



## CMST 4/503 • Gender & Communication

Department of Communication Studies      Spring 2022  
Room: N/A (online)      Section: 60  
Dates & Times: Arranged (online)      403 Course ID: 006583  
503 Course ID: 006753

**Instructor:** Justin J. Rudnick, Ph.D. (“Dr. J”) (pronouns: he/she/they)  
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**Office Hours:** [Book an appointment with me here!](#)  
Mon / Tue: 2:00 – 4:00pm (Online or @ Normandale)  
Wed / Thurs: 2:00 – 5:00pm (Online or @ Normandale)  
*\*I am also available by appointment. Please contact me to set up a meeting.*

### Required Texts:

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This course has one **required** textbook. It is **necessary** for the successful completion of this course (so yes, you need to buy it):

Fixmer-Oraiz, N., & Wood, J. T. (2019). *Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture*. Cengage. (ISBN: 9781337555975)

Additional required readings will be made available on the Desire-2-Learn (D2L) system (<https://mnsu.ims.mnscu.edu/>).

### About the Course:

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CMST 4/503 is designed to develop an understanding of how gender and communication interact. We will encounter basic theories and principles of communication as it applies to gender and develop skills to enhance communication through and about gender. Our studies will situate both gender and communication within influential contexts such as verbal and nonverbal interactions, media and politics, interpersonal relationships, and the workplace. In short, this course will investigate the dynamic relationship between communication and gender, and how gender is fundamentally a communicative issue.

Successful completion of **CMST 403** will fulfill the following learning objectives:

1. Define relevant concepts and theories pertaining to gender identity;
2. Explain the importance of gender in various communication contexts;
3. Critically examine representations of gender in contemporary discourses;
4. Produce assessments of institutional gendered artifacts;
5. Defend your analyses of gender and institutional life to your peers.

Successful completion of **CMST 503** will fulfill the following learning objectives:

1. Explain relevant communication perspectives pertaining to the study of gender;
2. Explain the importance of gender in understanding communication differences;
3. Critically analyze the representation and analysis of gender in communication research;
4. Construct an original communication analysis of institutional representations of gender.

## About Me:

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My name is Dr. Justin Rudnick (students call me “Dr. J”), and I’ll be your guide as we study the intersection of communication and gender! I have a doctoral degree in Communication Studies and a graduate certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Ohio University, and my research specialties are in identity, performance, and gender/sexuality studies. I joined the CMST department in 2016, and have been teaching mostly at our twin-cities program housed at Normandale Community College. On a personal level, I consider myself an amateur foodie and love exploring new food and drinks, I enjoy staying active, and I also play a lot of video games.



## Technology Requirements:

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We will use a variety of online learning tools in this class, including Desire2Learn (D2L) and FlipGrid. Course materials are available to you on D2L, and assignments should be submitted to D2L as well; our class discussions and presentations will take place primarily through FlipGrid. To successfully complete this class, **you will need a computer with access to both a microphone and a webcam**. It is your responsibility to ensure you can properly access and use the technology required for this class—**I will not troubleshoot technology issues for you**. As a note, D2L is designed to work best with the Firefox browser, which you can download for free at <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/>. If you have additional trouble accessing course technology, you are encouraged to contact the IT office (<http://www.mnsu.edu/its/help/servicedesk/>).

## Accessibility and Academic Accommodations:

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Minnesota State University, Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities, or services. Students with disabilities requiring equal access to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with Accessibility Resources, (Memorial Library 132, telephone 389-2825, or TDD 711) to establish an accommodation plan and then contact me if needed. Through our Partnership Center, Minnesota State Mankato will cooperate with Normandale Community College to set up any accommodations you need to succeed in this class. I will gladly incorporate any accommodations you might need in order to successfully complete this course.

## Nondiscrimination and Classroom Etiquette:

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We live in a multicultural world that is diverse, distinct, evolving, and complex—this is a basic assumption of the class, and one I hope you find readily apparent. As you can imagine, in this course we will frequently discuss ideas, issues, and controversies about which we are *socialized* to feel uncomfortable. This discomfort is one of the root causes of many forms of prejudice and discrimination we will encounter in this course, and is something we will all work through together. **We must not be silent or shy away from our perspectives—but we do not have free license to say whatever we want**. In this course, we will critically examine how we communicate *about* different groups of people; this is inherently a problematic endeavor. To that end, I expect us all to **discuss ideas, positions, and perspectives—but not people**. For example, it is fine for you to express your opinions about *the process of abortion*. It is not acceptable for you to express your opinion about *people who have an abortion*. As your instructor, you can expect me to facilitate an amicable environment where conversations about ideas and thoughts can flow freely, creatively, and comfortably. As students, I expect you to engage our class with a

similar commitment. We will entertain many ideas, hear conflicting perspectives, and remain open to challenging others and being challenged in turn. As a final note, all Minnesota State, Mankato nondiscrimination policies will be upheld and enforced in our class.

### **Rigor and Academic Honesty:**

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In keeping with MNSU's Academic Honesty policy, all work that engages in such inappropriate activities as plagiarism, cheating, or collusion will be subjected to the appropriate academic sanctions. These sanctions may include anything ranging from re-doing the assignment to receiving an automatic failing grade in the course. For more information on your rights and responsibilities as they relate to academic honesty, consult the university's policy at <https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>.

### **Attendance Policy and Online Work:**

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One of the most imposing challenges of online courses is their insistence that students be accountable and proactive. In order to succeed in this class, you *MUST* visit our D2L site **often and regularly**. This class is best experienced through conversation and dialogue, and I will strive to foster that environment regularly. However, it is your responsibility to ensure you are participating to the fullest extent possible. In a typical 4-credit course, you spend 4 hours in class each week discussing and applying the material you reviewed *outside* of class. In this class, you should also expect to log 4 hours of online time each week reviewing lecture presentations, posing discussion questions, and responding to your peers—**in addition to the time you spend reading and completing course assignments**. I expect you to stay on top of the progression of our online class, and to contact me if you have questions about what is expected of you. Similarly, you can expect me to check in with you if, at any point, I feel you are not “present” enough in our course.

### **Work Policies:**

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Late work is not indicative of upper-level (or graduate) course preparedness and is not conducive to success in this class. I expect all work to be completed by the assigned deadlines, for your success and for my well-being. Please consult with me if you have issues meeting any deadlines in this class.

I also have stylistic expectations for all written work in this class. Any written work, unless specified otherwise, should comply with the following expectations:

- All work must be submitted electronically through the appropriate dropbox on D2L;
- All work **MUST** be in a Word document or a format I can open with Microsoft Word;
- Type your work and double-space everything evenly;
- Use an APA-approved font and size (e.g., Times New Roman-12, Calibri-11, Arial-11, Georgia-11);
- Margins should be 1” all around;
- All assignments must include a cover page in proper APA format;
- Anything written by someone else and referenced in your assignment **in any way** should be cited in-text and included in a reference section according to the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

If the above requirements are not met, I may return the work to you—ungraded—and you will have the ability to make corrections. Your work will be subjected to the late work penalty.

### **Course Assignments and Grades:**

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Some students seem to have the misconception that simply doing an assignment results in an “A.” Failure to follow directions or meet criteria will result in you earning fewer points. Also, simply doing an assignment does not guarantee a passing grade regardless of perceived “effort.”

Please note the definition of each letter grade for **undergraduate work in CMST 403:**

- “A” is reserved for work that is exceptional;
- “B” is reserved for work that is above average;
- “C” is reserved for work that is average (**i.e., meets the minimum expectations**);
- “D” is reserved for work that is below average;
- “F” is reserved for work that is failing, late, or not submitted for evaluation.

The university sets more rigorous expectations for graduate work. Please note the definition of each letter grade for **graduate work in CMST 503:**

- “A” is reserved for work that is above average or exceptional;
- “B” is reserved for work that is average;
- “C” is reserved for work that is below average;**
- “D” is reserved for work that represents unacceptable performance;
- “F” is reserved for work that is failing, late, or not submitted for evaluation

The following grading scale will be used in this course:

A- = 90—92.9%	A = 93—96.9%	A+ = 97—100%
B- = 80—82.9%	B = 83—86.9%	B+ = 87—89.9%
C- = 70—72.9%	C = 73—76.9%	C+ = 77—79.9%
D- = 60—62.9%	D = 63—66.9%	D+ = 67—69.9%
	F = 0—59.9%	

**A note about contesting your grade:** If you have questions about your grade, I encourage you to come discuss your grade with me, with these exceptions: (1) you may not ask me about your grade before you have received my feedback; and (2) I will not discuss specific assignment grades more than 2 weeks after they are distributed.

**A note about final grades:** At the conclusion of the course, I will assign letter grades based on the above percentage scale. As indicated by the scale, *I will round grades to the nearest tenth decimal (0.x)*. I will not round beyond this, so do not ask me to. ☺

The following assignments will be completed by each student in the class. You can determine your percentage (and grade) by totaling the points you have accumulated and dividing those points by the number of points possible.

**403 (Undergrad) Assessments:**

Points Earned / Points Possible

1. Reading Quizzes (8; points vary)	_____ / 130
2. Discussions (8 @ 20 pts each)	_____ / 160
3. Intersectional Self Essay	_____ / 40
4. Oral History Presentation	_____ / 50
5. Institutional Artifact Analysis Presentation	_____ / 70
6. Institutional Artifact Analysis Essay	_____ / 100
Total:	_____ / 550

1. **Reading Quizzes:** Whenever you have assigned readings, you will complete a short online (D2L) quiz to assess your comprehension of the material. These quizzes will vary in the number of questions and their point values depending on the length of the unit and the number of readings (i.e., 1-week units will have shorter quizzes than 2-week units).
2. **Discussions:** In each unit, you will participate in a recorded video discussion post on FlipGrid (instead of traditional text-based discussion threads). You are expected to make **three posts per unit:** an original post where you provide your own responses to the questions posed, and a follow-up reply post to TWO of your peers in class. Each post may not exceed 10 minutes.
3. **Intersectional Self Essay:** To best understand how gender affects communication (and vice versa), we will begin by turning our lens inward to explore our own gender identities and development. This essay will require you to consider how you know yourself as a gendered person, and the formative experiences that contributed to your current gender identity.
4. **Oral History Presentation:** To further refine our understanding of the relationship between gender and communication, you will turn your lens outward to explore another person's story surrounding their gender identity. You will accomplish this by conducting an audio-recorded interview with someone about their formative experiences related to their gender, and then create a compelling presentation of your interview and the lessons you learned from it.
5. **Institutional Artifact Analysis Paper & Presentation:** You will capitalize on your learning in this class by employing your critical thinking skills to analyze the gendered implications of various institutional artifacts (symbols, representations, portrayals, or demands of gender). You will need to identify a meaningful gendered artifact and analyze it for its coded messages about gender and communication in a critical way. You will then present this analysis in both a presentation to your peers, and a final paper to me. **CMST majors are encouraged to save this work for possible inclusion in your senior seminar portfolio in CMST 485.**

503 (Graduate) Assessments:

Points Earned / Points Possible

1. Reading Responses (8 @ 15 pts each)	_____ / 120
2. Class Discussions (8 @ 20 pts each)	_____ / 160
3. Artifact Analysis Project:	
a. Part 1 (Introduction)	_____ / 35
b. Part 2 (Literature Review)	_____ / 65
c. Part 3 (Analysis / Findings)	_____ / 100
d. Part 4 (Online Presentation)	_____ / 100
e. Part 5 (Final Paper)	_____ / 150

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 730

1. **Reading Responses:** Whenever you have assigned readings, you will produce a 3-5 page written reflection on the assigned readings. These reflections should include questions you have about the material that you could pose to your peers, and responses or contentions (arguments) about the content.
2. **Discussions:** In each unit, you will participate in a recorded video discussion post on FlipGrid (instead of traditional text-based discussion threads). You are expected to make substantive contributions to these discussions (at minimum, one original post and 3 response posts) each unit.
3. **Artifact Analysis Project, Part 1:** Throughout the semester you will work on an original scholarly project investigating the study or representation of gender in an institution of interest to you (e.g., family, education, work, relationships, media, religions, etc.). Part 1 of this project will require you to identify your gendered “artifact,” introduce your project, and justify its relevance to communication studies.
4. **Artifact Analysis Project, Part 2:** Part 2 of your Artifact Analysis project will require you to synthesize relevant research (in communication studies and adjacent disciplines) into a targeted literature review. This review will help you situate your study within academic research and inform your approach to the analysis you do later.
5. **Artifact Analysis Project, Part 3:** For part 3 of your project, you will construct a draft of your analysis or findings (depending on your project). This will require you to present the framework or method you used to analyze whatever artifact you collected, and the analysis or lessons learned through that analysis.
6. **Artifact Analysis Project, Part 4:** Toward the end of the semester, you will create a 12-15 minute presentation describing your Artifact Analysis project. You will then view each presentation created by your fellow graduate students, and pose challenging or thought-provoking questions that you will then have to “defend” in responses back to the group.
7. **Artifact Analysis Project Part 5:** Your final semester paper will require you to revise and synthesize your project portions to construct a full-length original manuscript

(approximately 20 pages) presenting your scholarly investigation of gender in your chosen artifact. **I encourage you to submit this essay to relevant professional or academic meetings, conferences, or publications. Please consult me if you would like assistance.**

## Tentative Course Schedule

*Note: This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I will attempt to give you fair warning and make reasonable accommodations if I need to adjust the schedule.*

\*All supplemental readings will be announced later. Check D2L each week for your assigned readings.\*

Week	Dates	Topic:	Assignments:
1	Jan 10 – 16	Course Introduction & Getting Acquainted <i>Assign: Discussions; Responses; AA Part 1</i>	Reading Quiz 1 / Response 1 Discussion 1
2 – 3	Jan 17 – 30	Theoretical Introductions <i>Assign: Intersectional Self Essay</i>	Reading Quiz 2 / Response 2 Discussion 2 <b>Due: Artifact Analysis, Part 1 (503)</b>
4 – 5	Feb 31 – 13	Processes of Becoming Gendered <i>Assign: AA Part 2</i>	Reading Quiz 3 / Response 3 Discussion 3 <b>Due: Intersectional Self (403)</b>
6 – 7	Feb 14 – 27	Gendered Communication Styles <i>Assign: AA Part 3; Oral History Project</i>	Reading Quiz 4 / Response 4 Discussion 4 <b>Due: Artifact Analysis, Part 2 (503)</b>
8	Mar 28 – 6	Media Representations of Gender	Reading Quiz 5 / Response 5 Discussion 5
--	Mar 7 – 13	No new class work – spring break!	
9 – 10	Mar 14 – 27	Gender Movements: Feminism & Men's Rights <i>Assign: Artifact Project (403)</i>	Reading Quiz 6 / Response 6 Discussion 6 <b>Due: Oral History Project (403)</b> <b>Due: Artifact Analysis, Part 3 (503)</b>
11 – 12	Apr 28 – 10	Gendered Relationships <i>Assign: Presentations (all); AA Final (503)</i>	Reading Quiz 7 / Response 7 Discussion 7
13	Apr 11 – 17	Resisting Gendered Power & Violence	Reading Quiz 8 / Response 8 Discussion 8
14 – 15	Apr 18 – 1	<b>Artifact Analysis Presentations!</b>	<b>Due: Artifact Presentations (403 &amp; 503)</b>
F	May 2 – 6	<b>All Final Papers due 11:59pm Monday</b>	