Theories in Speech Communication
Speech 601
Fall 2004

Instructor: Dr. Bill Sharkey
Office: George Hall 332
Office Hours: T & R 10:30-12noon & W 3-4pm
Phone: 956-8407
Fax: 956-3947
E-mail: sharkey@hawaii.edu
URL: http://www2.hawaii.edu/~sharkey/

Classroom: George 335
Time: W 6pm - 8:30pm

Readings


Additional Readings for each week are found in the George Hall storage/mail room. You may take the readings out for no more than two hours at a time. This is to give everyone the time to read them. When you take the readings, you must sign the “sign-out” sheet, indicate the date and time you borrowed the readings, and indicate the time when you returned the readings. Please take care of the readings; others will be using them as well.

Course Description

Speech 601 is designed to give the graduate student an introduction to Speech/Communication Theories, their development and their evaluation. We will be examining the history of the Speech/Communication field, epistemological foundations of Speech/Communication Theory, Metatheories in Speech/Communication, and theories related to relational management, social influence & message. The class format will include lecture (limited) and discussion (emphasized). By the end of the semester it is hoped that you will have gained a working knowledge of the history of the Speech/Communication field, its metatheories, and theories. It is also hoped that you will have gained the ability to evaluate and critique theories.

Participation (10%):

Each week, you will have a number of articles to read along with Kuhn and Littlejohn’s books. At the next class session, I will ask each student to comment on each reading. Questions will include queries such as: What are the main points of the author? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the readings? Are the claims that the authors make valid and logical? What claims do you agree with and not agree with? What are the epistemological, ontological, axiological assumptions of the author(s)? And so on.

Assignments

1. Midterm Opportunity (26%)
   - The midterm is an in-class opportunity. It will include short answer and short essay questions. It will cover all information covered in class and from your readings up to the midterm opportunity.

2. Final Opportunity (26%)
   - The final is an in-class opportunity. It will include short answer and short essay questions. It will cover all information covered in class and from your readings from the midterm opportunity to the end of class.

3. Reaction/Critique Papers (38%)
- For each article/chapter/book, you are to write a short critique (with the exception of the Littlejohn book chapters). Reaction papers should NOT be summaries of the articles/chapters, but instead reaction papers are to be your own original thoughts, ideas, and critiques of the articles/chapters. This assignment requires critical thinking. I am more interested in your ideas and responses to the articles. Here are a few questions to think about while reading the articles/chapters.

1. What are the strengths and the weaknesses of the article/chapter/book?
2. Are the claims that the authors make valid and logical? Why? If not, why?
3. Are the findings generalizable to the greater population?
4. What are the flaws of the articles/chapters?
5. Are there any findings that surprised you? Why?
6. Given the content of the article/chapter, what do you think researchers should be studying in the future?
7. What did you find most impressive about the article/chapter?
8. Which aspects do you agree with? Which aspects do you disagree with? Why?

There are many different ways to approach a reaction paper, and I do not expect you to address all of the issues above. Also, you may want to address issues that are not expressed above. Each response paper should be 1-2 pages in length. Get to the point.

Writing the Reaction Paper:

• Reactions papers should have thesis statements.
• You need to plan your papers carefully. One to two page papers are not very long. You need to express yourself in a concise and direct manner and pick out the most important ideas to write about.
• Challenge yourself! Do your best to come up with original ideas and thoughts that can be used for class discussion.
• Critiquing the author’s writing style is not an acceptable reaction paper. I want you to focus on the content of the articles.
• Although I will be concerned with your writing style, grammar, punctuation, etc., I am mainly interested in the content of your paper, how well you developed your arguments, the logic of your arguments, and clarity of original thought. This is where the bulk of your grade will come from. Papers that are poorly written, including excessive grammatical errors, typos, spelling errors, and punctuation errors will NOT receive a passing grade. All reaction paper grades will then be averaged for the overall reaction paper grade.
• No late papers will be accepted.
• I encourage you to discuss the papers with each other outside of class; however, the actual writing of the papers will be your own work and ideas. Plagiarism or ghostwriting will cause failure of that assignment and may result in failure of the course and other administrative actions.

**Final Grading Divisions**
Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

A+ = 96.5-100; A = 92.5-96.4; A- = 89.5-92.4; B+ = 86.5-89.4; B = 82.5-86.4; B- = 79.5-82.4;
C+ = 76.5-79.4; C = 72.5-76.4; C- = 69.5-72.4; D+ = 66.5-69.4; D = 62.5-66.4; D- = 59.5-62.4; F < 59.4
Schedule (subject to change)

Aug  25  Introduction to Communication History & Theory

Sep  01  Meeting at Hamilton Library Room 156
       Tour of Library

  08  Kuhn, T.: The structure of scientific revolutions (discussion)

analysis. In M. Burgoon (Ed.), Communication yearbook 5. New Brunswick, NJ:
Transaction.

Monographs, 70, 275-294.

15  Evaluation of Theories
Communication: Definitions, Functions, Models.
Littlejohn: chaps. 16, 1 & 2

201-210.

Motley, M. T. (1990). On whether one can(not) communicate: An examination via


22  Metathories: Systems Theory
Littlejohn: chap 3

Berger, C. R. (1977). The covering law perspective as a theoretical basis for the study

Cushman, D. P. (1977). The rules perspective as a theoretical basis for the study of

Monge, P. R. (1977). The systems perspective as theoretical basis for the study of human

theorist: Problems in the laws-rules-system trichotomy. Human Communication
Research, 4, 120-128.

29  Signs & Language & Discourse
Littlejohn: chap 4 & 5

University Press.

Press.

Communication Monographs, 54, 325-343.
Oct 06 Message Production, Reception, Cognitive Theories
Littlejohn: chap 6 & 7


13 Midterm

20 Symbolic Interaction, Structuration, & Convergence
Littlejohn: chap 8


27 Social & Cultural Reality
Littlejohn: chap 9


Nov 03 Experience, Interpretation & Critical
Littlejohn: chap 10 & 11


10 Communication in Relationships
Littlejohn: chap 12


17 Communication in Relationships
(continued)


24 Communication in Group Decision Making
Littlejohn: chap 13


Dec 01 Communication & Organizations
Littlejohn: chap 14


08 Catch Up

15 Final Opportunity

**Note**: The date listed indicates the days on which we will discuss the reading. Be sure to have read the items before class time.