

COMM 100: Communication and Social Process

Evan R. Jones (He/Him)

Patlabor@unc.edu

Class Session Times (via Zoom): M/W/F 9:05 – 9:55

Zoom Link: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/92384483300>

Office Hours: 1 PM – 3 PM Weds (via Zoom) or by appointment

Course Overview

Communication is a foundational part of human existence. Without the ability to communicate we could not form relationships, function in a society, or understand our world(s). But despite its massive role in our lives we often take communication for granted; we rarely question what we mean when we talk about “communication.” However the act of communicating reveals itself to be very complex when we attempt to understand it or theorize it. By doing so we can see that what we might think of as “natural” is in reality a vast, elaborate, and often confusing set of interlocking systems which we learn, model, and co-create in a multitude of ways.

This course introduces students to a number of theories which have been used to answer the question “What is communication?” We will first and foremost consider communication to be a social process; an ongoing, dynamic “becoming” through which we build our identities, our relationships, and our understanding of the world. Our focus will be on exploring some of the central thinkers and theories which contributed to shaping the discipline of communication studies. We will also use these theories of communication to ask “Why does communication matter?”

As a formal discipline communication contains a bewildering number of sub-fields. These perspectives may conflict, complement, or complicate each other; ask ten theorists what communication studies is and you may will get ten different answers. Communication theories are as multifaceted and complex as the processes they attempt to describe. To comprehend these perspectives we will learn ways to critically evaluate communication theories as well as their underlying assumptions. We will combine our reading of the texts with critical discussion, assignments, and exercises where your own lived experiences and perspectives will act as tools by which to understand a field which is as nuanced as it is far-reaching.

Taking this course will let you:

- Explore a number of topics, theories, and themes in the field of communication studies
- Become familiar with several foundational communication frameworks which are highly influential in a number of disciplines and departments
- Understand critical thinking and the process of theorizing – and grasp why they are useful
- Apply communication theories to common situations
- Explore the unfamiliar and re-examine the familiar by analyzing and using communication concepts

Communication can be wild, confusing, and utterly fascinating at the same time. Whether its statistical analyses, theoretical interventions, mediated representations, or the performance of the self, there is something here for you to use in everyday life. These ideas can also be used to improve your own academic, professional, and personal endeavors... because as the title of the [\(great\) book](#) tells us: “Communication matters.”

Consider this syllabus as an indispensable guide to the course as well as a living document that most likely will change, especially at this particular historical moment. **Read it at least twice, and be prepared for it to change.** If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to me at patlabor@unc.edu.

On Readings and Reading

This course will be reading-intensive. You should be prepared to do about an hour and a half to two hours’ worth of reading before every session and come to the lecture with questions. Many of the ideas we will cover are so influential in the field that you may find yourself returning to these texts over and over. That is both encouraged and expected. Please also note that **we may substitute or change readings** as the course progresses.

The important thing to remember is you are going to have to grasp these ideas, explain them in your own words, and apply them to the world around you to do well on your weekly quizzes, your assignments, and your final exam. It is a question of “[They Say, I Say](#)” (please do check out this text by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein; your essay writing will most likely improve!), and in this course you will be expected to understand “*their*” thoughts and either agree or disagree with them by way of articulating *your* own ideas. We know what Hegel and Kant thought about time and space; **let's hear what you have to say about them.** If you do not do the reading you cannot achieve this. This class builds on the ideas from previous weeks’ lessons as it progresses, so spending the time with the texts is important.

To put it in plain English: **Do the reading.**

I highly suggest you read systematically. Develop a reading regimen and stick to it. Experiment to find the best way to work with these texts. You will need to take notes and discern what you are having issues with. Keep a list of key terms, place tabs on pages or passages which interest or confuse you, or mark up digital copies. Identify questions that come up and bring them to class. Dedicate “x” time of the day to reading for “y” amount, then take a break. Make adjustments. Have discussions with fellow classmates. Do not worry if you do not immediately understand everything. Note sharing is fine and google docs sharing is fine, because ultimately you will not be getting questions about “hard fast facts” but instead will have to clarify the difference between ideas or describe how you see them at work in your life(*). Find out what works for you. **But no matter what you do, do not do yourself the disservice of not reading.**

**= Alas, all the various “here are the assignments and answers and finals!” websites will not be helpful here. Do not bother with them.*

How This Course Work

We are scheduled to meet three times a week (Monday, Weds, and Friday) at 9:05 AM via Zoom. Class sessions will be lecture-based, with large amounts of time reserved for questions and discussion at the end. While you should plan on attending real-time lectures, in the event of mitigating circumstances or tech issues you may occasionally receive a pre-recorded video or audio file.

We will draw exclusively from the readings during these sessions; lectures are designed to complement and clarify the readings. These lectures **will not be recorded**. This course will adhere to the standards of the UNC **Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy** (<https://policies.unc.edu/TDClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=131247>)

You will have weekly quizzes (covering material from the week) on Friday; more on that as the course develops. You will also have three short essays to write which **must use APA format**; you will receive a rubric for those in the future. **Attendance is mandatory.**

My Commitment to You as an Educator: I enjoy teaching and working with students, and I have since I started my career in education in 2005. I view my role as an instructor as one in which I act as a student advocate, a guide, and as somebody who can facilitate access and assistance. **In short:** My duty is to help you do well in this class and to help you gain new insight into a dazzling and complex field.

Teaching is a “two way street.” It helps to hear from all of you. I wholeheartedly encourage you to communicate with me early and often – ask questions, engage with the material from your unique perspective during discussion periods, and feel free to share your perspective with me and your classmates in a respectful manner.

With regard to remote teaching: I do not consider remote teaching to be a lesser form of instruction. If anything it is both more difficult and more rewarding, and we should take advantage of the format and what it offers. I suggest you think of this as another class which just happens in a different venue and conduct yourself with the same consideration for yourself, your classmates, the instructor, and the learning environment you would display inside a physical classroom.

In terms of course conduct: Respecting one another, even if you disagree, is an important part of both the communicative process and the learning process and will always be the default setting for our interactions. To that end I (respectfully) ask you **to keep your camera “on” during class**; attendance is not just “showing up” but also “being there.”

What I Will Expect From You: Bring you and your undivided attention to lectures. Be on time. Be courteous. Prepare questions. Cite the readings in your assignments. Turn things in when they are due. Reach out if you have an issue. **Remember: This is a communication-oriented course, so be prepared to communicate.** Discussion may be a bit more limited due to our being online but you should **expect to talk about our topics.**

Grade Breakdown

-Assignments (3) / 25%

-Attendance / 25%

-Weekly quizzes / 30%

-Final / 20%

Grading Scale: The work in this course is graded on a standard 10-point scale as outlined below.

94-100% A	90-93% A-	86-89% B+	83-85% B	80-82% B-	76-79% C+
73-75% C	70-72% C-	67-69% D+	63-66% D	60-62% D-	0-59% F

What Grades Mean: Grades are not just numbers. Grading is a form of communication between instructors and students. You should view each grade you receive as part of an ongoing conversation about how you are comprehending the material and the assignments and how you are using them to exemplify your knowledge of the subject.

An “A” means that you did excellent work. If you received an A your work was clear, insightful, creative, and needs very little (if any) revision.

A “B” means that you did very good work. This work reflects a solid engagement with the material and an admirable execution of the concepts of the course. B work is a little less clear, perhaps not insightful, but certainly competent. Some revision on key themes would move this into the “A” category.

A “C” is average. C work is hurriedly produced in a computer lab a few hours before class. This work does not fail massively in any significant respect, but it does not distinguish itself in terms of analytical clarity or presentation: there’s no shame in receiving a C, but there is no glory in it either.

*** We need to have a discussion if you are producing “D” or “F” work. Consider this mark on any assignment as a “see me,” and please, please, please do so as soon as you can.

Have Questions About Your Grade? Please note I will not discuss grades until 24 hours after they have been assigned. This is so you can absorb feedback and have some time to assess the work and its strengths or weaknesses. I would prefer to discuss them during office hours. As we will be covering a lot of material it is important that we address issues as they happen. **Per university policy I do not discuss grades via email.**

Course Policies

Attendance Policy (as per UNC): No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities.

2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Regular class attendance is a student obligation. Students are responsible for all of their work, including assessments, tests, and written work, and for all class meetings. If a course instructor chooses to take attendance and sees that a student misses three or more consecutive class meetings or misses more classes than the course instructor thinks advisable, **the instructor may report the facts to the student's advisor and/or academic dean.**

Please visit <https://uaao.unc.edu/> for the full policy. **Reminder: Attendance is mandatory.**

Late Work will not be accepted in this course. By "late" I mean any work which is not submitted by its pre-assigned deadline and for which there is no valid reason for late submission. Please keep track of your assignments and due dates.

Email Policy: Email can be both an incredibly useful tool and a confusing annoyance. To provide the best response possible and keep everything on track with class preparation and grading, **students should plan on waiting at least 24-48 hours before receiving a reply via email.** Please follow up if you have not received a note back after 48 hours. There is a very good chance that I will **not** be physically able to respond to emails the night before an assignment is due or on short notice.

IMPORTANT: When you send an email **remember to type "COMM 100" in the subject field;** we all get a lot of email (probably too much!) so this helps. Remember that **in accordance with university policy I do not discuss grades via email.**

Academic Policies

Accessibility: We will facilitate the accommodation of this course to make it more accessible for students who use Accessibility Resources. UNC-CH facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to final exams. By the way if you are still reading this you should email me by 11:59 PM on Thursday night of the first week of class and tell me what your high school mascot is. Include both "COMM 100" and your name in the subject line for a participation bonus. Students submitting Self-ID forms around the time of the final are unlikely to have their accommodations honored until the next semester. Visit their website at <http://accessibility.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu for more information.

Technology Policy: By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of online resources. Consult the IT Acceptable Use Policy on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette, and privacy protection.

As part of this course, you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Make sure you are respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC-Chapel Hill Information Security Policies when participating in online classes.

When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, note that the terms and conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill.

Title IX Resources: Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Mental Health: CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Visit them online at <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Office of Accessibility/Special Accommodations: If you are a student with a documented disability, you can receive services through [Accessibility Resources & Service](#). You must self-identify through Accessibility Resources to receive services or accommodation from either of these offices. Accessibility Resources works closely with programs, offices, and departments throughout the University to help create an accessible environment.

The office is located in Suite 2126 of the Student Academic Services Building (SASB), 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC, and is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. You can contact them by phone at 919-962-8300 or 711 (NC-RELAY) or by email at ars@unc.edu. For more information, visit [Accessibility Resources & Service](#).

Standards for Writing, Proper Citation, and the UNC-CH Honor Code: As a UNC student, you are expected to uphold the University's [Honor Code](#). All work that you produce must be your own. [Plagiarism](#) is a serious offense and will not be tolerated in this course. Be sure that you understand the correct way to cite scholarly material when completing assignments by consulting an [APA guide](#).

If you have any additional questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or how to properly cite a source, **please contact me**. Take some time to view this brief [Plagiarism tutorial](#).

You must cite any sources that you use in your written work using the **APA format**. You will always need to include a works cited/references page, and you will need to use proper in-text citation. And

please, for the sake of everybody's eyes, please **double space** and **use paragraphs of a sensible length; do not submit massive, unbroken blocks of text**. It is very difficult to grade these and they are hard to physically read. I retain the right to refuse to grade assignments that do not adhere to these standards. A good rule of thumb is that no paragraph should be longer than 75% of a page.

For additional information on how to properly cite sources, the University Libraries has an informative [page on citing sources](#). *A lack of proper citation (or a complete neglect of it) could be defined as plagiarism and is considered a serious offense* within the university Honor Roll Policies. **If you plagiarize, you will receive an automatic F in the course. You will also be required to attend Honor Court so they can decide your standing as a student in the university. Don't do it!**

The UNC Instrument of Student Judicial Governance defines plagiarism as:

“Deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.”

([Instrument of Student Judicial Governance](#), Section II.B.1)

Plagiarism is taking and using another person's thoughts, ideas, or work (whether in whole or in part) and passing them off as your own. Whether you intended to plagiarize or not, if you use someone else's work without acknowledging this via proper citation you are in essence stealing and breaking the UNC Honor Code. Academic integrity is important, as is your own integrity as a student and a member of a vibrant learning community.

Course Schedule

Section One - Getting Into the Processional Spirit

M Jan 10 - Introduction / In-depth syllabus review

Assignment #0: Read syllabus front-to-back (twice)

Section Two - Why Theory and Critical Thinking Matter (Also: How to Read This Stuff)

W Jan 12 - <https://nikkiusher.medium.com/how-to-read-theory-f84cd75eb066>

<https://terpconnect.umd.edu/~jklumpp/comm652/reading.html>

[https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/theory.html?](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/theory.html?fbclid=IwAR1JPGY2p6Q7a1FT9L08h1XJV3AeTMch3tdshGxE7RvtEsLqahep9QQyR2k)

[fbclid=IwAR1JPGY2p6Q7a1FT9L08h1XJV3AeTMch3tdshGxE7RvtEsLqahep9QQyR2k](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/theory.html?fbclid=IwAR1JPGY2p6Q7a1FT9L08h1XJV3AeTMch3tdshGxE7RvtEsLqahep9QQyR2k)

F Jan 14 -

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/stuart-hall-and-the-rise-of-cultural-studies>

Will Mason, Reading Sociological Theory

<https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/june-2021/sociological-theories/reading-sociological-theory/>

Himmelstein, Learning to Read Theory (PDF)

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

M Jan 17 - *No class*

Section Three - The Building Blocks of Communication: Semiotics

W Jan 19 - Semiotics: The Basics - Introduction & Chapter 1

F Jan 21 - Semiotics: The Basics - Chapter 2

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

M Jan 24 - Vladimir Nabokov, Signs and Symbols <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1948/05/15/symbols-and-signs> (CW: References to self-harm)

Alexander Dolinin, The Signs and Symbols in Nabokov's "Signs and Symbols" - <https://www.libraries.psu.edu/nabokov/dolinin.htm>

Section Four - Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Activity

W Jan 26 - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mead/>

Griffin, Symbolic Interactionism (CW: Derogatory terms)

Symbolic Interactionism (Gary Potter video) - https://fod-infobase-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=206210

Piotr A. Chomczyński, Mobbing from the Standpoint of Symbolic Interactionism

F Jan 28 - *Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Activity Cont'd*

Carter & Fuller, Symbols, Meaning, and Action: The Past, Present, and Future of Symbolic Interactionism

Robert Cluley, Downloading Deviance

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section Five - Spatial Theory, Geography, and Communication

M Jan 31 - Introduction to The SAGE Handbooks of Social Geography

Social Geography Dictionary Entry - Log in via UNC Library to access - <https://www-oxfordreference-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-1708?rskey=xN5CVc&result=1708>

W Feb 2 - Doreen Massey, A Global Sense of Place

Black Geographies: Mapping Black Spaces and Places <https://blackfeminisms.com/black-geographies/>

Edward Relph, *Topophilia and Topophils* <https://www.placeness.com/topophilia-and-topophils/>

F Feb 4 - Simon Springer, Becoming Beautiful: To Make The Colossus Tremble from [The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation](#)

David Harvey, The Right to the City

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section Six - Rhetoric, the Polis, and the Greco-Roman Tradition

M Feb 7 - Keith & Lundberg, Essential Guide to Rhetoric Pt I

W Feb 9 - Keith & Lundberg, Essential Guide to Rhetoric Pt I (CONT'D) / Essential Guide to Rhetoric Pt. II

F Feb 11 - Keith & Lundberg, Essential Guide to Rhetoric Pt. II (CONT'D)

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section Seven - Performance Studies: Dramaturgic Theory (Performance of Self in Everyday Life) and Performance Ethnography

M Feb 14 - Della Pollock, *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*

W Feb 16 - TBA

F Feb 18 - TBA

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section Eight: Cultural Studies: Myth, Ideology, and Representation

M Feb 21 -

What is Cultural Studies? - Slide presentation - <https://slideplayer.com/slide/11407338/>

Editors' Introduction - Cultural Studies 1983

A Dictionary of Human Geography - Representation - <https://www-oxfordreference-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-1565#>

Cultural Studies 1983 - Preface to the Lectures

W Feb 23 -

Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies 1983 - Lecture 1: The Formation of Cultural Studies

Slack & Wise, Chapter 12: Articulation and Assemblage

Slack & Wise, Chapter 16: Critical Conjunctures

F Feb 25 - Presentation - Landscapes of Communication (No reading)

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section Nine: Review Section: Comparing and Contrasting "Up to Now"

M Feb 28 - Reviewing Sections 1-3

W March 2 - Reviewing Sections 4-6

F March 4 - Reviewing Sections 7-9

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section 10: Critical Communication Theories: Feminist Theories, Standpoint Theory, Muted Group Theory, and Critical Race Theories

M March 7 - Mark P. Orbe, From The Standpoint(s) of Traditionally Muted Groups: Explicating A Co-cultural Communication Theoretical Model

W March 9 - TBA

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Thursday night

F March 11 - March 21 Spring break

W March 23 -TBA

F March 25 - TBA

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section 11: Theories of Communication Media: Contexts, Effects, and Conflicts

M March 28 -

Harold Adams Innis: The Bias of Communications & Monopolies Of Power

<https://www.media-studies.ca/articles/innis.htm>

McLuhan, Light and Dark - <https://www.media-studies.ca/articles/mcluhan.htm>

Reception Theory: <https://www.communicationtheory.org/reception-theory/>

W March 30 -

McLuhan, Understanding Media (Introduction)

Michael E. Doherty, Jr., Marshall McLuhan Meets William Gibson in "Cyberspace" <http://www.ibiblio.org/cmc/mag/1995/sep/doherty.html>

Henry Jenkins, Welcome to Convergence Culture - http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2006/06/welcome_to_convergence_culture.html

F April 1 - Stuart Hall, Encoding/Decoding

John Nguyet Erni - Media Studies and Cultural Studies: A Symbiotic Convergence

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

Section 12: Assignment Three Presentations (Five Students Per Session)

M April 4 - Presentation Session One

W April 6 - Presentation Session Two

F April 8 - Presentation Session Three

Quiz due by 11:59 PM Sat night

M April 11 - Presentation Session Four

W April 13 - Presentation Session Five

No quiz this week!

F April 15 - No class

Section 13: Course Review - "Unraveling the Enchilada of Social Communication"

M April 18 - Guest: Ian Williams

Ian Williams, "You Can Sleep Here All Night": Video Games and Labor

Williams & Tobin, The Practice of Oldhammer: Re-Membering a Past Through Craft and Play

Jonathan Ore - War Games (article or podcast version) - <https://www.cbc.ca/radiointeractives/docproject/warhammer-40k>

W April 20 - Guest: Katrina Marks

Reading TBA

F April 22 - Guest: TBA

No quiz - Prep for final, take a break!

M April 25 - Guest: TBA

W April 27 - LDOC - Course Review / Final Review

Final - TBA (Most likely will be a take-home written exam)