

COM 200: Introduction to Communication

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 3:30-5:40pm
CMU 242

Course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1303300>

Instructor:

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Office: 123 Communications

Office Hours: Friday 2:00 – 3:00

COURSE OVERVIEW

COM 200 is a class designed to introduce you to basic research findings in communication. We will explore the myriad ways communication scholars approach some of the fundamental issues of contemporary human existence. At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Analyze communication and identify where problems and successes have occurred.
2. Better understand the ways we make sense of language and how our various “codes” fit together to produce complex messages.
3. Articulate some of the core ways communication reflects, shapes, and disrupts our personal and public lives.
4. Have a basic understanding how communication research is conducted.
5. Better understand the online information environment.

What this course is NOT

This is not a course for improving your conversational English. Proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English is assumed as a prerequisite for this course.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments:	Contribution to Final Grade:
Short Assignments (x4)	20%
Participation	10%

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Overview of Assignments:

- **Short Assignments:** There are 4 short (maximum 500 word) reflection essays throughout the quarter. Each reflection asks you to think about an idea or concept from the course and relate it to a current event or personal experience. Prompts will be posted on the course Canvas site one week in advance of each due date. 500 words equal about 2 double-spaced pages. You should write in complete sentences, use paragraphs, spell check, and proofread. Also, for each assignment, EVERY word (including quoted words) count toward the total word count. No late reflections will be accepted except for extreme circumstances such as illness and family emergency.
- **Class Participation:** Attentive participation in class discussions and activities is essential for a robust educational environment. You are expected to actively ask questions and speak up during lecture and discussion activities. Also, there will be in class activities upon which you are evaluated. There are no make-up in-class activities.
- **Exams:** There will be three cumulative exams. Exam dates are specified in the following class schedule. These three exams have multiple choice questions and short answer questions. Students are expected to finish each exam within 90 minutes. Exams include lectures, readings, discussions, short assignments, and in-class activities. Students will need the UW student ID for each exam. No scantron sheets are needed. Students are not allowed to take exam questions or answer sheets out of the classroom. There are no make-up exams except for extreme circumstances.

Extra credit opportunities:

- Specific extra credit opportunities will be announced in either the first or the second session of the class.

IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS:

This is (obviously!) a large lecture class. Your participation in the course -- both in and out of class -- is what will make it worthwhile for you. Students who come to class and participate actively generally do

better than students who miss class and/or do not engage actively in the class. According to the University's General Catalogue, "The basic rule for determining academic credit is: 1 credit represents a total student time commitment of 3 hours each week in a 10-week quarter, or a total of thirty hours in a quarter." What this means for this 5-credit class is that you are making a commitment to work on the material for this course for 15 hours per week, 5 in class and 10 outside of class.

It is also important to take notes. The slides will not be shared with students except for DRS students.

In-Class DOs and DON'Ts:

1. Do come to class!
2. Do be prepared to begin class on time, don't pack up early.
3. Do come to class with your reading completed.
4. Do come to class prepared to be actively involved in any course-related interactions.
5. Don't sleep in class.
6. Don't read *The Daily* in class.
7. Don't eat a full meal in class -- you need at least one free hand to take notes.
8. Don't surf the web, send text messages, buy shoes, watch movies, etc.
9. Don't do homework from other classes during class.

Out-of-Class DOs and DON'Ts:

1. Do read the course material for understanding.
2. Do think about the course material and come to class with questions/comments.
3. Do study class material every day so you don't have to cram for exams.
4. Do form study groups with your peers from your discussion section to work on course material.
5. Do come to our office hours if you have questions or concerns about the course material.
6. Don't wait until the last minute to submit your reflections.

Required text:

O'Hair, D., Weimann, M., Mullin, D., & Teven, D. (2017). *Real Communication: An introduction*. 4th edition. Bedford/St. Martins.

Additional Readings:

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas one week in advance of the class.

[Burdick, A. \(2017\). "The A.I. 'gaydar' study and the real dangers of big data," *The New Yorker*.](#)

Julia, K. (2018). Why are young people having so little sex? *the Atlantic*,
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/12/the-sex-recession/573949/>

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Konnikova, M. (2014). The limits of friendship, *the New Yorker*,
<https://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/social-media-affect-math-dunbar-number-friendships>

McNair, B. (2018). *An introduction to political communication*, 6th edition, Routledge.

Menard, L. (2017). ["Why do we care so much about privacy?" *The New Yorker*.](#)

Moy P., Tewksbury, D. & Rinke, E. (2016). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing, *the International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*

Email Policy:

Email is a double-edged sword. Whereas it offers many conveniences as a medium of communication, those same conveniences can also foster miscommunication. To facilitate clear and useful communication, please attend to the following policies:

- I will only answer email between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekdays.
- Please allow for up to 48 hours for me to respond. Generally, such a time frame will not be necessary, and I should usually respond within 24 hours, but contingencies can arise, so it is best to plan for them.
- Email is *formal* communication, and I expect it to be composed as such. Please include a clear subject heading (including the course number); proper spelling, grammar and punctuation; and an appropriate salutation, valediction, and signature. Without these elements, I may not be able to adequately respond to your email. For example, it can be difficult or impossible to answer an emailed question if the email fails to indicate the identity of its author.
- Please be aware that I cannot disclose your grade via email. If you wish to discuss grade-related matters, please come to office hours or see me after class.

- Questions whose answer can be found in the syllabus or on the course website will be considered my lowest priority. It is to your benefit to carefully examine both the syllabus and the website *before* emailing me.

Other policies:

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities should register with [UW's Disability Resources for Students Office](#) and meet with me about accommodations.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. We expect that you will know and follow the University's policies on cheating and plagiarism (see [Student Conduct Code](#) for more information). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University regulations. I will not speak to you about your case once it has been submitted to the University.

Behavioral Expectations: Because I want to create a productive learning environment for the most students possible, I am very serious about the dos and don'ts for in-class behavior posted above. In addition, I expect that you will be respectful of each other, your teaching assistants, and me. Any flouting of the class behavioral expectations will result in your immediate removal from class and possible reporting to the University's Student Conduct team.

See the [student conduct code](#) for more information regarding behavioral expectations for University of Washington students.

Guests: Only students enrolled in COM 200 may attend this class. Persons present during, but not enrolled in, COM 200 will be asked to leave. If you would like to bring a guest to class (e.g., friend, parent, etc.), please ask me first.

Grade Appeals: Grades will be posted on the course website as soon as possible following each exam and graded class activity. Although you will not be allowed to keep a copy of the exams, you may come to my office hours to review your exam. Please be sure to check your grades promptly; I will not accept any grade appeals submitted more than one week after grades for any exam or activity have been posted. I will notify you when grades are posted.

Course Concerns: If you have any concerns about course material, procedures, or personnel, please feel free to contact me during office hours or via e-mail. Alerting me to your concerns when they arise allows us to address them; waiting until the quarter is nearly over leaves me little room to try to work with you to resolve your issues.

Class Schedule:

Week 1	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
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6/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 	Chapter 1	
6/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and identity 	Chapter 3	
6/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and language 	Chapter 4	
6/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal communication 	Chapter 5	#1 Reflection assignment due

Week 2	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
7/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and culture • Intercultural communication 	Chapter 6	
7/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political communication 	Selected chapters from McNair (2018)	
7/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalism ethics and partisan media 	Selected chapters from McNair (2018)	
7/4	No class – Independence Day Observed		#2 Reflection assignment due

Week 3	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #1 Exam 		
7/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass and mediated communication 	Appendix B	
7/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and digital media 	Chapter 2	
7/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media, big data, and Surveillance 	Louis (2017) Burdick (2017)	#3 Reflection assignment due

Week 4	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
7/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message processing (Part 1): system 1 and system 2 	Selected chapters from Kahneman (2011)	
7/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message processing (Part 2): agenda 	Moy, Tewksbury & Rinke (2016)	

	setting, priming, and framing		
7/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #2 Exam 		
7/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and relationship: romance and family 	Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Julian (2018)	

Week 5	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
7/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication in small groups and organizations 	Chapter 10 Chapter 12 Konnikova (2014)	
7/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review session 		#4 Reflection assignment due
7/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam 		