

# COMMUNICATION IN FAMILY CONTEXTS

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COMMUNICATION STUDIES 3140 - Fall 2016  
Monday & Wednesday 3:30-4:45, Old Main 203  
Designated as a *Service Learning Course*

**Professor:** Dr. Elizabeth Dorrance Hall

**Email:** edh@usu.edu

**Office:** Old Main 073 (through the Intensive English Language Institute in 069)

**Office Hours:** MW 3-3:30pm and by appointment

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## Course Description:

This course is designed as an advanced course on family communication and relationships—our parents, siblings, romantic partnerships, and relations with other individuals who we consider family. The basic premise of the course is that one is positioned to maximize communicative effectiveness in these relationships with knowledge about how communication functions combined with application of communication practices and experiences. Specifically, we will be working with a non-profit organization that serves families in the Logan area.

The majority of our meetings will emphasize the knowledge component, but we will also engage in a service learning activity where we will discuss our own family relationships and reflect on the experience of serving families in the Cache Valley. The textbook and research articles are knowledge-centered and the service-learning component as well as class discussions will be application-centered. The course assignments (written, oral, and practice) will emphasize both knowledge attainment and application.

## Specific goals of the course include:

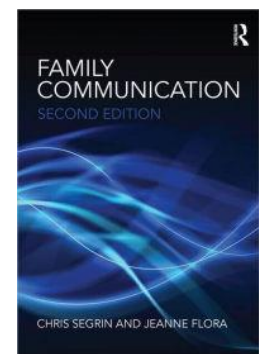
- Gaining factual knowledge (key terminology in family communication)
- Learning fundamental principles and family communication theories
- Learning to apply course materials to your everyday life (to help make relationship decisions, solve relationship problems, and serve members of the community)

## Required Readings:

1. Segrin, C., & Flora, J. (2011). Family communication, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge. (ISBN: 13:978-0-415-87634-6)
2. Addition readings and materials posted on Canvas.

## Resources:

- Textbook Companion Website: <http://routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/author/segrin/>
- Utah State University Writing Center: <http://writing.usu.edu/>
- Communication Studies Library Services: <http://libguides.usu.edu/cmst>



## **Expectations:**

*Attendance and tardiness.* You are expected to attend class and stay for the entire session. Doing so provides you the best opportunity to learn the concepts taught in this course through discussion and activities. Your presence will provide you a chance to learn from other students' perspectives and give them an opportunity to learn from yours. I will also provide important information about assignments, quizzes and exams during class.

*Reading assignments.* Read assigned chapters and articles **before** class meetings. We will not cover all the materials from the book or supplementary readings during lecture but command of all material will enrich class discussion and facilitate mastery of the lecture content. Exams will include content from reading assignments, even if not discussed in class.

*Participation.* Actively participate in class! This includes listening when others speak, sharing your opinion (respectfully) and actively taking part in discussion, completing any in-class activities with enthusiasm, etc. Simply coming to class and sitting silently will not be considered participating.

*Courtesy and professionalism.* Please respect yourself, one another, and me. This means that you should not text message, browse the internet, read the newspaper, etc. during our class meetings. You should not need to use a laptop or tablet during our class. Also, please do not pack up materials before class has ended.

*Meeting deadlines.* Submit assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted for a grade.

*Academic dishonesty,* in any form, will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, excessive collaborating, plagiarism, falsification, deceit, ghost-written papers, copying, etc. Academic misconduct will be handled according to University procedures. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for additional information regarding academic honesty:

<http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/article6.cfm>

*Students with disabilities* who need special accommodations should speak with me at the beginning of the semester. Students with special needs are encouraged to register with Utah State University's Disability Resource Center at <http://www.usu.edu/drc/students/gettingstarted/>

In the event of a major **campus emergency**, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control.

## **Assignments:**

- **Exams (450 points).** Three exams (at 150 points each) will be given online over the course of the semester. These exams are designed to assess your learning and will consist of short answer, true/false, and multiple choice items based on class readings and lectures.
- **Participation and Discussion Questions (150 points).** Discussion questions will be due the morning before most classes by 12:00pm (12 total) via Canvas, as indicated on your schedule. The questions (2-3 per reading) should reflect thoughts or connections you made while

reading the assigned chapter or article due that day. Respectful and active participation *in class* will be factored into your grade. Other class activities such as chapter presentations will contribute to this grade.

- **Observations and Transcription (50 points).** Part of the research process is collecting and transcribing audio data. This assignment will set you up for success on your service learning paper. More details will be presented early in the semester. Part of this grade will be based on your ability to work well in a small group.
- **Service Learning Paper (175 points).** This is a research paper you will write with a small group of other students including a literature review, methods, results, and recommendations for Cache Makers. You will be asked to present your recommendations to the class and our community partner. Details about this assignment will be posted to Canvas.
- **Service Learning Reflection (75 points).** This paper allows you a chance to reflect on your experience serving others in Cache County.
- **Book/Media Essay (100 points).** You will engage in a semester long project to help you understand how the theories and concepts learned in class apply to a book, movie, or TV show. You are able to choose from a list of approved media. This project is a culmination of what you will learn in class this semester. This grade includes writing, analysis, and an oral presentation of your ideas. You will read a popular book that features some family relationship(s) and discuss how the course concepts are evident in this text. You are required to include at least three major concepts and use scholarly research (not including your text book) to analyze the text. You will discuss how the author depicts the concepts, whether the depiction coincides with scholarly research, whose voices are heard and whose are silenced in the text, and the role of communication in the family relationships/concepts you select. Details about this assignment will be posted to Canvas.

#### **About our Service Learning Community Partner:**

Cache Makers is a 4-H club which hosts volunteer-led youth groups focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The groups provide experiential hands-on learning for youth exposing them to STEM curriculum in a supportive environment including parental involvement in the projects, youth mentors, and mixed-sex and female only groups. Our service learning project aims to find out how parent-child dyads participating in Cache Makers groups differ in parent-child communication while working on Cache Makers projects by observing and recording parent-child interactions.

**What is Service Learning?** *A method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community, as identified through collaboration with community partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students' understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.*

**Grading :**

Grading in this course is based on a points system. Each assignment is worth an assigned point value. All assignments will add up to 1,000 points. Please see below for the grade breakdown.

**Grading Scale**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Exams 1-3 (150 points each)	450
Participation & Discussion Qs	150
SL Reflection	75
SL Paper	175
Observation/Transcription	50
Book/Media Essay	100
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,000</b>

<b>A</b>	<b>920 - 1000 points</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>900 - 919</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>870 - 899</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>820 - 869</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>800 - 819</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>770 - 799</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>720 - 769</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>700 - 719</b>
<b>D+</b>	<b>670 - 699</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>620 - 669</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>600 - 619</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>599 and below</b>

Note: Grades will NOT be curved or rounded up. In general, grade changes will only be made due to a calculation error.