

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of General Studies**

**Communications Studies 465
Theories of Communication**

Fall 1992
Lec 02 MW 14:00
Tut 02 F 14:00
Office Hours: MWF 9:00 - 10:00, or by appointment

Instructor: Dr. Timothy J. Buell
Office SS 210
☎ 220-3493

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to the diverse conceptual approaches to modern communications theory. We will begin by developing an understanding of the general nature of theory building and testing. We will then look at several current theoretical perspectives, including information theory, transmission models, structuralist and post-structuralist approaches, discourse analysis, reception theory and semiotics.

Investigation of the theoretical discourses outlined above will serve as the basis for lectures and class discussions. A comprehensive study of communication theory necessarily involves an interdisciplinary approach. Topics for discussion will be drawn from the mass media, literature, visual arts, dance, music, fashion, architecture and popular culture.

Format

Essay 1 (9 - 10 typed pages) will be a semiotic analysis, while **Essay 2** (12 -15 typed pages) will be a critical analysis and evaluation of a particular theoretical approach.

The **mid-term quiz** is a short answer quiz based upon the reading and lecture material covered to date.

You will also be divided into tutorial groups. Each group will prepare an in-class oral presentation on an agreed upon topic.

Required Textbook

Littlejohn, Stephen W. *Theories of Human Communication* (4th edition) Belmont, CA, Wadsworth, 1992

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Essay 1: Semiotic Analysis	20%	October 23
Mid-term examination	15%	November 6
Essay 2: Critical analysis of a theory	25%	December 2
Group Presentations	15%	TBA
Final Exam (to be scheduled by the Registrar)	25%	

Please note that all assignments must be completed for a passing grade. Typed or word-processed essays are *most* appreciated. The micro-lab (SS203) is available for your use.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Pages in text:
Wed., Sept. 9	Part I The Historical and Scientific Background	
Fri., Sept. 11	Definitions: What is Communication? Discussion of group projects	
Mon., Sept. 14	A brief history of scientific method and theory-building Aristotle, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Decartes	
Wed., Sept 16	Newton's axiomatic method Empiricism, Hume and Kant Inductivism vs the Hypothetico-Deductive view of theory-building	2 - 37
Fri., Sept 18	Logical Reconstructionism: Carnap, Hempel and Nagel. Alternative approaches: Kuhn, Lakatos and Laudan Transmission and system theory	38 - 62
Mon., Sept 21	Part II Structuralism and Semiotics Historical background: Peirce and Saussure	
Wed., Sept. 23	Class cancelled	63 - 83
Fri., Sept 25	Class cancelled	
Mon., Sept. 28	Morris, Eco and Langer. Non-verbal communication	
Wed., Sept. 30	The social construction of reality: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: elaborated and restricted codes: Bernstein	190 - 212
Fri., Oct. 2	Phenomenology and Hermeneutics: an Introduction	215 - 223
Mon., Oct. 5	Textual and Cultural Interpretation: Ricouer and Geertz	224 - 237
Wed., Oct 7	Conflicting approaches I: Structuralist perspectives from Piaget to Giddens	308 -315
Fri., Oct. 9	Conflicting approaches II: Poststructuralism: Foucault, Lacan and Derrida	
Mon., Oct. 12	Thanksgiving: No class	
Wed., Oct. 14	Symbolic Interaction, Dramatism and Narrative	169- 189
Fri., Oct. 16	Group Presentation No.1	
Mon., Oct. 19	Film: Jean Genet's <i>The Balcony</i>	
Wed., Oct. 21	<i>The Balcony</i> (con't) Discussion and Analysis	

Date	Topic	Pages in text:
Fri., Oct 23	Group Presentation No.2	
Mon., Oct. 26	Interpretation theory: Osgood Essay No.1 DUE	132 - 147
Wed., Oct. 28	Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger); Attitudes, beliefs and values (Rokeach); Expectancy-Violation Theory	150 - 168
Fri., Oct 30	Group Presentation No.3	
Mon., Nov. 2	Feminist Critiques	238 - 244
Wed., Nov. 4	Other ideological critiques: Marxism and the Frankfurt School: Habermas	245 - 259
Fri., Nov. 6	Mid-term quiz	
Mon., Nov. 9	Part III Organizational Communication: Introduction	
Wed., Nov. 11	Remembrance Day: No Class	
Fri., Nov. 13	Reading Day: No Class	
Mon., Nov. 16	Message production and process theories; rhetorical sensitivity	107 - 131
Wed., Nov. 18	Communication and organizational networks: analogies and metaphors	316 - 330
Fri., Nov. 20	Group Presentation No.4	
Mon., Nov. 23	Theories of Organizational Culture: problems and perspectives	331 - 340
Wed., Nov. 25	Part IV Communication and Media: Introduction	
Fri., Nov. 27	Group Presentation No. 5	
Mon., Nov. 30	Marshall McLuhan's <i>Laws of Media</i>	handout
Wed., Dec. 2	Innis, McLuhan, & Gerbner Second Essay DUE	341 - 350
Fri. Dec. 4	Group Presentation No.6	
Mon., Dec. 7	Power and the Media (Lasswell)	353 - 374
Wed., Dec. 9	Review for Final Exam	

Final examination to be scheduled by the registrar.

Please note that class discussions and workshops are an important element of the course: regular attendance is expected. All assignments must be handed in during class time, and in fairness to other students, late papers will have one grade point deducted from the earned mark for each day of lateness.

Please type your assignments, or use a word processor. The General Studies Microcomputer Lab is available for your use. Consult a good style manual such as *The Chicago Manual of Style* when preparing your essays.

Note on Grading

The following table will be used to determine equivalents between letter grades, GPAs and percentages:

Letter Grade	GPA	Numerical Equivalent
A+	4	95 - 100
A	4	87 - 94
A-	3.7	83 - 86
B+	3.3	78 - 82
B	3	73 - 77
B-	2.7	70 - 72
C+	2.3	66 - 69
C	2	63 - 65
C-	1.7	60 - 62
D+	1.3	55 - 59
D	1	50 - 54
F	0	< 50