Communication Studies 100A: Survey of Communication Studies  
Mendocino Hall 1003  ----  Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 11:45pm

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00 – 2:00 & Thursdays 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
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You’ve been communicating since birth, so why study human communication?  
If you’re a communication studies major or minor (and most folks in this class are) then you’ve probably tried to answer that question for friends or family. By the end of this course, you’ll be able to explain the importance of studying communication, the types of research people in this field do, and you’ll have an understanding of some of the foundational theories of this discipline. This semester we’ll explore how these principles and theories of human communication apply to our personal, professional, and civic lives. We’ll also examine specific contexts that scholars focus on within the discipline, which will give you some insights into the myriad career options open to students of communication studies.

What will you know and be able to do by the end of the semester?  
If we both do our jobs this semester, at the conclusion of this course you will be ready to proceed with your upper division coursework to complete a major or minor in communication studies, and you also should be able to:

- explain how having an understanding of the transactional, symbolic nature of human communication can improve communication competence in our personal, professional and civic lives.
- explain the foundational theories of the following communication contexts: interpersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication, rhetoric and public communication, and intercultural communication.
- identify the structures and effects of mediated communication, and demonstrate the ability to consume mediated communication critically.
- explain the basic qualitative, critical and empirical approaches to the study of human communication.
- identify the steps necessary to obtain a job in the profession of your choice.
- demonstrate the ability to use the style guide of the American Psychological Association.

How will you know you’re learning – and how will your grade be determined?  
We’ll explore communication theories and practice effective communication in many ways, including reading, reflective writing, large group discussion, small group discussion and activities, and through your own research. You will be able to gauge your progress and understanding of the course material as we work through different activities
and assessments. Specifically, your grade will be determined by how well you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course material in the following ways:

- **Reading quizzes: 10 @ 10 points each (20%)**
  Reading quizzes will be delivered and immediately scored in class via the Top Hat classroom response system.

- **Exams: 3 @ 50 points each (30%)**
  There will be 3 exams covering readings, discussions, and any other assigned materials. They will be scantron exams featuring multiple choice, true/false and matching style questions.

- **Interview Assignment: 125 points (25%)**
  For this two part writing assignment, you will research your dream job and conduct an interview with someone who works in that career.

- **Participation & Homework: 125 points (25%)**
  These points will be made up of in-class participation activities (via Top Hat) as well as some cohort assignments and short communication journals.

Detailed assignment descriptions and grading rubrics (when appropriate) are available on Canvas. We will discuss each assignment in detail in class.

**Total Points Possible: 500**
The total points earned will determine your final grade:

A = 94-100%  
B = 82-84.9%  
C = 74-76.9%  
D = 63.1-63.9%  
A- = 90-93.9%  
B- = 80-81.9%  
C- = 70-73.9%  
D- = 60-63%  
B+ = 85-89.9%  
C+ = 77-79.9%  
D+ = 64-69.9%  
F = 59.9 and below

**Materials required to succeed in this class:**
- Access to and knowledge of how to use Canvas learning management system (LMS).
- Top Hat classroom response system subscription for spring 2018. **Course Join Code is 950323**

**Top Hat Classroom Response System**
We will be using the Top Hat classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. If you are new to Top Hat, please take a few minutes to visit the Top Hat Overview Guide: [https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide](https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide) in the Top Hat Success Center. There you’ll find information about how to register for a Top Hat account and a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to your SacLink account, but if don’t receive it, you can register by simply visiting our course website: [https://app.tophat.com/e/950323](https://app.tophat.com/e/950323)

**Note: Our Course Join Code is 950323**
Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.
Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email support@tophat.com the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

**Policies and Norms for Our Classroom Community:**
Now more than ever, it is important that our individual behavior promotes an environment conducive to full and equal participation. We can learn more deeply if we are able to listen to one another. And we listen most effectively when we are practicing civil and respectful communication practices. One way to do this is to be mentally present – avoid engaging in other activities during class, such as studying for another course, emailing, or texting. Not only is it more respectful to your peers to be paying attention in class, but there’s plenty of research to show we learn much more when we’re not multi-tasking. There’s also plenty of research showing that taking notes by hand, instead of using your tablet or laptop, increases your understanding and leads to deeper learning. Thus, I encourage you to take notes by hand rather than on your laptop or tablet (unless it’s to facilitate a group activity).

This is a really big class – perhaps the biggest you’ll take at Sac State. The large number of students makes it easy to get lost and to not feel connected to other students or the instructor. It might be harder for you to speak out in class or get answers to your specific questions. I hope to solve these potential disadvantages of a mega sized class in three ways. First, I am always available to meet with you during my office hours, and I will make every effort to meet with you at another time if my office hours don’t work for you. Second, we’ll be using Top Hat classroom response system, which gives everyone the chance to respond to questions and discussion prompts (sometimes anonymously, sometimes not). Third, you will get to work in cohorts for the semester. You’ll have some very low stakes (not worth a lot of points) required homework to do with the members of your cohorts, and it’s my hope that you’ll also work with these folks to study for exams and support each other in any other way necessary.

**Due Dates and Makeup Work:**
Due dates are firm, but if you ask in advance for an extension, I am usually open to granting them. That includes exams – if you know in advance you’ll miss an exam, it’s important that we chat about when and where you can take it as soon as possible. Though I understand that you have many responsibilities in addition to those related to school, I am much less understanding when you come to me after the fact to ask for a makeup or an extension.

**Attendance and Tardiness:**
I will look forward to and expect to see you in class. Your voice and perspectives will be a valuable part of exploring the course material, and your participation will deepen your learning experience. There will be regular in-class activities and assignments that cannot be made up. Missing one or two classes will not be overly detrimental to your grade.
Missing several will. Being late is disruptive and consistent tardiness should be avoided. If you are late, you may not get credit for the assignment/activity of the day.

**Ethical Communication:**
I expect that at this point in your academic career, you are familiar with plagiarism and understand the importance of avoiding this form of dishonesty. But you’re not alone if you are sometimes unsure what constitutes plagiarism, why it should be avoided, and how you can work to avoid it. To that end, we will spend some time this semester discussing these issues and exploring ethics and communication. However, as college students, I am certain that you are capable of avoiding plagiarism, and I will enforce the department and university policy on plagiarism, which I’ve pasted below for you.

**Communication Studies Department Policy on Plagiarism:** Any student proved guilty of plagiarism in this course will be failed for the entire course, not just for the piece of work in which the plagiarism occurs. It is important, therefore, to understand exactly what plagiarism is. Plagiarism is literary thievery: the use of somebody else’s material as your own in a speech, film, or research paper without giving credit to the author. It includes, particularly, the following:

- Use of somebody else’s exact wording, whatever the material, without indication of the source and quotation marks or other accepted typographical devices. Changing a few words here and there is not sufficient to avoid plagiarism.
- Borrowing the whole pattern of organization and points of view of a source without giving credit via standard in-text written citation.
- Borrowing facts, figures, or ideas which originated with and are the property of a particular source, rather than a matter of common information available in many sources.
- Collaborating with other students to the extent that two or more assignments are identical in pattern of organization, points of view, or wording.

To learn more about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit our library website: http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353