

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

COMS 520

COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Intensive study of current theories, research, and trends in communication.

RATIONALE

Understanding communication theories is essential to understanding the discipline of communication studies. As Littlejohn states, “Theories provide explanations that help us understand the phenomenon we call communication” (2). This course will provide an overview of communication theories across the major areas within the discipline of communication studies.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Microsoft Word
(Microsoft Office is available at a special discount to Liberty University students.)
- D. Media player software

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Summarize communication theories from all disciplines within the field of communication studies.
- B. Compare differences in theories used in organizations and theories used in small groups.
- C. Outline the need for theories in the study of communication.
- D. Support the application of a particular theory to a real communication situation.
- E. Give examples of how theories have been used in communication research.
- F. Discriminate between theories which apply to multiple communication contexts or fields and those theories which are limited to one particular area of communication.

- G. Complete scholarly research that applies to a particular communication theory.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations/notes

- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#), the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

- C. Discussion Board forums (5)

Students will complete discussion board forums in two parts over two weeks. In the first week, students will post an original thread in response to the topic presented. Threads should be at least 400 words and should include references to the textbook or other scholarly sources to substantiate the students' arguments. In the subsequent week, students will reply to their classmates' threads. All replies should be at least 300 words and should be posted intermittently throughout the week. All posts should follow proper APA style.

- D. Definition of Communication Essay

In Module/Week 1, students will submit a 500-word essay describing their personal definitions of communication. Opinions should be supported by rational arguments. This brief essay should be formatted in APA style.

- E. Money Talks Essay

In Module/Week 2, student will analyze the phrase "money talks" by applying their knowledge of communication theories. Essays should be at least 500 words and should be formatted in APA style.

- F. Research Project

Throughout this course, students will be completing a research project regarding one theory of communication. The final products of this research project will be a 15–20-page research paper and a 10-minute multimedia presentation of the paper. For this project, students need to collect 15 relevant sources, which must be cited in the paper. All portions of this project must be correctly formatted in APA style. This project will be submitted in the following stages:

1. Title Page

In Module/Week 2, students will choose one of the theories discussed in the textbook to serve as the topic for the research project. Using the chosen theory as the title of the paper, students should create a APA-formatted title page to submit for approval. If the APA format is incorrect, students will receive comments from the instructor and resubmit a corrected title page. As soon as students receive the instructor's approval, they should begin research for their project.

2. Introduction

In Module/Week 5, students will use their research to create an introduction paragraph with their thesis statement as the last sentence of the paragraph. These paragraphs may vary in length depending on the complexity of the paper topic; however, all paragraphs should define relevant terms and contextualize the research

for the purposes of this project.

3. Literature Review

In Module/Week 6, students will submit the body of the paper, which should be a review of the 15 sources found during the research process. This review should be written in paragraph format with appropriate topic sentences for each paragraph. Furthermore, through this literature review, students should compare/contrast, analyze, and apply the scholarly perspectives presented in the research. Since the review will serve as the body of the paper, students should aim to have between 15–20 pages of text.

4. Paper Submission

In Module/Week 7, students should submit their final research papers. Final papers should be between 15–20 pages with the additional title page, abstract, works cited page, and appendix (if necessary). At least 15 sources should be listed on the works cited page and all sources should be used within the paper. This final draft of the paper should demonstrate flawless APA format.

5. Presentation

In Module/Week 7, students will create a multimedia presentation of their theory that includes a video and a PowerPoint presentation. The video should be between 9–10 minutes and uploaded to YouTube for viewing. The PowerPoint presentation should include at least 6 slides with information corresponding to and supporting the content of the video. Both the video and the PowerPoint presentation will be posted in a designated Group Discussion Board forum for grading and for responses.

6. Responses

In Module/Week 8, students should review their group members' presentations in the Group Discussion Board and write 1–2-paragraph responses to each of them. Students should also review their own presentations, offering suggestions for improvement.

G. Exams (2)

Students will complete an essay midterm exam and an essay final exam. Each exam has a 2-hour and 45-minute time limit and is open-book/open-notes.

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES**A. Points**

Course Requirements Checklist		10
Discussion Board forums (5 at 60 pts ea)		300
Definition of Communication Essay		40
Money Talks Essay		40
Research Project		
Title Page		20
Introduction		20
Literature Review		80
Paper Submission		150
Presentation		110
Responses		60
Midterm Exam	(Chs. 1–4, 7)	90
Final Exam	(Chs. 5, 8–9, 11–12)	90
Total		1010

B. Scale

A = 940–1010 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859
 C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 F = 759 and below

C. Copyright Policy

Liberty University complies with applicable copyright laws. No copyrighted material may be duplicated for any purpose not expressly allowed by laws unless written permission has been granted by the copyright holder and submitted to the course instructor.

D. Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in an Liberty University Online courses. For more information about this policy, see the Student Expectations link inside the course.

E. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

COURSE SCHEDULE

COMS 520

Textbook: Littlejohn & Foss, *Theories of Human Communication* (2017).

WEEK/ MODULE	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Littlejohn & Foss: chs. 1–2 1 presentation	Course Requirements Checklist Discussion Board Forum 1 (thread) Discussion Board Forum 2 (thread) Definition of Communication Essay	10 30 30 40
2	Littlejohn & Foss: chs. 3–4 3 presentations	Discussion Board Forum 1 (replies) Discussion Board Forum 2 (replies) Research Project: Title Page Money Talks Essay	30 30 20 40
3	Littlejohn & Foss: ch. 7 4 presentations	Discussion Board Forum 3 (thread) Midterm Exam	30 90
4	Littlejohn & Foss: ch. 8 1 presentation	Discussion Board Forum 3 (replies)	30
5	Littlejohn & Foss: ch. 9 1 presentation	Discussion Board Forum 4 (thread) Research Project: Introduction	30 20
6	Littlejohn & Foss: ch. 5	Discussion Board Forum 4 (replies) Research Project: Literature Review	30 80
7	Littlejohn & Foss: chs. 11–12	Discussion Board Forum 5 (thread) Research Project: Paper Submission Research Project: Presentation	30 150 110
8	—	Discussion Board Forum 5 (replies) Research Project: Responses Final Exam	30 60 90
TOTAL			1010

NOTE: Each course week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Friday.