THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION  
COMM 3050-001  
Spring 2012

**Professor**  
Helene A. Shugart  
Office: LNCO 2858  
Telephone: 801.581.5686  
Office hours: W 3:00 – 4:00; and by appointment  
e-mail: h.shugart@utah.edu

**Teaching Assistant**  
Antonio de la Garza  
Office: LNCO 2930  
Office hours: M 12:00-1:00; and by appointment  
e-mail: Antonio.DeLaGarza@utah.edu

**Required Texts**  

Selected readings available through Marriott Library e-reserve.

Throughout the course, I will refer to as well as include clips from popular films, television shows, and/or websites that illustrate relevant communication situations, issues, and problems. These clips will provide us with common “texts” for discussion and analysis.

**Course Description and Objectives**  
This course, which serves as an introduction to the academic discipline of communication, is designed to furnish you with a basic understanding of the major theoretical perspectives that inform contemporary communication studies. Specifically, this course will assist you in developing a more thoughtful, sophisticated, and critical understanding of communication processes; allow you to apply that knowledge in the interpretation of a variety of communication situations, issues, and problems; and exercise and improve your analytical skills through brief written analyses as well as through active participation in class discussions.

**Course Goals**
- To explore basic issues and perspectives in the study of communication
- To develop proficiency in the critical analysis of a variety of communicative forms and practices
- To understand the scope of communication as a field of study

**Course policies**
- Examinations must be taken and papers submitted on scheduled days. Students who do not observe this policy will not be permitted to make up their exams, and late papers will not be accepted. Exceptions may be made for those with dire circumstances confronting them, but only if those circumstances are (a) made known to me in advance, if at all possible; (b) documented; and (c) verifiable.

- Regular attendance and participation is encouraged in this course but not required, for two reasons: first, in a large lecture class such as this one, opportunities for participation are limited, so there is no
fair way to require it. Second, as adults, you are responsible for your performance in the course. Attendance and, when possible, active engagement will almost certainly have a beneficial impact on your grade, but ultimately, I leave it to you to decide whether or not that is either necessary or important to you. I will circulate an attendance sheet regularly in class, but only for the purpose of determining “borderline” cases at the time of issuing final grades, i.e., those grades that are very close to the next highest grade. In cases where students have attended regularly and/or participated when possible, I will round the grade up to that next highest grade.

- In order to ensure the quality of class instruction, please be in class on time and remain in class for the entire period; interruptions are distracting to others. For that same reason and also because it is disrespectful, the use of cellphones, iPods, MP3 players, and other electronic media are not permitted in the classroom; computers may be used for notetaking purposes.

- The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that reasonable accommodation be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, or psychiatric disabilities. Students requiring such accommodation should speak with the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to make appropriate arrangements for this course. The Center for Disabled Student Services (Olpin Union, 581-5020) will also need to be informed. See the following link for more information: [http://disability.utah.edu/](http://disability.utah.edu/)

- The registrar cautions students that withdrawing from a course and other registration matters are the student’s responsibility. See the following link for more information: [http://www.sa.utah.edu/regist/handbook/withdrawal.htm](http://www.sa.utah.edu/regist/handbook/withdrawal.htm)

- In accordance with university policy (as articulated in the Student Code), academic misconduct—including cheating, fabrication of information, and plagiarism—is not tolerated in this course. A student found engaging in this behaviour will receive a failing grade. If at any time you are unsure whether your actions constitute academic misconduct, please see the professor in order to clarify the matter. See the following link for more information: [http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)

- Accommodation policy: Curriculum accommodations take two forms: schedule accommodations and content accommodations.
  - I am able to make schedule accommodations for those who have a conflict that involve religious/spiritual observances, University sanctioned activities, and personal or medical exigencies, provided that documentation is furnished. If you anticipate or when you experience any scheduling conflict with this course, please speak with me as soon as possible. In every case, it is the student’s responsibility to make these arrangements.
  - As we study communication in its various forms and contexts, we will apply the concepts we engage to a variety of examples, including those that occur in the venue of popular culture. Some students may find some of the reading materials, presentations, lectures, or audio/visual materials controversial or in conflict with their values or beliefs. Please be assured that all the material that I present, assign, or require you to encounter and address has been selected for its pedagogical value and utility in relation to the concepts we are engaging. I will not make content accommodations for this material. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, readings, assignments, and materials to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. Should you have questions or concerns, please see me immediately. Details on the university’s accommodation policy are available at this link: [http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/pdf/accommodations-policy.pdf](http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/pdf/accommodations-policy.pdf)

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution
Papers (2 @ 25% each): 50%
Exams (3 @ 25% each): 75%
125%*  

Although the total percentage reflected here is 125%, grades will be calculated on a 100% scale; this is because one exam or assignment will be dropped. This can happen in two ways: students may elect not to take one exam or write one paper, at their discretion; or if a student completes all assignments and exams, I will tally the four highest earning exams/assignments. NOTE: The “dropped” assignment is a measure of grace extended to students, constituting a “free pass” of sorts. Accordingly, there are no opportunities for extra credit in this class.

A = 93-100  B- = 80-82  D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92  C+ = 77-79  D = 63-66
B+ = 87-89  C = 73-76  D- = 60-62
B = 83-86  C- = 70-72  E = 59 and below

For further information regarding what letter grades signify qualitatively in terms of performance and quantitatively in terms of GPA, see the following link for more information:
http://www.sa.utah.edu/regist/handbook/grading.html

Papers
- Each essay will be a 5-7 page typed, double-spaced research paper, and it will require at least two academic references, properly cited and incorporated, in addition to the text. Please note that character size for the paper is not to exceed 12 points; another gauge of appropriate length is that a typewritten page contains about 250 words, so each essay should be between 1000-1500 words.
- Only hard copy submissions will be accepted, and they must be submitted in class on the day they are due.
- Papers should be written in accordance with the most recent version of the style manual of the APA: see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html. Hard copies of the APA style manual also are available at Marriott Library. Particular notes on format: no cover page is necessary—simply name and class information (including professor’s name, lab section number, and lab time) in the top left-hand corner; and staple in the upper left-hand corner (no folders, please).
- Be sure that your essays are mechanically correct; observe proper spelling and rules of punctuation and grammar.
- Papers may be turned in at any time prior to the due date, but they must be submitted by the date noted on the syllabus (see “Course Policies,” above). For each paper, you may choose one of the following options:

Paper #1:
- Analyse an actual or portrayed (e.g., in a film) relationship that illustrates the following concepts of the interactional view of interpersonal communication: punctuation, symmetrical/complementary relationships, and reframing.
- Analyse an actual or portrayed relationship that features either intrarelationship elements or couple-community elements of relational dialectics—that is, connectedness/separateness, certainty/uncertainty, and openness/closedness, in the former case, or inclusion/seclusion, conventionality/uniqueness, and revelation/concealment, in the latter case. Describe, as well, how relational partners address those tensions in each case.
- Analyse samples of an advertising campaign or compare and contrast two different advertisements according to the Elaboration Likelihood Model; specifically, identify the strategies, cues, and routes of
persuasion in each case.

Paper #2:
- Working as an ethnographer might, analyse an organisation in which you’ve worked, either in a professional capacity or as a student, according to the cultural approach to organisations. What metaphors are used? What stories are told? What rituals characterise the culture?
- Analyse a news story—print, televised, or internet—in terms of how the subjects and/or issues in that story are framed. That is, identify 3-5 qualities or characteristics that are associated with the subjects/issues, providing several detailed examples, in each case, of how those qualities are articulated via word choice, visual depictions, editing cuts, sound, lighting.
- Applying concepts of ideology, myth, and signification relevant to semiotics and/or cultural studies, discuss an instance of what you see as a mediated cooptation of a subculture. How is it coopted—that is, what strategies are used to accomplish the appropriation?

Exams
Each exam will cover material in the preceding third of the course; the final exam is not cumulative. For each exam, you will have a choice of an entirely objective; a combination of objective and essay questions; or an entirely essay format.

Course Schedule
9 January: Course Overview
- Introduction to theory
- Reading: Griffin, “Introduction” and Chapter 1
11 January: Introduction to communication
- Reading: Griffin, Chapter 2 and Chapter 4
16 January: MLK Day: No Class
18 January: Symbolic Interactionism
- Reading: Griffin, “Interpersonal Messages” and Chapter 5
23 January: Constructivism
- Reading: Griffin, Chapter 8
25 January: Interactional View
- Reading: Griffin, “Relational Maintenance” and Chapter 14
30 January: Interactional View cont’d
- Reading: Rogers (e-reserve)
- Film: When a Man Loves a Woman
1 February: Relational Dialectics
- Reading: Griffin, Chapter 12
6 February: Relational Dialectics cont’d
- Film: Soul Food
8 February: Elaboration Likelihood Model
- Reading: Griffin, “Influence” and Chapter 16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 February</td>
<td>Elaboration Likelihood Model cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 February</td>
<td>EXAM I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 February</td>
<td>President’s Day: No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>Group Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, “Group Decision Making,” Chapter 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film: Twelve Angry Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 February</td>
<td>Cultural Approaches to Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Griffin, Chapter 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 February</td>
<td>Cultural Approaches to Organisations, cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacanowsky &amp; O’Donnell-Trujillo (e-reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March</td>
<td>Critical Theory of Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, Chapter 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>Critical Theory of Organizations, cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film: Roger and Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17 March</td>
<td>Spring Break: No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 March</td>
<td>The Art of Rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, Chapter 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 March</td>
<td>Dramatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Griffin, Chapter 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ling (e-reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 March</td>
<td>Narrative Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, Chapter 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 March</td>
<td>Semiotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, Chapter 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 March</td>
<td>Semiotics cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film: The Lion King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 April</td>
<td>EXAM #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 April</td>
<td>Cultural Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Griffin, Chapter 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 April</td>
<td>Cultivation Theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading: Griffin, Chapter 29; Kilbourne (e-reserve)

11 April:
Cultivation Theory cont’d
Video: *Tough Guise*

16 April:
Agenda-Setting Theory
Reading: Griffin, “Media Effects,” Chapter 30

18 April:
Agenda-Setting Theory cont’d
Film: *Wag the Dog*

23 April:
Ethnography and Communication
Reading: Griffin, “Intercultural Communication,” Chapter 33

25 April:
Communication and Gender Issues
Reading: Griffin, “Gender and Communication,” Chapter 34
Connel (e-reserve)

**Paper #2 Due**

27 April:
**FINAL EXAM**
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
E-Reserve Readings


