Course Instructor: Stephen A. Furlich, Ph.D.  
Course Title: Theory of Communication  
SPC 412  
Class Time: W 4:00-6:30  
E-Mail: Stephen.furlich@tamuc.edu  
Office Hours: (M/W. 2:00-4:00; Tues./ Thurs 8:00-9:30).  
Office: PAC 120  
Prerequisites: None  

Disability statement: It is university policy that no otherwise qualified disabled person be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. Students should inform the instructor of existing disabilities the first class meeting.  

Course Description: Emphasis on formulating proposals, designing and organizing written and oral projects focusing on such theories related to organizational communication, interpersonal communication, crisis communication, health communication, aspects of diversity, group communication, and nonverbal communication.  

Required textbook and resource materials:  

Course outcome competencies:  
The student will be able to:  
1. Develop a general understanding of what theory is and what purposes it serves.  
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the essential features of current theories that seek to cast light on the communication process.  
3. Develop ability to research, analyze, and explain a specific communication theory of interest.  
4. Identify the major communication theories and understand their basic assertions along with their strengths and limitations.  
5. Show interrelationships among different theories.  
6. Apply specific communication theories in their writing and presentations, as well as recognize the application of specific communication theories in the writing and presentations of others.  
7. Use communication theory in a variety of social and professional contexts.  
8. Be consciously aware of the ethical implications of each theory.
Course requirements and grading criteria:

Attendance – Punctual attendance is expected at all class sessions, especially on presentation and test days. If you participate in University sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate sports) you must check with the instructor with appropriate documentation before you are absent. Students are responsible for all missed work.

Course Assignments/Assessments: The department of Mass Media, Communication, & Theatre supports university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook. Interpretation of grades should be considered within the university framework: A=excellent, B=good; C=average; D=inferior; and F=failure. Final grades in this course will be based on:

* Tests – (70%)
  20% Test 1
  25% Test 2
  25% Test 3

* Presentations – (30%) Note: Encyclopedias and dictionaries do not count as sources.
  10% Presentation 1:
  10% Presentation 2:
  10% Presentation 3:

1. Three exams: The exams will cover materials in lecture, class discussions, and the textbooks, as well as any other outside readings that may be assigned. The exams support Learning Outcome #1, 2, and 5.

2. Presentation 1: In Week 2, you will select one theory not covered in this course to study in depth. Your choice may be informed by your personal interests, previous familiarity with the theoretical concepts, and/or information available at www.afirstlook.com

Please get your theory approved in order to prevent the same theory being presented more than once.

The intent of the project is that you discover information about the theory that is not addressed in the class textbook: Here are some possible areas to address that you need to choose at least one of them.

- Select an important proposition, construct, or variable within the theory and investigate this portion of the theory in great depth.
- Discover and describe an important part of the theory that the author did not include. Make a case for its centrality and show its relationship to other components of the theory.
- Focus on recent (2000-2012) empirical or interpretive research that supports or casts doubts upon the theory’s validity.
- Explore the intellectual roots of the theory and show its relationship to other theories that we are studying.
- Discover, elaborate, and evaluate critiques of the theory.
Each presentation should be 4:30-5:30 minutes and have 3 sources. Students will turn in an outline and their reference page.

3. **Presentation 2**: You will select one journal article that is research based. You will present how the author integrates the theoretical construct into the research they conducted. Also, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article. **Please get your article approved in order to prevent the same article being presented more than once.** Each presentation should be 4:30-5:30 minutes and have 3 sources. Students will turn in an outline and their reference page.

4. **Presentation 3**: You will choose one theory we cover in the semester. In addition, you are required to present how the theory can apply to your personal life. In essence, how can you use this theory to communicate better in your personal, professional, academic life etc. Also, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the theory. Each presentation should be 4:30-5:30 minutes and have 3 sources. Students will turn in an outline and their reference page. **Please get your theory approved in order to prevent the same theory being presented more than once.**

All bibliographic references should conform to the APA style. You should only cite works that you’ve actually consulted. The speeches will be evaluated on the basis of depth and breadth of research, organization, coherence of ideas, clarity of prose appropriate for a research report, accuracy of information and interpretation, and the extent to which your presentation conforms to standard best practices of grammar and APA format.

* **Activities - (+2%)**

A number of activities will be assigned to demonstrate or apply content from the text and class discussions. **You cannot get credit for activities that are done on days you are absent, you leave early, or come in 10 minutes late.** Late activities will not be accepted. You are expected to keep up with your own grades. You should know your standing in the course at any time during the semester. Students will receive 2% additional points to their final grade if they miss no more than 1 day. **Students may lose 10% of their final grade for any class that they are disrespectful.** This includes but is not limited to text messaging, doing work for other classes, talking out of turn in a disruptive manner etc.

**Course Procedures**

Assignments – Assignments must be completed on time. Late work will result in loss of points. Academic integrity is expected on all course assignments and activities. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to university policy.

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations – If you miss an exam or presentation it must be for one of the following types of documentable reasons: death in the family, severe personal illness, university sponsored activities, etc. If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are
scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, you cannot make up that presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-up speeches for any reason. In order to take a make-up examination you must submit verifiable and official documentation to your instructor (e.g., a doctor’s note for the specific day missed). If your request is approved, you may take a make-up test on the appointed day. All make-up exams must be given for qualified persons within 2 weeks of the missed test.

Extra Credit – Extra credit can be earned for participation in departmental research conducted in or outside of class, if the opportunity arises. Extra credit points awarded will be determined by the nature of the project.

Cell Phones – All cell phones must be turned off before class starts.

Observance of a Religious Holy Day – Texas House Bill 256 requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. No prior notification of the instructor is required.

Spring 2013

<p>| Jan. 16 Intro., Ch. 1 Comm. Theory &amp; Scholarship |
| Jan. 23, Ch. 2 Idea of Theory, Theory &amp; Research Integrated, Description of Speech 1 |
| Jan. 30, Ch. 3 Traditions of Communication Theory |
| <strong>Feb. 6, TEST 1, Ch. 4 The Communicator</strong> |
| Feb. 13, Ch. 5 The Message, self-determination |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>PRESENTATION 1</td>
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<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td>Ch. 6 The Conversation, Expectancy Violations Theory</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td>TEST 2, Ch. 7 The Relationship, Description of Speech 2</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>Ch. 8 The Group</td>
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<td>PRESENTATION 2</td>
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<td>April 3</td>
<td>Ch. 9 The Organization</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
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