

COMM 3341 -- Discussion

Professor:

Office Hrs:

Office:

Phone:

Email:

Class Meets: MWF 9:10-10:05

Classroom: .

Introduction

If we learn best by doing it for ourselves, then we can best learn about discussion through doing it for ourselves. Thus, this course will evolve as a continual discussion. Certainly we will discuss the nature of discussion itself, but our discussions, to be most fruitful for learning, will have to revolve around other topics as well. Therefore, this is a course in which you will be engaged in many discussions.

But we will not stop there, for we will venture beyond the phenomenon of discussion in order to explore a deeper form of communication: dialogue. Hence the altered name of the course: Discussion To Dialogue. We will begin with discussion but then move to the study and practice of dialogue. Although everyone will be required to participate as speakers in this course, we will also stress the importance of listening to complete the communication circuit. There will be a lot of talking in here, but for communication to occur there will need to be a lot of listening as well.

We will not strive to learn only about communication but more importantly you will be challenged to learn more about your self and your life as a communicating being. In other words, we are not going to engage in discussions and dialogues just for the sake of learning course material; there must be higher and more significant goals for mastering this material. We will push to recognize and realize such goals.

Attendance Policy

Because the learning component of this course is steeped in active participation, your attendance--your live presence--will be essential. This policy will be seriously adhered to. You will be allowed 3 unexcused absences before each subsequent absence begins to whittle away 5 points from your final course grade. Be careful and strategic about when you miss classes in this particular course.

Required Texts

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Finding Flow*. NY: Basic, 1997.
- William Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*. NY: Currency, 1999.

Course Workload

Active Participation **50%**

First Essay **15%**

A 4-6 page typed paper that applies the concept of "flow" to communication in general and to discussion in particular. The essay should be an excursion into theory: both in terms of demonstrating an understanding of flow theory as well as a presentation of your own theoretical perspective in response.

Second Essay **15%**

A 4-6 page typed paper that seeks to apply the theory of dialogue to various aspects of everyday living and experience. In addition to demonstrating what you have learned about dialogue, this paper should offer some personal and imaginative vision regarding dialogic values as applicable to all kinds of communication contexts.

Initial Report **10%**

A brief 2-3 page presentation of initial remarks about your experience, perspective and skills in regard to the art of discussion, with particular emphasis on a self-assessment of your skills.

Revised Report **10%**

A follow-up and revision of your initial report, focusing upon any changes in experience, perspective and/or skillfulness.

Academic Enrichment Credit: All undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes are required to attend or participate in one outside-the-class educational event as approved by the Department of Communication. Notice of acceptable events will be announced in class and displayed on department bulletin boards in the TCA building. Failure to satisfy this requirement will result in 2 points being taken off the final grade.

Schedule of Class Meetings/Discussion Topics

8/27	M	Introduction and orientation to the course	
8/29	W	Discussion as phenomenon	
8/31	F	Basic fundamentals	
9/3	M	no class -- Labor Day	
9/5	W	Basic fundamentals	
9/7	F	Basic fundamentals	Report #1 Due
9/10	M	In-class discussion of <i>Finding Flow</i>	
9/12	W	"	"
9/14	F	"	"
9/17	M	"	"
9/19	W	"	"
9/21	F	"	"
9/24	M	"	"
9/26	W	"	"
9/28	F	"	"
10/1	M	Evaluating discussions	
10/3	W	Going beyond discussion	Paper #1 Due
10/5	F	TBA	
10/8	M	no class -- Fall Break	
10/10	W	Introduction to dialogue theory	
10/12	F	Introduction to dialogue theory, cont'd.	
10/15	M	Introduction to William Isaac's perspective	
10/17	W	Dialogue as a conversation without sides	
10/19	F	Thinking alone vs. thinking together	
10/22	M	Listening	
10/24	W	Respecting	
10/26	F	Suspending	
10/29	M	Voicing	
10/31	W	Predictive intuition	
11/2	F	Dialogue practice	
11/5	M	Structural traps	
11/7	W	Setting the container	
11/9	F	Fields of conversation	
11/12	M	Dialogue practice	
11/14	W	Convening dialogue	
11/16	F	Dialogue practice	
11/19	M	Taking wholeness seriously	

11/21 W Thanksgiving break

11/23 F Thanksgiving break

11/26 M TBA

11/28 W TBA

11/30 F Dialogue

Essay #2 Due

12/3 M Final class discussion, Pt. 1

12/5 W Final class discussion, Pt. 2

Report #2 Due

12/7 F {final exam period, to be used if needed}

SAMPLE