COMG 601: Theories of Communicology
Fall 2014
Section 001: Th 3:00 – 5:30 p.m., George Hall 335

Instructor: Bobby Tokunaga
Office: George Hall 316
Office Hours: Th 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course begins with an overview of the communication field. It provides you with the history of communication science and highlights the relative fragmentation in the study of communication. We then discuss the building blocks of theory, metatheoretical considerations in theory construction, and ways to evaluate theory for critique. From the outset of this course, we also situate the position taken by our faculty members on this ontological, epistemological, and axiological continuum. In the second part of the semester, this class becomes a survey of communicological theories. The course initially covers novel methods for theorizing about communication, including viewing communication processes in an evolutionary, cognitive psychology, and neurosciences framework. We then cover seminal theories in communication, privileging our four departmental foci: message processing, interpersonal communication, persuasion and social influence, and intercultural communication. Last, we examine theories of mass communication and communication technologies to offer a comprehensive review of the large bandwidth of topics covered in communication.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- define communication and discuss the various traditions of communication study;
- explain different metatheoretical considerations in theory building and articulate your preferred ideological position on the ontological, epistemological, and axiological planes;
- apply evolutionary, cognitive psychology, and neurosciences concepts to communication theories;
- identify and reconcile gaps in theories, integrate theories, and apply theories in specific contexts;
- discuss, at least conversationally, theories of message processing, interpersonal communication, persuasion, intercultural communication, mass communication, and communication technologies

COURSE TEXT

We will not be using a formal textbook for this course. In place of a text, you will have four to five readings each week. The readings are available on the Laulima website. Please read the articles or book chapters in the order specified on the syllabus and on Laulima.

COURSE WEBSITE

You are expected to be familiar with Laulima (http://laulima.hawaii.edu/) for access to the course website. The website will provide you with the latest announcements and readings. You must log in using your University of Hawai‘i username and password.
THEORIES OF COMMUNICOLOGY

COURSE POLICIES

Format: This graduate-level course is designated as a discussion-based lecture. The instructor will largely lead the class discussions, but you will still be expected to contribute your thoughts. You are expected to read the assigned book chapters and journal articles carefully. You should not attend class if you neglected to read because it will waste your time and the time of your fellow classmates. You should be prepared to make thoughtful contributions to the discussion and feel free to ask questions.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for this graduate-level course. Please contact me if some unforeseen situation arises in which you are unable to attend class. If there is a mitigating circumstance that causes you to miss class, you are responsible for all information covered and announcements made. There is also an expectation that you are not tardy to class; please do not arrive later than 3:00 p.m.

Late Work Policy: Absolutely NO late work will be accepted unless you have some documented reason that prohibited you from submitting the work on time. You should notify the instructor immediately when such circumstances arise and either an alternative assignment or extension may be given to you. If you are participating in a university-affiliated activity, you must make arrangements with the instructor prior to your absence.

Academic Integrity: Any student caught plagiarizing an assignment will be immediately reported to the Director of Graduate Studies and Chairperson of the Communicology Department, and will receive a failing grade on the assignment. Plagiarism includes the absence of acknowledgement for another person's original thoughts or writings, copying another's work verbatim without the use of quotation marks and citation of the source, the use of a person or agency in the business of selling term papers, and the submission of a paper written for another class without the permission of both instructors.

University of Hawai‘i’s Student Conduct Code covers these and other infractions in greater depth. You are expected to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which can be found at http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/.

E-mail Use: You are responsible for checking your e-mail account frequently and consistently to remain current with University communications. You are expected to monitor and manage your e-mail storage quota to ensure that your mailboxes are not saturated and you are able to receive new messages. Please check your e-mail every day to keep up to date on important correspondence related to this course.

Grade Appeals Policy: Any grade in the class is able to be appealed if you believe there is a compelling reason why you should have received a higher grade. You are responsible for preparing a type-written argument, which may be e-mailed, detailing why you feel a higher grade is deserved. To appeal a grade received on an assignment, you are asked to provide all of the necessary documentation with the written argument (e.g., paper with instructor’s comments, etc.). All appeals must be submitted within one week of receiving the grade.

The instructor will review grade appeals and determine whether any points should be granted. If no amicable solution can be met after the first grade appeal, you may file a secondary grade appeal. For such appeals, an independent graduate faculty member will regrade the assignment, using the assignment rubric, and issue a grade. The second grade, whether it is higher or lower than the original, will be recorded and is not able to be appealed.
THEORIES OF COMMUNICOLGY

ASSIGNMENTS

Theory Presentation (100 points; 20% of your grade): You will be responsible for leading a discussion on theories at two different points during the semester. You will be assigned a theory and asked to make a 10-minute presentation to the class. In the presentation, you should provide a brief overview of the theory, focusing on its major propositional arguments. You should then explain a potential gap or limitation in the theory. Provide a variable we can include in the theory or different methodology we can use to fill this gap. In the next part of the presentation, you will explain your theoretical integration, where you introduce a second theory and describe how the two can be combined to explain a communication phenomenon. Finally, you should explain a context in which this theory might be tested. Offer a communication phenomenon that you think can be explained by this theory. You should note that most of the readings in our class are seminal articles; this means a lot of scholarly work has been done on the theory since the time the original article was written. I encourage you not to review and then borrow from the later work but rather critically examine your theory independent of these revisions. You should also prepare a one-page handout on key points of your presentation for the instructor and your classmates.

Evolutionary, Cognitive, or Neurological Perspectives (50 points; 10% of your grade): The evolutionary and cognitive psychology perspectives are noticeably absent in theories of communication. For this reason, you are asked to select a communication theory and interpret the theory using evolutionary and/or cognitive psychology lens. The paper should present the main propositions of the theory as explained by the communication theorist, but then use what you learned in Weeks 4 to 6 to develop the theory in the alternative framework. You should be clear and complete about the way communication processes described in the theory can be explained by principles of evolution or cognitive psychology. The deadline for this paper is Thursday, November 6 at 11:59 p.m. HST.

Research Questions/Hypotheses (25 points; 5% of your grade): Each week, you are charged with the task of developing a hypothesis or research question. Along with each hypothesis or research question, you should (a) provide a 2-sentence description of what evidence might be provided to answer the questions (i.e., to ensure your test is plausible), and (b) a 2-sentence description of why answering the question would be valuable (e.g., theoretical interest, pragmatic application). You will turn in the set of hypotheses and/or research questions at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. The assignment is intended to improve not only your skills at hypotheses generation but also building rationales for research projects. The first set of research questions/hypotheses will be due on the day of the midterm; the second set will be due on the day of the final exam.

Exams (150 points; 30% of your grade): You will have two exams for this class. One exam will be administered in class on Week 8 and the other will be a take home. The exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions. The exams will cover materials in the readings. The instructor will solicit from students possible topic areas that the exams will cover.

Participation (25 points; 5% of your grade): The seminar format relies on your preparation to respond thoughtfully to the discussions and questions raised in class. A rich discussion can only emerge if you carefully read and understand the articles. Your participation grade in this course reflects the quantity and quality of your contribution to the discussion. Speaking frequently but with very little substance will not earn you maximum points. The instructor reserves the right to include quizzes each week if he finds that students are not reading each week. The grades for these quizzes will take the place of the participation grade.
THEORIES OF COMMUNICOLOGY
ASSIGNMENTS (Continued)

Research Study (150 points; 30% of your grade): The most substantive project in this class is the final paper and presentation. You will be responsible for a literature review that leads to testable hypotheses. The prospective goal of this paper is to complete the research project in Communicology 702. You have some latitude in designing the study, but one condition of this project is that you must invoke or meaningfully test part or all of a communication theory. You are responsible for the introduction, review of literature, theory explanation and application, arguments leading up to the hypothesis and/or research questions, and testable hypotheses and/or research questions. At the end of your introduction, you must provide a strong rationale for the study and discuss potential contributions of your study. It is your responsibility to ensure that no scholar has conducted the study you are proposing.

Your final paper will be approximately 12 to 15 pages in length (not including references, tables, figures, and end notes). You must organize your paper using the writing style prescribed by the APA 5th or 6th edition. Further instructions about what is expected in each section will be provided to you in a separate document on Laulima. Different parts of the paper are due at different time periods. You are expected to turn in the final paper, responding to the instructor's feedback on earlier “drafts.” The following deadlines must be met; failure to meet these deadlines will result in significant point penalties:

1. **September 11**: Submit a brief description (2-3 pages) of your research idea. The paper should specify a broad area of interest within which the topic falls, discuss how the project might advance our understanding of that area (i.e., the contributions), and give a precise description of the project's goals. You should also begin to search for relevant literature on your topic and append a reference list with at least four sources formatted in APA style.

2. **October 2**: Submit your study's hypotheses and/or research questions. This is an opportunity to show that you can produce theoretically-grounded, testable hypotheses. A 1-2 paragraph explanation should accompany each hypothesis and/or research question. In these paragraphs, you are expected to tie arguments together, using logical reasoning, to come to conclusions.

3. **October 16**: Submit an introduction to your paper. You should include an overview of the topic, a strong rationale (i.e., not arguing solely on the basis that no research has previously been done on this topic), and the contributions of the study.

4. **October 30**: Submit a 1-2 page overview of the communication theory you are extending or applying to a new context. You should explain the theory and demonstrate how it is applicable to the text that you have selected.

5. **November 26**: You should turn in the first draft of the completed paper. The paper should include a list of references with at least 15 sources, which should also be cited in text. The paper should include a sensible number of testable research questions or hypotheses. You should use hypotheses or research questions when appropriate; we do not privilege one over the other.

6. **December 11**: Final paper submission. The final paper must include all components, including an introduction, theory explanation, review of relevant literature, and hypotheses and/or research questions. A title page and abstract of no more than 150 words should accompany the manuscript. Neither the title page nor the abstract page count toward the page limit.
7. **December 18**: You must prepare a 10-minute presentation, which includes a visual aid, for your classmates and the instructor. Begin the presentation with an introduction to your topic area and briefly explain what inspired you to address this research area. You should then discuss the theoretical framework of your paper, the review of relevant literature, and your hypotheses and/or research questions. A 3-4 minute question-and-answer period, on which you will also be evaluated, will follow the presentation. Questions will be raised by your classmates and the instructor.

Submission Procedures: All papers must be submitted in the “Assignments” tab on Laulima by the start of the respective class. Please name the file as the capitalized last name of all group members and nothing else. If you are using Windows Office 2000 or a more recent version, please save the MS Word document as a .doc extension as opposed to the default .docx extension (e.g., Tokunaga.doc, not TokunagaPaper1.docx). Do not submit the document in any other format (e.g., .pages, .pdf, etc.). Absolutely no late papers will be accepted. You should expect to receive instructor feedback through the track changes and comments functions on MS Word. The instructor will upload papers to Laulima once they have been reviewed.
THEORIES OF COMMUNICOLOGY
COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule for each class period. Changes may need to be made to this schedule. You are responsible for making the changes on their syllabus.

August 28

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNICATION THEORIES

September 4

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION AS A DISCIPLINE


September 11

METATHEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COMMUNICATION THEORY


September 18

EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION I


**September 25**

**EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION II**


**October 2**

**COGNITIVE SCIENCES PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION**


**October 9**

**MESSAGE PROCESSING: CONSTRUCTING SHARED MEANING**


**October 16**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

**October 23**

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION I**


**October 30**

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION II**


**November 6**

**PERSUASION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE I**


**November 13**

**PERSUASION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE II**


**November 19**

**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION MAKEUP**


**November 20**

**NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (NO CLASS)**

**November 27**

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
December 4  


December 11  

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS


December 18  

PAPER PRESENTATION
# THEORIES OF COMMUNICOCOLOGY
## POINT BREAKDOWN

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97.0% – 100%</td>
<td>485 – 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.0% – 96.9%</td>
<td>465 – 484</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0% – 92.9%</td>
<td>450 – 464</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0% – 89.9%</td>
<td>435 – 449</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.0% – 86.9%</td>
<td>415 – 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0% – 82.9%</td>
<td>400 – 414</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0% – 79.9%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73.0% – 76.9%</td>
<td>365 – 384</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0% – 72.9%</td>
<td>350 – 364</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.0% – 69.9%</td>
<td>335 – 349</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60.0% – 62.9%</td>
<td>300 – 314</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0.00% – 59.9%</td>
<td>Below 299</td>
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## What a Grade Means

- **A**: Exceptional work; Far exceeds minimum requirements for the assignment; Demonstrated mastery over subject area; Very few technical issues
- **B**: Average work; Meets the minimum requirements for the assignment; Demonstrated superficial knowledge in subject area; Technical issues apparent.
- **C**: Below average work; Does not meet minimum requirements; Does not appear to understand assignment; Did not seek help when necessary.
- **D**: Poor quality work; Appeared to submit work haphazardly; Did not put in appropriate effort; No support in assignment; Many technical issues.
- **F**: Failed to meet the basic standards of the class; The student did not leave the class learning any of the outcomes specified in the syllabus; Did not put forth the effort expected in a graduate course.