

# COMM 105 – Introduction to the Communication Discipline

## Syllabus for Online Course in Fall 2018

### Contents

Instructor Contact Information.....	2
Course Description.....	2
Prerequisites .....	2
Special Note .....	2
Required Materials .....	2
Technical Requirements.....	2
Course Outcomes .....	2
Nature of this course .....	2
Organization of Course: .....	3
Assignment Descriptions .....	5
Mini Tests: .....	5
Discussion Board Guidelines: .....	5
Article Summaries.....	7
Final Project .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Course Assessments.....	8
Grading Scale.....	8
Late papers or assignments: .....	8
Expectations .....	9
Time .....	9
Communication.....	9
Reading .....	9
Academic Integrity.....	9
Student Support.....	10
Withdrawing.....	10
Special Learning Needs.....	10
Library.....	10
Technical Support .....	10
Personal Support .....	10
Institutional Policies.....	10
Financial and Registration Issues.....	10

## Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Jessica Fabbricatore  
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Online Office Hours: Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM  
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM  
Phone: (304) 613-6730- You may text me if you have a question with a quick answer.  
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## Course Description

An introduction to the discipline of communication that focuses on how people generate meanings within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Experiences and projects will be offered to allow students to assess their own communication competence levels and methods of study and research that are used across the communication field.

### Special Note

If you are a communication, public relations, or media studies major/minor, it is a required course. This is NOT the communication course for general education. That's *Fundamentals of Human Communication*.

## Required Materials

### Required Readings

Duck, S. & McMahan, D. T. (2018). *Communication in everyday life: A survey of communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., Gurung, R. A. R. (2016). *An easyguide to APA style: Easyguide series* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Supplemental Readings/videos will be provided in various formats.

## Technical Requirements

1. Internet access with adequate bandwidth for viewing videos as well as uploading and downloading documents.
2. Installation and ability to use Microsoft Office programs: Word, Excel and PowerPoint

## Course Outcomes

Upon completing this course, the student should be able to:

1. Reflect upon the breadth and history of the communication field.
2. Select and apply theories and practices that deal with communication.
3. Develop a personally meaningful and well-developed perspective on communication—a perspective that will enable them to make better use of communication to achieve valued goals.
4. Utilize databases to locate social scientifically based research.
5. Understand how to read and summarize social scientific research.

Department:

1. Students will demonstrate an ability to integrate self-knowledge and communication principles in order to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of communication.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of communication theories, principles, and research methods.

School:

1. Demonstrate competency in written and oral communication, and information literacy.
2. Illustrate competencies needed to function in an entry-level social science-related career and/or graduate education.

## Nature of this course

The activities in this course include readings and mini tests, discussions surrounding a variety of concepts, and papers to check for understanding. I will include PowerPoints with each chapter. In the notes section of my PowerPoints, you will find supplemental information including actual notes and videos that will help drive the points home. When faced with a concept you do not understand, make your first step identifying all that you do know about the problem. Identify resources that can help you fill the gaps in your understanding. These will include your text, your classmates, online academic support resources and your instructor. Many times as you try to put your understanding into writing, the light will dawn.

## Organization of Course:

The organization of this course is in modules. Each module has its own set of modular outcomes. Each module is located in a separate folder in the Content section of the course. To begin the course, go to the Content section at the left of the course home page. **Click on the Start Here folder.** This first folder sets the stage for the class and must be finished by end-of-day (11:59 PM) on the second day of class, Tuesday, August 21. Specific due dates for all remaining activities are specified within the instructions and also noted on the calendar for the course.

Module	Activity Time	Topics	Assignments Due
Start Here!	Aug. 20-21	Introduction to the course & the people in it	SQ DB
1	Aug 20-25	What is communication? Histories & contexts of comm.	DB MT
2	Aug. 26- Sept. 1	Database search	MT <b>DBS</b>
3	Sept. 2-8	Using APA • Labor Day Recess Monday, Sept. 3	MT <b>APA</b>
4	Sept. 9-15	Reading scholarly journal articles	DB MT
5	Sept. 16-22	Identities, perceptions, and comm.	DB MT <b>SEP</b>
6	Sept. 23-29	Family communication	DB MT

7	Sept. 30- Oct. 6	Cultural communication	DB MT <b>AS</b>
8	Oct. 7-13	Personal relationships	DB MT
9	Oct. 14-20	Public relations • Fall Recess Oct. 18-21	DB MT
10	Oct. 21-27	Resumes & interviewing	DB MT
11	Oct. 28- Nov. 3	Technology & media in everyday life	DB MT <b>MD</b>
12	Nov. 4-10	Public & personal influence	DB MT
13	Nov. 11-17	Health communication	DB MT <b>AS</b>
14	Nov. 18-24	• Thanksgiving Break (begins Friday, Nov. 16)	
15	Nov. 25- Dec. 1	Communication in the workplace	DB MT
16	Dec. 2-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last day of classes: Wednesday, Dec. 5</li> <li>• Reading Day: Thursday, Dec. 6</li> <li>• Finals: Friday, Dec. 7-11</li> </ul>	<b>GTP EVAL</b>

## Assignment Descriptions

### Mini Tests:

The mini tests will be based on the assigned textbook readings and PowerPoints that correspond with the chapters. There will be one mini test per chapter meaning there are a total of 16 mini tests. These are due by Saturday at 11:59 pm of each module. I am not looking over your shoulder to determine if you are using your learning materials when you take your quizzes. I want to let you into a little secret about learning: The retrieval of information is what makes learning stick in the long term. Simply looking up, rereading notes, copying down definitions are all activities students do thinking that they are studying effectively. The key to helping yourself truly learn the material requires quizzing yourself—asking yourself to retrieve the information rather than taking the shortcut and looking it up. In other words, use the mini tests to determine areas in need of further effort. You will be given one opportunity to take the mini tests—push yourself to rely on your own brain as a diagnostic.

### Discussion Board Guidelines:

Discussions are an important part of this course. A discussion board is the centerpiece of our activities within each of the four modules.

Due Dates: Original posts are due each Wednesday by 11:59 pm. Responses to posts are due each Friday by 11:59 pm. After the due date for the initial blog post, there is a 48 hour period for responses. These dates are noted on the Blackboard calendar. My aim is to provide enough flexibility in the calendar to allow for your various schedules. At the same time, we have to keep up a certain pace to make certain that we work methodically through the assignments and avoid a pile-up of assignments at the end of the course. You can always make these posts sooner than the date due and even work ahead.

#### Discussion Board Etiquette:

How you post a message to a topic is just as important as what you post. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer.

- The instructor reserves the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content. Do not use offensive language.
- Rudeness or slamming will not be tolerated.
- Show respect for your fellow students, even if you disagree with something that was stated.
- Clearly state what you believe, even if it means that you're disagreeing with someone. Never, however, respond in anger – take care to discuss ideas, not the person.

#### Grading:

Topic discussion posts will be graded during the week following the date that the discussions are due. 20 total points are possible for each discussion topic. You will post 1 original post and respond to at least 2 classmate's posts each week. The discussion topic will be provided in each module. In determining your grade, the following components are considered (see the *Grading Rubric for Discussions* in the section that follows for a complete breakdown):

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Critical Analysis</b>	<b>Relevance to Post</b>	<b>Contribution to Learning Community</b>	<b>Quality of Writing</b>	<b>Timeliness</b>
<b>Exemplary (4 points)</b>	Response goes beyond the understanding of the content and includes relevant information from outside sources to support the main points.	Post is relevant to the discussion content and discusses other outside sources relevant to the content.	Attempts to motivate further discussion beyond the required participation. Interacts freely.	Free of grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Writing style promotes communication.	Original posts are added during the first half of the discussion period.
<b>Proficient (3 points)</b>	Response indicates an understanding of the content including concepts and terminology. Proper citation.	Post is related to the content of the discussion content.	Responses contribute to the discussion by asking related questions, elaborating on relevant topics discussed in post, or making an educated oppositional statement.	Mostly free of grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Writing style mostly promotes communication.	Original posts are present, but may have been posted during the last half of the discussion period.
<b>Limited (2 points)</b>	Response does not go beyond summarizing the reading. Little or no reference to outside sources or relevant current applications. Incorrect or no citations.	Responses mention the reading, but does not discuss any points from the reading. Response is short and/or irrelevant to the post.	Responses sometimes contribute to the discussion by asking related questions, elaborating on relevant topics discussed in post, or making an educated oppositional statement.	Some grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors.	Original posts are added at the last minute, leaving no time for classmates to respond.
<b>Incorrect (1 point)</b>	Little or no evidence that the readings were completed or understood.	Response is all opinion-based or anecdotal evidence. Does not reference the content.	Feedback is irrelevant or says something along the lines of, "I agree with her."	Use of texting/informal language; several grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors.	Post is made after the deadline
<b>Unacceptable (0 points)</b>	No post.	No post.	No feedback to fellow student.	No post.	No post.

## APA Citations

**APA [20 points]:** You will need to properly cite communication references in the APA format. Using the indexes available through our library, and the topic you searched in the Database Search Assignment, construct five citations of sources using correct APA style for the following categories: one reputable website source, one recent single-authored communication book, one edited (edition other than the first) communication book, one single-authored scholarly communication journal article, and one multi-authored scholarly communication journal article. To receive credit, you **MUST** label each citation with the appropriate type from the five above. Although this appears to be a deceptively simple assignment, each aspect of a correct APA citation will be evaluated and each error will reduce your grade.

## Database Search

**DBS [20 points]:** This assignment requires you to use EBSCO: Academic Search Elite as well as the two “Best Bets” for communication (EBSCO: Communication Source and ProQuest Social Sciences Premium Collection) for a particular area of communication-related research. The goal is to compare the databases. First, you will brainstorm at least three search terms related to a broader topic (topic: sport communication, search terms: media sports spectators, athlete sponsorships, Twitter sport journalism). Find a minimum of three relevant articles in the first database. Next, take your search terms and go to the other two databases. From each of the last two databases, find a minimum of three relevant articles. You will need a total of at least 9 references (3 from Academic Search Premier, and 6 from the other two databases). **DO NOT** turn in your entire search – just three good sources from each database. Finally, use your search terms in Google to see what kind of results come up. How were the searches different? Did your searches return the results you expected? Specific filters will be established in class.

## Article Summaries

**AS [40 points- 2x20]:** This assignment requires you to search in one of the three main databases for our field for a particular area of communication-related research. As a part of this assignment you will create an annotated bibliography demonstrating your knowledge of the content in the articles. More information will be provided in the module for this lesson. You will need to properly cite communication references in the APA format.

## Self-Evaluation Project

**SEP [15 points]:** This assignment allows you to assess your own communication attitudes and behaviors.

- a.) Obtain the four instruments from the SEP in LESSONS on Blackboard (the attachment here). After completing and scoring the “Quiet Person Survey,” the “PRCA-24 survey,” the “SPCC survey,” and the “PCS Scale.”
- b.) Summarize the purpose of each instrument and what each your scores on these instruments reveal about your attitudes about or behaviors when communicating in a variety of contexts. Support your analysis of your communication attitudes with descriptions of actual behavior from your experiences in interactions in these contexts.
- c.) Then design a LIST (minimum of seven) of very specific and descriptive behaviors, skills, and attitudes that should be considered strengths and a second list of very specific and descriptive behaviors, skills or attitudes that need improvement for you to be considered communicatively competent.
- d.) Finally, design a set of at least five goals that are observable and measurable that would move you toward communication competence. These goals should address the time remaining in your Wesleyan student career.

## Media Diary

**MD [15 points]:** For one 24-hour period, you must maintain a diary of your media interaction. This means not only all of your consumption (intended and otherwise), but also the times you talk about what you've seen, read, or listened to, and the times you find yourself using (intentionally and otherwise) what you have received from the media; in other words, every time the media touch your life in that period. The diary can be handwritten, but it must be readable and detailed (E.g., Tuesday Aug. 22 10:30 to 11:15 am, read editorials in *NY Times*. Monday March 15, texted for two hours).

Based on the information in your journal, you must discuss in a typed paper (2-3 pages) how the use of various media influences you, your environment, and others in it. Also, describe how you think going 24 hours without those media/technology might change your day/life.

## Group Theory Project

**GTP [70 points]:** For this project, you will be assigned to a small group in which you will select a specific communication theory to present to the class via YouTube video. The goals are to understand the theory in more depth than it is covered throughout this course as well as provide practical application examples of the theory. As a part of this assignment, you will evaluate each group member (including yourself) so I can make a more informed decision on grading the project. More information on this assignment will be given in the module.

Course Assessments	Points Per Assignment	Number of Assignments	Total Points
Discussion Board	20	13	260
Mini-tests (including SQ)	10	16	160
APA	20	1	20
Database Search	20	1	20
Annotated Bibliography	20	2	40
Self-Evaluation Project	15	1	15
Media Diary	15	1	15
Group Theory Project	70	1	70
			<b>600</b>

Above is complete list of all required activities.

## Grading Scale

To calculate your grade, divide the number of points you have by 600 (the total number of points in the class).

93% & up	A	83-86.99%	B	73-76.99%	C	63-66.99%	D
90-92.99	A-	80-82.99%	B-	70-72.99%	C-	60-62.99%	D-
87-89.99%	B+	77-79.99%	C+	67-69.99%	D+	59.99% & below	F

## Late papers or assignments:

Late posts or responses are accounted for within the grading rubric for the discussion board because late posts have an effect on the ability of your peers to finish their assignments. Other late assignments will lose 10% each day late. I will **not** accept any more that is more than **five** days late.



## Expectations

### Time

While the organization and the actual activities of this course may be different for a session offered during a regular semester, the expected learning outcomes and the time commitment required to meet those outcomes is the same. Translating the class time, the out of class preparation time required over a 15 week semester means that you should expect to spend about 5-7 hours per week completing the activities in this course. If you find it is taking you significantly more time than that, please discuss this with me so that we can analyze how you are approaching the work.

### Communication

You are expected to communicate respectfully. Netiquette. Using formal English. Texting short-cuts not acceptable. Emoticons may be used to help convey feelings, but they are not a substitutes for clearly written statements. Communication concerning course content should be through one of the discussion boards. Personal matters should be discussed with me directly. My preferred means of communication is through email, but I can be reached by phone in an emergency.

### Reading

There will be a significant amount of reading in this course. Some the reading will be in the assigned textbook, but some may require you to read an article online. When you are reading these materials, you are expected to connect the information read to concepts we are discussing and things you already know. You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding through mini tests and discussion boards.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity violations (including cheating, plagiarism, and facilitating either) are serious matters and will not be tolerated. See the West Virginia Wesleyan College Student Handbook for further discussion. Any violations of academic integrity in will result in, at minimum, failure of the assignment and likely failure in the course. All incidents are reported to the Dean of the College. **MAKE SURE YOU CITE ALL OF YOUR WORK.**

## **Student Support**

I realize that a variety of academic and non-academic issues may arise during the time of this course. What follows are brief descriptions of the types of support available to you during the semester. More details and specific resources can be found in the Student Support course link at the left. It is just below the Content course link.

### **Withdrawing**

Throughout the duration of the semester, you can email the professor and the registrar when you want to withdraw. The add/drop period is during the first week of the semester. If you want to withdraw from the class after that period, you will need to retrieve a withdraw form from the registrar, fill it out, and return it to the registrar.

### **Special Learning Needs**

If you have a physical, medical, psychological, or learning disability that is going to or require accommodation, please let me know immediately. More information is found in the Academic Support and the Accessibility folders in the Student Support course link at the left.

### **Library**

The WVWC Library offers information resources for students at all levels and all disciplines. Library resources are a key component of academic success. Google and Wikipedia as research tools will not lead to acceptable research assignments, papers, or presentations. The library's reference and instructional staff is available by phone, by email, by text, and via reference chat on the library homepage to assist students with research inquiries. Starting place for accessing library resources is here.

### **Technical Support**

I can help with most Blackboard issue, but am not your best source for internet or computer issues. The HelpDesk contact information is in the Technical Support folder.

### **Personal Support**

Should you become overwhelmed during this course, there are a variety of avenues for working through this difficulty. Feel free to contact me by email or telephone. Also, at the Student Support course link at the left side of each page, you can find a folder titled "Personal Support." In that folder you have contact information for advisors who can help you. There are also a variety of links to guidance and practices which may help you manage this demanding period of time.

### **Institutional Policies**

The Student Handbook is here along with direct links to the institutional policies on non-discrimination, students with disabilities and academic integrity.

### **Financial and Registration Issues**

This gives you the contact information for issues relating to billing and financial aid.