



THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

COM 415 WI | SPR 2025

DR. BRIAN CARROLL

T/TH 1230-145
LAU 116

3 CREDIT HOURS

Catalog Course Description: This course explores a wide range of theoretical frameworks for understanding communication, including human communication, media effects, and critical theories of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Emphasis on application of theory to contemporary communication phenomena.

Pre-requisite: RHW 102

Purpose: The course is intended to provide students with a grounding in qualitative and quantitative research methods used to better understand media, media effects, and the human process of communication in various contexts and for varying purposes. The course also aims to give students an opportunity to put into practice these methodologies and theoretical approaches. Communication theory aims to accomplish systematic investigation, analysis, and explanation of mediated and human communication. The course will give students an understanding of and appreciation for the state of theory and research in various areas of communication study, covering both mass communication research and human communication research.

Learning outcomes

By successful completion of this course, students will:

1. demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of communication theories through completing weekly discussion posts and exams.
2. demonstrate the ability to apply communication theory to communicative acts and/or texts by writing an original research paper.
3. demonstrate the ability to present and defend research findings in a professional setting by creating and presenting a poster summarizing their original research.

What you will need (required): *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, 3rd edition, Stacks, Salwen, Eichhorn (Routledge)

Stuff you need to know:

Instructor: Dr. Brian Carroll

Office location: Laughlin 100

Office phone: 706.368.6944 (anytime)

Email: bc@berry.edu

Home page: <http://cubanxgiants.berry.edu>

Blog: <http://wanderingrocks.wordpress.com>

Office hours: MW 11am-2pm, T/TH 10am-noon, by appt., or just drop by

Schedule of class sessions available: <http://cubanxgiants.berry.edu/415>. Any changes to our schedule, including deadlines, will be indicated on this webpage, so frequently

and regularly refer to it. Deadlines and changes to deadlines will be mirrored on Canvas.

Class format: As a seminar course, we will spend a great deal of time in discussion, which requires from us that we regularly attend and that we come prepared. This means having read the assigned text for understanding (not merely making eye contact), taking reading notes, and generating questions for discussion.

The primary project for the course is a research-and-writing project. Being prepared will also, therefore, require that we meet deadlines and bring work-in-progress ready for meaningful critique and feedback in class. Deadlines will matter, and they will matter a lot.

Keep in mind that for each credit hour of registered coursework, Berry expects students to commit two hours of outside engaged learning (readings, research, etc.). Because this is a three-credit hour course, successful students should expect to spend three hours per week in-class and an additional six hours of outside learning activities.

Policies

- **Attendance:** Be on time, just as you would for a job, surgery, or even a haircut. Depositing your things before class begins, but then disappearing to the bathroom for 10 minutes before returning is NOT on-time attendance. Everyone gets one unexcused absence or late arrival, maybe two, with no questions asked. Stuff happens. After that, unexcused and/or unexplained absences and/or lateness will result in point deductions from the "professionalism and participation" portion of your grade -- **one point for each unexcused absence and/or late arrival**. And late is late – one minute or ten minutes. It's binary. What is excused is at the instructor's discretion, so you are best served discussing situations and extraordinary circumstances prior to class whenever possible. Medical attention typically is excused. Weddings, family reunions, vacations, job interviews, grad school visits, Winshape retreats, your roommate's birthday? These are NOT typically excused. Save your free passes for these non-academic excursions.
- **Late submissions (deadlines):** Submit assigned work on time, printed out for grading, and submit this work in person. Do not email the professor your work; your professor does not offer a printing service. Similarly, posting your assignment somewhere in Canvas will not "count" as making deadline. Late work, including any work submitted any other way than that which is authorized, will be penalized one letter grade per class session. Work submitted a week or more after deadline will not be eligible for points. In-class quizzes cannot be made up, regardless of the reason it was missed. The instructor is very reasonable when consulted PRIOR TO deadlines. Finally, please appreciate that deadlines are also for instructors, so that we can move on, as well. In short, deadlines are real, they are our friends, and they will be enforced.
- **Email etiquette:** Related to the above, when emailing your instructor, please keep in mind that he is a person, not a vending machine for information, grades, etc. Begin each and every email with an address and a greeting, something like, "Dear Dr. Carroll. I hope this finds you well." It's courteous, and it doesn't take much time to write. It's also polite to thank someone for

whatever was provided in response to your request. Speaking of email, it is the authorized communication channel for faculty and students at Berry, so you are responsible for checking your email and promptly responding to your instructors as needed.

- **Distractions:** The instructor needs your attention and your respect, as do your peers seated near or around you. Your instructor is easily distracted, so he needs your help. Practically, this means:
 - ZERO unauthorized device use of any kind, including laptops, iPads, smartphones, and Apple watches. Put your devices away and make sure they are either off or on 'silent.' Use a device, even an Apple watch to check a text, and you will be marked as having been "absent" for that class session.
 - Doing homework for other classes somewhere else.
 - Avoiding the zipping up of backpacks and clearing off of desks prior to being dismissed.
 - Avoiding repetitive noisemaking, such as clicking pens, crinkling food wrappers, and clanging water bottles.
- **Decorum:** Related to the distractions described above, please remember that the classroom is the professor's workspace and our shared learning space. It's not your living room or den, in other words. You cannot, therefore, disappear with your phone into the restroom for 20 minutes whenever you might like. Getting up, leaving, using the door, returning, occasionally tripping over someone's backpack and/or spilling their beverage – all of this distracts and interrupts. So, go the bathroom BEFORE you come to class. If nature calls – and I mean SCREAMS – ask for permission to (briefly) exit the classroom. Leave your phone behind. Students are permitted one or two "emergencies" during the semester, but deductions will be made from your professionalism and participation grade for chronic bathroom escapes or their equivalents.
- **Academic integrity:** Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life at Berry, academic dishonesty will have consequences. You are invited to consult the College Catalog for an articulation of the College's policies with respect to academic integrity. Specific to this course, academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses, hiring a ghostwriter, asking an AI generator to write something for you that you later submit, failing to cite sources for your research (and, therefore, submitting others' work as your own), consulting non-authorized sources or texts during an exam period, and aiding and abetting academic dishonesty by another student. Violations will be reported. Students who are sanctioned for violating the academic integrity policy forfeit the right to withdraw from the class with a grade of "W." Attached to this syllabus is the pledge of academic integrity you will be asked to sign for most major assignments.
- **Class recording (Zoom):** Per Berry policy, students are required to attend class in-person. Classes will not be available for remote learning, at least not regularly or without advance warning and authorization. Any recordings will only be available to students registered for this class and cannot be re-transmitted, distributed, or otherwise shared without the expressed, written consent of the instructor, who owns the copyright to the intellectual property contained in or by the recording.

VII. How your course grade will be computed (assessment measures):

Takeaways & Residuals	<u>20%</u>
Project proposal (text/artifact & theory)	05%
Bibliography	05%
Literature review	15%
Smooth draft and peer review (writer's workshop)	15%
Final paper	25%
Presentation and oral defense (of paper)	05%
Professionalism, participation, attendance	10%
TOTAL	100%

Some specifics

Our class sessions will depend on the vitality and vibrancy of our discussions. We will discuss issues and questions related to the text and readings, and we will workshop our research projects throughout the course. Your involvement is essential. Your submitted questions will drive our discussion, so avoid simplistic yes/no questions. Think about instances in which the reading is confusing, muddy, or incomplete (clarifying questions). Think about how we might apply what we've read in our research (application questions). Think about what you most want to know next (residual questions). 'Why' and 'how' questions will push us forward. You typically will bring questions to class for discussion, submitting those questions before we depart.

Next, the research and writing project. The **research proposal** will briefly describe the theoretical approach you will use and the artifact, text, medium, or event you will analyze. You will justify why the proposed project is worthwhile (the "so what?" question). You should be able to explain why your theoretical method is appropriate for your study, so there is a persuasive aspect to this assignment. You may use a theory not covered in this course, but only in consultation with the instructor.

The **literature review** will identify how your project might contribute to our understanding of either your theory, your focus of analysis, or both by identifying the work already done in these areas and on your proposed topic. In other words, you will provide an introductory review of relevant literature.

The **smooth draft** will approximate to the best of your ability your final submission. It is not, therefore, a "rough" draft. The more you can provide your writing workshop partner, the better feedback you can expect from that collaborator. Your grade for the writer's workshop will in part be based on the "smoothness" or "non-roughness" of your draft.

The **final paper** will be 15 to 20 (typed, double-spaced) pages in Times New Roman 12-point type, with 1-inch paper margins, representing a complete and original work of communication theory application. It will be (mostly) free of grammatical, syntactical, and orthographical error. You are invited, therefore, to continue collaborating with your workshop partner beyond the formal period of that workshop, to visit the Writing Center, to consult with a tutor, and to consult with the professor, and to do any or all of these often.

To compute your final grade, add up your point totals, apply the appropriate percentages, then refer to the Communication department suggested grading system, summarized here:

A = 93-100	A-= 90-92	B+=88-89	B=83-87
B- = 80-82	C+= 78-79	C=73-77	C-=70-72
D+= 60-69	F=59 and below		

Definitions of the grades can be found in the Berry College Catalog. “A” students will demonstrate an outstanding mastery of course material and will perform **far above** that required for credit in the course and **far above** that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student performance that is relatively unusual in the course.

VIII. Accommodation Statement & Academic Resources

The Academic Success Center provides accessibility resources, including academic accommodations, to students with diagnosed differences and/or disabilities. If you need accommodations for this or other classes, please visit berry.edu/asc for information and resources. You may also reach out at 706-233-40480. Please note, faculty are not required, as part of any temporary or long-term accommodation, to distribute recordings of class sessions.

Consultants at the Berry College Writing Center are available to assist students with all stages of the writing process. To schedule an appointment, visit berry.mywconline.com

The Academic Success Center provides free peer tutoring and individual academic consultations to all Berry College students. The ASC Session schedule is available on ASC Website: berry.edu/ASC. The goal of these meetings is to help students study smarter, not harder.



Pledge of Academic Integrity

As a member of the Berry College academic community, I recognize the importance of honesty, integrity, and respect for knowledge in all academic endeavors. I hereby pledge to uphold the following principles of academic integrity:

1. Honesty: I will be truthful in all my academic pursuits, including coursework, exams, research, and any other academic activities.
2. Originality: I will submit only my original work, ideas, and creations, acknowledging and appropriately citing the contributions of others.
3. Attribution: I will give proper credit to all sources used in my academic work, whether they are written, visual, oral, or electronic.
4. Independence: I will complete all assignments and exams on my own, unless expressly permitted to collaborate with others by the instructor.
5. Respect: I will respect the intellectual property rights of others, including copyright and fair use principles, in all academic materials.
6. Ethical Use of Technology: I will not use AI or software that employ it (ChatGPT and Grammarly, for ex.) without BEFORE obtaining specific authorization from my instructor. Furthermore, I will not use any software or technology to engage in academic dishonesty, including but not limited to:
 - Unauthorized assistance in completing assignments.
 - Plagiarism or other forms of intellectual dishonesty.
 - Altering or falsifying academic records or credentials.
7. Accountability: I understand that academic integrity is my personal responsibility, and I will accept the consequences of any violations of this pledge. These consequences likely mean earning a zero ('O') for any assignment or activity for which I violated this pledge. Depending on the degree of the infraction, I understand I could earn a failing grade for the course or even expulsion from the College. Lastly, I understand that ignorance is no defense against charges of academic dishonesty.

By affixing my signature below, I commit to upholding the principles of academic integrity and maintaining the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct in all my academic endeavors.

Name

Date

