



CMST 301 • CMST: Approaches & Perspectives

Department of Communication Studies Spring 2018
Dates & Times: Mondays, 6:00 – 9:45pm Course ID: 005903
Room: P2804 Section: 60

Instructor: Justin J. Rudnick, Ph.D. (“Dr. J”)
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Office Hours: Schedule a meeting through MavConnect! www.mnsu.edu/mavconnect/login.html
Mondays: 2:00—5:00pm (Online, or In-Person @ Normandale)
Tues/Thurs: 1:30—3:30pm (Online, or In-Person @ Normandale)
Wednesdays: 2:00—5:00pm (by appointment only)
<i>*I am also available by appointment. Please contact me to set up a meeting.</i>

Required Texts:

This course has one required textbook. It is necessary for the successful completion of this course:

Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2011). *Theories of human communication* (10th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. ISBN: 9781577667063

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

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of CMST 301 is to introduce you to the many and varied ways of understanding, researching, and practicing communication. We will question what “communication” is, what questions a communication student might ask about a social phenomenon, how communication theory helps us understand social phenomena, and how a degree in communication will prepare you for life and work outside of the university. As a “gateway” course for the communication major, you will practice basic research and writing skills—including library database research and writing in APA style—to enhance your skills in observing, analyzing, and understanding the process of communication in a variety of contexts.

Your successful completion of this course will fulfill the following learning objectives:

1. Describe the process of communication through various theoretical perspectives;
2. Analyze how humans use symbols to communicate;
3. Explain the communicative nature of a social phenomenon in which you are interested;
4. Use research and writing techniques appropriate to the study and practice of communication;
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of various communication theories to answer questions about a social phenomenon;
6. Integrate communication theory and communication research to propose an original research project about a social phenomenon of interest to you.

Nondiscrimination and Classroom Etiquette:

We live in a multicultural world that is diverse, distinct, evolving, and complex. As an instructor, you can expect me to facilitate an amicable environment where ideas and thoughts can flow freely, creatively, and comfortably. As students, I expect you to enter our class with a similar commitment. We will entertain many ideas, hear conflicting perspectives, and remain open to challenging others and being challenged. As a final note, all MNSU nondiscrimination policies will be upheld and enforced in our class.

Accessibility and Academic Accommodations:

Minnesota State University, Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities, and/or services. Students with documented disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with Accessibility Resources (Memorial Library 132, ph: 507-389-2825, TDD 711, or email Julie.Snow@mnsu.edu) to establish an accommodation plan and then contact me as soon as possible. Through our Partnership Center, MSU, 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.

Rigor and Academic Honesty:

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:

CMST 301 is designed to be a “gateway” to the major—the skills and knowledge you gain in this course are needed to successfully complete the rest of your degree in Communication Studies. It is in your best interest to attend class regularly and participate to the fullest extent you are able. I will take attendance each week and notify you of excessive (more than 2) absences. Additionally, each week you will complete a short group presentation of the course material worth 10 points—these points account for approximately 18% of your total semester grade. If you are unable to attend class, or leave class early, you will not receive points for these presentations. Finally, if you miss more than 2 class sessions, your final semester grade will be reduced by 5% (the equivalent of ½ letter grade) for each absence beyond 2. Absences are *excused* if they are for *documented university-sponsored travel* or *dire personal emergencies*. As a final note: I am not responsible for “catching you up” if you miss class—it is your responsibility to stay current in your work. Please use your group members as resources to assist you.

Work Policies:

Any late work will be subjected to an automatic 50% grade deduction. I will not accept ANY late work a week after the due date. You should also note that, because of the constraints of meeting

only once per week, there is no guarantee you will be able to make up oral presentations if you miss your assigned date.

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 a serif font (either Times New Roman or Cambria) in size 12;
- Margins should be 1" all around;
- Assignments more than two pages long must include a cover page with the paper title, your name, and the course number (e.g., CMST 301);
- 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, 6th edition.

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

Course Assignments and Grades:

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%	

Please note the definition of each letter grade:

“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.

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.

<u>Assessment:</u>	<u>Points Earned / Points Possible</u>
1. Reading Quizzes (9 @ 10 pts each)	____ / 90
2. Theory Facilitations (7 @ 20 pts each)	____ / 140
3. Topic Statement Description	____ / 20
4. Communication Contextualization	____ / 30
5. Annotated Bibliography Draft	____ / 10
6. Annotated Bibliography Final	____ / 60
7. Literature Review Outline	____ / 25
8. Literature Review Draft	____ / 10
9. Literature Review Final	____ / 75
10. Oral Presentation	____ / 50
11. Theory Application Essay	____ / 50
	Total: ____ / 560

- 1. Reading Quizzes (10 points each):** Whenever you have assigned readings, you will complete a short online (D2L) quiz to test your comprehension of the material. These quizzes are always 10 questions, multiple-choice, and 1 point per question. Quizzes open a week before the class session, and close at 5:30 pm before class.
- 2. Theory Facilitations (20 points each):** Each week we read from the textbook, you will work in teams to teach the class about one of the theories from the reading. I will assign your team a theory in class, and give you class time to prepare (these presentations are not out-of-class work). Together, the class will teach each other (with my help) the complex ideas from the reading.
- 3. Topic Statement Essay (20 points):** To prepare you for your capstone experience in CMST 485, you will begin conceptualizing your senior research project in this class. You will start by writing a short (~2 page) essay describing your topic of interest and why it would be important to study.
- 4. Communication Contextualization (30 points):** As a communication studies major, you are expected to relate your research interests to the communication discipline. This short (~3 page) essay will require you to use course materials to explain how your research topic (from the Topic Statement Essay) relates to communication studies.
- 5. Annotated Bibliography (70 points total):** To prepare you for work in future classes, you will collect 15 academic sources that help you better understand your chosen research topic. You will compile these sources into an APA-style bibliography and identify relevant or useful quotations from *each* article. You will bring a complete draft to class for an in-class workshop, which you will then revise into a final version.
- 6. Literature Review (110 points total):** Using the sources you collected for your bibliography, you will develop a 5-6 page literature review essay in three stages. First, you will organize your source quotations into a topical outline. Second, you will turn that

outline into a draft essay. Third, you will have an individual consultation with Dr. J and revise your draft into a final essay. You will take this essay with you to CMST 306 and 485.

- 7. Oral Presentation (50 points):** At the end of the semester, you will give a short (5-7 minute) presentation where you describe your research topic and relate it to a theory from class that helps explain what you think you might learn about that topic in your future classes.
- 8. Theory Application Essay (50 points):** Your final paper will require you to identify 2-3 theories from class, and explain how each of those theories relate to your chosen research topic. You will provide both broad overviews and specific conceptual descriptions for each theory to demonstrate your understanding of those perspectives.

Tentative 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.

Week	Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Jan 8	Course Overview & Defining Communication <i>Assign: Topic Statement Essay</i>	Read: Chapter 1, pp. 3-9; Wood (D2L); O'Hair & Wiemann (D2L) Quiz 1
2	Jan 15	No Class—Martin Luther King Day	
3	Jan 22	Communication Research & Asking Questions Guest Presenters: CMST Faculty	Read: Ch. 1, pp. 9-14; Keyton (D2L) Quiz 2
4	Jan 29	Understanding the Communicator <i>Assign: Comm Contextualization Essay</i>	Read: Chapter 4 (skip pp. 106-108) Quiz 3 Due: Topic Statement
5	Feb 5	Understanding the Message <i>Assign: Annotated Bibliography</i>	Read: Chapter 5 (skip pp. 130-135) Quiz 4
6	Feb 12	Finding & Using Academic Sources Workshop: Library Resources	Due: Comm Contextualization
7	Feb 19	Workshop: Bibliography & APA Style	Due: Bibliography Draft
8	Feb 26	Understanding Conversations <i>Assign: Literature Review Outline</i>	Read: Chapter 6 (skip pp. 206-209) Quiz 5 Due: Bibliography Final
—	Mar 5	No Class—Spring Break!	
9	Mar 12	Understanding Relationships	Read: Chapter 7, all Quiz 6
10	Mar 19	Understanding Organizations <i>Assign: Literature Review Essay</i>	Read: Chapter 9, all Quiz 7 Due: Lit Review Outline
11	Mar 26	Understanding Media & Technology	Read: Walther (D2L) Quiz 8
12	Apr 2	Guest Presenters: CMST Graduates Workshop: Writing a Lit Review	
13	Apr 9	Individual consultations w/ Dr. J	Due: Lit Review Draft
14	Apr 16	Understanding Culture <i>Assign: Presentation & Theory App Essay</i>	Read: Chapter 11, all Quiz 9 Due: Lit Review Final
15	Apr 23	Oral Presentations	
F	Apr 30	Final Exam: Paper due @ 6pm	Due: Theory Application Essay