Comm. 601: Introduction to Communication Studies

Fall 2026 Ball State University Monday/Wednesdays 4 pm LB 127

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Student Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm and by appointment

Course Description: The introductory course in graduate work in communication studies is intended to provide a foundation for the graduate program in communication studies. This will include such areas as: the development of the discipline, particularly focusing on the last 100 years; an exploration of key concepts in communication; an overview of the research traditions; an introduction to academic writing, including the key journals within the field; and the diversity of the communication discipline, through an exploration of some of the key sub areas of the field.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Identify some of the **key figures** in the last 100 years pertaining to the development of the communication discipline.
2. Identify and explain the placement of **key concepts** in communication (e.g., meaning, symbols, intent, rhetoric, etc.).
3. Identify and explain the different **research traditions** (social scientific, rhetorical, humanist) in the communication discipline.
4. Identify **key journals** within the field.
5. Identify and explain the nature of **key sub areas of the field** (e.g., interpersonal, organizational, feminist, family, health, etc.).
6. Explain the **role of higher education** and graduate education within society.
7. Demonstrate **strong writing**, argument construction, and critical thinking skills.

Required Readings:

Text: *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (current edition)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Other course readings are available on the course Canvas page and are listed in suggestedreading order on the course schedule. All readings – assigned text chapters and additional course readings– are to be read in preparation for class on the day the topic will be discussed. Plan to Print These

My Assumptions of a Graduate Course: In a graduate course, I hold the same standards for you that I do for myself. We will be at all class meetings, unless an emergency occurs, which then we will be in contact with each other right away, or if a pressing conflict arises that we spoke to each other about in advance. We will produce edited, original work that meets professional standards. We will be ready each day to engage in a productive, thoughtful, and respectful conversation about the material at hand and we will all be attentive and make productive, thoughtful, and respectful contributions. If you violate these assumptions, it should be understood that you will either drop a letter grade or fail the class depending on the seriousness of the violations. It is also understood that if I violate these assumptions this should be represented in my teaching evaluations.

Your Responsibilities

Due Dates: - If you are having a problem that is impacting your ability to be successful in this course, please set up a time to meet with me as soon as possible.

-We all are managing multiple hats, so I want us to have some choice with the schedule. This is of course balanced against my need to keep up with grading and keep the projects on track. Unless noted- All

assignments are due during that week listed on the syllabus. I would highly encourage you to have your work well in progress by class on Wednesday, that way you can get any final questions answered before submitting if need be. My weeks are starting Monday at 1am and go until Sunday at 11:59pm

- Late work will be penalized **10% off** for each **business day** (Monday- Friday) late unless there has been communication and a documentable emergency. I understand that all of us will have off days, therefore everyone will have **eight late passes** days to use as they need throughout the semester. Each late pass day will erase one 10% late penalty for an assignment, so if you need to turn in a paper two days late, you can submit it with a note to use two of your late day passes. Late pass usage must be requested with the assignment submission and cannot be applied retroactively. Absolutely no late work will be accepted after **December 10th**. EOD, unless again extreme and documented emergency.

Academic Misconduct and AI: The university states its philosophy this way: "Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the University community. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated, for it threatens the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge." We as scholars and researchers cannot tolerate academic misconduct in our classes and individuals will be accountable for their choices, up to and including course failure. All individuals are expected to follow the university's code of behavior regarding all academic matters. I will address the academic misconduct with the student directly, whether the misconduct was intentionally or because of a lack of awareness. Penalties can include receiving a failing grade on the assignment/activity in question, a failing grade in the course, or expulsion from the university. Cheating, plagiarism (the using of another's work, words, or ideas as your own), and double-dipping (turning your own work in for credit in two different courses) are serious academic offenses.

You may use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Additionally, the use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity, both which are tools you should be building. However, all final work/material submitted should be your own.

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own, be it mostly or entirely written by AI. You may not use AI for generating citations, examples, or arguments that you present as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Additionally, as you respect the work you do, you should not freely give it to AI for future use. For specific information about the university's policies related to academic dishonesty or for descriptions of other behaviors that qualify as "dishonest," please consult the online version of the "Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities"

Communication and Feedback: I will try to return e-mail from your official BSU e-mail address within 24 hours during the business week. If you haven't heard from me within that timeframe, please feel free to nicely follow up. Sometimes e-mails become buried. I will make every effort to grade assignments within 5 business days of submission. End of semester assignments may take longer. Please feel free to e-mail me before that time if you have any questions or concerns about your performance in the course.

Attendance Policy: For this class to be successful, your attendance and participation are imperative. We will conduct this class as a seminar, performing the roles of teachers and learners simultaneously. Therefore, your participation is important not only to your own intellectual development, but also to the development of others. The expectation in graduate school remains that students should attend every class meeting. However, conflicts arise. You are allowed one absence – save it for when you are ill, have car problems, or a family emergency. Engagement points cannot be made up. To be successful in this course, you must engage with the course material each week. I will record attendance and report student attendance rates in accordance with BSU policy. Attendance, in and of itself, does not earn students points or result in point deductions. Instead, I assess course engagement in a variety of ways throughout the semester as outlined in the course assignments.

University Policies

University Statement: We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression: In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

Writing Center and Learning Center: All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students. To schedule a free appointment, go to *http://www.bsu.edu/writingcenter*. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!*!*

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit my.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Additional Tools section, or just go directly to *https://bsu.navigate.eab.com*. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: BallStateLC.

The Speaking Center: The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message. The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or **use this** direct link **to sign up for a time.** Appointments are available both in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Title IX Ball State University is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Students who experience or witness conduct that may violate University policy are encouraged to seek support and assistance. The Title IX Office can provide information about reporting options, supportive measures, and available resources. Contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.

Please Note: As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose information to me about

conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, I am required to notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Office will reach out to discuss available resources, supportive measures, and reporting options. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, you may contact the Counseling Center or the Center for Survivor Support.

Pregnancy and Related Conditions: Ball State University provides reasonable modifications for students affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Students seeking academic, housing, or other modifications are encouraged to contact the Title IX Office as early as possible to discuss available options and support. For assistance, contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.@.

The Basic Needs Hub If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a Basic Needs Assistance Form.

The Counseling Center The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found here.

General Policies:

1. The syllabus may be adjusted because of scheduling difficulties or instructional need. The studentis responsible for all materials and instructions given in class or on/via Canvas.
2. Course & Instructor Evaluation: Students will have an opportunity to participate in formal assessment of this course and the instructor's teaching performance at the end of the semester through the university's on-line evaluation process. I invite and encourage your feedback here as I continue to develop my teaching and this course.
3. I reserve the right to request technology be removed from the course to enhance the classroom community. No electronic recording or broadcast of this class is permitted without writtenpermission. This includes the use of and/or wearing Smart glasses/AI glasses.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment (see below for descriptions)	*Possible Points*	*Earned Points*
Exploring the Field – Smaller Assign.	150	_____
Final Paper Project (total of 300-340 pts)		_____
Topic Idea List	15	_____
Process Assignment 1	25	_____
Process Assignment 2	35	_____
Process Assignment 3	55	
Optional Peer Review	20	
Optional Response Letter	20	_____
Final Paper	150	_____

Paper Presentation	25	
Participation/Weekly Activities	100	
Total Points	*550 to 590*	

Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track

This class uses the typical A (100-93%), A- (92.999-90%), B+ (89.999-87%), B (86.999-83%), B- (82.999- 80%), and so on… grade scale.

Note about assignments: Most communication scholars primarily utilize APA style, so will we. Paper should be well organized and easy to read. It is important that you do not allow a negative first impression of your papers to overshadow your ideas. Make sure that your paper is free of typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors ("Invention is only half of the writing process"- McCauliff, 2010?).

Save copies of your work in multiple spots-Always keep backups. For the purposes of course assessment and development, I may keep copies of your work for assessmentpurposes or for use as exemplars for future semesters. Please notify me if you would prefer that your work not be used as a future exemplar.

See canvas for detailed assignment descriptions and course calendar