

## **COMM 5000 Proseminar in Communication**

**Tuesdays 5:30-7:40**

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STBS 111

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342-1400

### **Course Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Graduate standing in the CMMA Graduate Program.

**Textbooks:** None required.

### **Course Description**

*(0 Cr.) Orientation to the graduate program process, practices, events, and academic requirements. Required during first semester of enrollment. Grade of CR (Credit) or NC (No Credit). A student must earn credit in this course prior to taking the comprehensive examination. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Communication.*

The purpose of this course is to provide new graduate students in communication with the information essential to their successful navigation of graduate study culminating in a Master of Arts in Communication.

### **Course Objectives and Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, graduate students will:

- 1) be familiar with each member of the graduate faculty;
- 2) be aware of graduate faculty's expectations for their performance as a graduate student, graduate assistants and/or graduate work study recipients;
- 3) have a better understanding of the ways contemporary communication practices and theories are rooted in a specialized history;
- 4) have the information necessary to plan and complete a graduate program geared toward their educational and professional goals.

Additionally, this course should help you see the value and necessity of developing community among the graduate students. Much of what we do in this course is focused on learning the relational elements of the department, discipline, college, and university.

Although this course is REQUIRED of all graduate students in the Department of Communication, students do not earn credit toward completion of their degree. Successful completion of this course requires attendance to each class meeting, and completion of readings and assignments.

For each assignment you will receive a letter grade. These will be averaged to determine your final grade. Grades of A and B will result in passing the course without further work. A grade of C at the end of 8 weeks will require revision of assignments until a grade of A or B is achieved and credit can be given for the course.

### **Instructional Methods and Activities**

This class is rooted in classroom discussion and completion of the assignments designed to increase your familiarity with the department and the resources available at ULM.

Students are required to use Moodle to acquire syllabus, handouts, announcements, updates/changes to the schedule, and other information.

### **Requirements/Assignments**

#### *Major Professor Proposal:*

Each of the seven continuing member of the Communication Graduate Faculty will spend up to an hour interacting with you about their teaching and research interests. You are urged to approach each of these sessions remembering that you must select a major professor from among them. Be prepared to take notes and ask questions.

After we have heard from everyone, we will spend a bit of class time discussing your interests relative to their expertise and interests. Thereafter, you might want to go to the one or two or three you are considering and ask them additional questions. No later than our final class meeting, you must submit to me a 1-page proposal of who you want to ask to be your major professor and make an appointment to discuss your proposal with me soon thereafter.

**Please do NOT ask anyone to be your major professor until after we have had our discussion.**

My interest is not in dictating who you should ask but in understanding your thought process and using my knowledge and experience to make sure the best possible matches emerge. The graduate program coordinator is also expected to make sure that no one professor is overloaded while others are not considered.

#### *Literature Review:*

Writing literature review is one of the basic skills of scholars and a key component of graduate school. For this assignment you will complete a literature review specific to a research question. You will begin by choosing a topic, and then formulate a research question. Ideally, you will choose a topic you might be interested in using for your exit project or thesis. Your literature review must cover at least 15 scholarly journal articles. We will discuss the goals, structure, and important characteristics of a literature review in class.

#### *Community Development:*

The Department of Communication hosts public events each semester that are designed to enhance academic life and to develop the community of scholars. This spring, Dr. Joni Jones is coming to illustrate qualitative research and performance, and Dr. Lawrence Frey will lecture on advocacy in the public sphere. You are encouraged to attend both of these events, but are required to attend one and write a 1- to 2-page discussion of how the presenter stimulated your thinking about the study of communication.

### **Class Policies and Procedures**

#### *Attendance:*

Because of the nature of this course, it is very important to attend each class. Please keep in mind that ULM policy indicates that you are expected to be in class unless you are ill or experiencing an emergency. If you know you will be absent, please contact me in advance.

#### *Make-up Work:*

**A class schedule that we will follow as closely as possible throughout the semester is now in your possession. Because you know when each of your assignments is due, make up work should not be necessary.**

See Syllabus Addendum for additional policies.

### **Tentative Schedule**

*The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule as needed. Please remember that my contact information is at the top of p. 1. See Syllabus Addendum for my office hours.*

Week 1: Introductions; review of graduate handbook.

Week 2: Syllabus; NCA Credo for Ethical Communication; APA Style  
**Assignments:** 1) Choosing a major professor. 2) Literature review. 3) Discussion of Traveling Scholar presentation.  
**Guest:**

Week 3: Guest:  
Guest:

Week 4: Guest:  
Guest:

Week 5: Guest:  
Guest:

Week 6: Thoughts/questions re major professor choices; Exit Project syllabus & examples; Doing a thesis & examples; research questions; lit review.  
Guest: Dr. Leonard Clark, Director, Graduate School

Week 7: Degree Plan; Grades/Academic Standing; Using the Library/Research Strategies; Citation/Plagiarism; Academic & Gender-Neutral Writing; Native Languages; Graduate Work Study and Graduate Assistantships  
**Due:** First statement of research question and literature to be reviewed (1 page)  
**Critique:** What makes a good research question?

Week 8: Application to Graduate; Written & Oral Comps; Professional Organizations; Presentations & Publications; Library research, etc.  
**Due:** 1) Major Professor proposal, (1 page) 2) A brief discussion of traveling scholar presentation, 3) lit review.  
**Sign up:** For one-on-one conference with me