

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES 499**  
**Proseminar in Communication Studies**  
**Fall 2020**

**Instructor:**

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**Course Objectives:**

1. To offer an intensive integrative experience that will substantially broaden the student's comprehension of the major;
2. To increase the student's understanding of the ways in which the ideas, methods, and achievements in communication have affected modern society;
3. To examine communication from differing perspectives; and
4. To help students develop effective oral and written communication skills.

**Grading:**

Your grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:

Future of the Field Essay	15% of total grade
Group Presentation Project	15% of total grade
Individual Presentation	15% of total grade
Research Proposal Project	40% of total grade
Poster Presentation	15% of total grade

**Assignments:**

**Future of the Field Essay**

How do you view the current state of the field? Our interest here is with the field of communication studies and the state of study involving communication, **not the act of communicating**. For this assignment, each student will prepare a five to seven page paper that explores the future direction(s) of the field. Specifically, the paper should address how communication studies can be defined, key topics in the study of communication, and how the field is likely to evolve in the future. I encourage you to begin this assignment by visiting the website of the National Communication Association at <https://www.natcom.org/>. The format for the paper should follow APA guidelines. Please include a cover page for the paper. You will need to make use of appropriate sources for this assignment.

## **Group Project**

Each student has been assigned to a group for the term. Group members are required to prepare and deliver a group presentation about the assigned topic. The fall 2020-semester assignments will be covered in class.

## **Research Proposal**

The completion of a well-documented research proposal is required to pass this course. This final document should demonstrate the student's ability to design a research project with the goal of exploring some aspect of communication.

### **Research Proposal Assignment – Designing and carrying out the project**

- Select topic
- Construct research questions/hypotheses
- Determine appropriate research design
- Identify appropriate measures
- Determine appropriate method(s) of analysis
- Identify study participants
- Determine procedures for data collection
- Write up proposal and prepare poster

### **Research Project Assignment – Writing up the paper**

- For most manuscripts, the primary goal will be to inform. Thus, avoid purpose statements that include words such as “prove” or “show” or “demonstrate.”
- Papers should be approximately 15-17 pages in length.
- Be cautious about making claims.
- Focus the manuscript on the purpose.
- Be cautious about stating anticipated results.
- Take an objective, balanced view of the topic.
- Do not recycle a paper from a previous class.

**Content/Form** – content cannot be separated from form.

#### **Form:**

- Title page (a single, separate page)
- Abstract (a single, separate page)
- Page numbering (top right or bottom centered)
- Running head
- Headings (must include the following headings: Literature Review, Methods, Discussion/Limitations)
- Margins (one inch margins top/bottom/sides)

- Reference page (heading for this page – References )

**Content:**

- Clear purpose statement
- A statement of organization
- Clearly identified main points
- Adequate information to support purpose/main points
- Introduction and conclusion
- Transitions
- Citations in the text

**Sample Research Proposal Outline**

I. Introduction

This section should introduce the problem, identify the purpose of the project, and provide a statement of organization.

-Transition-

II. Literature Review

Review the academic literature involving the variables examined in the study. Each variable involved in the study must be discussed in the literature review.

Rationale for additional research.

Research questions (RQ1, RQ2, etc.) or Hypotheses (H1, H2, etc.)

III. Methods

Review the research methods involved in the study – include participants, measures, procedures, and analysis

IV. Anticipated Results/Discussion

Organize this section around the research questions and/or hypotheses  
Review the anticipated results in relation to what previous research suggests.

Discuss future directions for research  
Summary

V. References (use APA format)

## VI. Appendices (measures used, large tables, figures, or illustrations)

Additional information about this assignment will be covered in class.

### **Individual Presentation**

Each student will be required to deliver an individual informative presentation. The date for this assignment is listed in the syllabus. More information about this assignment will be covered in class.

### **Poster Presentations**

Each student will be required to present a summary of the research proposal in the form of a poster presentation.

Poster presentations are widely used in the academic community, and most conferences include poster presentations in their program. Research posters summarize in visual form a research project in a concise, visually appealing fashion.

The poster is usually a mixture of a brief text mixed with tables, graphs, pictures, and other presentation formats. At a conference, the researcher stands by the poster display while other participants can come and view the presentation and interact with the author.

What makes a good poster?

- Important information should be readable from about 10 feet away
- Title is short and draws interest
- Word count of about 300 words
- Text is clear and to the point
- Use of bullets, numbering, and headlines make it easy to read
- Effective use of graphics, color and fonts
- Consistent and clean layout
- Includes acknowledgments, your name and institutional affiliation

Additional information about this assignment will be provided during class meetings.

### **Association Assignment**

For this assignment, each student must participate in the development of an alumni association for the Communication Studies program. More information about this assignment will be covered in class.

**Class Participation:** Since this course is a seminar, active class participation is expected. Please come to class prepared to discuss assignments. Moreover, **attendance is required.**

## **\*\* A NOTE ABOUT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS \*\***

Your grade in this course is made up, in part, of several written assignments. While the content of these papers is critical, it cannot be separated from their form. Thus, one goal of this course is the further development of writing skills. In preparing written assignments, students should give careful attention to language usage and to writing mechanics. In addition, papers should be proofread carefully in order to avoid misspellings and inaccuracies due to typing errors. Writing errors **will** result in a lower grade on the assignment.

### **Assignment Penalties**

1. Late papers will be accepted but will be penalized at the rate of one (1) letter grade per day.
2. Plagiarism will result in failure of the **course**.

### **Resources**

National Communication Association

<http://www.natcom.org/>

International Communication Association

<http://www.icahdq.org/>

Southern States Communication Association

<http://www.scca.net/>

Library – Communication Studies research guide

<http://libguides.utk.edu/commstudies?hs=a>

Poster presentation template – University of Tennessee

<https://brandassets.utk.edu/downloads/powerpoint/>

Poster printing at Hodges Library

<https://www.lib.utk.edu/printing/>

Poster printing at UT's Pendergrass Ag/Vet Library

<https://www.lib.utk.edu/agvet/posters/>

Poster session presentation tips

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/drs18/postershow/>

## **College of Communication and Information Diversity Statement**

CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

## **UT ODS Disability Statement**

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 865-974-6087 in 100 Dunford Hall to document their eligibility for services. ODS will work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## **TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Date**

### **Activity**

August 20

Introduction to the Course  
Research Proposal Topics and RQs/Hs

August 25-27

State of the Field discussion  
Group Assignments

### ***Guiding Questions***

1. What is communication? What is communication studies?
2. What does it mean to be a communication scholar?
3. How do we study messages?
4. How is the field of communication organized?
5. How does communication relate to other areas of inquiry?  
(e.g., psychology, sociology, classics, speech pathology, women's studies, Management, English, etc.) What separates communication from other areas of inquiry?
6. How has the study of communication evolved? What were the key issues involved in early communication scholarship? What are the key issues involved in contemporary communication scholarship?
7. What is the current state of the field?

Sept 1	Alumni Panel first half of class <b>Research Paper Topic</b>
	<b>**Project topic and research questions/hypotheses due**</b>
Sept 3	Group Assignments Review and Charge Interview Theatre  <b>**Resumes Due**</b>
Sept 8-15	Research proposal review  <b>(Note: Sept 10 visitors from Amazon)</b>  -Purpose of the study -RQ's / H's -Measures -Writing up the report -Poster presentation <b>**Future of the Field Essay Due Tuesday, Sept 15**</b>
Sept 17	<b>**Individual Presentation PRACTICE**</b>
Sept 22	<b>**Impromptu Presentations delivered on this date**</b>
Sept 24- Oct 20	Individual presentation feedback (Sept 24) Delivering group presentations (Sept 24 – Oct 20)
Oct 22-27	Uploading Group Presentation to YouTube
Oct 29	View Groups One, Two, and Three
Nov 3	View Groups Four, Five, and Six
Nov 5	View Groups Seven, Eight, and Nine
Nov 10	Group Project Feedback Research project update Interview Theatre – negotiating the offer
Nov 12-24	Research proposal work Constructing and delivering a poster presentation
<b>Dec 7</b>	<b>Research Proposal and Poster Presentation due Upload to Canvas</b>