Communication Studies 6050: Seminar on Teaching Communication

Fall Semester 2020

General Information

Instructor: John Seiter
Office: Main 308
Office Hours via Zoom: by appointment (to set up an appointment, please email me and request a time/day. If possible, please provide several possible times that you are available. I will set up a Zoom meeting and email you a link).
Phone: 435-797-0138
To leave message, email me at: john.seiter@usu.edu
Class Time: 4:30-7 p.m., Thursdays
Class Location: This is an Web Broadcast course that meets via Zoom. You should have already received an email invitation with a link to register in advance for these meetings go to. If not, please email me to request the link. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Required Readings


Additional readings can be found on Canvas.

Note: you will also be assigned ONE of these books to read and report on. As such, you will only need to acquire the ONE book that you are reporting on:


Additional Resources


**General Goals of this Course**

As part of your academic experience, you’ll undoubtedly be engaged in some form of teaching, whether as the instructor-of-record in your own courses, as an educator or mentor in some future career, or even as a presenter in the classes you are taking. Considering this, it makes sense to find yourself in this course, which is designed to introduce you to the subject of instructional communication. The primary goal of this course is to get you thinking—if you haven’t already—about what it means to be an effective teacher, and, in turn, how to integrate those ideas into your teaching behaviors. As such, you’ll not only be exploring and developing your own teaching philosophy, along the way, you’ll strive to understand what others in the field have to say about theories, methods, strategies, activities, and problems related to communication pedagogy. What’s more, you’ll get to practice trying these ideas. Indeed, instructional communication is not only grounded in theory, it’s applied in nature. And although I can’t promise that “practice makes perfect,” I can assure you that the more practice you get, the more you’ll come to understand who you are as a teacher, and the more ready you’ll be to engage your own students in this delightful, vibrant, frustrating, rewarding, and challenging activity we call learning.

**Specific Objectives**

After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand and articulate major theoretical perspectives on how learning takes place
2. Develop your own teaching philosophy
3. Prepare to teach your own courses
4. Use a variety of approaches (e.g., lectures, discussion, activities) to teach communication concepts
5. Assess students’ work while providing effective feedback
6. Anticipate, troubleshoot, and deal with obstacles to effective teaching
7. Understand factors that foster a positive learning environment

**General Expectations**
As a graduate student, you are held to a much higher standard than when you were learning the ropes as an undergraduate. Because so much of our time in class is built around discussions, you are not only encouraged to participate meaningfully, providing in-depth insights and arguments to support you analyses, you also carry a considerable amount of the responsibility for contributing to the learning experiences of others in this class. There will be times, in fact, that I will “fade into the background” or function as more of a “sounding board” while you step into the role of discussion leader, instructor-of-the-moment, or attentive responder when your classmates are in charge. Although taking on such roles requires hard work and commitment, it will provide you with invaluable practice and experience for teaching your own classes. Thank you in advance for taking this obligation seriously! Finally, although this class will include “workshops” where you’ll get to practice teaching various concepts from the undergraduate interpersonal communication course (that you may be instructing in the future), it is not meant to substitute for the time you’ll need to devote beyond this class to preparing for that course.

**Graded Requirements and Assignments**

1. **Reflection Essays.** As preparation to contribute meaningfully to class discussions and share your ideas if called upon by the discussion leader, you should reflect on each of the day’s readings. Prior to each class meeting (excluding Weeks #1, 5, 7, 12, 13, 14 & 15), you will submit a 1-page, single-spaced essay. In addition to summarizing/synthesizing the central themes of each day’s readings, be sure to include questions about the readings, agree or disagree with the authors’ main points (while including arguments for why you agree or disagree), offer ideas for how the readings might be applied or useful, and/or share personal experiences that help you relate to the readings. Note: I recognize that on some days, not all of the readings will relate to one another, but do your best to synthesize those that are related. These essays are due on Canvas the night before class meets. Worth 20% of overall grade (9 papers worth 25 points each and you drop the one with the lowest score).

2. **Session Discussion Leader.** For this portion of your grade, you will be asked to lead discussions in four class sessions. Specifically, you will be the discussion leader for a chapter from the textbook (i.e., 8 Essential Questions) and/or articles related to the class. As leader, you may facilitate your session as best you see fit, with the understanding that your goal is to promote discussion, understanding, and application of the important themes and concepts from the reading. You should aim for no more than 20 minutes for each session and are encouraged to be creative. Your sessions may include a brief summary of essential points, posing questions, moderating discussion, showing videos, providing handouts, facilitating debate, providing or asking for real-life examples, including activities, and so forth. You should go beyond the reading in your preparation by finding additional relevant material that aids the discussion. Although I may or may not pose questions to you and your classmates, remember that you are the “go to” expert for this particular reading and it is your responsibility to keep the discussion moving. That said, it also fair for you to expect participation from your classmates. As the discussion leader feel free to ask open-ended questions and call on your classmates to answer. Worth 15% of overall grade (4 sessions worth 37.5 points each).

3. **Book Reports.** For this assignment you will draw the name of a book “from a hat,” and then
give an in-class presentation summarizing the book’s major themes, issues, and/or controversies to the rest of the class in a lively presentation lasting no more than 20 minutes. Be sure to leave room for questions and please provide handouts to your classmates (and submit handout online on Canvas). Worth 10% of overall grade (1 report worth 100 points).

4. GIFTS Presentation. GIFTS (Great-Ideas-For-Teaching-Students) are published activities that you can use to help students learn various concepts. I can’t begin to tell you how handy they are! This assignment will help you collect and become familiar with a variety of them. Specifically, throughout the semester, you will present two GIFTS activities to your classmates. You may either describe the activities or try them out in class. Keep in mind, however, that you may need to abbreviate since you only have 8-10 minutes to present each activity. Be sure to provide classmates information summarizing the activity (a handout that you’ll also submit to me online) and on where to obtain the activity. Useful resources include Communication in the classroom (see above) and the journal called Communication Teacher. You might also use instructor’s manuals, online sources, or other journals (e.g., Teaching Psychology). Note: at least one and as many as both of your activities can come from Communication Teacher. You might want to check with classmates to make sure that your activity is not one that they have eyes on. Worth 10% of overall grade (2 presentations worth 50 points each).

5. Teaching Demonstration. For this assignment you will teach a one-hour unit covering a chapter from Looking Out, Looking In. Your teaching should represent what you plan to do when instructing that unit in your own course. It should include the presentation of material, discussion, and an activity. It should also demonstrate effective teaching practices culled from this class. Worth 15% of overall grade (1 demo worth 150 points).

6. Teaching Observation. After politely requesting to visit one professor’s undergraduate class, you will observe the professor teaching and write a brief (2 to 3 pages), double-spaced paper analyzing what you observed. Use concepts from class as criteria to guide your observations. For instance, how would you characterize the teacher’s style? What strategies did the teacher use? Did the students seem engaged? Was the teacher effective? Why or why not? What advice would you give? What is the most valuable idea you might borrow from this teacher? You can turn this paper in at any time during the semester but no later than the day of the final exam. Worth 5% of overall grade. (1 paper worth 50 points).

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I will accept observations of online teaching at USU or elsewhere as long as they are communication related.

7. Teaching Portfolio. To complete this assignment you will create a teaching portfolio, which includes the following items: your teaching philosophy (1-3 pages); a course syllabus; one future assignment that your students must complete; an original GIFTS activity; 2 lesson plans (including notes, material not in the textbook, handouts, activities, etc.), and exam questions. Details to follow. Worth 25% of overall grade (1 portfolio worth 250 points).

8. Participation. Although your participation in class is not a graded assignment, I will consider it when calculating your final grade in the course. Specifically, if you are midway between grades, your contributions to the climate, community, and content of the class will be taken into
Grading Policy
Total point possible=1,000

Grades will be assigned according to the following distribution of total course points: 0-59%=F; 60-62%=D−; 63-66=D; 67-69%=D+; 70-73=C−; 74-76=C; 77-79%=C+; 80-82%=B−; 83-86=B; 87-89%=B+; 90-92%=A−; 93-100=A.

Course Policies

1. Attendance and Participation: Seminar courses only function well when everyone attends and actively participates in the discussion. You are expected to attend all class sessions, complete all readings, and participate in class discussions. If you are unable to attend a class, please let me know ahead of time.

2. Late work: No late work will be accepted, unless prior arrangements for extenuating circumstances have been made ahead of time. You are always welcome to turn in assignments early.

3. Academic Integrity: You will be expected to adhere to the USU’s policy for academic integrity. See: http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140

4. Disabilities: Accommodation for disabilities will be made, per USU’s policies. See: http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3168

5. Classroom Civility: Both students and the teacher will be expected to follow all guidelines for classroom civility. See: http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3171
## Tentative Schedule

**NOTE:** Reflective essays are due the night before class meets on weeks that are marked with *

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course and Each Other</td>
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<td>No readings or assignments due but sign up for “Getting Started with Zoom” and “Getting Started with Canvas” workshops at <a href="https://cidi.usu.edu/workshops">https://cidi.usu.edu/workshops</a></td>
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<td>Toolbox: Icebreakers</td>
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*Week 2*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Defining the Field</td>
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<td>Dannels, Chapter 1: What are the Eight Essential Questions Teachers Ask?</td>
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<td>Adler &amp; Proctor Chapter 1: A First Look at Interpersonal Communication</td>
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<td>Toolbox: Definitional Activities</td>
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9/17  

**Credibility and Leadership (through discussions) in the Classroom**

Dannels, D. P., Chapter 2, How can I establish credibility?

**Discussion Leader: Michala**


**Discussion Leader: Travis**


**Discussion Leader: Donnie**


**Discussion Leader: Diana**

Adler/Proctor Chapter 3: Communication and Identity: Creating and Presenting the Self

Toolbox: GIFTS.

**Presenter: Cody**
*Week 4

9/24  Negotiating Power

Dannels, D. P., Chapter 3, How can I negotiate power?

**Discussion Leader Diana**


**Discussion Leader: Michala**


**Discussion Leader: Travis**


**Discussion Leader: Cody**

Adler/Proctor Chapter 7: Nonverbal Communication: Messages Beyond Words

Toolbox: GIFTS.

**Presenter: Donnie**
Week 5

10/1

**Philosophies of Education and Book Reports**

Dannels, Chapter 9: How can I make a difference?


Adler/Proctor Chapter 6: Language: Barrier and Bridge

**Book Reports Due:**

1) The Courage to Teach by Palmer  
**Presenter: Michala**

2) Critical Communication Pedagogy by Fassett & Warren  
**Presenter: Donnie**

3) Save the World on Your Own Time by Fish  
**Presenter: Diana**

4) How Learning Works by Ambrose et al.  
**Presenter: Travis**

5) What the Best College Teachers Do by Bain  
**Presenter: Cody**

Adler/Proctor Chapter 6: Language: Barrier and Bridge

Toolbox: TBA
*Week 6

10/8  Managing Anxieties

Dannels, Chapter 4, How can I manage communication anxieties?

Discussion Leader: Michala


Discussion Leader: Diana


Adler/Proctor Chapter 4: Perception: What You See is What you Get

Toolbox: Designing Your Course/Creating a syllabus

GIFTS:

Presenter #1: Travis

Presenter #2: Cody

Presenter #3: Donnie
Week 7  **Online Teaching**

10/15  Workshops about how to teach and communicate with students online:

   “Getting Started with Zoom” and “Getting Started with Canvas” workshops

   No reflection papers due this week.

*Week 8*

10/22  **Classroom Climate Part 1**

   Dannels, Chapter 7, How can I acknowledge difference?

   **Discussion leader: Travis**


   **Discussion leader: Cody**

   Adler/Proctor Chapter 8: Listening: More than Meets the Ear

   Toolbox: Using the Library to Facilitate Learning

   Guest speaker: Britt Fagerheim (from library)
*Week 9

10/29  Classroom Climate Part 2

Dannels, Chapter 6, How can I navigate relational dynamics?

Discussion Leader: Michala


Discussion Leader: Donnie


Discussion Leader: Travis


Discussion Leader: Cody

Adler/Proctor Chapter 9: Communication and Relational Dynamics

Toolbox: GIFTS

Presenter: Diana
Engaged Learning/Motivating Students

Dannels, Chapter 5, How can I engage students?

**Discussion leader: Cody**


**Discussion leader: Donnie**

Toolbox: GIFTS

**Presenter #1: Travis**

**Presenter #2: Michala**

**Presenter #3 Diana**
Week 11

11/12  Assessing Assignments and Providing Feedback

Dannels, D. P. Chapter 8, How can I provide feedback?

Discussion leader: All


Discussion leader: All


Discussion leader: Diana

Toolbox: Tests, Grading, Feedback

GIFTS:

Presenter: Michala

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Week 12

11/19  Teaching demonstrations

Adler/Proctor Chapter 2: IPC and Social Media

Teacher: Cody

Adler/Proctor Chapter 5: Emotions

Teacher: Michala

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Week 13

11/26  Happy Thanksgiving! No class today!

Week 14

12/3  Teaching demonstrations
Adler/Proctor Chapter 10: Interpersonal Communication in Close Relationships
Teacher: Diana
Adler/Proctor Chapter 11: Improving Communication Climates
Teacher: Travis

Week 15

12/10  Teaching demonstrations
Adler/Proctor Chapter 12: Managing Interpersonal Conflicts
Teacher: Donnie

Tues 12/15  Final Exam in the form of Teaching Portfolios AND Last day to turn in Teaching observation