

# **COM 495: Communication Theory & Research**

## **Spring Semester 2016**

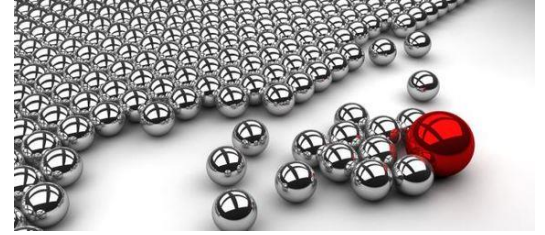
**Time & Place:** Mondays, 1:30 - 4:20 p.m. in  
Chambers 1006

**Professor:** Dr. Amanda R. Martinez

**Office Hours:** Preyer 213, Wednesdays, 2 - 4 p.m.  
and other days/times by appointment.

**Phone:** 704-894-2037

**E-mail:** [ammartinez@davidson.edu](mailto:ammartinez@davidson.edu)



## **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Herbert W. Simons and Jean G. Jones, Persuasion in Society, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2011).
- Robert B. Cialdini, Influence: Science and Practice, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2009).
- Routine access to Davidson email and Moodle is required. Additional readings in .pdf format, assignment details, and links to various resources are available on Moodle by week.
  - *I will tweet items of interest using our class hashtag #COM495Davidson from my Twitter handle: @AMartinezPhd. Feel free to tweet as you come across items your classmates might find interesting and useful as well! [Twitter](#) is an informal, supplemental back channel of communication for our class.*



## **THE COURSE**

**Course Description:** Welcome to the seventh offering of COM 495, the senior seminar for the Communication Studies minor. As you know, the minor in Communication Studies requires COM 101, COM 201, and three courses in the interpersonal, public, or mass communication track – plus COM 495. This course serves as the capstone course, drawing its metaphor from the stonemasons' term for the rocks crowning a stone wall that solidify the blocks beneath it. Somewhat more organic imagery might be appropriate (a wall of amoebas?) because we will seek connections, combinations, and integrations among those "blocks," but the etymology of the term is instructive in that the course seeks to pull together and solidify the courses and concepts on which the minor is built.

This course focuses on a variety of theories of communication as they frame questions and enable the discovery of answers. How have theorists conceptualized the basic process of communication? How have they delineated those processes within the areas of interpersonal, public, and mass communication? How do those conceptions emphasize particular aspects of the process and mute others? What questions are encouraged by some conceptions and discouraged by others? How do the resulting answers frame the process of communication? What does a *communication studies*

perspective entail? The examination of these theories then provides the basis for the investigation of key questions concerning processes of communication.

This semester, we will focus on communication as a process of social influence. The course design underscores the dynamic interactions of theory, research, and application, first by examining central theories and the research testing those theories, and then by using that body of theories and research to inform an analysis of and for non-profit clients of our choice. This analysis will form the basis for specific recommendations on how the theory and research in communication studies suggest a comprehensive communication plan for each of these organizations.

**Learning Outcomes:**

In short, this course is designed to help you think analytically about the dynamics of communication, pulling together the courses of your minor. The objectives of this course are to enable you:

- to appreciate the distinctiveness of a Communication Studies perspective in the liberal arts;
- to delineate the ways in which particular theories both empower and constrain conceptions of communicative processes;
- to connect concepts from COM 101 and COM 201 with concepts from other courses in the Communication Studies minor;
- to explore and understand exemplary research in communication studies; and
- to use various theoretical perspectives to explore particular instances of communication in both historical and contemporary contexts.

**Course Structure:** This class consists of a variety of ways to earn your grade including class preparation and participation, a major small group civic engagement project, and essay reviews. The percentage weighed toward your grade and details for each assignment follow.

Class Preparation & Participation:	25%
Discussion Leader:	15%
Essay Reviews:	30%
Major Project:	30%

A	93+
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

**General Expectations:** We need to establish a positive, supportive communication climate in which we identify the significant research and theories in the area, and in which we not only respect but seek to truly understand the perspectives of others – a central tenet in communication studies. I expect that you take responsibility for your educational learning experience by taking part in class discussions, keeping up with your reading, participating in in-class activities, homework, small group work, and other creative assignments.

It is your responsibility to stay on schedule and communicate when there is course content that you need extra help with. We will adhere strictly to our schedule of deadlines. I hold you accountable to high standards of utmost respect for our classroom environment, your peers, and the organizations

we will spend the semester working with. I am also your advocate and resource in all matters related to this course and our shared goals and outcomes.

## **ASSIGNMENT DETAILS**

### **Class Preparation and Participation** (25%)

The seminar cannot function without your coming to class having read the materials closely so that you are ready to participate fully. We need to hear your informed interpretations, challenges, extensions, and applications of the various theoretical approaches and research pieces we will explore; and you need to be able to articulate your views and investigate how the interpretations of others in the class illuminate your perspective. That requires not only having completed the reading before class but also having developed insights, questions, and areas for additional exploration. In addition, it requires listening and responding to the contributions of others in constructive ways, and drawing others into the conversation. We will have homework assignments that will require critical thought, reflection, application and analysis that will count towards this portion of your grade. You also need to be a full participant in the major project for the course: contributing fully, respecting others' perspectives, serving as a devil's advocate on occasion, and enjoying the process of intellectual exchange.

### **Discussion Leader** (15%)

Each of you will sign up for a class period during the semester and serve as the discussion leader for the topic that week. You will cover the assigned readings, conduct additional research, and determine effective ways of engaging the seminar members in the materials, all within *one hour*. Evaluations are based on:

- your demonstration of a clear knowledge of the assigned materials;
- the creation of ways to move beyond the readings;
- the enactment of ways to effectively engage the entire class with the concepts; and
- the ability to clearly address questions from the class.

You *must* submit an outline of your **discussion plan**, including major topics, terms, illustrations, and exercises, by **5 pm** on the **Thursday before** your discussion leadership, and then **touch base with me** by **Friday afternoon** (if not earlier, whether by email or in person in office hours or appointment). I would be happy to talk about potential approaches with you even earlier than that. In addition, I would recommend looking at NCA's site to translate research into everyday language:

<http://www.communicationcurrents.com/>. Plan ahead and come talk with me about options.

### **Major Project** (30%)

Because I believe we can best understand communication theory and research by seeing it in action, COM 495 will have three clients to work with in small groups of five. Divided into three groups of students, one group for each client, the seminar members will use the concepts from the course to assess the organization's current communication about its mission and its means, and then to make specific and detailed recommendations about how they might better communicate that mission with these publics. Each group will discuss with Dr. M how they want to keep her updated on the progress. The seminar members then will present their findings to the director of each organization, Dr. Stacey Riemer, Director of Civic Engagement, and other key individuals, with a packet of information for each client and a copy for Dr. M. Group members will then evaluate the contributions of each member, including themselves, to the project, along with a brief overall

assessment of the project. The presentation and poster session constitute 15% of the final grade, and the paper/project packet and peer evaluations are worth 15%. Details to follow on Moodle.

### **Reviews** (30%)

There will be two take-home, essay reviews, each worth 15%. These are ways for you to demonstrate your individual grasp of the interconnections among the course materials by analyzing communication situations.

## **POLICIES**

### **Attendance Policy:**

Regular class attendance is the student's obligation. I take attendance each time we meet. I expect that everyone treat our class meetings respectfully by recognizing that they are vital to our success as a class community. Each student has a total of 1 \*freebie\* unexcused absence to use during the semester, no excuses required, no questions asked. After the 1 freebie (which is a week's worth of class), every subsequent absence will result in a 15-point deduction from the participation grade. If a student misses more than one quarter of a semester, the student effectively fails the course. Davidson athletics, religious observances, and other College-mandated excusable absences must be communicated in advance for proper marking in my attendance records.

### **Late Work Policy:**

***I do not accept late work.*** You have all due dates mapped out in the course calendar. Plan well and work to meet the deadlines. I reserve the right to make exceptions with penalties on rare occasions on a case-by-case basis.

### **Technology Policy:**

The use of laptops to take notes is permitted during class time. However, I reserve the right to alter this policy should the level of interactive and attentive engagement diminish. During student-led discussion, electronics should be silenced and put away. Any disruption during discussion leader presentations will result in participation point deductions.

### **Davidson Honor Code & Pledged Work:**

All work is pledged work. Please write (or type) "pledge" and your name in full on the top corner of any work you hand in. Please make sure you understand the Honor Code, and especially the definition of plagiarism.

### **Citing Sources & Avoiding Plagiarism:**

I encourage you to speak to others about your written work: colleagues, friends, and consultants in the Speaking Center and the Writing Center. All of the work that you do for the course must be your own and you should not "recycle" work from prior classes, but you are welcome to get feedback and

*The students and faculty of Davidson College are committed to the **Honor Code** and will not tolerate any violation of this principle. Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted – not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. As indicated in Davidson College's Student Handbook, I must refer every act of academic dishonesty; violations may result in failure in the course, as well as suspension or expulsion.*

suggestions from anyone in the community. Written work must include appropriate citations. We have APA and MLA citation examples on our course research guide to make sure that the basics are clear including how to cite when paraphrasing and directly quoting. The librarians will make resources available that thoroughly cover the basics in our research guide and also serve as resources themselves for students.

**Written Assignment Submissions:** To be **green friendly** and save paper/trees, all written work will be submitted electronically via Moodle (with the exception of the final major project). Please attach your document in Word .doc format to the appropriate assignment link. I will provide feedback in bubble comments and indicate the grade earned at the end in a bubble comment. Graded work will be sent back via email.

## RESOURCES

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences:**

Accommodations are the legal right of students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability or learning difference who anticipates needing accommodations, and the disability is documented by Davidson College, come talk to me early in the semester so that we can discuss accommodations. All such discussion will be confidential. Pedagogically, I strive to employ a variety of strategies and approaches to appeal to an array of preferred learning styles throughout the duration of our course.

### **Title IX and Student Misconduct:**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://www.davidson.edu/offices/dean-of-students/sexual-misconduct> and <http://www.davidson.edu/student-life/health-and-counseling/counseling>. Dean of Students, Kathy Bray (Office: Chambers 1255), is the Title IX Coordinator and may be reached at: 704-894-2225, [kabray@davidson.edu](mailto:kabray@davidson.edu). Full policy details may be found on Inside Davidson provided by the Sexual Misconduct Task Force.

### **The Speaking Center:**

The Speaking Center on campus provides free consultations for your presentations for any course. Consultants will meet with you about any aspect of your work, from invention to delivery. The tutors in the Speaking Center are your peers who have had COM 101 and performed exceedingly well in their presentations. They are peer experts with the practice and experience necessary to perform well on presentations. *Speaking Center hours: Sunday – Thursday, 8-11 p.m., Studio D & Group Tutor Room 2 (Library)*

### **DR. MARTINEZ' QUICK CHECKLIST FOR WRITTEN WORK:**

- ✓ Microsoft Word .doc format.
- ✓ Font = 12 point, Times New Roman.
- ✓ One inch margins.
- ✓ Double-spaced (without extra spacing before or after paragraphs).
- ✓ Edit thoroughly for the basics of grammar, spelling, punctuation, content, clarity, sentence structure, etc.
- ✓ Citations follow APA or MLA style consistently and accurately.

## The Writing Center:

The College provides free consultations on writing that you do in any course. Consultants, who are themselves practiced writers, trained to help you with any aspect of your work – from forming ideas, to developing arguments, to helping with grammar and style – will work with you individually and free of charge. Visit the Writing Center for further information.

*Writing Center hours: Sunday – Thursday, 2-4 p.m. and 8-11 p.m., CTL (Library)*

## Library Services:

Research Consultations - The librarians are happy to work with you individually. Drop-in and scheduled consultations are available Monday – Friday, 9-5 p.m. and Monday – Thursday, 7-9 p.m.

Visit the library website for all forms and details:

<http://davidson.libguides.com/askalibrarian>

*Questions, comments, concerns? Silence is satisfaction unless I hear otherwise.  
Please do feel free to talk to me at any point in our semester together!*

## COURSE CALENDAR

*Minor changes may be made to this schedule at the discretion of Dr. M and at times in consultation with the class.*

### KEY FOR COURSE CALENDAR:

Gray = Readings on Moodle

Blue = Discussion leader

Pink = Presentations

Yellow = Review/Final project due

Green = Breaks/No class meeting

WEEK	DAY	TOPIC	READINGS	DUE TODAY
			<i>*have these readings completed before the class period on which they are listed.</i>	
1	Monday January 11	-Welcome to COM 495! -Syllabus = our contract  <b><u>Prologue:</u></b> <b><u>Communication</u></b> <b><u>Studies as a Liberal</u></b> <b><u>Art</u></b>	YouTube (.pdf transcript on Moodle): Centennial President Speech: Dr. Turner, “Back to Our Future: The Presence of Our Past(s), the Echoes of Our Future”  Turner, “The Only Thing I’ve Learned . . . ‘: The Central Tenet of a Liberal Arts Education”  McCloskey, “The Neglected Economics of Talk”  ↑ Complete these two readings before writing your essay. 😊	Get your books! Available in the Davidson College Store; other readings available on Moodle. -Discussion leader sign-up. <b>-Due by Friday, 4 p.m. via Moodle link: 3-4 page essay on the interconnections among the courses for your minor.</b>  Talk about meaningful things you’ve read, discussed, experienced, etc.
2	Monday January 18	<b>Dr. MLK Jr. Day!</b> <i>No classes</i>		

3	Monday January 25	<b><u>Understanding Persuasion</u></b>	<p>S/J, Ch. 1: “The Study of Persuasion”  S/J, Ch. 2: “The Psychology of Persuasion: Basic Concepts and Principles”  S/J, Ch. 15: “More About Ethics”  Cialdini, Ch. 1: “Weapons of Influence”</p> <p><i>Discussion leader: Dr. M</i></p>	
4	Monday February 1	<b><u>Coactive Persuasion</u></b>	<p>S/J, Ch. 3: “Persuasion Broadly Considered”</p> <p>S/J, Ch. 4: “Coactive Persuasion”</p> <p><i>Discussion leader: Adrienne</i></p> <p>S/J, Ch. 7: “Cognitive Shorthands”</p> <p>Cialdini, Ch. 2: “Reciprocation: The Old Give and Take . . . and Take”</p> <p><i>Discussion leader: Grace</i></p>	
5	Monday February 8		<p>A. S/J, Ch. 5: Resources of Communication</p> <p>Sun and Scharrer, “Staying True to Disney: College Students’ Resistance to Criticism of <i>The Little Mermaid</i>”</p> <p><i>Discussion leader: Brian</i></p> <p>B. S/J, Ch. 6: “Framing and Reframing”</p> <p>Thomson, “Big Food and the Body Politics of Personal Responsibility”</p> <p><i>Discussion leader: Clark</i></p>	
6	Monday February 15		<p>A. S/J, Ch. 8: “Reasoning and Evidence”  Cialdini, Ch. 3:</p>	

			<p>“Commitment and Consistency: Hobgoblins of the Mind”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Madeline</b></p> <p>B. Cialdini, Ch. 4: “Social Proof: Truths Are Us”</p> <p>Cialdini, Ch. 5: “Liking: The Friendly Thief”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Perry</b></p>	
7	Monday February 22		<p>A. Cialdini, Ch. 6: “Authority: Directed Deference”</p> <p>Cialdini, Ch. 7: “Scarcity: The Rule of the Few”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Michelle</b></p> <p>B. S/J, Ch. 12: “Analyzing Product Advertising”</p> <p>Hunt and Keaveney, “Sales Promotion Wars: A Strategic Application of Attribution Theory”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Mahlek</b></p>	<b>Review # 1 is released on Moodle by today!</b>
8	Monday Feb. 29 – March 6	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b> <i>No classes</i>		
9	Monday March 7	<b><u>Contexts for Persuasion</u></b>	<p>S/J, Ch. 10: “Persuasive Campaigns”</p> <p>Lederman, “‘Friends Don’t Let Friends Beer Goggle’: The Use and Abuse of Alcohol Among College Students”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Madison</b></p> <p>Lederman, Stewart, Barr, Powell, Laitman, and Goodhart, “RU SURE?” The Role of</p>	<b>Review # 1 due by Friday, 4:30 p.m. via Moodle link.</b>



			<p>Communication Theory and Experiential Learning in Addressing Dangerous Drinking on the College Campus”</p> <p>Sections from <i>Public Communication Campaigns</i> book on fear appeals and media health campaigns</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Caroline</b></p>	
10	Monday March 14		<p>A. S/J, Ch. 11: “Staging Political Campaigns”</p> <p>Gosa, “Black Youth, Social Media, and the 2008 Presidential Election”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Alex</b></p> <p>B. S/J, Ch. 13: “Talking Through Differences: Persuasion in Social Conflicts”</p> <p>Robert Bacal, “Organizational Conflict: The Good, The Bad &amp; The Ugly,” at <a href="http://www.work911.com/conflict/articles/orgcon.htm">http://www.work911.com/conflict/articles/orgcon.htm</a></p> <p>Jameson, “Negotiating Autonomy and Connection through Politeness: A Dialectical Approach to Organizational Conflict Management”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Brooke</b></p>	<p><i>Group Code due by Weds., March 14, by 5 p.m. via Moodle!</i></p> <p><i>--Honor Code pledged that all group members contributed to it and consensus was reached on the contents of this assignment.</i></p>
11	Monday March 21		<p>A. S/J, Ch. 14: “Leading Social Movements”</p> <p>Drumheller and McQuay, “Living in the Buckle: Promoting LGBT Outreach Services in Conservative Urban/Rural Centers”</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Leigh</b></p>	<p><i>Preliminary bibliography + outline draft of the group paper including anticipated subheadings and creative proposal ideas so far --due by Friday, midnight via</i></p>

			<p>B. S/J, Ch. 9: “Going Public: Delivering a Presentation that Persuades”</p> <p>Potter’s <i>Media Literacy</i> chapters</p> <p><b>Discussion leader: Cy</b></p>	<p><i>Moodle!</i></p> <p><i>*Dr. M will provide feedback electronically before Easter Break.</i></p> <p><b><u>*Review # 2 available via Moodle by Friday.</u></b></p>
12	Monday March 28-29	<b>EASTER BREAK!</b> <i>No classes</i>		<i>*Groups work on their Informal “Pitches” for the upcoming Monday meeting at Campus Summit. The more detailed, the better the depth and quality of feedback!</i>
13	Monday April 4	<p><b>Informal “Pitches”</b> <i>Each group meets with Drs. M &amp; T at Campus Summit for a half hour “pitch” of comm. theories, concepts, and relevant lit. to use as the basis of the creative proposal ideas + informal feedback for the major project.</i></p> <p><i>*Use the rest of class time with group members to draft the poster in prep for next week’s deadline.</i></p>	<p><b>1:30-2:20: Present Age Ministries group</b></p> <p><b>2:30-3:20: Uncommon Challenge App group</b></p> <p><b>3:30-4:20: Charlotte Bilingual Preschool group</b></p>	<p><i>Work on the group posters --due next Tuesday by noon.</i></p> <p><i>*Dr. M designs, orders, and distributes flyer/email .pdf by Monday, April 11.</i></p> <p><i>--Groups dist. flyer to org. contacts no later than 2 weeks before presentations take place.</i></p>
14	Monday April 11	No class meeting! Work on the review!	<b>Review # 2 due by Monday, 4:30 p.m. via Moodle link.</b>	<i>*Posters due by Tuesday, noon (designate 1 group member to upload to Louise folder – see instructions on Moodle).</i>
15	Monday April 18	Workshop on campaigns	<b>*Group Work Day</b>	<b>Civic Engagement Poster Session: Lilly Gallery, April 19, Common Hour</b>
16	Monday April 25	Workshop on campaigns	<b>*Group Work Day</b>	<i>Due: Final group packet (paper +</i>

				<i>creative ideas) via email to Dr. M by Thursday, April 28 by noon.</i> <i>*I will print (3) copies of each in color and get them bound at the Union.</i>
17	Monday May 2	<b>Presentations of Communication Theory in Action for our organization clients</b> -Sprinkle Room, Union -Refreshments will be served. -Dr. M will introduce the class before each presentation takes place. <i>-Q&amp;A held after each presentation.</i>	<b><u>Present Age Ministries:</u></b> Madeline, Madison, Alex, Perry  <b><u>Uncommen Challenge App:</u></b> Michelle, Grace, Mahlek, Cy, Leigh  <b><u>Charlotte Bilingual Preschool:</u></b> Brian, Brooke, Clark, Caroline, Adrienne	<b>-Final project packets due at the time of presentations (2 copies for the organization, 1 for Dr. M = 3 total bound copies).</b>  <b>-Peer evaluations with brief assessment of project due by Friday, 4 p.m. via Moodle link.</b>
		<i>May 6 – 11 = Final exam period</i>	<i>Commencement = May 15</i>	

**Cheers to the end o' semester! ☺**