
SEMINAR IN FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Communication Studies 7910

Mondays 5:00-7:50

153 Coates Hall

Instructor: Dr. Loretta L. Pecchioni
Office: 124 Coates Hall
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 –
11:00 a.m. and by appointment
Phone: 578-6724 or call the department office at 578-2172
as graduate students, feel free (within reason) to call me at home,
768-9965 (yes, that's an old-fashioned land line)
E-mail: **lpecch1@lsu.edu**

Selected readings will be posted on Moodle – see course schedule for topics

Course Objectives

1. To expose students to theory and research regarding family communication broadly and with depth in selected areas.
 2. To enhance students' ability to critically analyze bodies of research, especially in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of lines of research.
 3. To provide students with the opportunity to actively participate in research about health communication.
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Course Grading

Course grades will be based on individual performance during class discussions, leading class sessions on your research interest, your research project, and the final exam.

Class participation	100 points	22.22%
Theory presentation	25 points	5.55%
Journal review	25 points	5.55%
Class leadership on research topic	50 points	11.11%
Research project*	150 points	33.33%
Final exam	100 points	22.22%

Total

450 points

*see description after schedule for details

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Topic areas are proposed, however, events in class may dictate that the schedule be adjusted to meet the needs and interests of class members. Reading assignment details will be posted on Moodle. Any changes from the proposed schedule will be announced in class and on Moodle.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>
Jan. 19	definitions of family family processes levels of analysis
Jan. 26	family interaction patterns -- norms, routines and rituals, stories apply concepts to Joy Banner's dissertation family systems theory
Feb. 2	theory presentations discuss project ideas
Feb. 9	family interaction processes -- decision-making, conflict, intimacy apply concepts to Khaled Nasser's dissertation turn in brief statement on role of theory in your project
Feb. 16	Mardi Gras break – no class
Feb. 23	Family stress and coping
Mar. 2	journal reviews turn in annotated bibliography for your class project

Mar. 9

Student topic
Student topic

Mar. 16

Student topic
feedback session on literature reviews

Mar. 23

Student topic
feedback session on methods sections

Mar. 30

Guest lecture with Dr. James Honeycutt

Apr. 6

Spring Break – no class

Apr. 13

Student topic
Student topic

Apr. 20

Tying it all together

Apr. 27

Project presentations

May 6

Wednesday
5:00 p.m. deadline to turn in final exams and project papers

Course Assignments

Class Participation

As graduate students, you are expected to attend each and every class meeting and actively participate. One of the great joys of a good graduate seminar is learning from your colleagues, therefore, each class member is expected to contribute to scholarly discussions about the content area(s) assigned for each week. As you are reading the assigned materials, you should identify questions or issues that will help to generate discussion that assists each class member in developing an understanding of the content area as well as larger issues regarding research and theory in the field of communication. Please feel free to ask questions for clarification. Asking for clarification points out areas where we might not have shared understanding and can be very fruitful areas of discussion. Contribution to these discussions will not be graded solely on the number of

times an individual speaks, but on the quality of his/her comments and the value such comments provide to further the discussion.

Missing class will adversely affect your class discussion grade. If you know that you will be missing class because of a conference, interview, or other scheduled reason, just let me know. If an emergency should arise that precludes you from attending class, try to let me know. I do not need the details, just the notification. I understand that when emergencies arise it may be difficult to notify me before class.

Theory Presentation

Family communication scholars draw on a rich array of theories to frame their research projects. Being able to understand the basic tenets of a theory, the logical consequences of its assumptions and how it focuses our attention on some aspects of interaction, helps us to accomplish a number of goals. One such goal is creating focus for a particular study. Another such goal is being able to join an on-going conversation about communication in families. Therefore, we will review a select number of theories. Each class member will randomly select a theory. I will provide an overview chapter on that theory, but you would benefit from reading more broadly about the one you are assigned. Each class member will inform the class about the selected theory. I will do so for family systems theory the week before your presentations so that you will have a model to follow.

I will not require you to use the theory you present in your research project (or any of the ones that happen to be covered in class), but you will definitely want to choose at least one theory to guide your class project. So, listen to the presentations from your classmates carefully to consider if you might want to use one of their theories.

Journal Review

The area of family communication is growing. With that growth, additional outlets for research have been created. We will read a chapter by Stamp and Shue synthesizing the last 20 years of research in family communication. Those authors, however, chose not to include issues from the *Journal of Family Communication* because it has not been around for 20 years. Each class member will review one issue (that is, one year) of the journal. Your analysis should follow the example in the chapter, but also think about your own and your colleagues' research interests. If you find an article that might be of particular interest to someone in class, be sure to highlight it. We will randomly issue assignments, but since the last 18 months are not available through the LSU Libraries databases, the most recent year will be 2012.

Class Leadership on Research Topic

A major goal that I have for you is to end the semester with a research paper that is ready for submission to a conference (see the details below). In addition to completing your research project, you will be sharing key readings that inform your project. Each of you

will have about one hour in class to talk about your project and the supporting literature. For your class period, you will want to identify those key articles and get me a copy at least one week before your assigned day so that I can post files for everyone to read before you present in class. Your job is to not only talk about these specific readings, but also to provide the larger context and issues being addressed in your project. The rest of the class should read the articles and come prepared to talk about the issues raised and identify connections to the broader context of family communication.

Research Project

Each student is expected to participate in a research project related to the content area of the class. The goal is for each student to have a convention-quality paper (about 25 pages) ready by the end of the semester. This project *must* be related to family communication in some meaningful way, and, therefore, must be approved by me. Feel free to talk with me about your project at any time (well, not in the middle of the night!).

For an individual project, each student will be responsible for developing a proposal for approval; conducting a literature review; collecting and analyzing data (using all those terms broadly); and, writing up a final, convention-quality (not defined broadly!) paper. Groups of students may decide to work together on the research project. For group projects, the group may decide to divide the work up among its members in any manner found appropriate by the group members, but a synopsis of the division of labor should be provided to me.

To help you develop your project and keep on track with writing the related paper, we will have several checkpoints throughout the semester.

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|------------------------------------|------------|
| ➤ Theoretical grounding | 10 points |
| ➤ Proposal | 10 points |
| ➤ Annotated bibliography | 10 points |
| ➤ Peer review of literature review | 10 points |
| ➤ Peer review of methods | 10 points |
| ➤ Final project paper | 100 points |

Theoretical grounding. You should submit a 2-3 page paper identifying at least one potential theory that might ground your project for this class. The paper should include a review of the theory and how it will serve to guide your project.

Proposal. The project proposal should be 3-5 pages outlining the questions that will be addressed and how you will go about answering those questions (methodology) as well as identifying some of the most relevant literature. I recommend that you include a proposed project timeline as well to help you stay on track to meet course deadlines.

Annotated bibliography. For the relevant literature section of your project paper, you will need to review studies that inform your project. For this assignment, you should identify at least three relevant articles. An annotated bibliography includes the citation, a

one or two paragraph summary of the article's key arguments and findings, and one paragraph on how this article relates to and/or informs your project. The articles you choose for this assignment may well end up being ones that you share with the class for your topic leadership, but they do not have to be the same ones.

Peer review of literature review. By this point in the semester, you should have started drafting your paper for your final project. Your literature review may not be complete, but should have key sections ready for feedback. You will be paired with one or two members of class. You should share your draft at least 72 hours before our class meeting. You should read the other person's work and make comments about how their argument is framed, supported by evidence, and note any bits of information that are not yet covered. Ideally, you will be able to share your written comments a few hours before we meet together. We will have time in class to discuss the feedback you received.

Peer review of methods section. Much the same as the peer review of the literature review, you should have this section drafted and ready to share for feedback. Again, you will be paired with others in class. You should send each other these sections at least 72 hours before our class time. If possible, share your written comments with the other person before we meet so that we may focus on discussing what needs improvement.

Final Exam

The final exam will consist of a variety of essay questions testing your knowledge on several levels. Questions will be designed to tap into basic knowledge about the content area as well as your ability to analyze and synthesize various aspects of research within the area. Questions will draw on the assigned readings, the class discussions, and the research projects conducted for the class. I will post the final questions on-line at least two weeks before your responses are due. Turn in your responses any time before the final deadline noted in the course schedule. You may submit them electronically or as a hard copy.

Reasonable Accommodation

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.
