, simulations. Tentative: Prof. Wang will be in to talk about theory through mathematical modeling.

Readings:

J&J, chapters 8, 9, & 10.

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 3/18- Short paper 8— two parts

- A. Find an empirical article of interest relevant to the model you have been developing in this class, preferably in JOC, Comm Research, or HCR, or a quality subdiscipline journal, and based on the Slater and Gleason article tell me what kind of theoretical contribution(s) were being made in the article (i.e., what contribution was envisioned, how it was tested, what the results showed). If you see additional potential theory-building directions based on this article not proposed by the authors, or have critiques of their theoretical claims, please mention those.
- B. Considering the model/theory you have been developing - how would you apply qualitative research/grounded theory approaches to explicating it rather than confirmatory approaches?

3/25 Part One: Evaluating your own planned theoretical contributions

We will discuss these in class and small groups.

Part Two: Research talks and presentations: how to present your theoretical and study ideas professionally, accessibly, and persuasively. (We may have guest speakers for this.)

Due 8 AM via Carmen dropbox Wednesday 3/25- Short paper 9: Per the Slater and Gleason article, explain the kind of contribution(s) to theory-building that you are planning to do in your work in the coming year or so (e.g., elaborating or proposing alternative mechanisms: testing moderators/contingent conditions and/or mediators; extending boundary conditions; testing premises or challenging assumptions/conceptualizations; elaborating/clarifying concepts and demonstrating empirical importance of new conceptual distinctions; replicating using different methods/populations; comparing alternative theories in a given context; importing theory from other disciplines and adapting/testing in communication, etc). Be as specific as you can regarding how you plan to go about this.

No more day-of-class postings after this class.

4/1 Proposal presentations and instructor-facilitated class discussion of student theoretical ideas (3 planned)

Remember...our purpose is:

- a) to learn about the process of theory development by watching and participating in the process for each other as well for your own project...your project is just one example of this process...you learn far more by being attentive to issues arising in the development of theoretical ideas of others as well...and you've had a chance to observe the development of these ideas for your classmates.
- b) To experience the collaborative nature of idea development in social science theorizing...the value of feedback and input in helping you refine your ideas.
- c) To improve the final product—your programmatic research ideas and model—through this collaborative process.

Therefore, I do expect students in this class not only to attend these presentations, but to

actively participate via their questions, suggestions (eg for useful literature, clarifying definitions, possible relationships/mechanisms about which to hypothesize and operationalizations), and comments. This input is part of your participation grade.

Also, you will find that a brief, tight oral presentation can serve to clarify your thinking considerably. That is another benefit of these presentations. Therefore, as noted above, I expect carefully prepared, powerpoint presentations, that you've rehearsed and polished; the quality of the presentation is part of your class grade. You will probably do presentations much like these for your masters and PhD defenses, and if you go into academia, your "job talk" is critical—so practice in doing these is most valuable. You hopefully will be able to use this presentation as the foundation for your second year talk next semester. Look at guidelines on p. 342-343 in J&J for such powerpoint presentations.

Highlight graphically the part of your theoretical model being addressed by each of the studies you summarize, or otherwise find a graphic means to illustrate how your studies are linked programmatically.

Plan and rehearse a 20 minute presentation. We'll have 20 minutes for discussion after each presentation.

4/8 Proposal presentations and instructor-facilitated class discussion of student theoretical ideas (3 planned)

4/15 Extended office hours for issues/questions re final project.

Final papers are due April 23rd by midnight.