



AgCom 844 – Theory in Agricultural Communication

Instructor

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Course Time and Location

Online via K-State Online and www.drbakeragcom844.wordpress.com

Course Description

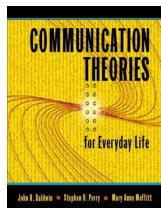
Effective communication is at the heart of successful operation in every enterprise in agricultural and natural resources-based industries. Whether communicating interpersonally, inter-organizationally or through the mass media, it is critically important to understand the communication process in order to achieve effective discourse on the major issues facing agricultural and natural resources industries.

This course is specifically designed to teach communication theory and concepts and research processes as they apply to important agricultural/natural resources issues. The major objective of the course is to enhance students' ability to think critically and to develop effective strategies and tactics that draw on the theoretical frameworks and methodologies that are most central to the communication process for agricultural communications professionals.

Course Objectives - Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the history and evolution of agricultural communications as a professional discipline;
- Analyze agricultural communication issues within the context of communication theory and research;
- Develop a strategic approach to communication research that is specifically related to agricultural communications media, audiences and organizational systems.

Required Course Materials



Communication Theories for Everyday Life

By John R. Baldwin, Stephen D. Perry, & Mary Anne Moffitt

Software

Technology is now an important aspect to communication, and this course will offer opportunities for you to advance both your writing and technology skills. *All assignments will be submitted electronically through K-State Online and **MUST** be in Word, or compatible software.* Your assignments will be graded electronically and resubmitted to you via K-State Online (again, as a Word document). The only exception to this is your “In-Depth Analysis of a Theory” Assignment, which will be a video podcast.

Late Assignments Policy

When a due date is given, this means assignments are due by midnight that day (technical difficulties will NOT be an excuse, so plan to submit prior to 11:59 pm). An assignment submitted after this time will receive a **10% deduction per day**, up to four days for late assignments. After **four days** from the assigned due date, the assignment **will not be accepted**.

About E-mailing

I will make every attempt to contact you within 24 hours of receiving your e-mails. Over the weekend and holidays, expect a slower response time.

In your e-mails:

- Give the e-mail a subject (AGCOM 844: Insert your subject)
- Capitalize sentences and use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation to the best of your ability
- Close the e-mail with your first and last name
- Double-check that attachments are attached before sending

Academic Honesty

Kansas State University has an Honor System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor System. The policies and procedures of the Honor System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The honor system website can be reached via the following URL: www.ksu.edu/honor. A component vital to the Honor System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge, which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

It is assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the instructor. **This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.**

Academic Accommodations/Services for Students with Disabilities

"Any student with a disability who needs a classroom accommodation, access to technology or other academic assistance in this course should contact Disability Support Services (dss@k-state.edu) and/or the instructor. DSS serves students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety."

- Faculty members who have a student with a disability in their class will want to contact the office of Disability Support Services (DSS) office on our campus. DSS will help faculty provide academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities include those having mobility impairments, visual and hearing impairments, chronic health conditions, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. DSS is located in Holton Hall 202. The Director, Andrea Blair, can be contacted at 532-6441.

Expectations for Classroom Conduct

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Judicial Conduct Code as outlined in the Student Governing Association By Laws, Article VI, Section 3, and number 2. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

Syllabus Disclaimer (please read)

Serious effort and consideration were used in formulating this syllabus. While viewed as an educational contract between the instructor and student, unforeseen events may cause changes to the scheduling of assignments, quizzes, etc. *The instructor reserves the right to make any changes deemed necessary to best fulfill the course objectives.* Students registered for this course will be made aware of any changes in a timely fashion using reasonable means.

Grades

I like to look at grades based on a points system. The more effort you put forth, the more points you receive, and the better grade you earn. If you don't want to do an assigned activity that is your choice, and you won't receive points for the activity. I encourage you to keep track of your points throughout the semester so you can gage how many more points you need to earn for the grade you desire.

Grade Breakdown: Note that grades are based on POINTS not percentages.

A = 900-1000 points
B = 800-899 points
C = 700-799 points
D = 600-699 points
F = less than 600 points

Assignments

Blog

I will communicate with you through the blog at www.drbakeragcom844.wordpress.com. This will basically be the weekly lecture for the course. I will write a post each week in which I will discuss theory and case studies and introduce questions for discussion. You will participate in blog discussions throughout the course. There will be 16 blog discussions (one each week). You will participate in these discussions via the blog on the course website. You will need to make an initial post on each of the blogs (around 150 words). Indicate you are active in the conversation and make

sure and include your first name and last initial so you will receive credit for your participation. You will also need to participate with your peers in the posts. As such, you will need to make a least two comments or replies to your peers' posts each week. I would like for you to be engaged throughout the course, but there is not a specific cutoff for participation in the blog posts. I understand that many of you are working professionals and need to fit posting in to your schedules. You will, however, be discounted if you don't post anything until mid way through the course. This is an opportunity for us to connect with each other and engage in conversation related to theory in agricultural communications. Grading is based on thoughtful reflection, timely responses, and correct grammar and punctuation.

Communication Theories in Action Paper

Select **two** communication theories presented during the course. In an 8-10 page double-spaced paper, explain the theories and indicate how the theories apply to one or two of the three topic areas below. (You can select one example from two of the topic categories or two from one of the topics. For example, you could select two media examples or one media and one agriculture example.)

- Show how communication theory applies to media organizations.
- Show how communication theory applies to U.S. agriculture.
- Show how communication theory applies to an organization with which you are associated

You will need to provide references throughout your paper according to American Psychological Association (APA) Style 6th edition.

Although you do not have to use a crisis or risk communication scenario as the basis of your “communication theory in action” assignment, you may want to. Here are some examples that we will discuss later this semester that you may wish to investigate:

- Canadian beef producers and BSE (“mad cow disease”) crisis
(<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/madcow/>)
- Walkerton, Canada: e. coli
(<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/walkerton/>)

Other scenarios that you might consider are the recent BSE incident in California, the tomato recalls of 2008, or water shortages.

In Depth Analysis of a Theory

You will be assigned a theory to research outside of the theories specifically taught in the course. You will need to search for research on the theory and determine the following:

- History of the theory
- Disciplines that utilize the theory
- Example cases/articles utilizing the theory
- Controversies surrounding the theory (Are there differing views on the interpretation of the theory? Are there people who question if it should be a theory?)
- How is it being used to understand agricultural communication OR if it is not currently being used in agricultural communication how could it be used?)

You will develop a 15 minute podcast as your in-depth analysis outlet. Instructions and details on this will be provided at a later date. A portion of your grade will come from a peer's review of your podcast.

Peer Review of a Colleague's In Depth Analysis of a Theory

In the contribution to scholarly endeavors, we regularly review peers' research. You will be asked to review a peers' podcast based on selected criteria. This will be similar to a journal or conference review of a colleague's work. We are all made stronger by critical and thorough evaluation by our peers.

Final Exam

Your final exam will include of all of the theories presented in the course. The exam will include open-ended essay questions designed to make you think deeper and apply theory to the agricultural communications industry. The format will be a "take home" style exam.

Assignment	Due Date	Points Available	Points Earned
In Depth Analysis of a Theory	10/14	100	
Peer Review of a Colleague's "In Depth Analysis of a Theory"	10/28	75	
Communication Theories in Action Paper	11/18	100	
Participation in Blog Discussion	Every Week	125	
Final Exam	12/16	100	
TOTAL POINTS	-	500	

Course Schedule

Week		Topic	Book Chapters	Journal Articles
1	8/26	Welcome & Overview	Ch. 1	
2	9/2	Introduction and history of Agricultural Communication Theory		<p>Preparing for the Next 150 Years of Agricultural Communications - Irani and Doerfert</p> <p>Examining JAC: An Analysis of the Scholarly Progression of the Journal of Applied Communications - Naile, Robertson, and Cartmell</p>
3	9/9	Why should I care about research?	Ch. 2 & 3	
4	9/16	Research perspectives: classic and contemporary rhetorical theory	Ch. 5 & 6	
5	9/23	Interpersonal communication theories and small group communication	Ch. 7 and 8	
6	9/30	Theories of persuasion	Ch. 9	<p>From Opposite Corners: Comparing Persuasive Message Factors and Frames in Opposing Organizations' Websites - Abrams and Meyers</p>
7	10/7	Theories of culture and intercultural communication	Ch. 10	
8	10/14	Case studies and the use of theory in agricultural communication research		<p>A Case Study of the Risk and Crisis Communications Used in the 2008 Salmonella Outbreak - Palmer, Irlbeck, Myers, and Chambers</p> <p>Conversations with Gatekeepers: An Exploratory Study of Agricultural Publication Editors' Decisions to Publish Risk Coverage - Abrams and Meyers</p>
9	10/21	Media use and Effects	Ch. 13 and 14	
10	10/28	Agenda Setting and Public Opinion	Ch. 15	<p>Salmonella and the Media: A Comparative Analysis of Coverage of the 2008 Salmonella Outbreak in Jalapenos and the 2009 Salmonella Outbreak in Peanut Products</p>

				- Barr, Irlbeck and Akers Is Perception Reality? Improving Agricultural Messages by Discovering How Consumers Perceive Messages - Goodwin, Chiarelli, and Irani
11	11/4	Technology and Theory	Ch. 16	
12	11/11	Organizational communication and integrated marketing	Ch. 19 and 23	
13	11/18	Utilizing theory in quantitative study designs		Managing Media Relations: Determining the Reputation of Land Grant Institutions from the Perspective of Media Professionals - Baker, Abrams, Irani, and Meyers Influence of Subjective Norms and Communication Preferences on Grain Farmers' Attitudes toward Organic and Non-Organic Farming - Hall and Rhoades
14	11/25	FALL BREAK – No class		
15	12/2	Utilizing theory in qualitative study designs		Postsecondary Students' Reactions to Agricultural Documentaries: A Qualitative Analysis - Meyers, Irlbeck, and Fletcher Brand Salience and Brand Differentiation of the Florida Forest Service -Settle, Goodwin, Telg, Irani, Carter, and Wysocki
16	12/9	Public relations theory	Ch. 20	Advocacy in Agricultural Social Movements: Exploring Facebook as a Public Relations Communication Tool - Meyers, Irlbeck, Graybill-Leonard, and Doerfert
17	12/16	Final exam		

Links to journal articles are on the course website www.dr bakeragcom844.wordpress.com