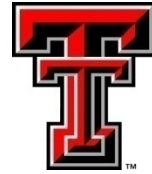


# ACOM 5306

## Foundations of Agricultural Communications

### Summer I 2013



#### **Instructor**

Dr. Courtney Meyers  
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Office Phone: 742-2816  
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Office hours: Open door policy and/or by appointment

#### **Time and Location**

Monday-Friday, noon-1:50pm  
116 Ag Education and Communications Building

#### **Course Description**

This course will explore historical foundations of agricultural communications including selected philosophical concepts, how the field has changed over time, where it is today, and what it may look like in the future. In addition, this course will focus on an in-depth analysis and discussion of communication theories and their application and relevance to current issues in agriculture and agricultural communications.

#### **Course Objectives**

After this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the history and development of agricultural communications.
2. Describe principles associated with foundational communications theories.
3. Apply foundational communications theories to agricultural communications.
4. Create a matrix of communication theories used in agricultural communications and how they can be applied to agricultural issues.
5. Analyze agricultural communication issues within the context of communication theory and research.

#### **Methods for Assessing the Learning Objectives**

The expected learning outcomes for the course will be assessed through participation, agricultural communications concept maps, exam, theory discussion questions, American Agriculture Movement activity, historical research experience, book reflection, and theoretical matrix.

#### **Course Resources**

Egan, T. (2006). *The worst hard time*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Blackboard ([www.blackboard.ttu.edu](http://www.blackboard.ttu.edu)) – Scholarly articles and additional reading material will be posted on Blackboard. You will be told in class what resources you need for class.

Agricultural Communications Documentation Center is a great resource to find relevant information. The database does not contain the full resource, but it may include a link if it is available online. Otherwise, you'll have to use the Texas Tech library to find the resource.

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/funkaces/acdc>

### **Academic Honesty**

"It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of students to present as their own any work that they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension" (Texas Tech University Catalog, p. 49).

- **Cheating:** Dishonesty on examinations and quizzes or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination or quiz, obtaining information during an examination from the examination paper or otherwise from another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in an office are instances of cheating.
- **Plagiarism:** Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore any student who fails to give credit for quotations or an essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

### **Classroom Conduct**

To foster an ideal learning environment, students are expected to be punctual, courteous, and respectful. Students are expected to share their opinions and feedback in a manner that is constructive and beneficial. It is expected that students will attend class with a positive attitude and eagerness to help each other succeed in the course. **No cell phone use – including texting – will be permitted. Please leave your cell phones in your office or in your bag. There is no reason to have them out in class.**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student, who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note, instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office at 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

### **Attendance**

Attending each class meeting is a crucial element for success in the course. Much of the class is designed around discussion and participation. The course is most beneficial when all students attend and actively participate. If a student will be absent, he or she must notify the instructor **PRIOR** to the absence either by telephone or e-mail. On-campus students can participate via distance if the absence is excused. Students are responsible for obtaining any information they miss; ask a fellow student for notes. To receive credit, assignments must be submitted **on or before** the due date. Excused absences are permitted for officially approved trips (such as research conferences) or religious observance with

written prior notification (p. 50-51, *The Texas Tech University Catalog*). **No late assignments** will be accepted without prior approval of the instructor. If approved, missed assignments must be completed within two days of returning to class. If you are ill or an emergency occurs, contact the instructor prior to the scheduled class time; otherwise, your attendance and participation are firm expectations.

### **Assignments (800 Points Total)**

- **Part I Participation: Suggested Questions for Midterm** – The first part of the class is dedicated to the history of agricultural communications, how the profession has changed over time and fundamental principles guiding the discipline. You will take notes during each lecture and write potential questions for the exam. **(180 points)**
- **Part II Participation: Theory Discussion Questions** – The second half of the class is dedicated to communication theory. One aspect of this is to read scholarly articles that utilize the theories. Before the beginning of each class period, you will submit one question for each assigned article. These questions will be used to encourage discussion. **(90 points)**
- **Preliminary Agricultural Communications Concept Map** – What are the foundations of agricultural communications? How do you conceptualize agricultural communications? Provide a visual depiction of the major concepts, principles, and aspects of agricultural communications, in your opinion. Also provide a brief (one-page double spaced) commentary to further describe your concept map. **(20 points)**
- **American Agriculture Movement Activity** – This semester we have the unique opportunity to learn about this moment in U.S. agricultural history. On-campus students will attend a special reunion event for members of the American Agriculture Movement. Distance students will be able to complete an alternative assignment to gain similar first-hand knowledge. **(30 points)**
- **Exam** – One exam will be given halfway through the course. The exam will be on Blackboard and you will have a limited amount of time in which to complete the exam. **(100 points)**.
- **Historical Research Experience** – On-campus students will tour the TTU Southwest Collection Library. Distance students can choose to tour a special collection library or museum in your area. If this is not possible, you can review a historical research paper that is available on Blackboard. **(20 points)**
- **Theoretical Matrix** – You will be responsible for developing a matrix or a graphic organizer that compiles and depicts the major theories, contributors, concepts, and applications used in this course. Each theory should also have three citations of articles or books that further describe the theory including the seminal article. This project will be ongoing and graded twice during the semester. **(60 points for initial draft, 140 points for final)**
- **Book Reflection** – After reading “The Worst Hard Time,” write a personal reflection of how the book made you feel, what you learned, and the connection to ag comm. **(100 points)**
- **Final Agricultural Communications Concept Map** – What are the foundations of agricultural communications? Now that you have completed the course, how do you conceptualize agricultural communications? Provide another visual depiction of the major concepts, principles, and aspects of agricultural communications, in your opinion. Write a brief commentary to highlight how this concept map changed as a result of what you learned in the course. **(60 points)**

**Grading Scale:** 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F

**Course Schedule** (Subject to change to meet students' learning needs and progress. Additional readings may be announced in class.)

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
June 4 (T)	Introduction to Course & Communications		
June 5 (W)	History of Communication & Agricultural Communications		Preliminary Concept Map and Commentary
June 6 (R)	History of Extension & Role of Ag Communications	"The Morrill Act" & "Rethinking Extension Communications"	
June 7 (F)	Ag Communications in Education & Professional Associations	"Thoughts About the Development, Role and Future of Academic Programs..."	
June 10 (M)	Ag Publications	"The Role of Ag Journalism in Building the Rural South"	
June 11 (T)	Farm Broadcasting	"The Farmer's Friend: Radio Comes to Rural America, 1920-1927"	
June 12 (W)	American Agriculture Movement Presentations at NRHC	"Emergence of AAM"	
June 13 (R)	Ag Advertising & Public Relations (Communication Campaigns)	"Counting Room Voices"	
June 14 (F)	Ag Communications Online	"U.S. Farmers Rely on Internet More and More"	AAM Activity
June 17 (M)	Ag Comm in Entertainment Media	"The USDA Motion Picture Service"	
June 18 (T)	Intro to Communication Theory & Researching Theory	Evans article & National Research Agenda	Part I Participation (Mid-term questions due)

June 19 (W)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing</li> <li>• Agenda Setting</li> </ul>	Theory articles	Discussion questions due by 11 a.m. each lecture day through July 2
June 20 (R)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivation</li> <li>• Media dependency theory</li> </ul>	Theory articles	
June 21 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses and Gratifications</li> <li>• Selectivity processes</li> </ul>	Theory articles	
June 24 (M)	EXAM (Only on content from June 4-18)		Blackboard Exam
June 25 (T)	Reading Day	"The Worst Hard Time" and/or theory articles	
June 26 (W)	On-Campus Students Tour TTU Southwest Collections Library		
June 27 (R)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge gap</li> <li>• Spiral of silence</li> </ul>	Theory articles	Historical Research Experience Reflection  Theoretical Matrix Draft
June 28 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaboration Likelihood Model</li> <li>• Theory of Planned Behavior</li> </ul>	Theory articles	
July 1 (M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media richness theory</li> <li>• Semiotics</li> </ul>	Theory articles	
July 2 (T)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situational theory</li> <li>• Reputation Management</li> </ul>	Theory articles	Final Concept Map with Commentary
July 3 (W)	Course Wrap-Up and book discussion		Book Reflection paper  Final Theoretical Matrix (due by 11:59 p.m.)