

COURSE OUTLINE

**Speech 120 (C-ID Number: COMM 180)  
Introduction to Communication Theory  
(C-ID Title: Introduction to Communication Theory)**

**Catalog Statement**

SPCH 120 introduces students to the process of human communication through the study of basic communication models, fundamental theories, and relevant research findings. Emphasis is placed on achieving an understanding of the various forms of human communication, and the ways in which researchers contribute to the communication field. Coursework encourages students to research, analyze and apply communication theories to everyday communication practices. SPCH 120 prepares students for upper division coursework in the communication discipline.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Laboratory Units: 0.0

**Total Course Units: 3.0**

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Laboratory Hours: 0.0

Total Laboratory Hours To Be Arranged: 0.0

**Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48.0**

Recommended Preparation: Eligibility for ENGL101. ESL students should have completed ESL 155.

**Course Entry Expectations**

Prior to enrolling in the course, the student should be able to:

- organize and write thesis-based essays which meet the standards for English 101 entrance;
- use organized, detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements;
- critically analyze selected works that deal with important contemporary issues;
- summarize, analyze and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions;
- gather and organize information through library research;
- demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax and mechanics sufficient for English 101 entrance: communicating (both orally and in writing) in standard English, with few major errors in grammar and punctuation;
- apply strategies appropriate to improving communication with native speakers;
- critically evaluate classroom presentations and analyze the validity of their academic content;

- select and participate in modes of presentation and discussion appropriate for a given academic topic;
- apply knowledge of culture-appropriate presentation style, using effective body language and appropriate level of language.

### **Course Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- discuss the history of the study of human communication;
- explain the importance of theory as it relates to communication research and communication practice;
- evaluate a theory using at least four criteria identified in the course;
- discuss and evaluate at least three approaches to communication theory and research;
- analyze a communication event from two different theoretical perspectives;
- describe the theoretical approach embodied in a piece of communication research;
- summarize, critique and apply communication theories to social and professional life.

### **Course Content**

**Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48.0**

History of Communication Study **(6 hours)**

Defining Communication

Verbal and nonverbal communication

Models and perspectives

Traditions in Communication **(3 hours)**

Communication Theory Fundamentals **(12 hours)**

Theory definition Functions of theories

Organize/categorize

Explain

Predict Control

Guide further research

Naive versus rigorous theories

Criteria for evaluating theories

Clarity

Parsimony/elegance

Logical consistency

Empirical validity

Testable quality

Usefulness

Heuristic value

Theoretical scope

The Process of theorizing

Thinking

Gathering information

Organization  
Critical analysis  
Data analysis  
Construction

The basics of research  
Literature search strategies  
Using electronic databases  
Designing research projects  
Qualitative  
Quantitative  
Mixed methods

**Approaches to Communication Theory (9 hours)**

Cognitive and behavioral  
Rules, laws and systems  
Humanistic and scientific  
Critical and interpretive

**Context-Specific Applications (12 hours)**

Interpersonal communication theories  
Small group communication theories  
Intercultural communication theories  
Rhetorical theories  
Organizational communication theories  
Mass communication theories  
Gender communication theories  
Emerging specializations  
Health and sciences communication  
New technologies communication  
Computer mediated communication

**Integration (6 hours)**

Common threads in communication theories

**Methods of Instruction**

The following methods of instruction may be used in this course:

- classroom lecture and discussion;
- collaborative group learning (e.g. role playing, problem solving and decision making exercises, conflict resolution exercises, panel discussions, and symposium forum discussions);
- educational technologies including word processing, Internet, and electronic presentation.

**Out of Class Assignments**

The following out of class assignments may be used in this course:

- essays that respond, explain, analyze, argue, and/or evaluate a communication theory (e.g. prepare a written comparison of the message theories that would help you best communicate while traveling in a part of the world where you do not speak any of the native languages and people generally speak little or no English.);
- reading assignments from textbooks and/or journal articles;
- quizzes;

- journaling;
- oral presentations;
- comprehensive final exam.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

The following methods of evaluation may be used in this course:

- discussions;
- group and individual oral presentations;
- self and peer evaluation papers;
- oral and written assignments of sufficient length and complexity to require students to demonstrate independent research, organization, critical thinking and communication skills;
- quizzes;
- comprehensive final exam.

### **Textbooks**

Griffin, Emory, Andrew Ledbetter, and Glenn Sparks. *A First Look at Communication Theory*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2015. Print.

12<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Level. ISBN-13: 978-0073523927

Wood, Julia. *Communication Mosaics: An Introduction to the Field of Communication*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont: Wadsworth P, 2013. Print.

12<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Level. ISBN-13: 978-0205902354

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- articulate basic human communication theories and principles;
- demonstrate an understanding of human communication within particular contexts;
- apply communication theories to social and professional life.