

**COMM 121 IM INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA THEORY
SPRING 2010**

TERM	SPRING 2010
Course Number & Title	COMM 121 IM Introduction to Media Theory
Class Meeting Place	Mouton Residence Hall 21
Class Meeting Day & Dates	Thursdays, January 14 through March 4, 2009
Class Meeting Time	6:00 – 8:50 p.m.
Course website	In D2L
Instructor	Dr. Barbara DeSanto, APR, Fellow PRSA
Office Hours	Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. & Thursdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. & by prearranged appointment
Office Number & Phone	Reid Hall 3302 – 314-529-9455
E-Mail Address	bdesanto@maryville.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Introduction to Media Theory is a changing course! Its new title, Introduction to Contemporary Communication, is officially in place for Fall 2010, but this spring course gives you the preview look at what the new course contains. The course was changed to provide students with an overview of the diverse range of communication from interpersonal to mass, in large part because today's technology allows a person with a cell phone or other personal electronic device to be a personal communicator and a mass communicator, all within a few seconds. And while technology is a huge element of today's communication, the principles and history of communication still have a great effect on what is communicated from personal to mass situations. So this course will provide students with a history of different types of communication, descriptions of the main perspectives and models of communication, an introduction to major communication scholars and practitioners, and lots of illustrations and examples of today's communication issues, challenges, and opportunities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to identify & explain the major characteristics of different communication perspectives & models
- Students will be able to identify & explain the major communication processes & effects
- Students will be able to understand & articulate their own communication behaviors
- Students will demonstrate their writing, speaking, and analytical and critical thinking skills through class assignments
- Students will have an understanding of the career opportunities in communication

REQUIRED TEXT:

Sarah Trenholm. *Thinking Through Communication: An Introduction to the Study of Human Communication*. Fifth Edition. Pearson Publishing: 2008.

The text is available through the Maryville bookstore or through Amazon.com.

COURSE ORGANIZATION:

COMM 121 IM is a blended learning weekend/evening (WEC) class. This means the course materials and information will be posted to D2L as well as discussed in class. One class will be conducted entirely online through D2L. The remaining seven in-person class session will be a combination of lecture, in-class discussions and assignments supplemented by online materials.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

This class meets only once a week, so attendance at every class is vital to your academic class success. We'll be doing in-class work for grades each week. Failure to be in class without an acceptable excuse (see list of acceptable excuses at the end of this section) will result in NO POINTS for the missed in-class work. You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Being late to class will cost you five points from your final class grade for each late arrival, as will leaving class early.

Acceptable excuses:

- Cases of unavoidable absences (death of a close relative, personal hospitalization or serious illness, accidents). The student is responsible for notifying me via e-mail and/or phone on the day of the absence. The notification must clearly explain the reason for the absence. No second-hand or after-the-fact notifications will be accepted. Also note that having to work is NOT an acceptable excuse for missing class.
- I reserve the right to request a physician's note to document illness. I also reserve the right to request documentation regarding other personal situations.
- The student is responsible for any makeup work and/or additional assignments as agreed upon with me, the course instructor.
- The course instructor is the final judge and jury on all attendance matters.

ASSIGNMENTS:

All out-of-class assignments must be computer-generated (or typewritten) and follow all directions. Directions and grade sheets for each assignment will be distributed at the time the assignment is made, as well as posted to the "News" section of the course D2L website.

All assignments must be submitted by the announced due date. **NO LATE** assignments will be accepted. Please do NOT wait until the very last minute before class to complete your assignments. Equipment failures and technical difficulties are NEVER acceptable excuses for not having an assignment done.

PLAGIARISM

Any instance of plagiarism will result in a course grade of "F." All instances of plagiarism are reported to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who informs other appropriate University offices. **Students must be prepared to show the course instructor copies of any print or electronic materials used for class projects, if requested.** For definition and examples of plagiarism, see <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Maryville University produces accommodations and support for student with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability registered with the university and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the course instructor and/or the Director of the Academic Success Center located in the University Library at 314-529-6850. No special accommodations can be made without this notification being set up at the beginning of the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA

All grading in this course is done on straight percentage. Each assignment and its grading criteria and points will be detailed in an assignment direction sheet at the time the assignment is made.

Course letter grades are determined as follows:

A	94 – 100%	C+	77 – 79%
A-	90 – 93%	C	74 – 76%
B+	87 – 89%	C-	70 – 73%
B	84 – 86%	D	60 – 69%
B-	80 – 83%	F	00 – 59%

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

EIGHT WEEKLY FORUM POSTS:

I'll be posting weekly forum questions that each student will be responsible for responding to at least once during the week. The topics will range from interpersonal to mass communication issues and trends. The format & handout for responding to each post will be discussed during our first class. Ten points each; 80 total points.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION:

The midterm exam will be online during the week of February 4. It will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. We'll discuss the exam the week before it is posted. Seventy-five (75) points.

FINAL EXAMINATION:

Like the midterm exam the final examination will be available online during the week of March 4. It will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. We'll review for the exam the week before it is posted. Seventy-five (75) points.

BOOK REPORT WRITTEN REPORT & CLASS PRESENTATION:

Each student will select a book about communication from a list I'll post online during winter break. You'll read the book and write a report about your chosen book that refers to class readings, discussions, and other reference sources you'll find. The final evening class will be devoted to individual student presentations of the books read. Complete directions and grading criteria will be available during the first evening of class. Seventy-five (75) points for the written book report and 25 points for the class presentation; 100 total points.

SEVEN IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES:

Each class period we'll have a class activity/exercise related to the evening's topic. You'll enjoy each one, and you'll earn 10 points for each evening's participation. Ten (10) points each; 70 points total.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Eight weekly forum posts @ 10 points each	80
Midterm examination	75
Final examination	75
Written book report	75
Book report class presentation	25
Seven in-class activities – 10 points each	70
Total Semester Points	400

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENT
0	Pre Jan. 14	Getting ready for Class 1	For Week 1 read Chapters 1, 2, & 13
1	Jan. 14	Communication definitions, models & perspectives	For Week 2 read Chapters 4 & 5
2	Jan. 21	Signs, symbols, language & nonverbal communication	For Week 3 read Chapter 6
3	Jan. 28	Interpersonal communication	For Week 4 read Chapter 7
4	Feb. 4	Group & organizational communication	For Week 5 read Chapter 8 & 9; Midterm exam
5	Feb. 11	Mass communication I	For Week 6 read Chapter 11
6	Feb. 18	Online class – Mass communication II	For Week 7 read Chapter 12
7	Feb. 25	Communication & culture	
8	Mar. 4	Communication overview	Book report presentations & final exam