Celebrating 100 Years
of COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

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The National Communication Association advances Communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry.

The NCA serves the scholars, teachers, and practitioners who are its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests in research and teaching. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.
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365 DAYS OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

The contents of this volume were drawn from briefly stated Communication theories, concepts, or research findings that were collected from NCA divisions and posted to the association’s website.

ABOUT THE NCA CENTENNIAL

2014 marks the 100th year since the National Communication Association’s founding in Chicago, Illinois, where 17 speech teachers formed the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking. Today, the association’s membership includes thousands of scholars, teachers, and practitioners of the Communication Arts and Sciences.
INVITATIONAL RHETORIC
Rhetorical and Communication Theory Division

The theory of invitational rhetoric, developed by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin and described in Communication Monographs in 1995, suggests that rhetoric can be conceptualized as an attempt to understand perspectives different from one’s own. This approach constitutes an invitation to enter the communicator’s world and to see it as the communicator does. Built on the principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination, invitational rhetoric occurs when individuals enter into dialogue with one another to clarify positions, explore issues and ideas, and articulate beliefs and values. Invitational rhetoric involves two primary forms. One, offering perspectives, occurs when communicators articulate their perspectives for consideration. The second is the creation of an atmosphere of safety, value, and freedom that encourages an audience to share its perspectives. Since the purpose of invitational rhetoric is to create understanding, the theory challenges the notion that all communication involves the attempt to change others.
The word “ideology” has a number of meanings, as Terry Eagleton has noted, from “any idea system” (a neutral meaning) to “ideas of the ruling class” (a critical meaning). In one of the most germinal critical theories of ideology, Karl Marx defined ideology as the taken-for-granted systems of ideas that prevail in any given society. Further, Marx argued, the class of society that controls the means and content of material production also controls the means and content of intellectual production. The ruling systems of ideas convince, through gradual cultivation, members of that society to cooperate with their assumptions and aspirations. For rhetorical scholars, an ideological approach to the study of communication requires a significant shift in the understanding of text, context, and more. Specifically, ideology critique directs our attention beyond individual orators and single speeches toward analysis of rationales for power and the conditions of discourse in collective common sense.
Rhetorical theorist Richard Weaver believed that language is “sermonic” and every word we say has the potential to influence others to believe as we believe. Weaver says that rhetoric reveals values, whether honorable or corrupt; therefore, in conversation with others we are always preaching our own values and listening to those of others. The power of rhetoric to influence others is why it is important for students of all ages to study rhetoric. Because humans use words to communicate, learning to recognize embedded values is crucial to negotiating social relations, and to understanding how people use language to impact and move others. Weaver presented a simple but compelling reason for why we should care about the study of human communication.
THE PARASOCIAL CONTACT HYPOTHESIS
Rhetorical and Communication Theory Division

The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis (PCH) is simple: People learn about other people through mass mediated contact in a way that is similar to how we learn through face-to-face contact. Researchers Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes conducted five different studies testing the PCH, primarily focusing on the influence of TV and film on attitudes toward gay men. They found strong evidence that learning about a minority group through mediated contact can reduce prejudice. When a person’s contact with a minority group is solely through mass media, then the content of that mediated contact is critical to how people feel about the group. Since 2005, more scholars have investigated the influence of mediated contact. Studies in Europe and Africa involving media portrayals of stigmatized groups such as immigrants or HIV-positive people continue to support the conclusion that one’s attitudes and beliefs about categories of people can be influenced in important ways.
In 1973, Richard E. Vatz published “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” a challenge to Lloyd Bitzer’s 1968 iconic article, “The Rhetorical Situation.” That earlier article, Vatz maintained, represented an anti-persuasion perspective. Vatz discerned the following implications of Bitzer’s worldview: “In the best of all possible worlds, there would be communication perhaps, but no rhetoric—since exigencies would not arise...persuasion...lacks philosophical warrant as a practical discipline.” Vatz claimed that construing rhetoric and persuasion as a consequence of situations made them second-class studies. Persuaders create reality by focusing audiences on chosen agendas and infusing with spin the desired interpretation. Thus, issues of the day are “pressing” not because they are intrinsically or “naturally” important, but because successful persuaders have made them appear important to relevant audiences. Persuaders are responsible for chosen agendas and spin.
In his 1999 book, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America*, James Darsey examined the motivation and utility of radical rhetoric in American democracy. He traced much of the radical rhetoric in America back to the prophets of the Hebrew Old Testament. Radical rhetoric, from this perspective, seeks to accomplish two main goals: 1) to hold society accountable to a set of values, and 2) to speak out against existing powers that violate those values. Darsey’s theory offers insight into the roots of much of the radical rhetoric in contemporary American culture, from people like Glenn Beck to Jeremiah Wright. While they are ideological opposites, both use rhetoric to hold society accountable to a set of core values, and both speak out against those who fail to operate according to the values. Darsey theorizes that radical rhetoric is not disruptive to democracy, but an attempt to preserve it from social decay.
In *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Charles Taylor argues it is social practices—not ideas—that shape society. Communication scholars engage in archival inquiry to discover social practices that are representative of social imaginaries. Discourses related to the Tuskegee Airmen of WWII include a letter to the editor from a white father about the death of his bombardier son in an air collision with a black pursuit pilot over Charleston, SC. “This is not a letter of hate. It is the expression of the very deep resentment I feel toward the fetishism of our Government in...the elevation of the Negro to duties he is not yet qualified to perform.” The anger, bigotry, and grief of one father reveals discursive practices of segregation now evident in a social imaginary of flight.
The ongoing “materialist turn” in communication studies has involved a shift from examining representations (what does a text mean?) to examining enactments and performances (what does a text or artifact do?). One exemplar of the materialist turn has been what Kenneth Zagacki and Victoria Gallagher call “spaces of attention,” which are public spaces that invite visitors to see and experience landscapes (or the other physical contexts) around them in new and embodied ways. Consider, for example, a public park: While we might investigate an outdoor park for what it means (i.e., for the implicit or explicit arguments it makes about the preservation of and respect for the natural world), the concept of spaces of attention invites us to attend to the complexities—the multiple value orientations, the comparison between individual and collective experiences, the various temporal and spatial interactions, etc.—of our experience of nature, a park, or a cityscape.
THE PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL THEORY OF ARGUMENTATION
Rhetorical and Communication Theory Division

The pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, developed between 1975 and 1995, enables us to analyze all of the fallacies that may occur in argumentative discourse as violations of rules for critical discussion. The rules for critical discussion represent standards of reasonableness that are applied to communication aimed at resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. As Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst explain in their 1992 book, Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies, each of the fallacies included in the traditional list of fallacies is a violation of one or more of the rules and creates a specific hindrance to the resolution process. Such violations may occur in all stages of the resolution process, and may be committed both by the protagonist of a standpoint and the antagonist who is in doubt about its acceptability.
While Raymond Williams wrote that culture is one of the most complicated words in the English language, scholar Dreama Moon finds that how we conceptualize culture—as an independent variable identified by checked boxes, as a set of fluid and contested power relations, or as meaning-making systems with both macro and micro manifestations and implications—has something to do with what we are able to “discover” or learn in its study. Imagine culture as a set of situated meanings about the world—people, places, things, and events—shared by some, contested by others, negotiated by all. These meanings have histories and present enactments, with their futures to be determined by us in our interactions with those meaning sets. For example, in the United States and other countries, people are embroiled in cultural negotiations regarding what marriage means, who may participate in it, and how that participation is decided or adjudicated.
Semiotic theory examines how people construct meaning, for themselves and for others. Meaning stands at the heart of communication; thus semiotic theory helps in the search to understand how communication works—or to understand what has happened when it doesn’t work so well. In her book *Semiotics and Communication*, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz separates three levels of analysis: signs, the smallest elements of meaning, made up of both visible and absent elements; social codes, sets of signs, used together or alternately; and cultures, sets of codes. An example of a sign might be a national flag representing a country; the flag is part of the social code of material objects; a culture makes use of objects as well as other codes, including language, food, clothing, and music, to convey meanings. Semiotic theory provides a tool for understanding differences in cultural assumptions and the role these play in intercultural communication, among other functions.
From immigrants seeking a new life in a foreign land to temporary sojourners such as international students, millions of people change homes each year, crossing cultural boundaries. Although unique in circumstances, all cultural strangers are challenged to acquire new habits and establish a relatively stable relationship with the new environment. This phenomenon is addressed in Young Yun Kim’s integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation, first developed in her 1988 book, *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*, and further refined in her 2001 book, *Becoming Intercultural*. Kim describes the dialectic process in which stressful experiences of facing environmental challenges are met with adaptive responses in the form of new cultural learning. Kim explains that an active and prolonged undertaking of this process accompanies an increased ability to communicate effectively and associate with the natives meaningfully, and that this ability is essential in achieving a greater sense of well-being and efficacy vis-à-vis the host environment.
CULTURAL IDENTIFICATIONS
International/Intercultural Communication Division

In her 2013 book, Community Engagement and Intercultural Praxis, theorist Mary Jane Collier moves beyond definitions of cultural identity as a singular, demographic category that individuals have, such as nationality, to cultural identifications as multiple positions of shared and unshared alignments that are contextually contingent, produced, and constructed through communication. Cultural identifications of nationality, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class are contextually produced by histories and transnational political policies that define groups as “developed” or “third world.” Cultural identifications (e.g., “feminist”) are also socially constructed; they emerge in the discourse of international funders, national women’s organizations, and patriarchal elders in rural communities. Enacting identifications often occurs in spaces of struggle due to tensions between intersecting identifications (such as “Western educated” and “Afrocentric”), problematic representations, and inequitable intergroup relations. But spaces of joint identification are also created as intercultural allies work to advance just, equitable, and inclusive relations.
THIRD CULTURE BUILDING
International/Intercultural Communication Division

Third Culture Building (TCB) denotes a process by which two parties, through protracted interaction, consciously come to decide that they would like to share perspectives, negotiate values, test beliefs, or proceed in a direction that leaves both of them permanently changed. TCB therefore implicates relationships, business transactions, cultural exchanges and home stays, and intercultural/interracial communication in general. Openness to mutual influence is a given in the model. TCB moves from a unilateral process to a bilateral one, and from an intrapersonal to interpersonal to rhetorical to intercultural one. If it successfully proceeds, it leaves both parties with a new and enduring identity. A section (pp. 133-138) explaining the dynamics of TCB can be found in Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta’s 1998 book, Foundations of Intercultural Communication.
While prejudice is often thought of as a psychological aversion to others based on the group to which one belongs, the layered perspective argues for multiple causes of intolerance beyond psychological prejudice—sociological, legal/structural, and communicative. These influence one another in complicated ways, creating layers of intolerance toward different groups. The best understanding of complex phenomena such as intolerance considers both unique experience and systematic effects, and borrows from across disciplines, for, like a holograph, we will see the same structures of intolerance in a rhetorical analysis of a video game like Final Fantasy IX as we will in an experimental study of teachers and gender attitudes. However, the narrower our view, the more limited our understanding of a given intolerance will be. This approach has been applied in research ranging from surveys relating stereotypes to communication behavior, to an interpretive analysis of how Brazilian rock music reproduces and/or challenges racism.
The study of whiteness has centered on the ways that the social construction of whiteness influences intercultural interaction. One approach focuses on the power historically and contemporaneously held by white people, in the United States and overseas. This power differential influences how intercultural interaction takes place and on whose terms. Considering Western colonialism, for example, sheds light on which languages have predominated and which languages are used in intercultural interaction. The second approach describes the cultural values and communication patterns of various white groups. In part, intercultural communication scholars have studied how “whites” have felt a bond with other whites around the world. Other scholars have focused on how whiteness is constructed in labels, mediated images, as well as interpersonal interaction. Taken together, much of the work on whiteness in intercultural communication is motivated to challenge notions of whiteness as normative and the baseline for understanding all other cultural groups and communication patterns.
Academic studies of culture and communication often take for granted the last 500 years of modern history and civilization as the exclusive scope of critique and analysis. Scholar S. Lily Mendoza argues that this limiting frame of reference, premised on a specific notion of human being as inherently acquisitive, competitive, individualistic, and utilitarian, has the unintended consequence of rendering all other ways of being and communicating invisible, passé, or irrelevant. She advocates breaking the frame of analysis to include as a priority indigenous peoples who still live on the land (vs. the industrial infrastructure and the market economy) and can witness to some measure of practical knowledge for living sustainably. These indigenous cultures now constitute modernity’s only remaining Other. Mendoza advocates learning from their differing subjectivities, views of the world, and modes of relating with their human and non-human others as a touchstone for re-theorizing intercultural communication writ large.
Asiacentricity is the idea of centering, not marginalizing, Asian languages, religions, philosophies, histories, and aesthetics in theorizing and storytelling about Asian peoples and phenomena. For Asians, Asiacentricity encourages their careful and critical engagements in their own cultural traditions for self-understanding, self-expression, communal development, and intercultural dialogue. For non-Asians, Asiacentricity stimulates their cross-cultural reflections on human ways of life through their non-ethnocentric exposure to Asian versions and visions of humanity and communication. Asiacentricity invites us (1) to see the Asian world from the perspective of Asians, (2) to view Asians as subjects and agents of their own realities rather than as objects of analysis and critique, and (3) to have a better understanding and deeper appreciation of Asian worldviews and ways of communication. An updated articulation of Asiacentricity was recently published by Yoshitaka Miike in the second edition of *The Global Intercultural Communication Reader*. 
Does it bother you when someone you’re conversing with sends or reads a text message? Do you answer your mobile phone or send a text message while at work or in front of your boss? The answers to these questions and others may, indeed, depend on the country in which you live, according to Robert Shuter, who has written extensively about how culture affects how we use new media at work, home, and play. Shuter proposes a new field of inquiry called intercultural new media studies, and explores how culture influences our social uses of new media, how new media change culture, and how our intercultural relationships are affected by new media. For example, men and women in India and the United States have different social rules for texting when conversing with others, which Shuter calls textiquettes.
THE DIALECTICAL APPROACH
International/Intercultural Communication Division

The notion of dialectic is based on the idea that people, activities, and relationships often involve inherent contradictions. For example, people can be both good and bad, relationships can be both close and distant. In their 1999 essay, “Thinking Dialectically about Culture and Communication,” Judith Martin and Thomas Nakayama applied this concept of dialectic to intercultural communication encounters and identified six intercultural communication dialectics. Moving away from focusing solely on cultural differences between groups, a dialectical approach highlights the many tensions in understanding cultures: 1) similarities and differences across cultures; 2) privilege and disadvantage relative to individuals and cultures; 3) communication behaviors that are individual vs. cultural; 4) cultural patterns that are both static and dynamic; 5) cultures shaped by both their pasts and futures; 6) and communication behaviors being both individual and contextual. The dialectical approach challenges intercultural communication scholars to conceptualize cultures in more complex ways.
INTERCULTURAL ALLIANCES
International/Intercultural Communication Division

Early views of intercultural alliances offered descriptions of relationships in which parties demonstrated that they valued their relationship and were committed to maintaining it through building understanding of their cultural differences, the differential role of histories and contexts, and issues of power. The work of scholar Mary Jane Collier, however, moves beyond intercultural alliances as relationships between individuals from different groups to alliances as relational constructions with multiple identifications and a shared political itinerary, such as working for just, equitable, and inclusive relations in diverse communities. Examples include those alliances engaged in wrestling with the politics of identifications and representations as well as in pre-empting violent conflict (in Northern Ireland), working to change local policies and practices that keep families in poverty (in the United States), and working with diverse Asian groups to develop strategies to interrupt abuse and isolation for women.
Humans make sense of their interactions with others by making relational judgments. Across many decades of research in a variety of communication contexts, researchers generally agree that two of the fundamental relational judgments are affiliation and dominance. Whereas affiliation is used to determine whether or not and how much individuals like each other, dominance is concerned with controlling or attempting to control another. Dominance can be achieved through nonverbal communication either in isolation or in conjunction with spoken words. Dominance can be conveyed through multiple nonverbal channels, including the sound of one’s voice. One counterintuitive research discovery is that men convey dominance with a higher pitched voice. Lower pitched voices are associated with masculinity and perceptions of strength, but when men try to control others with their voice, the act of encoding dominance co-occurs with a higher fundamental frequency, the acoustical correlate that we hear as pitch.
Relational topoi refer to the relational themes that underlie relational messages. In 1984, Judee Burgoon and Jerold Hale undertook the ambitious task of synthesizing diverse and seemingly disparate literatures from fields including nonverbal and interpersonal communication, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and human development, among others, in order to identify underlying relational message themes. The end result was a multidimensional complex of 12 conceptually distinct dimensions presumed to underlie communication behavior: dominance-submission, intimacy, affection-hostility, involvement, inclusion-exclusion, trust, depth-superficiality, emotional arousal, composure, similarity, formality, and task-social orientation. Because the themes are communicated through both nonverbal and verbal channels, they have been used extensively in research investigating several areas of communication (e.g., interpersonal, small group, marital, computer-mediated). However, they have been used most prominently in the area of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal scholars have studied variations in the themes as a function of behavioral adaptation patterns that occur during, for example, deceptive communication, persuasion, conflict, doctor-patient interaction, and marital and family interactions.
Studying nonverbal communication presents a unique challenge to researchers because the behaviors displayed by individuals must be identified, categorized, and understood in order to be analyzed effectively. The process of identifying and categorizing nonverbal behaviors or cues for analysis is called “nonverbal coding.” Adam Kendon’s work in the 1960s created a structural approach to coding nonverbal cues in which certain behaviors or acts are identified and then are categorized or grouped into meaningful units. Although new technologies such as facial recognition software or gesture tracking methods using devices such as the Xbox Kinect are becoming useful tools to reduce the laborious hours of human coding needed, many researchers still rely on training humans with coding systems to understand the nuances of human communication. Several coding systems and computer-assisted tools have been developed and can be found in Valerie Manusov’s edited book, The Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going Beyond Words.
Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT) was developed by David Buller and Judee Burgoon as a high-level theory to apply a communication perspective to deception. IDT lays out several assumptions and principles of interpersonal communication that predict and explain deception and its detection during interpersonal exchanges. Whereas much deception research has focused on involuntary telltale signs of deceit related to stress, arousal, and negative emotions (e.g., guilt), IDT expands the classes of deception signals to include not only ones related to cognitive and memory processes, but also communicator intentions and strategies. IDT’s main focus is the verbal and nonverbal message exchange process, the temporal dynamics that enable deceivers to succeed or be detected, and relationship factors between sender and receiver that affect deception and credibility assessment. The interactivity afforded by the modality of communication is also featured, as are receiver states such as suspicion and biases.
When talking to people facing stressful situations, we may often find ourselves uncertain of what to say or do. Research by April Trees and by Susanne Jones, however, points toward specific sets of nonverbal behaviors that provide support and may leave distressed friends or family members feeling better after the conversation. Nonverbal cues that demonstrate sensitivity, responsiveness, and engagement, including a warm tone of voice and attentive and animated facial and body cues (e.g., greater eye contact, facing the other person more directly, leaning toward the other, animated gestures), play an important role in supportive communication. In addition, movement coordination, or the degree to which two peoples’ behaviors mesh smoothly with one another, adds to perceptions of supportiveness. People who are more attentive and warm are perceived to be more supportive listeners and more helpful and comforting in supportive conversations. Although what you say matters, caring nonverbally counts, too.
Communication research provides evidence that nonverbal behaviors observed in the voice, the face, and the body can shape the physician-patient interaction. Two studies published in *Human Communication Research* support this notion. Richard L. Street, Jr., and David Buller (1988) found that physicians generally mirror patient pauses, patient body orientation, and interruptions. They also found that physicians used less domineering and more responsive nonverbal behaviors with patients under 30 years old than with patients over 30. Their study suggests that patient characteristics predict physician nonverbal communication. A similar study shows that nonverbal behavior can predict more patient sharing. Ashley Duggan and Roxanne Parrott (2000) found that physicians who built rapport through warmer facial expressions and more head nodding also had patients who shared more details about how illness affected their lives. This is important because the details the patients share indicate whether they are likely to adhere to treatment recommendations.
Perhaps the most significant discovery Conversation Analysts made about social interaction is that conversational behavior is orderly, a discovery that challenges the Chomskyan linguists and scholars who saw interaction as a stochastic process (e.g., Duncan and Fiske). Because of this discovery and the enumeration of the orderly structures of social interaction that followed, scholars of interpersonal interaction are able to describe how a society and all it encompasses is constructed act-by-act by the members of that society.
ACTION-IMPLICATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
Language and Social Interaction Division

Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis (AIDA) is a discourse method for developing grounded practical theories: conceptualizations of communicative practices that reconstruct the problems of a practice from different participants’ points of view, the strategies participants use to address problems, and the ideals of good conduct that can be inferred from participants’ actions and reflections. Developed by Karen Tracy, AIDA has been used in studies of a range of institutional practices, including public meetings, medical interviews, and self-assessment activities. AIDA offers guidance about (a) how to conceptualize practices and the problems within a practice, (b) how to tape and transcribe, with justifications for the typical choices, and (c) why interviews, participant observation, and collection of institutional documents are necessary to AIDA, as well as how to select among these supplemental materials when studying a particular practice.
In a 1962 book chapter titled, “The Ethnography of Speaking,” Dell Hymes pointed out that neither anthropologists nor linguists had really emphasized the actual use of language within interaction. Within a few years, he revised the name, expanding beyond language to nonverbal behaviors accompanying words, such as head nods or intonations, giving his concept greater relevance to more people. Since then, the ethnography of communication frequently has been used to analyze patterns of interaction among members of a speech community (that is, a group of people with shared assumptions). Other efforts have documented how children learn such patterns, and have used cross-cultural comparisons to reveal important generalizations about interaction underlying the specific contexts analyzed. Given significant cultural differences in expectations, the ethnography of communication has also contributed much to our understanding of what happens during intercultural communication when members of different speech communities interact.
SPEECH ACTS
Language and Social Interaction Division

One of the most significant discoveries about social interaction, attributable to Ludwig Wittgenstein and J. L. Austin, among others, is that the significance of a word or utterance is not what it means, what its “contents” are, but what it does, what act it performs. Linked to this is the insight that all human doing is, ultimately, if not immediately, achieved through human communicating at the interpersonal level. Thus, to study interaction is to study human doing in an interpersonal context.
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE
Language and Social Interaction Division

The phrase “communicative competence,” attributable to Dell Hymes in 1973, suggests that practical situations require knowledge not only of grammar but also of how to use language and other aspects of communication appropriately in context. Participants need to be able to produce meaningful speech and behaviors and do so in ways that will be understood as relevant by others in the same interaction. Today his phrase has been widely adapted, both to explain the skill required to learn how to speak a second language appropriately, and, more broadly, for intercultural communicative competence (how to interact in appropriate ways with members of other cultural groups). Since the same behavior may have different meanings across cultural groups, thinking one’s words or actions will be interpreted in one way cannot prevent them from being understood quite differently.
Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical theory of the interpersonal communication of the self, and the evidence he provides for it, requires social interaction scholars and others to acknowledge that a person’s social self is always and only their communicated self. That is, his research demonstrates that what is not dramatized by the self about itself during everyday social interaction is of no consequence. It also demonstrates, as does Freud’s theory of the mind, that the mind is active even when a person is unconscious of its doings; specifically, the mind calculates how to dramatize the self, and often carries out its plans even while being unconscious.
Americans love sports because they teach important values such as hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Sports also teach the idea of fairness, as both athletes and teams are evaluated on their own merit by the use of statistics and win/loss records. However, sports coverage in the U.S. media is influenced by both the race and sex of athletes. Research reveals that women’s sports get less overall coverage compared with men’s sports, and when women do get coverage, they are more likely to be featured for a sex-stereotyped sport (e.g., figure skating) or discussed in belittling ways. African Americans, meanwhile, are more likely to be discussed as naturally athletic, whereas whites are more likely to be discussed as intelligent players. African-American athletes who are accused of committing crimes are portrayed more negatively compared with white athletes who are accused of committing crimes.
Children and Food Advertising
Mass Communication Division

Food advertising targeting children has been a topic of great interest for obesity and Communication scholars alike. Children do not possess the cognitive abilities to comprehend advertising with the same sophistication as do adults, making them more vulnerable to persuasive appeals. Nevertheless, the effects of food advertising on children have been heavily debated. In a review of research commissioned by Congress, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science examined hundreds of studies on the topic. Their conclusions state that, among many factors, food and beverage marketing influences the preferences and purchase requests of children, influences short-term consumption, may contribute to less healthful diets, and contributes to an environment that puts children’s health at risk. This landmark review has fueled the need for future research exploring the precise mechanisms for such effects.
Researchers have traditionally studied media’s impact on morality indirectly by examining topics of moral concern (e.g., sex and violence). Most work has used rationalist models, which argue that moral judgment results from deliberative reasoning about right and wrong. Contemporary dual-process models in moral psychology argue, instead, that most moral judgments result from intuitive responses (gut right/wrong reactions), which are then justified by rational thought. One dual-process approach, the model of intuitive morality and exemplars, describes a reciprocal influence between media and moral intuitions. Evidence supporting this model suggests that moral intuitions are susceptible to media influence. Exposure to media exemplars can prime moral intuitions (e.g., sensitivity to cruelty, unfairness, disloyalty, disrespect, impurity) and increase their influence on decision making. Repeated exposure to such exemplars can increase an intuition’s chronic salience in audiences. These processes can shape moral judgments, content appeal, and the production of future media content to match audience preferences.
MEANINGFUL (EUDAIMONIC) ENTERTAINMENT
Mass Communication Division

Foundational research in entertainment psychology has tended to focus on enjoyment as a primary and intended experience of entertainment consumption. However, recent research recognizes the importance of broadening this scope of inquiry to recognize meaningful entertainment that individuals may not necessarily enjoy but that is deeply valued and appreciated. In making this distinction, some scholars have employed the term “hedonic” to refer to entertainment that evokes pleasure, and “eudaimonic” to entertainment that elicits feelings of meaningfulness and appreciation. Evolving scholarship points to a diversity of portrayals and experiences that may give rise to appreciation, including complex questions of morality, inspiring depictions of human compassion, and even stories focused on tragedy and injustice. Likewise, meaningful entertainment appears to be associated with affective and cognitive blends, including feelings of tenderness, poignancy, and elevation. Eudaimonic entertainment is further thought to give rise to outcomes such as enhanced feelings of psychological well-being, feelings of connectedness with others, and heightened altruism.
MEDIA VIOLENCE
Mass Communication Division

The degree to which media violence does or does not influence real-life violence remains contested in the general public and research community. At present, available research data has not provided firm answers. Most existing studies are with college students, not children, and serious methodological problems are common. Many use outcome measures that relate poorly to the kinds of aggression and violence the public is interested in. Results have been mixed, although correlational and longitudinal studies of youth—which control well for other variables such as family violence, personality, or peer influences—suggest that media violence influences on real-life violence are minimal. Further, although media violence consumption has not decreased, real-life violence has plummeted to 40-year lows. The belief that media violence constitutes a public health threat was explicitly rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court in Brown v. EMA, although public and scholarly debates are likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

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Many people have heard the term “gatekeeping” with regard to the news media. The term often evokes an image of journalists sitting around a table deciding what goes into the newspaper and what goes in the trash. The term was suggested in 1947 by Kurt Lewin and further developed by David Manning White, who used the pseudonym “Mr. Gates” in his newsroom research. Some critics have suggested that the Internet has destroyed any “gates” that once existed for funneling information to the public, but the reality is much more complicated. People still receive most of their information through the work of complex organizations and institutions. Decisions about which stories should have top billing, which ones get video, which ones to Tweet—as well as tussles between journalists and government over leaks—are all examples of how gatekeeping continues to be a useful metaphor for understanding media.
In today’s knowledge economy, information is a valuable commodity, although not all people acquire information equally. The Knowledge Gap Hypothesis, as formulated by Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien (1970), suggests that individuals with higher socio-economic levels use media sources—newspapers, radio, and television—in different ways and thus gain more knowledge than do those from lower socio-economic levels. This can cause a knowledge gap, as those with higher education levels gather more information than do less-educated individuals. Studies through the years reveal a striking association between knowledge gaps and a range of quality of life issues, including disease, crime prevention, and health-related problems. Groups who are most in need of help, lower SES groups, might not be getting the information they need to lead a healthy, successful life. Researchers today are asking: Can the Internet be the equalizer, closing knowledge gaps for a better-informed citizenry?
Loneliness is very common, with studies finding that at least one-third of adults experience some loneliness sometime. In a world full of media, perhaps lonely individuals can fulfill their desire to connect with others by imagined interactions with figures in the media. Having imagined communication with a media figure is called parasocial interaction. In a 2008 study published in *Communication Quarterly*, Qi Wang, Edward L. Fink, and Deborah A. Cai found that when experiencing loneliness because of a lack of an intimate relationship, women engage in more parasocial interaction, but men engage in less. When loneliness is a long-standing issue, men engage in more parasocial interaction, but women engage in less. Interestingly, for both genders, loneliness resulting from a need for friendship reduces parasocial interaction. Thus, parasocial interaction appears unable to replace actual interaction, but, under some conditions, it functions as an alternative to it.
The use of fear appeals (i.e., making individuals fear something) in mass media is still an emerging area of research. We have seen instances of fear appeals in public service announcements (e.g., anti-smoking), political advertisements (e.g., 9/11 images), and news coverage (e.g., plane crashes). Oftentimes, when fear appeals are used, reminders of death accompany them. Twenty years of Terror Management Theory, originating in psychology, suggests that when reminders of death occur, there are potentially harmful psychological effects ranging from derogating cultures and people that are unlike you to clinging to your close relationships. Research suggests that when individuals are reminded of their own death through the mass media, it can disturb their psyche, making them ripe for persuasion. Research has focused on news coverage of events such as the Boston Marathon bombings and plane crashes to anti-smoking and cancer screening public service announcements.
Commercial media are saturated with Photoshopped, retouched, or digitally edited media. The impact of exposure to digitally “perfected” media ideals on body image has become a public health concern; for example, the National Eating Disorders Association promoted federal legislation to require advertisers to identify digitally altered imagery with disclaimers. This and similar initiatives assume such disclaimers will reduce potentially harmful effects—but what does research show? Bissell published an article in Studies in Media & Information Literacy (2006) showing that disclaimers created a boomerang effect, intensifying college women’s desire to look like thin models. Harrison (Media Psychology, in press) independently found a similar boomerang effect among adolescents exposed to retouched images. At least two other papers, in press in 2013 in psychology journals, revealed parallel findings. What exactly is communicated by retouching disclaimers that makes audience members feel worse about their bodies? That is the prime question for future research.
Content analyses of beer commercials, which remain a fixture of popular television, have shown common themes to include adventure, socializing, romance, and humor. Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory explains that because people cannot experience everything in life first-hand, they sometimes look to media portrayals of behaviors to learn. Behavior that is modeled by attractive people and shown to be rewarding, as drinking is in many beer commercials, is often emulated. Alcohol expectancy theory (Goldman, Brown, and Christiansen, 1987) takes this a step further, by explaining that the decision to drink is in part driven by expectations or beliefs that if one drinks, then certain positive outcomes, such as popularity, sexual success, or confidence, will ensue. Thus, while people’s decision about whether to drink is a complicated one, the prevalence and popularity of beer commercials in our society may well play a role in it, with seductive and sanitized portrayals of alcohol consumption providing an expectation that modeling this behavior will benefit the drinker.
Media coverage detailing the long-term health effects associated with concussions, such as Alzheimer’s and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, is on the rise, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While information concerning concussions is readily available to the public through various media outlets and the CDC’s “Heads Up” campaign, is this information really utilized by college athletes to become more informed about concussions and their impact upon future health? A survey sent to athletes at three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) colleges and universities revealed that 82 percent of college athletes used media outlets to investigate the effects of concussions. From this research, it is clear that college athletes are using media outlets such as the Internet (51.8 percent) and television (19.3 percent) to become more informed about the long-term health effects of concussions.
In 1961, scholar Daniel Boorstin coined the term “Pseudo Event” to describe events that were created for the sake of the news media, not for any real public participation. How often is the average person invited to a ribbon-cutting or the presentation of an oversized check? Such events are usually orchestrated for journalists with cameras, and are a way for public relations professionals to influence the news agenda. Today, the control of news by public relations might go even further. Research on video journalists (VJs), who shoot, write, and edit video stories alone, found that some public relations professionals were being asked to vocally narrate stories because the VJ workload was so intense. This only shifts control of the news agenda further away from news professionals and into the hands of people who are paid to push a particular agenda.
Philosophy of communication is an area of inquiry in which scholars explore the overlaps, intersections, and complements between philosophy and communication (communication from a philosophical orientation and/or philosophy from a communication perspective). This scholarship seeks to explain what communication is, how it is possible, and in what ways human beings are communicatively constituted by and situated in the world. One application is the study of the ethical dimensions in and of communicative acts. By inquiring about the relation of communication practices and a good life, Communication Ethics scholarship moves beyond questions of individual morality and personal relationships to examine the relationship between practices of human communication and the demands for social justice, either in the calls of conscience for advocacy or in the duties of institutions to understand and respond to their constituencies.
COMMUNICATION AS APPLIED PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION
Philosophy of Communication Division

Philosophy of communication answers the fundamental questions of philosophy—what does it mean to be human; what is the nature of reality; how should we live our lives—by exploring how human beings give meaning to their experience in the world through communication. Philosophy of communication, while grounded in philosophy, is concerned with a different purpose: the application of philosophical thought to human experience, as Ronald C. Arnett and Annette M. Holba point out in their 2012 book, *An Overture to Philosophy of Communication: The Carrier of Meaning*. Hannah Arendt, in her posthumously published book, *The Promise of Politics*, argued that philosophy doesn’t really matter unless you do something with it. In philosophy of communication, we engage philosophy to understand the world and open up possibilities for action. Philosophy of communication is about the doing, not just the ideas.
Communicology is the study of human communication that uses logic-based methods of semiotics and phenomenology to understand human consciousness and behavioral embodiment. There are four subdivisions including art communicology, clinical communicology, media communicology, and philosophy of communication. Richard L. Lanigan is the Executive Director of the International Communicology Institute and a principal founder of the subdiscipline, Philosophy of Communication. His methodology of semiotic phenomenology is widely recognized as a major contribution to philosophy and the human sciences. He has numerous publications in philosophy of communication, has been honored as the 1995 recipient of NCA’s “Spotlight on Research,” and was the first scholar to receive Duquesne University’s first annual award for “Distinguished International Scholarship in the Philosophy of Communication” (2012).
SEMIOTICS
Philosophy of Communication Division

Psychiatrist and communication theorist Jürgen Ruesch defines semiotics as “the phenomenology of signs and their relationships to one another and to their human users.” Employing the methodology of phenomenology, Charles Peirce and Edmund Husserl concluded that all thought is in signs and humans themselves are signs. The constitution of consciousness (“mind”) is through communication in the medium (or, action) of signs. Semiotics scholars working within Communication in the United States have for the past 40 years synthesized semiotics and phenomenology into a pragmatic philosophy of communication. Its goal is to deepen understanding of how signs and rules (codes) and habits of their combination (learned in discourse) bring structure to sense and meaning to our conscious experience of communication in the lived-world, as individuals, with others, within groups, and across cultures. Study of the constraints and possibilities of the lived experience of signs (“communicology”) is the essence of communication inquiry.
The importance of the historical moment is a key idea in philosophy of communication, elaborated by Ronald C. Arnett. Arnett’s work on the importance of historicality, rooted in the work of Gadamer, suggests that appropriate communication is grounded in the historical moment within which communicators are embedded. As Arnett and coauthor Pat Arneson note in their 1999 book, Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships, a particular period of time presents questions and problems to which communication theory must be responsive; human beings also experience this temporality, which holds implications for interpersonal dialogue. Dialogue requires interpretive attentiveness to questions of a particular historical moment and to the historical situatedness of all parties in the communicative context. The “existential demand” of historicality asks us to consider what communicative action might be appropriate for this historical moment as it is, not for the moment we wish might exist.
Providing a unified and coherent understanding of communication as a concept and as a field of research is an important goal acknowledged by many philosophers of communication. Igor E. Klyukanov’s 2010 book, A Communication Universe: Manifestations of Meaning, Stagings of Significance, is a heuristic contribution to reaching this goal. Communication is presented as a dynamic spatiotemporal phenomenon undergoing several transformations, moving from stable and observable structures, which exist in (supposedly pure) space, to ever-changing semiotic relationships, which exist in (supposedly pure) time, and finally to their “ideal” unification. Each perspective presents a certain staging of communication, whereby some of its meaningful characteristics are manifest. Overall, communication is viewed as a process of meaningful experience undergoing spatiotemporal transformations and (continuously attempted to be) turned into one. Communication thus appears as a moving, constantly transformative and transformed experience. Understanding communication in terms of motion, space, and time opens up many possibilities for future research in philosophy of communication.
Trust in existence implies confidence in other human beings, in public and private realms of life, and in our surroundings. Philosophy of communication acknowledges the reality of problems that seem insurmountable and threaten our trust in existence, particularly when everything around us is changing and we no longer share common ground with others. With economic, healthcare, environmental, and global political uncertainties, the realities we have come to trust and rely upon suddenly appear out of reach. This condition creates what Ronald C. Arnett (1994) refers to as a sense of existential homelessness, which describes a community that has experienced the loss of a common center and where trust has been replaced by mistrust. Existential homelessness is not hopeless; it provides an invitation to dialogue that permits persons to meet existence on its own terms, preparing, with anyone who is willing, to navigate together through directionless spaces that lead to dialogic havens of trust.
The standard characterization of technology, no matter how sophisticated its design or operation, is that it is a tool or instrument serving human interests and endeavors. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger called this the instrumental theory of technology. This theory, although useful for organizing research in fields such as computer-mediated communication, is no longer tenable. Recent innovations—artificial intelligence, autonomous decision-making systems, social robotics—are no longer mere instruments of human activity, but are beginning to occupy the place of another agent in social relationships and interactions. As the progenitor of cybernetics Norbert Wiener predicted, the social landscape of the 21st century depends on communication not only between human beings but between human beings and machines, and between machines and machines. This fundamental shift in the role and function of technology not only challenges the standard assumptions of human exceptionalism, but also necessitates new approaches to the study of communication and social interaction.
With his 2001 book, *The Call of Conscience: Heidegger and Levinas, Rhetoric and the Euthanasia Debate*, Michael J. Hyde begins developing a philosophy of communication ethics wherein the practice of rhetoric plays a fundamental role in promoting and maintaining the health of our personal and communal existence. The philosophy is further developed in Hyde’s *The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgment* (2006), *Perfection: Coming to Terms with Being Human* (2010), and *Openings: Acknowledging Essential Moments in Human Communication* (2012). All four books emphasize the importance of grounding communication and rhetorical theory in phenomenological investigations of everyday behavior. In a review of *Perfection* published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, rhetorical theorist and critic Bradford Vivian notes that Hyde’s work “confirms [his] stature as the foremost ethical thinker in rhetorical studies as well as one of the fields most distinctive and capacious researchers.”
In our historical moment, “leisure” is typically misunderstood as a break during the day, week, or year that provides respite from work. Annette Holba, in her 2007 work, *Philosophical Leisure: Recuperative Praxis for Human Communication*, differentiates philosophical leisure from recreation, relaxation, amusement, and entertainment. True philosophical leisure involves “contemplation, reflection, and play,” cultivating the ground for meaningful human conversation that goes beyond the superficial “phaticity” of small talk as a default mode of discourse. Holba traces shifting understandings of leisure throughout the history of philosophical discourse and ends with a remedy for the alienation of existential homelessness by showing how leisure invites interpretive participation in philosophical play. Revisiting leisure philosophically has opened the potential for further interdisciplinary research and scholarship involving leisure and the human condition.
Languages are historically and socially situated systems of signs and meanings, but they function and are altered through gesture and tone, acts of speech, and linkages of genres. Persons and groups enter into and remain in communication through language games, which are typified constructions that orient interaction. In this sense, we are nodes of multiple language games that operate according to normative constraints in everyday speech (promises, requests, demands, inquiries, etc.), in genres of discourse (educational, political, economic, narrative, religious, scientific, etc.), and as dominant historical entities associated with national and pan-nationalist identities (English, Japanese, Arabic, French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, etc.).

Of particular interest are how typified forms at various levels of communication do battle to establish or “territorialize” meanings through human interaction; how persons, groups, and collectivities negotiate meanings creatively and critically given structuring linguistic structures; and how humans are vulnerable linguistic animals bent on naming while also being subject to names.
CORPOREAL PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNICATION
Philosophy of Communication Division

A corporeal philosophy of communication gives the body a key role in understanding human experience and contributes to how people make and find meaning in their lives. By studying phenomena inside our lived experience, we learn that meaning is created through and within bodily experiences. Calvin Schrag’s 1986 book, *Communicative Praxis and Space of Subjectivity*, offers a new humanism grounded in corporeal experiences and provides a phenomenological justification for the intersection of corporeality and communication leading to an ethics of relief, a concept Ramsey Eric Ramsey’s 1998 volume, *The Long Path to Nearness*, offers to those seeking meaningful engagement and understanding in their lives. Technology can become a barrier to human experience and understanding, but a corporeal philosophy of communication provides an ethics of relief by bringing the body back into sight again—permitting acknowledgement of the body to guide how people understand their lives and live with others ethically.
The Credo for Ethical Communication is a description of ethical communication and a series of belief statements that anchor how we understand ethical communication and its processes. After asking for input from the NCA membership as a whole, Ken Andersen led a group of participating Communication Ethics Division members in developing the Credo, which was adopted by the National Communication Association in 1999. The Credo demonstrates the centrality of ethics to all forms of communication and reads in part as follows: “Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others. We believe that unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live.”
One of the persistent and enduring concerns for ethics is deciding who or what is deserving of moral consideration. Although historically limited to “other men,” the practice of ethics continually challenges its own restrictions and evolves to encompass what had been previously excluded—women, animals, and even the environment. We currently stand on the verge of another fundamental challenge to moral thinking. This challenge comes from the autonomous and increasingly intelligent machines of our own making, and it puts in question many deep-seated assumptions about who or what constitutes the Other in social relationships and interactions. The way we address and respond to this “machine question” (D. Gunkel, MIT Press, 2012) will have a profound effect on how we understand ourselves, our place in the world, and our responsibilities to the others we encounter in our lives.
Communication ethics pedagogy takes seriously the claim that communication constitutes the worlds in which communicators live—to live in a more ethical world, we must promote ethically mindful communication. Competent and skilled communicators are ethical communicators who take responsibility for a message’s creation, impact, and effects in a diverse range of contexts, including mediated, mass, interpersonal, intercultural, professional, and public. Stimulating the moral imagination is key to helping students recognize issues of communication ethics in their lives. Introduced to philosophical theories of what is good, right, or virtuous (e.g., virtue theory, utilitarianism, the categorical imperative, theories of justice, dialogical ethics, ethics of care, etc.), students use case studies and practical philosophy to develop skills in problem-solving and reasoning about communication. They learn to weigh their self-interest relative to the self-interest of Others so their communication may co-construct the ethical dimension of the worlds in which they live.
Significant attention has been directed to pedagogy that informs how we teach students to communicate not only effectively and appropriately, but ethically as well. These contributions focus on applying communication ethics in meaningful ways to lived human experience. Some noteworthy contributions that focus specifically on and outline systematic approaches to teaching communication ethics in the classroom include Johannesen’s (1975) *Ethics in Human Communication* (now in its 6th edition); Arnett, Fritz, and Bell’s (2009) *Communication Ethics Literacy: Dialogue and Difference*; Neher and Sandin’s (2006) *Communicating Ethically: Character, Duties, Consequences, and Relationships*; and Tompkins’s (2010) *Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making*. These key texts focus on teaching communication ethics. Most importantly, they all illuminate the importance of dialogic communication ethics, an ethical lens not usually acknowledged in ethics textbooks from other disciplines.
Do people notice when ethical issues have arisen when communicating with others? Rebecca Ann Lind and David L. Rarick researched this question, which is related to “ethical sensitivity.” This is the ability to recognize ethical components and issues in situations and interactions that might harm others. They found in their studies of news viewers that ethical sensitivity is related to the level of education people have and their knowledge of particular situations. Their research demonstrates the significance of praxis (theory-informed action) and phronesis (practical wisdom/learning from experience) in ethical communication, and they recommend that people receive training about ethical issues so that they are better able to notice them when communicating with others.
“God made Man because He loves stories,” wrote Holocaust survivor and author/activist Elie Wiesel in The Gates of the Forest in 1966. His quote demonstrates the crucial role of story-telling to human life, which has long been a focus of Communication studies. Walter R. Fisher, an Emeritus Professor at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, has done much to advance the concept that all human communication is a story-telling process. Fisher proposed that arguments should be tested, not just on rational grounds, but on how they hold together as narratives. Fisher’s belief in this paradigm, or model, for looking at communication is most famously expressed by his statements that the human race should be thought of as “homo narrans” and that “man is a story-telling animal.”
Sandra L. Borden provided a key contribution to journalism ethics by theorizing journalism in terms of Aristotelian philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre’s notion of a practice. She suggested that by understanding practice as composed of its telos (or goals or ends), internal goods, external goods, individual and collective virtues, and supporting institutions, we can see how journalism is defined by a moral purpose that contributes to human flourishing. In this way, journalism helps citizens discover the common good as responsible participants in a diverse political community. Therefore, journalism’s practice informs and shapes its enduring standards of journalistic excellence while possessing the resources to extend its moral excellence into the context of rapid industrial and technological changes. Borden’s book, *Journalism as Practice: MacIntyre, Virtue Ethics and the Press*, won the 2008 Award for Top Book in Applied Ethics by the National Communication Association’s Communication Ethics Division.
INTERPERSONAL/DIALOGIC ETHICS
Communication Ethics Division

Interpersonal communication ethics invites thoughtful engagement with others. Dialogue, a foundational concept in interpersonal communication ethics associated with scholars such as Martin Buber, Hans Georg Gadamer, and Mikhail Bakhtin, is the focus of Rob Anderson, Kenneth N. Cissna, and Ronald C. Arnett’s 1994 edited volume, *The Reach of Dialogue: Confirmation, Voice, and Community*. Emmanuel Levinas, who considers ethics “first philosophy,” is another key figure in dialogic ethics. Arnett, in a 2009 book chapter in *Ethical Communication: Moral Stances in Human Dialogue*, edited by Clifford G. Christians and John C. Merrill, notes that for Levinas, the human face of another generates an “ethical echo” that calls us, no matter the cost, to attend to that person. Michael Hyde writes about the importance of acknowledging the existence of others as a key element of interpersonal communication ethics in his 2006 book, *The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgement.*
Public relations ethical theory and practice began with a 1905 Declaration of Principles, which emerged because of conflicts between journalists and publicists who were staging outlandish media events. The declaration promised respectful and symbiotic communication, a precursor to today’s public relations practice as a two-way process of building beneficial relations between an organization and its publics. Further, peer oversight, awareness-building, and education keep ethics at the forefront in public relations practice. In 2001, researchers Kathy Fitzpatrick and Candace Gauthier proposed a theory of professional responsibility of public relations ethics. The theory recognizes the dichotomy between accountability to the organization and its publics, and provided a decision-making process based on ethical principles illustrated in the Public Relations Society of America’s professional standards.
The ethics and values of today’s press have evolved rapidly in the last 60 years. In the mid-20th century, press magnates worried that Roosevelt’s New Deal would spill into editorial dictates and watchdogs worried that post-WWI opinions would chill political dissent. In response, the Commission on Freedom of the Press (COFOP) was formed in order to reframe the proper role of the press, but there were divergent opinions among Commission members. However, it was William Ernest Hocking’s 1947 ethical theory, Framework of Principle, which provided a theoretical core by positing a “duty to speak,” believing human goodwill reaches its zenith in the conveyance of ideas. Therefore, a democratic press is obliged to be truthful, comprehensive, transparent, accessible, fair-framed, and free—all treasured values of the Social Responsibility Theory of the press. This theory has achieved worldwide influence and shapes theory-informed practice between communication ethics and media today.
DOCTOR/PATIENT BAD NEWS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Applied Communication Division

Breaking bad news in the medical encounter is certainly a familiar health care context to health care providers, yet one of the most difficult health messages to deliver. Lisa Sparks’ et al. (2007) study of a patient-centered approach to breaking bad news revealed four health care provider message strategies that emerged from patient accounts: indirect communication, direct communication, comforting communication, and empowering communication. Overall results of this study demonstrated that providers most often take the direct approach when breaking bad news, which focuses on the topic itself, as opposed to the social or emotional implications of the message for the patient or provider. Perhaps the most emotionally difficult communication providers must master is breaking bad news in an empathetic and comforting manner. A communication perspective for breaking bad news suggests that a formulaic approach is less appropriate when breaking bad news than considering the characteristics of the patients, the message content, and context of interaction.
People struggle with decisions to share or withhold important information, especially information that is stigmatized. HIV/AIDS is highly stigmatized and affects many people worldwide. Sharing HIV+ status is related to many positive outcomes for patients and others, including increased social support and quality of life, and decreased transmission of HIV/AIDS. A study published in 2013 by Greene, Carpenter, Catona, and Magsamen-Conrad in the *Journal of Communication* describes the Brief Disclosure Intervention (the BDI). They created a short intervention to help people living with HIV or AIDS evaluate whether and how to disclose their HIV diagnoses to friends and family. They tested the BDI with HIV+ urban African Americans and found that the BDI enhanced confidence to share while decreasing anxiety and worry about sharing. They also found that issues related to social networks, concern for others, and institutional support affected the sharing of HIV+ status.
ONLINE FUNDRAISING RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING
Applied Communication Division

Nonprofit organizations that raise money online should be incorporating key relationship-building features into their websites to improve their fundraising success. Based on a study by Nancy Wiencek, organizations that raised more than $1 million online had more relationship-building features present on their websites than organizations that raised less than $1 million online. This was especially true for the nonprofits that featured members of the organization’s leadership on their homepage; offered ongoing communication through e-mail; incorporated interactive features such as blogs, games, and online shopping for organizational merchandise; encouraged donors to share in tasks, such as advocacy efforts; and finally, offered incentives to donors in return for their online gift.
In 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force attempted to communicate to the public a revised mammogram screening policy, intended to expand women’s health care options. But, in the end, it appeared to have inadvertently limited those options. Susan Opt’s study of the USPSTF’s efforts was published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* in 2012. Opt suggests ways to avoid USPSTF’s pitfall. First, people advocating policy change should identify the social system’s perceptions of need to anticipate better its responses to the messages. Next, they should remember that social-system change always occurs in cooperation with other stakeholders and identify and build relationships with those groups. Finally, they should attend to the systemic nature of social change and attempt to anticipate and create responses to possible side effects of their social-change attempts. Overall, her essay highlighted an overarching need—to improve our lives—that appears to underlie all policy-making efforts.
Humor in communication not only serves to transmit information or share meaning, but also to manage a relationship between people. John Meyer explored how humor unites or divides. Humor use promotes sharing that can enhance relationships and further interaction, even at the expense of dividing from or alienating some others. Four key functions of humor have emerged from research: identification, clarification, enforcement, and differentiation. Identification and clarification both serve to unite communicators, one by stressing the shared script or expectations both share, the second making clear one’s view through a humorous remark. Enforcement and differentiation divide communicators by pointing out social norm violations or lack of knowledge by someone, or simply drawing a dramatic contrast by putting another party down through humor. These four functions form a continuum from “most unifying” to “most dividing” uses of humor. Humor can thus focus on an expected pattern and its underlying solidity, or it can stress a violation of the moral order.
Imagine being on a jury and deciding whether someone is guilty or innocent. Now imagine that the person whose guilt or innocence is being decided is accused of murdering two people. Now imagine laughing during that deliberation. Seems odd, right? But it’s not, really. Joann Keyton and Stephenson Beck reported in *Small Group Research* that laughter in a trial like the one just described can serve many functions. Laughter among jury members regulated the relationships that were developing among jurors, procedures the jurors were using, and even how information was shared among jurors. In some cases, laughter was positive; in others it was negative. The fact that laughter can be used and interpreted in so many ways suggests that one important role of laughter is to create ambiguity to allow the jury a chance to figure out what to do next.
It is common for people at work to complain about the communication in their workplace. But what happens when working adults are asked about their own communication competencies at work? A 2013 study in the *Journal of Business Communication* reported that working adults identified 44 routine communication behaviors at work. These include those that help employees share and process information (e.g., seeking information, discussing ideas), build and maintain relationships (e.g., using small talk, using humor), express negative emotion (e.g., expressing frustration, complaining), and organize their work (e.g., resolving problems, planning with others). Interestingly, working adults evaluated themselves as being less effective in the communication behaviors that were reported as being the most frequently used. For example, asking questions was the second most important communication behavior reported, but working adults ranked this behavior as their 15th most effective. These findings suggest that to succeed at work, our routine communication behaviors may require our greatest attention.
Prior to Matthew Seeger’s 2006 work in the Journal of Applied Communication Research, best practices in crisis communication were largely based on anecdote. Seeking to generate a data-driven identification of consistently effective strategies, Seeger took a grounded theoretical approach to the subject, consulting with established scholars, reviewing extant literature, and considering recent cases. The ten best practices he established were then critiqued openly in the special section of the journal by leading scholars from public relations, organizational communication, and emergency management. This article marks a clear departure from anecdote in the study of crisis communication. Seeger’s essay is now one of the most referenced articles published in JACR. The best practices are continually operationalized and tested in a variety of crisis settings. In short, Seeger’s article continues to help set the agenda for empirical crisis communication research.
Sexual harassment has been a persistent concern in organizational life. The *Journal of Applied Communication Research* has been in the forefront of responding to sexual harassment as a communication issue. In 1991, the journal published the first of what would become several research reports, an explanation by Shereen G. Bingham of why sexual harassment messages are difficult to deflect. The journal also raised consciousness within the Communication discipline when, in 1992, under the leadership of Julia T. Wood, it published personal stories of sexual harassment as submitted by its readers. These stories were analyzed in the journal’s pages by Communication scholars, but they were also analyzed by graduate students, who learned how to find underlying meaning in difficult texts. This exercise led not only to developing methods of researching sexual harassment episodes, but also to applying those methods to studying sensitive situations brought about by any number of dysfunctional communication patterns.
WOMEN PREACHERS FIRST FEMALE PUBLIC SPEAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Spiritual Communication Division

Women’s communication in the United States has a rich history. Some of the first female public speakers in America were women preachers, who led the way for their secular counterparts. Frances Wright, often touted as the first female public speaker in America, was predated by Dorothy Ripley, who spoke to Congress in 1808. Michael Casey examined the 200-year-old tradition of prophetic women speakers that predated the 19th century suffrage movement in the Journal of Communication and Religion (2000). Women preachers claimed to be prophets who received authority to speak directly from God, basing their power on their role as prophets rather than on church structure and hierarchy. They defended their right to speak by using biblical examples of women leaders and speakers, attacked patriarchy and racism, and established an oral preaching style based on inspiration in the moment rather than on written remarks based on formal study.
INTERNET BRINGS NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES
Spiritual Communication Division

More and more Americans are using the Internet to communicate with their churches. The impact of the Internet on the religious experience cannot be ignored. A 2011 article in the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, “Applying Relationship Management Theory to Religious Organizations: An Assessment of Relationship Cultivation Online,” by Richard D. Waters et al., examines strategies used by churches to develop relationships with congregational stakeholders. In another article published in 2012 in *Communication Research Trends*, “Jewish Cyber-Theology,” Yoel Choen extrapolates from the Jewish tradition to uncover a Jewish view on the Internet. And a 2012 article, “Online Religion in Nigeria: The Internet Church and Cyber Miracles,” by Innocent Eberechi Chiluwa, published in the *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, highlights the benefits and dangers associated with online worship. Clearly, this issue will be relevant in the field of Religious Communication for many years.
Adolescent values and behaviors provide endless fascination for parents, educators, marketers, and society in general. In contrast to the focus on negative adolescent behavior, G. L. Forward and colleagues published two papers in the *Journal of Communication and Religion* (2006 and 2008) investigating family interaction, communication, and spirituality. Communication quality was rated highest in families in which both parents, but especially a father, exhibited an authoritative parenting style. This style is responsive and respectful, uses reason to persuade, and communicates high expectations to the child. Additionally, family satisfaction is highest when mothers and sons and fathers and daughters have a meaningful connection with one another. Finally, frequent, open, and honest communication about spirituality matters more than parenting style. It allows adolescents to become aware of the importance of spirituality to their parents and the reasons for it, and it increases the likelihood of a child’s personal acceptance.
One element held in common by many religious traditions is a commitment to nonviolence. In his 1980 book, *Dwell in Peace: Applying Nonviolence to Everyday Relationships*, Ronald C. Arnett brought together the work of Jewish theologian/philosopher Martin Buber, the work of Hindu leader Mahatma Gandhi, and the voices of members of the three historic peace churches (Church of the Brethren, Quaker, and Mennonite) to offer recommendations for peace in interpersonal relationships. Violence is not only physical, but happens when human dignity is violated. Conflict can be resolved without doing interpersonal violence to another. Peacemaking rests on several principles: taking into account concerns of both parties; recognizing that the cost of commitment to nonviolence may not be embraced by another; acknowledging that power can be used to resist oppression; remaining committed yet open to new views; and confronting without humiliating. Caring confrontation focuses on ideas and on the importance of the other.
MEDIA AND RELIGION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES
Spiritual Communication Division

The burgeoning field of media ecology intersects with religion and communication in thought-provoking ways. Technology profoundly influences structural changes in our perception and understanding of religious matters. Neil Postman posited that changes in media alter the way people navigate the boundaries between private and public places. For example, the Internet has become a new outlet for religious expression. Fr. Paul Soukup has generated important theoretical work related to these issues. In a recent volume he edited with Thomas Farrell, Of Ong and Media Ecology: Essays in Communication, Composition, and Literacy Studies (2012), various authors ground the value of Walter Ong’s thought in “human expression and expressiveness—orality, writing, print, [and] visual imagery.” This contribution allows Religious Communication scholars the opportunity to understand religious expression in deeper and more complex ways.
Questions of ethics and virtue inevitably arise in the context of religious communication. Are virtues stemming from religious traditions relative, specific to a given culture, or do universal ethical principles running through all human cultures underlie these religious frameworks? A landmark treatment of this topic, Communication Ethics and Universal Values (1997), edited by Cliff Christians and Michael Traber, addresses this issue, identifying minimalist protonorms across cultures. This examination has revolutionized the field of religious communication by “identifying a broad ethical theory which transcends the world of mass media practice to reveal a more humane and responsible code of values.” The contributing authors offer the possibility of universal moral imperatives, such as human dignity and justice. These imperatives establish common ground for scholars to examine contemporary issues in the media, interpersonal communication, mediation, and conflict resolution.
DEMOCRACY, RELIGION, AND MASS MEDIA: SERVANT COMMUNICATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD
Spiritual Communication Division

The mass media in the United States and Christian religious groups influence one another in significant ways. A landmark theoretical treatment of this relationship emerges in Quentin Schultze’s Christianity and the Mass Media in America: Toward a Democratic Accommodation (2003). Schultze identifies a popular theology of the media emerging from two forms of “rhetorical imagining” about the media in the United States, one utopian, reflecting an evangelistic imagination, and the other dystopian, reflecting a “moralistic” imagination. Regardless of Americans’ religious or secular backgrounds, these evangelistic and moralistic rhetorics are used to make sense of mass communication. Schultze notes that while religion and the media have borrowed from each other’s rhetoric, they have kept each other honest, illuminating each other’s weaknesses and arrogance. In this way, religious groups and media may enact “servant communication,” serving each other to affirm a larger public good.
Quilts have long been analyzed as rhetorical invitations for action. This persuasive medium of visual communication is fertile ground for the examination of dialogic ethics via religious artifacts. Michael P. Graves has spent his life’s work studying the Quaker community. In his 2001 article, “The Quaker Tapestry: An Artistic Attempt to Stitch Together a Diverse Religious Community,” published in the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, Graves focuses on the choices made by the Quaker Tapestry designers that expressed their goal of community-building. And in her 2004 essay, “Quiltmaking as Living Metaphor: A Study of the African AIDS Quilt as a Visual Parable of the Peaceable Kingdom,” also published in the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, Elizabeth W. McLaughlin examines how the African AIDS Quilt weaves together the suffering of African families and functions as a living metaphor within the Anabaptist tradition.
Symbolic patterns originating in different arenas of public culture often converge in others, particularly with the language of science and religion. John Angus Campbell (1986) demonstrated a “Baconian grammar” running through Charles Darwin’s writings and descending from an earlier natural theology tradition. Davi Johnson (2006) illustrated something similar by examining the work of Richard Dawkins, as did Thomas Lessl’s (1985) analysis of Carl Sagan. Lessl (2012) showed that science emulates religious speech forms because it appropriates a “priestly” social role similar to that of religion. The scientific revolution unfolding in 17th century England was made possible by Francis Bacon’s representation of empirical science as an extension of the Reformation’s spiritual and millenarian themes, which forged an alliance between science and the Protestant churches. While 19th century scientists distanced themselves from these faith traditions, they did not abandon so much as naturalize these symbolic patterns by folding them into a social evolutionary narrative of progress.
Christian churches in Sub-Saharan Africa teach similar doctrines about sexual morality, but are all churches equally effective at translating doctrine into church-going youths’ behavior? This question holds implications for HIV-prevention efforts among youth in this highly religious context. Ann Neville Miller et al. (2012) found that in Nairobi, Kenya, Pentecostal boys were less likely to have had sex than boys from other churches, while Pentecostal girls were no different from other girls in this regard. From another perspective, whereas in mainline churches (and in the larger population), male youth are considerably more likely to have had sex than same-age girls, among Pentecostal youth, boys were no more likely than girls to have had sex. Reasons for this finding were both higher individual religiosity among Pentecostal youth and more intense church socialization, such as more daily conversation with friends about spiritual issues, more frequent service attendance, and a wider range of religious activities.
Rhetoricians and preachers have long studied “prophetic” social critique, which C.S. Lewis described as “resistance thinking.” Communication scholars examine how prophetic voices emerge within mass media and how to apply prophetic critique to mass media itself. Clifford Christians (1990) prompted media scholars to reexamine “media’s prophetic task,” which he later called “prophetic witness.” The latter can emerge through “aesthetically mature” media programs, but can also transform the media environment itself. Quentin Schultze’s (2003) critique of advertisers as “the great evangelists of our age” deepened this line of inquiry, as did Robert Woods and Paul Patton’s Prophetically Incorrect (2010), which positioned media criticism as resistance to “the dominant forces of our culture.” Most recently, Robert Woods and Kevin Healey (2013) argued in Prophetic Critique and Popular Media that prophetic critique is a universal human capability and can serve as an organizing concept to bridge secular and religious critiques of mass media.
Prayer is a defining element of religious communicative practices. In articles published in 1997 and 1999 in the Journal of Communication and Religion, E. James Baesler developed a communication-oriented typology of prayer that included talking to God, listening to God, dialogue with God, meditation, contemplation, and mystical union. A synthesis of six typologies of prayer, both ancient and contemporary, provided the foundation for his model of Interpersonal Christian prayer, which includes God as the source of prayer through invitation; the Christian as responder to God’s grace through talking, listening, and/or dialogue with God; becoming less self-oriented and more God-oriented over time; and the potential for an ineffable or “radically Divine” experience of divine infusion. Research with colleagues on prayer in areas ranging from health contexts to digital media continues to yield findings on the importance of prayer in the life of believers.
The study of socialization/assimilation in organizational communication, initially championed by Fred Jablin, explores the interactive process of individuals joining, participating in, and leaving organizations as employees, students, or volunteers. Because the process is filled with challenges, it examines how people communicate to manage uncertainty and make sense of their experiences. It recognizes that individuals bring with them background and experiences (anticipatory socialization) that influence how they seek information and respond to the organization’s socialization strategies during organizational entry. It explores the impact of communication with peers, supervisors, and mentors on gaining an understanding of the organizational culture, including such diverse aspects as management theory, work-life balance issues, emotion management, and power relationships. It explores general experiences common to many persons, but also unique experiences that individuals may experience due to different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. It explores the experiences of adjusting to organizational changes and transitioning to new roles.
Certainly one of the most important arenas for applied contributions by organizational communication and other areas of the field is participation, a concept and set of practices that has important applications from the level of team decision making to questions of the wider polity. One of the most exciting trends in recent years is that organizational communication scholars (along with rhetoricians, small-group experts, and health and environmental specialists, among others) are considering how our discipline speaks to issues of participation in ways that are both complementary to and distinct from contributions from Political Science, Sociology, and Education. At a time when concerns about the vitality of democracy, along with issues of access and equity, are at the forefront of many public discussions, it is heartening that Communication scholars are responding to the need in contexts ranging from workplaces, to neighborhood associations, to multi-stakeholder dialogues, to movement activism, to public policy formation.
Politically attentive relational constructionism (PARC) offers an alternative metatheoretical framework for organizing the study and field of organizational communication. Relational constructions are outcomes of the politics of their production, and all constructions happen in real conditions of inequality, specific historical circumstances, and practical needs. PARC focuses on six politics based on the relational issue each is about: (1) the politics of authenticity (relation to the inner world); (2) the politics of identity and recognition (relation with specific others); (3) the politics of order (relation to general others); (4) the politics of truth (relation to the external world); (5) the politics of life narratives (relation to past/future vortex); and (6) the politics of distribution (relation to interdependence and scarcity). PARC offers a vocabulary that draws attention to underlying communication processes in these politics and is addressed in Deetz and Eger’s (2013) book chapter in the SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication.
THE MONTRÉAL SCHOOL’S TRANSLATION MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTITUTION
Organizational Communication Division

What is an organization? How does it become an organization and reproduce itself in communication, even as its component members come and go? Research on the communicative constitution of organizations seeks to address these questions. According to Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud, and Taylor (2014), all organization is born in the here-and-now of collective human experience. The authors show how the immediacy of collective organizing scales up to more complex configurations typical of all extended organizations, and how, in turn, the “person” of the organization is translated back into situated practice, where it acts as an actor through its various embodiments. Thus, Brummans and colleagues explore the modalities of translation that, respectively, link domains of practice to become a collective organizing, and how the organization, once constituted as an actor, is then re-translated back through its different agencies into the many practices of hands-on, space- and time-situated organizing.
Expressing one’s disagreement to management is one of the greatest challenges employees face in contemporary workplaces. Yet it is a form of communication that can serve to make organizations healthier. Jeffrey Kassing’s studies in Management Communication Quarterly (2002, 2007, 2009) illustrate how employees go about communicating dissent to management—ranging from presenting solutions and facts to going around one’s supervisor or threatening to quit. Clearly some of the tactics are more appropriate than others, but this line of research demonstrates that circumventing one’s boss is at times necessary and effective. In fact, in certain instances where supervisors’ lack of action, performance, or judgment proved problematic, circumvention brought about needed corrective action. However, such circumvention carried a cost, as employees often felt that relationships with their supervisors were altered negatively. Thus, dissent expression can be effective in bringing about change, but costly in terms of workplace relationships.
IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS: THEORETICAL ENTRY
Organizational Communication Division

Identity and identification have become core concepts in organizational communication since the late 1970s and represent major contributions of Communication Studies to understanding how identity develops, functions, and is expressed on multiple levels. Like “power,” “identity” is a term that has tremendous resonance in lay talk and theorizing, as well as in academic discourse. Although identity and identification were initially studied primarily from empirical, post-positivist standpoints (per approaches in social psychology), their investigations also have been heavily influenced by the rhetorical tradition (per Kenneth Burke) and today include strongly interpretive and critical perspectives and associated methodologies. Important recent developments include studies of identification in virtual networks; the extension of studies of identification to alternative and movement organizations; the historicizing of identity and work in the (post-) industrial age; the incorporation of transformative insights from studies of difference and diversity; and post-modern takes on the role of identity in language and narrative.
Traditional considerations of organizations have highlighted rational aspects of the workplace. More recently, scholars in Communication and related fields have begun to consider ways in which emotion is critical for understanding interaction patterns and the experience of workers and clients. One important emotional workplace process is compassionate communication. Grounding their work in the positive psychology movement and in studies of compassion in sociology and management, Communication scholars Katherine Miller, Sarah Tracy, Deborah Way, and others have begun to study and model compassionate communication processes in the workplace. Based on studies of the hospice context and workers in a variety of human service occupations, these scholars argue that compassionate communication can best be understood as a complex process that includes the noticing and acknowledging of suffering, seeing the importance of perspective-taking and emotional connection, and communicatively responding in appropriate ways.
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN ORGANIZATIONS
Organizational Communication Division

Research and theorizing about information and communication technologies (ICT) in organizations during the first decade of the 21st century emphasizes three general themes. These are the main building blocks of a general model of ICT in organizations consisting of (a) the influences on ICT use, (b) the contexts and processes in which people use them, and (c) the outcomes with which they are associated. Influences range from intentions and attitudes to emotions, norms, and power, as well as ICTs. The contexts and processes phase also includes ICTs, as well as structure (boundaries, space, time), processes (design, implementation, adoption, changes), problems (resistance, disruptions), interactions (collaboration, discourse, social relations), and knowledge sharing (expertise, learning). Outcomes include some processes and knowledge sharing, as well as adoption, use, and adaptation of ICT, and associated changes. All three phases involve different levels of actors (individual, group, organizational, societal), and aspects of research (qualitative or quantitative study, review or theory development).
THE CRYSTALLIZED SELF
Organizational Communication Division

The crystallized self is a theoretical concept developed by Tracy and Trethewey (2005) that refers to the idea that individual selves are neither “real” nor “fake,” but rather “crystallized” with multiple facets. Popular notions suggest that people have one “true” or authentic identity. However, critical and poststructural notions of the self, as discussed by scholars such as Ashcraft, Deetz, and Mumby, suggest that identities are not singular, fixed, or essential. Rather, identity and the self are a product and effect of competing, fragmentary, and contradictory discourses. This alternative metaphor of the “crystallized self” is a positive term that helps people experience and talk about the self in politicized and layered ways. Viewing the self as crystallized moves away from ideas of which parts of the self are more “authentic” and rather suggests that the self is constructed through context and communication. Multiple facets can be “real” and competing, simultaneously.
Holidays such as Mardi Gras and Halloween are often characterized by masks hiding people’s identity. Craig R. Scott, in his book *Anonymous Agencies, Backstreet Businesses, and Covert Collectives* (2013), observes that various organizations may also take various efforts to conceal their identities. His book offers a framework for thinking about how organizations and their members communicate identity to relevant audiences. Considering the degree to which organizations reveal themselves, the extent to which members express their identification with the organization, and whether the audience is public or local, Scott describes collectives ranging from transparent to shaded and from shadowed to dark. Taking a closer look at groups like Earth First!, the Church of Scientology, Alcoholics Anonymous, the KKK, Skull and Bones, U.S. special missions units, Anonymous, men’s bathhouses, various terrorist organizations, and even certain small businesses, his framework unmasks these important, but under-examined, organizations in the contemporary landscape.
Karl Weick’s theory of retrospective sensemaking is rooted in a simple but profound question: How do I know what I think until I see what I say? This theory challenged traditional approaches to decision making, namely that organizations rationally plan and respond to changes in their environment, with the notion that organizations first act and then make sense of those actions after the fact. It suggests that organizations make sense of ambiguous situations by paying attention to what they already understand, looking to rules, talking to people, and then retaining the practices that resolve the dilemma. Retrospective sensemaking has important implications for training and development practices in organizational settings, for organizational planning, and for decision-making practices at group and departmental levels. Scholars have used this theory to explain how the Supreme Court makes decisions, how airplane cockpit crews react to crises, and how White House administrations make and justify their decisions.
By the end of the 20th century, Internet technology had become an integral component of the modern economic and social environment of many Western nations. Yet the increased focus on networked technologies assumed all people to have connectivity—and this was not the case. In 1995, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released its first of a series of studies, “Falling Through the ‘Net’,” which detailed systemic gaps between populations with and without network service. These gaps were a function of geographic location (urban spaces being more connected), age (older populations were less connected), race (minorities were disproportionately connected), and income (poor populations were less connected). Follow-up studies into the early 2000s reported these access gaps to be closing with the falling cost of computing technology. However, many argue that gaps in technology literacy and usage, often along the same socio-demographics found by the NTIA, exist still today.
Crt

Rhetoric and technology may seem to be strange bedfellows. Rhetoric calls to mind scholars in tweed jackets who study the speeches of those long dead. But rhetoric is a practical art; Kenneth Burke suggests that one function of rhetoric is to build communities. Thus, it seems fitting that the individual who created a listserv in the late 1980s to drive discussion among Communication scholars holds the title of Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric at the Pennsylvania State University. Thomas Benson has served as editor of the Communication, Research, and Theory Network (CRTNET) listserv for almost three decades. CRTNET has been an important space for scholars and practitioners alike to discuss ideas and ask questions. The CRTNET listserv is currently managed by the National Communication Association and is open to anyone who wishes to discuss Communication research and theory.
Malcolm Parks and Kory Floyd’s “Making Friends in Cyberspace” was published in the *Journal of Communication* in 1996 and remains a groundbreaking study in computer-mediated communication (CMC) research. At the time of publication, many individuals were hesitant to believe that people could form “real” relationships in online settings. Parks and Floyd systematically examined the relational world of Internet discussion groups using a random sample from 24 online newsgroups and found that nearly two-thirds of users had formed a relationship on a newsgroup, with nearly one-third labeling this relationship as “highly developed.” Moreover, these online relationships often transferred to other settings such as email, snail mail, telephone, and—for one-third of participants—face-to-face interaction. As a result, this study provided the growing field of CMC with solid evidence that online relationships not only exist, but also have the potential to grow into well-developed personal relationships spanning multiple communication channels.
In 2002, Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, and Sunnafrank published “Information-Seeking Strategies, Uncertainty, and Computer-Mediated Communication.” Challenging the notion that the lack of traditional nonverbal cues (eye contact, body language) found in computer-mediated communication (CMC) leads to an inability to accomplish uncertainty reduction about others, the authors suggested that people find alternative ways to accomplish uncertainty reduction online. For example, the authors noted that some people ask more questions and disclose more information to strangers online than in face-to-face communication (e.g., Tidwell & Walther, 2002). In addition, Ramirez and colleagues added a new uncertainty reduction strategy, extractive strategies, to the existing face-to-face strategies offered by Berger (1979). Extractive strategies involve searching online archives for information about another person to reduce uncertainty about them. Today, this could include conducting a web search or searching another person’s social media posts to learn more about them.
As the Internet experienced massive growth in the mid-1990s, Joseph Walther published “Computer-Mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal, and Hyperpersonal Interaction” in 1996. This widely cited, award-winning article introduced the concept of hyperpersonal communication, which describes how relationships between previously unknown people can develop faster in computer-mediated communication (CMC) than in face-to-face communication. Walther noted that because a majority of CMC is time-delayed, it can create a cycle where message senders communicate only the most desirable information about themselves, and because people who receive these desirable messages are often relying on this information to make judgments about the message sender (especially when they feel they will interact with that person in the future), the result is flattering, positive impressions. These positive impressions from message receivers are then communicated back to the message sender to close the cycle, which then leads to more cycles of repetitive desirable messages being exchanged back and forth, and rapid relationship development.
As she explored the 1990s-era proliferation of technology use in organizational and educational settings, Caroline Haythornthwaite stumbled upon a surprising finding. She observed that closer group members used more media to communicate with one another. This association, which forms the core of media multiplexity theory, has received considerable research attention from Communication scholars. Researchers have observed media multiplexity operating in interpersonal relationships outside organizational contexts and across media as diverse as telephone, social media, and online gaming. However, a recent study by Andrew Ledbetter and Joseph Mazer found that the effect of media multiplexity is not automatic. Rather, media use predicted greater relational closeness only when the communicator held a positive attitude toward the medium. Therefore, partners who desire greater closeness may wish to use more media to communicate with each other—but perhaps only if they actually like the media they choose.
Throughout the 1980s, many scholars reached the conclusion that computer networks were task-oriented and poorly suited for communicating emotions. In 1987, Ronald Rice and Gail Love published “Electronic Emotion: Socioemotional Content in a Computer-Mediated Communication Network,” a study vital to early computer-mediated communication (CMC) research based on the authors’ discovery that about 30 percent of all messages through computer networks were “socioemotional” in nature (communicating unity, tension, agreement, and/or disagreement). Additionally, Rice and Love found that both less experienced and more experienced computer network users provided about the same amount of emotion in their messages. This study also demonstrated the importance of studying groups in CMC over longer periods of time (six weeks for this study), as opposed to most other early CMC research that examined groups at one moment in time (such as in controlled experiments).
Early research on communication via computer concluded that it was hampered by the lack of cues such as tone of voice and facial expressions. However, Joseph Walther’s 1992 paper, “Interpersonal Effects in Computer-Mediated Interaction: A Relational Perspective,” introduced Social Information Processing theory (SIP) and radically changed how Communication scholars approached the topic. SIP posits that, over time, people can develop relationships through communicating entirely via computer that are equal to those developed in person. Walther argued that this result is not just because participants adapt to the limitations of the computer, but also because people are motivated to develop relationships and will form impressions of others based on whatever information they have. Because the rate of information exchange is slower when communicating via computer, relationships may take longer to develop, but they can be as positive, or sometimes more positive, than in-person relationships.
People use multiple communication technologies when they communicate. Even our smartphones have so many communication channels that it is hard to tell if we are making a phone call, sending a text, or sending an email. Yet only in the past decade have we begun to create theories and conduct research to explain how this mix of technology can be used strategically. Keri Stephens’ body of work on successive ICT use (Communication Theory, 2007), multicommunicating (Management Communication Quarterly, 2012), and differentiating between sequential and simultaneous ICTs (Human Communication Research, 2012 & 2013) has provided us a bridge between human communication and communication technology use. Her most recent work applies this concept to emergency communication and finds that real-time human communication is an important part of the mix of technologies used to capture attention in this busy world.
WARRANTING THEORY
Human Communication and Technology Division

As articulated by Joe Walther and Malcolm Parks in 2002, warranting theory suggests that the less online information messages are perceived to be manipulated by others, the more that information is trusted. One way that research has examined warranting in online information is by testing messages from individuals themselves or from others about an individual. Findings indicated that individual, self-supporting claims online (e.g., Facebook status), which can be highly manipulated, garner low trust (low warranting value). Meanwhile, information that supports people from third parties (e.g., Facebook posts from others supporting a person) are seen as less likely to be manipulated and are more trusted overall (high warranting value). Other research used warranting theory to examine levels of trust for online product impressions and consumer behavior. Warranting theory helps us learn about the challenges people encounter when examining various types of information about other people or products online.
In his 2006 book, *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins discussed the “Black Box Fallacy” as a way of understanding the misconceptions associated with technological determinism in analyzing the future of communication. The fallacy is that one piece of technology will facilitate the communication needs of society and other forms of communication will be moved by the wayside. Jenkins argues that older forms of media do not die, but simply adapt to the current state of the media economy. The delivery technologies associated with the media (VHS tapes, audio cassettes) do disappear, but the media content evolves to meet the needs of society. This evolution means that society needs multiple communication channels to address the needs of humanity. There are multiple “black boxes” that fulfill the needs of society on a daily basis, and those “black boxes” will evolve as communication technology improves.
During his 2000 “Shibuya Epiphany,” Howard Rheingold was one of the first researchers to describe the presence of “instant and ubiquitous” data and connectivity in the realm of the mobile. Beyond the technological changes that occurred after Rhiengold wrote this, he focused on how those changes would impact society, especially in the realms of popular culture and social activism. These “technologies of cooperation” would allow the complex social networks that previously existed in the informal and the intangible to be made more solid and visible through consistent communication and the database of connections (in Rheingold’s case, the cellular phonebook). Rheingold’s focus during this time was the role of text in maintaining “ad-hocracies” that would be considered the foundation of what we would know as social media today.
Technology has the potential to immerse learners in unprecedented teaching experiences. Through the use of video games, students can explore the imaginative terrain of exotic planets or foster the rise of civilizations. While literature and lectures were once chief teaching mechanisms, the ways people play and learn are shifting. During this transformative period, social games are, according to Steinkuehler (2004), “quickly becoming the form of entertainment and a major mechanism of socialization for young and old alike.” As such, educators are beginning to adapt to the changing nature of the classroom using game-based learning to improve communication and collaboration. Gaming advocate McGonigal (2011) suggested that “the great challenge for us today, and for the remainder of the century, is to integrate games more closely into our everyday lives and to embrace them as a platform for collaborating on our most important planetary efforts.”
As the Internet continues to gain in popularity, both consumers and health care professionals are recognizing its potential as a primary channel for health communication. Zhang and Meadows (2013) analyzed the publication trends over 16 years of research published in top-ranked communication and health communication journals. The study found that there had been an increase in the overall publication of Internet-related health communication articles across the journals during the time period. Communication scholars should be encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary research efforts, test new media theories, and apply various methodological perspectives. These findings highlighted some notable trends in research for the future development of health communication scholarship and the Communication discipline.
Foresight studies include a number of methodologies to anticipate future events as an approach to rethinking the present. Forecasting, as Paul Saffo (2007) elaborates in his essay for the Harvard Business Review, involves mapping areas of uncertainty. With sufficient intention and evidence from weak and strong signals, trends, and other drivers, the contours of emergent futures arise. Foresight studies have in the past 10 to 20 years become a mainstream feature of government agencies, corporations, and nonprofit firms. Recently, researchers in Finland, Sirkka Heinonen and Elina Hiltunen (2012), in the journal Futures, have suggested that showing images of weak signals, signs anticipating or pointing to possibly emerging new issues, can stimulate creative and long-term thinking. They call this method the Futures Window. They recommend further research for combining spaces to stimulate both creativity and foresight, what they call creative “foresight spaces.”
In his 1938 book, *Le Théâtre et son Double* (*The Theatre and Its Double*), French theorist and playwright Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) introduced his concept of the Theatre of Cruelty. Artaud wanted to create a theatre capable of overcoming the real world of the audience in order to establish a sort of metaphysical experience. To do so required a theatrical aesthetic that would be so overwhelming as to allow for a direct connection between performers and audience. To accomplish this, Artaud utilized surreal, subconscious, and bizarre imagery in his own plays. *Jet de Sang* (*Jet of Blood*), first written in 1925 (but not performed until 1964), is a short play that directly anticipates the style called for in his later work. Artaud’s approach has been tremendously influential for a variety of artists and thinkers in the 20th century, including English director Peter Brook, American playwright Sam Shepard, and French philosopher Jacques Derrida.
Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre director, author, and social justice activist, is one of the most influential drama theorists of the modern era. In Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal described his work as a system of physical exercises, games, image techniques, and improvisations whose aim is to motivate actors and audiences (called spect-actors) to dialogue about social and personal problems and search for solutions through interactive performances. Boal began in the 1960s, working with peasants in both rural and urban areas of South America. He believed that theatre could serve as a “rehearsal for revolution,” teaching oppressed people the strategies they needed to change their world. In addition to a celebrated career as a director, Boal served one term as a vereador (city council member) in Rio de Janeiro from 1993 to 1997, where he developed “Legislative Theatre.” Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008, he died in 2009.
Over the course of his career, German playwright, director, and theorist Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) developed an approach to theatre known as Epic Theatre. Heavily influenced by Plato, Karl Marx, and Erwin Piscator, Brecht advocated for a politically oriented theatre that appealed to the intellect of the audience. Brecht challenged the prevailing model of theatre, grounded in Aristotle’s cathartic theatre, which relied primarily on manipulating the audience’s emotions. Epic Theatre did not exclude emotional responses—indeed, Brecht insisted upon them—but he did not want the audience to be consumed by them. Brecht desired an audience that would take action in the real world as a result of the theatrical experience. To break the emotional spell, Epic Theatre attempted to alienate audiences by constantly reminding them that they were experiencing a play. Brecht’s theoretical writings were collected and translated into English by John Willet in Brecht on Theatre (1964).
Internationally renowned author and director Peter Brook (b. 1925) is best known for his first book, *The Empty Space* (1968). Drawing on his experiences as an English stage director, including a long stint at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Brook examined the theatre as an entity that existed in four states: the deadly, holy, rough, and immediate. Each state describes a particular type of theatre, and through an analysis steeped in the theories of Grotowski, Artaud, and Brecht, Brook developed an approach to performance based on bare essentials. As he states in his opening to the book, “A man walks across an empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theater to be engaged.” This emphasis on actors, audience, and space described in Brook’s book has become a central concern of contemporary drama, and *The Empty Space* an essential work.
POOR THEATER
Theatre, Film, and New Multi-Media Division

Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) was an innovative director, theorist, and educator who aimed to explore and refine the distinctly theatrical—that which separates live performance from other genres. Chief among those distinctions is the relationship between spectator and performer. Grotowski placed the performer at the center of his ‘poor theater’—not text, a director’s vision, or elements of spectacle—and spent his career looking for ways to improve the performer’s basic toolkit (voice and body, imagination, etc.) and how it could be used to more effectively communicate between the performer and audience. He referred to his spaces as laboratories, as he believed them to be true centers of research, and to his endeavors as experiments, though he also described theatrical performance as spiritual practice. Through the performer’s ability to make the invisible visible, the spiritual corporeal, Grotowski hoped his work in theater would lead to personal and social change.
Corporations frequently find themselves in crises—situations that pose a threat to stakeholders and/or the organization. Crises can be a serious threat to corporate reputations and/or public safety. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was developed by Timothy Coombs and Sherry Holladay to improve crisis communication efforts. SCCT uses an analysis of key variables in the crisis situation to guide the selection of crisis response strategies—the words and actions managers employ after a crisis occurs. The key variables include type of crisis, history of past crises, and reputation prior to the crisis. The key variables help crisis managers anticipate how much responsibility for the crisis stakeholders will assign to the corporation. After addressing issues of public safety and welfare, crisis managers then select crisis response strategies that maximize reputation protection by matching the crisis response to the level of crisis responsibility perceived by stakeholders.
Michael Kent and Maureen Taylor (1998) introduced Dialogic theory to public relations as a means of providing a conceptual framework for understanding the ethical practice of public relations. Dialogue, as a public relations concept, includes five features: mutuality, the recognition of organization–public relationships; propinquity, the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics; empathy, the supportiveness and confirmation of stakeholders and public goals and interests; risk, the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and commitment, the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue and understanding in its interactions with publics. When organizations enact dialogic orientations with employees, publics, activists, and global stakeholders, public relations becomes a valued organizational and societal tool. Dialogue, however, is not a panacea. Public relations scholars and professionals still must draw upon traditional interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, rhetorical, and other communication frameworks.
An infrastructural theory of risk communication, as articulated by Robert Heath and Michael Palenchar, features building and sustaining relationships that foster discourse and the sharing of perceptions, and communication and action structures that are based on shared meanings across varied and multiple constituencies, issues, and levels of understanding. Each public makes an idiosyncratic response based on its unique decision heuristic. From this perspective, risk communication is a community infrastructure, a transactional communication process among individuals and organizations regarding the character, cause, degree, significance, uncertainty, control, and overall perception of a risk. It provides the opportunity to understand and appreciate risk bearers and other stakeholders’ concerns related to risks generated by organizations and nature; engage in dialogue to address differences and concerns; carry out appropriate actions that can mitigate perceived risks; and create a climate of participatory and effective discourse as a rationale for collaborative decision making for a more fully functioning society.
Image Repair Theory (Benoit, 1995) concerns how one can respond to accusations of suspicions of wrongdoing. Five general strategies, some with several tactics, can be used: denying the accusation, including shifting blame to another; reducing offensiveness of the offensive act; reducing responsibility for the offensive act; apologizing; and corrective action. This theory has been applied in many cases in both the United States and abroad: corporate, political, religious, health, sports, and celebrities. If one is guilty, it is wrong to lie about it, and dangerous—because the truth often comes out. However, other considerations, such as avoiding lawsuits or criminal charges, may lead the accused to try another strategy instead of admitting it (e.g., minimizing the harm, a form of reducing offensiveness). It is often good to offer corrective action. For example, after its capsules were poisoned, Tylenol introduced tamper-resistant packaging, so using the approach does not necessarily admit guilt.
The issue of sustainability has been high on the public and corporate agenda for some time. Research has previously demonstrated how corporations argue that they are on a ‘journey’ toward sustainability. This, then, would provide some leeway as they are at least striving toward this goal. In a recent paper in the journal Sustainable Development, Øyvind Ihlen and Juliet Roper show a new trend among the world’s largest corporations: in non-financial reports, they typically treat sustainability and sustainable development as given and unproblematic instead of addressing the fundamental problems of today’s practices or the dilemmas of the concepts. The most striking finding, however, is that so many of the corporations argue that they have integrated sustainability principles and that they have already worked like this for years. Such arguments arguably inhibit the change in business models many commentators call for.
The topic of Strategic Issues Management (SIM) is a hot-button concern that has attracted a significant amount of attention over the past five decades. As argued by Health and Palenchar (2009) in their second edition of Strategic Issues Management, SIM is not something pasted on an organization when needed as a result of a crisis, but is the essence of smart organizational cultures and the key proactive element of public relations scholarship and practice, along with risk communication. SIM goes beyond a communication function, and research advocates that the efforts devoted to understanding the lay of the land and working with other groups and organizations that have aligned interests is vital to the success of organizations, regardless of their type and role in society. Ultimately, the formation of meaning through words and the forging of ideas are crucial to SIM as an organizational and society effort.
Information technology has increased the volume of data that can be collected and stored at an unprecedented rate. The change in data quantity eventually leads to a paradigm shift, often referred to as Big Data, which may profoundly reshape business models and affect our approaches to scientific research across disciplines. In the era of Big Data, the ability to incorporate innovative data analytics is crucial to the success of a business and even an entire profession. In public relations, Big Data may affect how we plan campaigns and evaluate their impact. The availability of real-time, massive social media data may also change how we detect early signs of crises and respond to crises across media platforms. Public relations scholars are working to develop theories and models that help practitioners exploit Big Data’s potential and to manage the threats it can pose.
The areas of health, crisis, and risk communication have played key roles in extending the applied and theoretical utility of public relations research. Examining the moderating role of context unique to the specific organization managing the crisis, and not just the crisis situation itself, is one research stream advocated by Elizabeth Avery that can richly inform crisis directives in more nuanced ways. For example, organizational resources—including time, money, and staff—may play key roles in that organization’s ability to manage crisis. Thus, management directives and crisis plans must be sensitive to unique operating environments. Limited budgets and personnel especially plague public health agencies that are managing high-magnitude crises with serious implications for public health (such as epidemics including pertussis and swine flu). Public relations research can better serve these organizations by developing more tailored crisis directives sensitive to unique organizational types and available resources.
PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH
Public Relations Division

Not understanding how communication contributes to one’s life may result in many opportunities lost, misunderstandings, and misperceptions. For example, what is your response when you hear “that is only public relations”? Do you listen carefully? Or do you dismiss the thought? Many issues emerge in society, and Robert Heath noted the “wrangle in the marketplace” in his 2008 chapter on Strategic Issues Management as a “society of competing ideas.” Public relations as a profession, based on nearly 4,000 research studies, helps create a better understanding of the issues in the networks, community, individuals, and organizations with which you are involved. For example, the results from these projects can clarify the criteria used to identify the image of your organization from your community’s perspective, assist you in understanding how an issue developed, and help you develop strategies for managing a crisis.
Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is a theoretical jewel emerging from within public relations literature. SCCT posits that different aspects of crisis events, such as perceived causal origination (e.g., victim, accidental, or intentional), serve as a conceptual predictor of stakeholders’ attributions of blame, and therefore can inform effective public crisis response strategies. New experimental research is nuancing the theory by focusing specifically on the impact of media and source credibility. New findings by Alicia Mason, in Corporate Reputation Review, indicate that even when organizations are victims of crises, if expected treatment responsibility is high, the organization can and likely will face elevated levels of reputation threat. With this knowledge, we will be able to better respond to a variety of risks and crisis situations in a manner that protects and informs publics, preserves relationships, strengthens and enhances communities, and informs organizational leadership across an array of sectors.
Are maps more than just a scientific tool for objectively charting the spaces around us? Tim Barney votes “yes.” His recent work in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* finds maps to be influential historical documents that articulated America’s growing international power during the Cold War. Maps circulated through a wide array of contexts in the era—from Congressional reports and State Department conference rooms to labor union meetings, popular magazines, battlefields, and homes—and became powerful and strategic modes of communication. Particularly in the Cold War’s tense East/West confrontations, and the ensuing fight for influence across the so-called Third World, maps made persuasive visual arguments that framed the tensions between America’s national security interests and its expanding international aspirations. In the process, cartography’s unique mixture of artistic vision and scientific authenticity shaped the ways in which our leaders both saw the world and made important political decisions about that world.
Over the last decade, scholars have gone from recognizing that rhetoricians regularly ground their work in topics related to risk-framing and perception to delineating a sub-field of study specifically dedicated to the rhetoric of risk. The rhetoric of risk as an area of study has since been defined as dedicated to analyses of discourses about risk and how those discourses function to shape individual and public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. An emphasis on understanding how risks are constituted via rhetoric over time is one that pervades scholarship in this area. This might involve, for example, an exploration of the role that context and social factors play in discursive accounts of risk, and/or the expansion of traditional notions of risk as an elitist delineation to account for the role that lay individuals play in the communication of risk in specific situations and historical moments.
Building upon decades of scholarship dedicated to women’s public address, *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman’s Party* (2011), by Belinda A. Stillion Southard, helps answer questions about the role of rhetoric in social change, including how presidential rhetorics shape and constrain political agency and how the disenfranchised assert political agency and constitute citizenship identities. The book places the rhetorics of the self-proclaimed militant women’s suffrage organization, the National Woman’s Party (NWP), in conversation with the rhetorics of President Woodrow Wilson. Steeped in archival research, Stillion Southard analyzes NWP photographs, letters, pamphlets, protest banners, and weekly issues of *The Suffragist* to chart the organization’s seven-year campaign for suffrage. Through the strategy of political mimesis, the NWP appropriated Wilson’s rhetorics and rituals to simultaneously effect resistance and compliance with his refashioned citizenship ideals. Ultimately, these women asserted political agency to help expand political rights for U.S. women.
In the United States, national identity is constituted through a variety of rhetorical modes and sources: myths of the nation’s history, the election of public representatives, the words of presidents, acts of public protest, and much more. Public address scholarship provides an important way of understanding the complexities of national identity. For example, Leslie J. Harris rhetorically analyzes the American obsession over marriage and its connections to national public identity in the 19th-century United States. Public debates over seemingly distinct marriage controversies functioned as ways of both challenging and reifying norms of gender, race, class, and ethnicity while providing a lens for debating some of the most heated public issues of the time. This book proves that marriage is a critical site of regulating, performing, and constituting ways of being in public, all of which have deep implications on understanding of the “correct” national body and, thus, proper citizenship.
The way we communicate shapes the character of our ideas. Perhaps few philosophers have understood this as keenly as William James (1842–1910), who not only defined American philosophy at the turn of the 20th century, but did so by communicating with popular, non-academic audiences. In the 2013 book *William James and the Art of Popular Statement* (Michigan State University Press), Paul Stob shows how James developed the philosophy of pragmatism by speaking to ordinary Americans in periodicals, best-selling books, and community lecture halls. In fact, Stob argues, James not only addressed his work to popular audiences but built his philosophy around them, incorporating their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences into a new system of knowledge and action. On the public stage, with language designed to captivate, inspire, and empower those outside of academia, James made pragmatism a philosophy for the people.
During the 1970s, Paulo Freire’s groundbreaking pedagogy made accessible what would become known as critical pedagogy, a philosophy adopted by educators across the globe. Known for the ways it engages students and teachers as active creators of knowledge, unearths power structures inherent within educational systems, and engenders hope and possibility, critical pedagogy began making its way into Communication Studies in the 1990s—largely through the work of Jo Sprague. The 2007 publication of Deanna L. Fassett and John T. Warren’s Critical Communication Pedagogy provided a thorough discussion of the contribution of Communication Studies to critical pedagogy. Grounded in the Communication perspectives on dialogue and social construction, critical Communication pedagogy highlights the ways both macro and micro communication theories and practices constitute the systems in which we operate. As such, communication also encompasses the theories and practices by which we, as active social agents, can change those very systems—including education.
As many basic Communication courses are integral to general education programs across the country, it is imperative to have assessment procedures in place that are reliable and reflective of actual student performance. A program of research developed by colleagues (Simonds, Hunt, et al.) at Illinois State University on speech evaluation has been instrumental in addressing the concern of Communication assessment. This program of research has addressed evaluation fidelity in terms of criterion-based assessment and rater training; the development of a systematic evaluation process, which includes the development of an evaluation form, criteria, models of expected performance, and instructor training; an analysis of the relationship between instructor feedback and student improvement; and the use of language from the criteria and the quality of instructor feedback. These efforts lay the foundation for basic Communication courses to provide clear measures of speaking effectiveness, thereby strengthening the role of Communication in general education.
Preparing college students in oral communication competencies is essential in today’s information-based world. Even though people increasingly rely on connecting through social media, face-to-face interactions remain foundational to students’ academic, professional, social, and civic lives. Thus, providing students with a cognitive understanding of communication principles, behavioral skills to function effectively, and supportive attitudes toward communication are keys to curriculum, instruction, and assessment of oral communication. Research by Morreale, Worley, and Hugenberg (2010) indicates that over 60 percent of the responding institutions include a basic Communication course in their general education requirements. Since most students are likely to take but one course in oral communication, the curriculum should be inclusive of communication process (verbal and nonverbal); intrapersonal communication and listening; interpersonal communication (interviewing and group processes); and presentational skills (informative briefings and persuasive speaking). Learning outcomes assessment, then, centers on measuring how students demonstrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral course goals.
Public speaking has long been a hallmark of Communication Studies as a discipline. Indeed, many introductory-level courses address public speaking as their explicit focus. In more contemporary times, particularly with the rise of citizen journalism and civic engagement, scholars have been interested in public speaking as public advocacy, which describes more than a simple persuasive message. In their introductory Communication Studies text, Fassett and Warren (2011) describe public advocacy as “engaging the public through careful, thoughtful, and responsible communication toward an end that seeks a better world for our communities and our families.” More than an attempt to change an audience’s viewpoint or practice, public advocacy understands communication to be explicitly political (position-oriented) and active. It asks speakers and audiences to be socially and ethically aware of the ways they construct and embody their persuasive messages, as well as the implications of those messages.
Ethnography, the study and writing of culture, takes Communication scholars into the field to experience various cultures, to interview people about their lives, and to write those stories and share them with others. Robin Clair (2006) conducted an ethnography that focused on the stories that created an urban community, ranging from bedtime stories that parents told their children, to how community members reported that religion helped them manage hard times. The stories also included historical accounts of a neighborhood fire in the early 1900s, which led community members to define themselves as people who help one another, no matter their class status. As one neighborhood woman said, “even the rich women reached their hands into the flames to pull children from the burning building.” This same sentiment helped the neighborhood overcome racial discrimination in the 1980s and 90s, reminding the neighbors that they are the kind of people who come together to help each other.
Autoethnography is the study of culture from a personal vantage point. Specifically, these researchers study phenomena that they experience within their own culture. Patrick Dillon recently wrote about what it is like for a man to undertake the roles of husband, father, and graduate student by way of autoethnography. Alexander, Moreira, and Kumar (2012) published a three-part study of the father/son relationship discussed by three different researchers, which provided heartfelt accounts of the joy and sorrows associated within these father/son relationships. These articles were nominated for an Outstanding Article of the Year Award in 2013.
Several ethnographic studies have collected the narratives of holocaust survivors. A recent addition to this area of study by Ellis and Rawicki (2012) reminds us of what should never be forgotten—the suffering of Jews during the brutal period of imprisonment, torture, and execution in the days of Nazi occupation. Rawicki’s stories are brought to publication by Ellis, who conducted the interviews. In the interviews, Rawicki tells of the ways in which he survived using his own skill and with the help of others. This article was nominated for an Outstanding Article of the Year Award in 2013.
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FARMING
Ethnography Division

One ethnographic study (Clair, 2011) comprised a researcher conducting an in-depth study of an Indiana farm-family, which revealed the ways in which one farmer identified himself in relation to family, community, and the land. Rhetorical and linguistic choices demonstrated that the farmer employed metaphors to explain his relationship with big government and big corporations, but used no metaphors when describing the family, community, or the land. The researcher explained this phenomenon as demonstrating that farmers are literally close to life and death (e.g., birthing some animals and burying others), close to the earth, and close to their families, thus not needing figurative language to give importance to how they live; whereas, the average worker lives by metaphors (e.g., not meeting a deadline does not mean that someone will die in the average workplace situation, but gives artificial importance to a project).
ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT EXPERIENCE
Ethnography Division

Ethnographers study cultures that are often times hidden from the view of the average person. In a study by Moreman and an anonymous co-author, the story of what it is like for an undocumented minority student to take classes and look to the future is unveiled. Moreman’s co-author is called Persona non Grata, Latin for “Unwelcome Person.” The co-author must write under this guise due to illegal status and can never share the joy of publication. Together, the authors tell the story of student and teacher, but before the completion of the article, Persona non Grata leaves school, wondering what good a degree will do if she cannot acknowledge her achievement for employment or civic action. Moreman draws lessons from the experience, especially for educators. This article was nominated for an Outstanding Article of the Year Award in 2013.
Auto-ethnographers, who study their own personal experiences in order to relate them to others, especially within the same culture, have begun telling their own sexual stories. While sharing one’s own stories of sexuality may invite ridicule or worse, being among the first to do so can mean being brave enough to share stories that other people are afraid to share. From Tony Adam’s book, *Narrating the Closet*, to Kristine Blinne’s work on masturbation, a brave new world is forged. Blinne finds that sexualities move from the personal to the cultural and political, reminding us of the significant impact that such open and frank discussions can have. Blinne noted that “the first African-American U.S. Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders, [was] removed from her post in 1994, for promoting masturbation as a ‘safe-sex’ alternative...” These ethnographers take on taboo subjects to tell us that the taboo is all too ordinary.
It is often difficult for researchers to account for the complex process of moving from methodological design to final manuscript. However, the metaphor of an architectural blueprint offers insight into the foundational principles supporting ethnographic research and writing. Through their 2011 article in Symbolic Interaction, Jennifer Scarduzio, Gino Giannini, and Patricia Geist-Martin offer the architectural blueprint metaphor as a set of principles for creating, writing, revising, teaching, and evaluating ethnographic scholarship. Their essay invites researchers to embrace the blueprint metaphor along with metaphors others have created as inspiration for both pedagogical and methodological practices.
Origin of language theories consistently neglect the role that women likely played in the development of symbolic communication. Language origin theories were so numerous that in 1866 the Société de Linguistiques de Paris refused to accept further theories (Aarsleff, 1982; Gans, 1982; Hewes, 1973; Hockett, 1960), but scholars continued to provide theories even into the postmodern period (e.g., Mortensen, 1991; Foucault, 1966/1973). And still the theories failed to incorporate the voice of women, until Clair proposed that the mother/infant relationship initiated symbolic communication in the form of silence (whether verbal—shh—or physical—rocking a child). Once this symbolic action was transferred to provide meaning in other situations, language began. Thus, Clair (1998) argued in the first chapter of her NCA award-winning book, Organizing Silence: A World of Possibilities, women were at the fore of symbolic action and language was born of silence.
PARTNER ABUSE
Feminist and Women’s Studies Division

Partner abuse is a serious problem which has received a vast amount of attention from interpersonal researchers, especially Dominic Infante and colleagues. But sexual and partner abuse is receiving a different type of scholarly attention in the form of an academic novel by Robin Clair (2013), Zombie Seed and the Butterfly Blues: A Case of Social Justice. The novel focuses attention on corporate greed, but the main character encounters the narratives of partner abuse and is forced to face her own tragic past. The book is being used in a course at Purdue University, Rhetoric in the Western World, which is grounded in the premise that rhetoric should be studied as civic action. The course includes guest speakers (e.g., from a local women’s shelter) and teaches the students how to create on-line petitions for civic action. Facts on partner abuse are found at the end of the novel.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Feminist and Women’s Studies Division

Silence, sexual harassment and voice: Communication scholars, especially feminist scholars, have contributed theoretically and pragmatically to helping to expose silence surrounding sexual harassment, and violence against women (e.g., from the early works of Clair, 1991, 1993a, 1994; Strine, 1992; Taylor & Conrad, 1992; Violanti, 1996; Warren, 1996; Wood, 1992, to the edited collections of Bingham, 1994; Kreps, 1993; and theses/dissertations, e.g., Chapman, 1994). Furthermore, scholars have included studies of the sexual harassment of men (Clair, 1994; Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2008, 2010). In addition, their works have contributed to giving voice concerning these issues, and to policy-making at the organizational, national (Clair, 1993b), and international (Tsetsura, 2012) levels. They have done so without forgetting that silence is not a one-trick pony; while silence may be oppressive, it can also bring peace and liberation (Clair, 1998; Malhorta & Carillo-Rowe, Eds., 2013; Palmer-Mehta & Haliliuc, 2011).
FIGURAL ANALYSIS
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Communication Studies Division

Rhetorical scholars have traditionally been concerned with particular “figures of speech,” but recent cultural theorists have focused on analyzing larger forces shaping politics and practices. Joan Faber McAlister’s 2011 article in the *Southern Communication Journal*, “Figural Materialism: Renovating Marriage through the American Family Home,” brings these two interests together by updating figural analysis and applying it to contemporary visual culture. McAlister’s study shows how depictions of the married couple and designs for the family home changed dramatically in the last decades of the 20th century to make marriage and family life sexier and more appealing—and helped to weather both feminist and GLBTQ critiques of these institutions. Moreover, McAlister shows that figures are not just devices that we use, but also identities that we come to inhabit, influencing our public personas and political commitments as well as our personal beliefs and intimate choices.
The field of Communication Studies has greatly contributed to analyzing and theorizing about discourses surrounding the legality and performance of same-sex marriage. In a Text and Performance Quarterly article, “‘It’s Not a Wedding, It’s a Gayla’: Queer Resistance and Normative Recuperation,” Dustin Goltz and Jason Zingsheim (2010) describe their attempt to create a non-heteronormative and non-homonormative celebration of their love through a “Gayla” and how this effort was continually recuperated and read as a “gay wedding.” Goltz and Zingsheim use critical communication and performance theory to make sense of an approach to marriage equality that “simultaneously marks gay exclusion from legal, economic, and social equity, and enacts a broader interrogation of heteronormative systems of relation for their patriarchal, classist, and homophobic functions” (p. 292). This scholarship offers a rich and nuanced understanding of the complexity of, and stakes involved in, communicating and performing “queer.”
“Scant attention has been paid to the role of sexual preference as a variable in the communication process.” This opening line of James W. Chesbro’s 1980 article in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, “Paradoxical Views of ‘Homosexuality’ in the Rhetoric of Social Scientists: A Fantasy Theme Analysis,” was an important step in LGBTQ scholarship in the Communication discipline. Chesbro’s article argued, through his application of Fantasy Theme Analysis, that the fantasy of “The Homosexual as Degenerate” versus “Mainstreaming the Homosexual” created a paradox of meaning consistent with public opinion of the times. He offered a call for an emergent “Cultural Compatibility” fantasy and proposed the word “gay” as a more productive, meaning-centered orientation for Communication scholars. His article, one of the first on this subject in a flagship disciplinary journal, forecasted a trend in both an abundance of subsequent LGBTQ Communication scholarship and social attitude change.
No queer essay has had quite the subversive impact on the field of Communication as “Sextext,” by Frederick Corey and Thomas Nakayama. The essay is a fictional autobiographical account of a gay graduate student, his ethnographic involvement in pornography, and theories of the “text” from Barthes, Foucault, and other poststructuralist thinkers. Published in Text and Performance Quarterly in 1997, it led to notoriously divisive debates on the NCA listserv CRTNET and journals across the range of subdisciplines. “Sextext” opened up conversations about the proper role of the self, the body, and the text in ethnographic research; the relation of academia to transgressive sexualities; and questions of propriety and integrity for academic discourse.
QUEER RHETORICAL STUDIES
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Communication Studies Division

Queer Rhetorical Studies scholars have increasingly worked to locate, publicize, and examine the discourse of marginalized individuals and answer Charles E. Morris’s call to use sexuality as a lens within public address scholarship. Within the narrative of LGBTQ history, lesbians and lesbian-feminists are often rendered invisible, in part because many worked within other social movements (not always openly as lesbian), joined feminist collectives and chapters around the country, or worked primarily within gay rights and liberation organizations that have received minimal attention. Alyssa Samek’s 2012 study examines lesbian-feminist published writings and speeches given during conferences, marches, demonstrations, and political rallies between 1970 and 1980 to reveal how they crafted a space for lesbian-feminist politics, identity, and liberation within coalitional relationships that also marginalized them. She traces the rhetorical strategies lesbian-feminists employed to make their voices heard during the 1970s despite significant historical, political, and social constraints.
LESBIAN-HEADED FAMILIES
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Communication Studies Division

In spite of the increasing numbers of lesbian-headed families, lesbian mothers are held accountable for their perceived nonconformity as others react with discomfort, skepticism, and sometimes outright denial of the lesbian family form. Such disconfirmation can lead to rejection, decreased social support, and vulnerability for lesbian families, and can create barriers between female co-parents. Koenig Kellas and Suter (2012) published a study in Communication Monographs on how female co-parents manage these interactive challenges. They found that female co-parents experienced challenges emerging from societal master narratives (e.g., health care, education, politics, religion) as well as from comparisons to heterosexual families, direct rebukes, and exclusion. They responded in a variety of ways, such as pre-emptively addressing challenges, leading by example, and justifying family love and family ties across generations. Participants advised other lesbian mothers to model for others, lead by example, manage emotions, surround themselves with supportive people, and focus on their children.
Perhaps no other family experience is simultaneously more rewarding and more challenging than coparenting children. Coparental communication refers not to the individual attempts of a parent to guide and direct the behaviors and activities of his or her child, but to the interaction patterns that emerge as one coparent supports and/or undermines the parenting attempts of his or her coparenting partner. According to Jenna R. Shimkowski and Paul Schrodt’s study of coparental communication published in Communication Monographs in 2012, hostile coparenting may heighten the negative effects of witnessing parents’ conflict on children’s well-being. Young adult children who perceive that their parents criticize each other and undermine each other in their parenting efforts are more likely to report diminished self-esteem, heightened levels of stress, and poorer mental health. More importantly, their findings were consistent for young adult children from both divorced and intact families.
Scholars have largely agreed on two major dimensions of parenting associated with socialization: control and warmth. Parenting as warmth is the demonstration of acceptance, emotional availability, and sensitivity. Parenting as control is the management of a child’s behaviors. Positive parenting as control includes clearly setting rules, consistently enforcing those rules, monitoring and supervision, consideration of the child’s viewpoint, and discipline through induction and reasoning. An authoritative style of parenting (appropriate levels of expression of parental warmth or acceptance, clear boundaries, expressions of support, and appropriate exertion of control) is often considered optimal. Inappropriate or inconsistent control or warmth has been linked to deficits in social communication competencies, the inability to form successful peer relationships, child delinquency, externalizing behaviors, eating disorders, and self-esteem issues.
Overparenting, known colloquially as “helicopter parenting,” involves the application of developmentally inappropriate parenting tactics, particularly to late adolescents and young adults. This overprotective and overzealous form of parenting is often enacted with the best of intentions, but Communication researchers are finding that it is associated with mental health problems in both the parents who enact this behavior and the emerging adults who are on the receiving end of it. Specifically, overparenting has been associated with a greater sense of entitlement, narcissism, anxiety, and stress in young adults. The latter two problems appear to stem from poor coping skills, which may be one of the unintended consequences of overparenting. Parents who engage in this practice also appear to have high levels of anxiety. Communication researchers theorize that overparenting might be motivated by parental regrets over unfulfilled goals that get projected onto children and pursued as a means of generating a vicarious sense of accomplishment for the parent.
In 1996, Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery developed Relational Dialectics Theory (RDT), which was revised in 2011 by Baxter. RDT helps us understand the communicative struggles we face as we make sense of our relational experiences and how meaning emerges from such struggle. Communicative struggle pervades the human experience, but particulars vary by culture. For example, in U.S. middle-class, Anglo culture, parents and children might struggle to construct their relationship as autonomous or connected. They might favor one, vacillate between the two, or construct a relational meaning that combines autonomy and connection in a novel way. RDT has helped us understand a variety of family issues, such as how families construct adoption as valid against a cultural ideal that deems it inferior to biological reproduction, how children construct closeness with stepparents while remaining loyal to nonresidential parents, how forgiveness is negotiated in families, and how families experience ambiguous loss.
Families play an important role in providing care from birth to death, both in everyday situations and during health crises. Although talking about health-related issues may be difficult, the positive benefits are well-documented. Open family conversations have a positive impact on lifestyle choices. For example, adolescents whose parents talk with them are more likely to delay the onset of sexual behavior and practice safer sex when they do engage in sexual behaviors; less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; and less likely to develop eating disorders. During a health crisis—whether a cancer diagnosis or an accidental injury—family communication emphasizing personal self-reliance, family cohesion, and attentiveness leads to the most positive outcomes, whereas controlling, critical, overprotective, and distracting behaviors are associated with negative health outcomes.
FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND ADOPTION  
Family Communication Division

Prior to the last decade, adoptive families had not been studied in the discipline of Communication Studies, but had been studied primarily in allied fields. This changed after Kathleen Galvin’s 2003 research agenda in the *The Journal of Family Communication* and 2006 typology in *The Family Communication Sourcebook*. Galvin forwarded the notion that as discourse-dependent families, adoptive families are more reliant on communication to establish who members are to one another (internal family identity) and who the unit is to outsiders (external family identity). Her constructs of discourse dependency and internal and external boundary processes provided researchers a much-needed framework to research the ways family identity is created and re-created in and through communication. Galvin’s conceptualizing ignited family communication research on the discursive construction of family identity, paving the way for the now-burgeoning adoption research centered on the interactional and meaning-making processes inherent in adoptive families’ communicative encounters.
Family stories and storytelling are among the primary ways people create identity and make meaning about everyday, extraordinary, and difficult life events. According to Koenig Kellas and Trees (2013), three functions of family storytelling include creating, socializing, and coping. Families create identities for themselves and their members by telling stories across generations; family storytelling demonstrates or performs family identity (Langellier & Peterson, 2004). Families also use stories to socialize members on rules, values, and appropriate behavior (Stone, 2004). Finally, families tell stories to cope with difficult situations like stress, illness, death, and divorce. Both the lessons conveyed in family stories and the interactional sense-making (ISM) processes (Koenig Kellas & Trees, 2005) through which they are told have been linked with individual and relational well-being, such as mental health, perceived stress, family cohesion and adaptability, and relational satisfaction. Thus, how families tell stories have consequential implications for family and psychosocial functioning.
Since September 11, 2001, almost 1 million children in the United States have had a military parent deployed overseas. Although military deployments are stressful for the entire family, many children and families demonstrate tremendous resiliency by rebounding and creating a new sense of normal during deployments and reunions. Based on models of family resiliency, the Purdue Military Family Research Institute, in conjunction with the Indiana National Guard, created Passport Toward Success—a program that brings children aged 5-17 together shortly after their parent’s return from deployment to practice skills related to talking about feelings, coping with stress, and managing conflict with similar-age peers. An initial evaluation study, published in 2011 by Steve Wilson and colleagues in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, found that children as a group rated the program favorably in terms of the degree to which they gained new ideas about communication skills that promote resiliency.
Making dinner, doing the dishes, and running a load of laundry may seem unimportant, yet these tasks are necessary to maintain a household. How they are divided and performed, however, is a primary source of conflict within relationships. A new theory, the integrated theory of the division of domestic labor, recognizes the complexity of household task allocation by considering the individual, dyadic, and societal factors that influence task allocation. Sarah Riforgiate, Jess Alberts, and Paul Mongeau tested the part of this theory that predicted individual cleanliness threshold levels would be related to the amount of time individuals spend on tasks as well as the frequency of conflict in their relationships. The authors determined that women possess lower individual cleanliness threshold levels (i.e., are more bothered when a task is undone) compared with men. These findings may help explain why existing research suggests women spend more time performing domestic tasks.
Social media allow grandparents, parents, siblings, and young adults to create online privacy boundaries that reflect family communication practices and interaction styles. Child and Westerman (2013) surveyed young adults about how they process and respond to parental Facebook friend requests. The results of their study, published in the *Journal of Family Communication*, demonstrate that most young adults welcome greater family connections and interactions through social media. The study finds that more open and less secretive family interaction patterns are associated with young adults being more likely to welcome parental interaction through social media. For moms, parent-child relationship quality and trust levels impact how young adults process parental Facebook friend requests. These findings reinforce that the ways families come to relate to one another and interact in face-to-face environments also transcend the ways they come to interact with one another through social media.
Understanding privacy management is increasingly complex in the 21st century. Managing private information takes place across cultures and contexts. Over decades of research, Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory provides a dependable road map of understanding. CPM shows people believe they own their private information and therefore presume they have the right to control who, how, and how much others know about them. Privacy boundaries are regulated by privacy rules people develop, and granting access to someone’s privacy boundary is perceived as accepting responsibility for the owner’s information. Families illustrate that people are taught certain kinds of privacy orientations. Some families have closed privacy boundaries using privacy rules that restrict access to outsiders, while others orient toward more openness—both to members and outsiders. Families also have internal privacy cells that can fluctuate access, such as is seen with adolescents and social media use.
Avery and colleagues shed light on news coverage of the autism-vaccination controversy (AVC) in *Health Communication* (2012). While the news media have long been fascinated with the purported link between autism and the childhood vaccination for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), scientific evidence has discounted any such claim—but the AVC continues. In this study of global newspaper coverage of the AVC over a 13-year period dating back to the first study to suggest an autism-MMR link, the authors found that news coverage largely attributed blame to the science community and to the author of the original study, which was eventually retracted for a number of egregious research errors. Over time, the news media placed more blame on the author, discounting others who may have played a role in the AVC, including the news media itself. Interestingly, the news media’s coverage of the AVC relied more on points of view and opinion than on facts or scientific evidence.
“Do you have kids?” “How many kids do you have?” “When are you going to start a family?” For the millions of people coping with infertility, handling everyday questions about their plans to have children can be a great source of stress. Although these sorts of questions are seemingly harmless, they put people struggling to get pregnant in an awkward position. In Jennifer Bute’s 2009 study in Health Communication, women with fertility problems described handling such requests for information. Women attributed multiple and potentially conflicting meanings to these requests. For instance, questions about childbearing plans often come across as nosy, hurtful, or insensitive, but they can also offer women a chance to broach an uncomfortable topic and disclose their infertility. Understanding the nature of questions about childbearing can help prepare women for this frustrating aspect of the infertility experience.
The public is interested in learning more about cancer, so journalists routinely write articles about the latest cancer research breakthroughs. Unfortunately, research has shown that cancer news coverage often omits key limitations of the research (e.g., that the study was done with mice, not humans) to make the articles shorter, simpler, and more certain. Jakob D. Jensen and colleagues, writing in the *Journal of Health Communication* (2011), revealed that journalists may be doing more harm than good. In that study, the authors conducted an experiment to test whether omitting limitations in news coverage of cancer research negatively impacted news consumers. The short answer: It did. News consumers reading articles that did not contain limitations were significantly more fatalistic about cancer. Rather than make people feel informed, cancer news articles left news consumers frustrated, confused, and ready to lash out against health recommendations.
THE INFORMATION OVERLOAD MODEL
Health Communication Division

Do you feel overwhelmed by the amount of health information you hear every week? If so, then you are like most people. Survey research suggests that three out of four Americans exhibit signs of health information overload. Based on this research, Jakob D. Jensen and colleagues developed the Information Overload Model (IOM). According to IOM, people become overloaded when they can’t categorize information effectively. Research has shown that most health information lacks categorizing information; hence, the IOM would predict (correctly) that most people would be in a state of overload. Identifying useful categorizing information, and including it in health communication messages, is an effective communication goal supported by the IOM.
The big island of Hawaii is referred to as the “healing island” because of the varied modalities of healing practiced there. Research conducted on the Big Island explored the perspectives of holistic providers about the communicative practices they believe are central to their interactions with patients. Interviews with 20 individuals revealed that they perceive their communication with clients as centered on four practices: (a) reciprocity—a mutual exchange wherein the practitioner and patient are equal partners in the healing process; (b) responsibility—the idea that, ultimately, people must heal themselves; (c) forgiveness—the notion that healing cannot progress if a person holds the burden of anger and pain; and (d) balance—the idea that it is possible to bring like and unlike things together in unity and harmony. The narratives revealed providers’ ontological assumptions about mind-body systems and the rationalities they seek to resist in their conversations with patients.
CANCER EXPERIENCE UNCERTAINTY
Health Communication Division

Many people coping with cancer experience uncertainty, and some individuals may use information to manage their illness-related questions. Laura Miller’s study of uncertainty and information management was published in Health Communication in 2013 and included interviews with 60 cancer survivors and partners. Participants in this study not only reported seeking and avoiding information about cancer to manage uncertainty, but described challenges surrounding (a) conflicting information; (b) distressing information; (c) too much information; (d) not enough information; (e) unavailable information; and (f) dyadic information. More specifically, many participants described uncertainty due to not enough or unavailable information from health care providers after the completion of cancer treatment. Some participants even mentioned lying about symptoms in order to schedule more frequent check-ups to ease uncertainty about a cancer recurrence. These results have important implications for health care providers and imply that continued communication and informational support after cancer treatment is complete would help individuals adjust to the lingering uncertainties and challenges throughout cancer survivorship.
Patients who refuse physicians’ recommendations are often labeled as irrational or non-compliant. One study, which explored why patients refused recommendations for further diagnosis or treatment of lung cancer, conducted in-depth interviews with nine patients with documented refusal of doctors’ recommendations. Recruiting over a two-year period was hampered by deaths, logistics, and study refusal. Questions focused on participants’ understanding of disease, medical recommendations, and decision-making. Participants emphasized self-efficacy, minimizing threat, fatalism, faith, and/or distrust of medical authority. Comments included complaints about physicians’ communication, health system discontinuities, and impact of social support. Explanations of participants’ decisions included strategies for reducing, sustaining, and increasing uncertainty. Babrow’s Problematic Integration Theory helps to explain patients’ difficulties in managing uncertainty when assessments of disease outcomes and treatment recommendations diverge. Implications for clinical communication include increasing trust while delivering bad news, understanding the source of resistance to recommendations, and discussing palliative care.
Breaking bad news in the medical encounter is certainly a familiar context to health care providers, yet one of the most difficult health messages to deliver. Sparks’ et al (2007) study of a patient-centered approach to breaking bad news revealed four health care provider message strategies that emerged from patient accounts including: indirect communication, direct communication, comforting communication, and empowering communication. Overall, results of this study demonstrated that providers most often take the direct approach when breaking bad news. Direct communication of the basic bad news message focuses on the topic itself, as opposed to the social or emotional implications of the message for the patient or provider. A communication perspective for breaking bad news suggests that a formulaic approach is less appropriate when breaking bad news than considering the characteristics of the patient, the message content, and the interaction context.
There is no greater challenge to parents than the death of a child. As parents seek to deal with their grief, they are often disheartened to discover how difficult it is to talk to one another about their child’s death. Paige Toller’s 2009 study of the communication of grieving parents, published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, demonstrated that someone might be especially challenged to find that they grieve differently from their spouse. One may want to be open and talk about it, while the other wishes to grieve more privately. Toller describes five communication practices to help parents give each other freedom to grieve in their own way and stay connected as a couple: learning to accept differences, listening with empathy, compromising in ways that help the spouse and honor one’s own needs, seeking outside help, and finding supportive family and friends.
COMMUNICATION AND DRUG PREVENTION
Health Communication Division

Our nation’s youth face many challenges, including the temptation to engage in risky behaviors such as substance use. In response, Michelle Miller-Day and Michael Hecht have been developing communication theories to promote healthy youth development. Over the years, they developed narrative engagement, cultural grounding, and the Communication Theory of Identity to create the “keepin’ it REAL” drug prevention curriculum. At the cusp of theoretical and applied Communication research, keepin’ it REAL teaches decision-making, risk assessment, communication, and relationship skills. It is now the most widely disseminated school-based drug prevention program, reaching over 2 million youth in the United States as well as those in 47 other countries. Its effectiveness in teaching skills and reducing substance use demonstrates the power of Communication theories.
In Centering Ourselves: African American Feminist and Womanist Studies of Discourse (2002), Marsha Houston and Olga Idriss Davis offer an edited collection that centers Black womanhood as a site of communicative inquiry. Each contributor focuses on Black women from a humanizing perspective and offers insight into how the lived experiences of Black women can inspire rigorous research that calls the imposition of oppressive forces into question. Likewise, each chapter is exemplary of a site of resistance in that Black women speak for themselves and/or are respectfully spoken about with a mindful eye toward power and privilege at the intersections of multiple identities. Perhaps most importantly, both then and now, this collection highlights the scarcity of research in the Communication field that centers Black women.
In Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media (2006), Ronald L. Jackson II centers Black masculinity to explore the corporeal politics of race and gender. Working against the ahistorical and stereotypical scripts that collapse the meaning of Black masculinity into the dominant imagination, Jackson locates bodies as discursive texts and politicizes how and why Black male bodies are inscribed with consequential meaning. Importantly, given our media-saturated society, Jackson focuses on how popular media in particular irresponsibly script Black male bodies in alignment with colonial ideologies. In doing so, he contributes to the larger goal of corporeal emancipation.
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNICATION
African American Division

In a volume edited by Hecht, Jackson II, and Ribeau, African American Communication: Exploring Identity and Culture (2003) offers a comprehensive discussion of African American cultural values, norms, mores, and beliefs central to understanding dynamics of African American communication patterns. Since it utilizes a dynamic perspective, this book accounts for diversity within African American culture utilizing multiple approaches and concepts, including historical and contemporary content, self-identity, cultural identity, language and communication styles, relationships, and cultural identity negotiation. It covers a variety of perspectives regarding how African Americans perceive their own culture, as well as how they communicate with members of other cultural groups. Additionally, it problematizes cultural affiliation, particularly looking, sounding, and acting “Black.” It covers a wide range of communication issues, including intracultural, intercultural, intraethnic, and interethnic communication. Theoretical approaches include the Communication Theory of Identity and Cultural Contracts Theory.
Specifically addressing how interpersonal communication as process is potentially impeded because of how we are socialized to think about racial differences, Mark P. Orbe and Tina M. Harris guide readers in applying the valuable contributions of recent Communication theory to improving everyday communication among the races in *Interracial Communication: Theory Into Practice* (2007). In addition, the authors offer a comprehensive, practical foundation for dialogue on interracial communication, as well as a resource that stimulates thinking and encourages readers to become active participants in the solution process.
Sparks and Nussbaum (2008) highlight the relevant research findings and pragmatic dilemmas faced by those adapting to cancer, and describe the ways in which older adults and their formal and informal caregivers can improve their cancer health literacy. Published in Patient Education and Counseling, the authors state that older adults who are diagnosed with cancer or help care for an individual coping with cancer must confront a health care system that demands a high level of health literacy to successfully manage the disease. The authors explain how older adults may be at a distinct disadvantage in their ability to successfully cope with cancer because of age-related physiological, cognitive, psychological, and communicative factors. A communication perspective suggests that providers, patients, and caregivers must all participate in creating a health care environment of shared meaning and understanding of health messages tailored to the aging patient diagnosed with cancer.
Communication and Aging Division

Caregivers often deal with a variety of communication-related issues that have important implications for the well-being of those for whom they are providing care, and often experience caregiver burden and emotional exhaustion during the care process. Lisa Sparks’ research describes how family caregivers are thrown into a confusing, complex, and unknown world of difficult decisions that demand physical and emotional strength perhaps never before experienced. Communication is a central component to a successful and effective caregiving experience for all involved. Family caregivers are often unprepared to deal with the many challenges of caregiving, and they often find it difficult to cope with the demands of providing care for family members and other loved ones. Caregivers are thrown into learning such tasks as: (a) providing physical assistance and emotional support to the patient; (b) being a liaison between the patient and an interdisciplinary team of providers; (c) handling financial and social affairs for the patient; and (d) monitoring symptoms and communicating them to providers.
EFFECTS OF NEGATIONS ON BAD NEWS

Communication and Aging Division

The role of specific formulations in a doctor’s bad news delivery is a crucial role to consider in the medical encounter. A Buekeboom, Burgers, and Sparks (2012) study focused on the effects of negations and message framing on patients’ responses to the message and the doctor and medical adherence intentions. The authors conducted two lab experiments with 2 (language use: negations vs. affirmations) x 2 (framing: positive vs. negative) between-subjects designs. After reading a transcription (experiment 1) or seeing a film clip (experiment 2), participants rated their evaluation of the message and the doctor, expected quality of life, and medical adherence intentions. Doctors should refrain from using negations to break positively framed news, but use negations to break negatively framed news. A Communication approach to small linguistic variations (i.e., negations) in breaking bad news can have a big impact on patient satisfaction and on medical adherence intentions.
Two sociologists, Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), stated that all organizations and systems are only abstract concepts or phenomena. Only people’s interactions within organizations and systems make them come alive. Communication between people creates social behavior and makes interactions observable, as is the case during criminal trials. The judicial procedure offers an explanation for the social behavior of judges and litigant parties in court. However, their actual behavior depends on their communicational choices, i.e., how they ask questions in a witness hearing, or what kinds of opening statements or closing arguments they use. Their ability to relate to other people is important, too. Communication between different parties in court is not only a tool on a personal level for achieving individual and professional goals, on a systemic level it also creates a picture of the social reality called a (fair) judicial trial.
Effective listening is crucial in every profession, but it is extremely important for people working in court, especially for prosecutors due to their central role at trial. People usually listen because they want to: (a) organize information they hear; (b) build relationships; (c) learn and integrate information so they can interpret, analyze, and understand the information; and (d) listen critically so they can argue (Bodie 2011). This finding was achieved by using an instrument called the Listening Concepts Inventory (LCI, Imhof & Janusik 2006) in which people were asked how they define the concept of listening. In a study published in Prologi, The Finnish Communication Yearbook 2008, listening concepts of Finnish prosecutors and judges were examined, and findings obtained with LCI suggested that these legal professionals use listening to organize information critically and to learn and integrate information, but that they do not consider it essential when building and maintaining relationships.
The “CSI effect,” a media effect confirmed by Susan Sarapin and Glenn Sparks (2010), gets its name from the popular TV show CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. The term is actually a misnomer because it implies a single effect that results from exposure to a single subgenre of crime-oriented television (COTV)—forensics-oriented TV programs. It refers generally to the influence of substantial viewing of any crime-related television programs on an individual’s perceptions of the law, criminal behavior, and agents of the justice system. Specifically, heavy exposure to COTV can correlate to: (a) a juror’s tendency to speak about TV shows during deliberations; (b) a juror’s heightened expectation of seeing hard, scientific evidence; (c) an increased interest in forensic-science careers; (d) an increase in acquittals due to heightened levels of reasonable doubt; (e) an increase in convictions due to stronger beliefs in scientific evidence and testimony by forensic-science experts; and more.
Institutions of higher education are required to systematically demonstrate student learning based on learning goals set forth by the institution in order to be accredited. This is typically accomplished by assessing student performance in general education classes. In the early 1980s, oral communication became a necessary basic skill to learn at colleges and universities. Since the early 1990s, when it was mandated that colleges and universities assess student learning, most Communication general education assessment focuses on oral communication in the basic public speaking class. Typically, this is accomplished by assessing student speeches for competency in preparation and delivery, and changes in communication apprehension from taking the course. In 2010, the eighth survey about the nature of the basic communication course by Morreale and colleagues was published in Communication Education. Additionally, the National Communication Association’s third edition of “Large Scale Assessment in Oral Communication” lists common assessment tools.
NCA AND ASSESSMENT
Communication and Assessment Division

The National Communication Association and its members have explored the assessment of student learning for several decades. Leaders of that investigation are Phil Backlund, Sherry Morreale, Ellen Hay, Mike Moore, Deb Hefferin, and Richard Quianty. Their work includes presentations, publications, and the gentle, persistent persuasion to keep the project moving forward. The organization of assessment into understandable best practices is what makes these theoreticians good models of praxis. From understanding the motivation to communicate, to large-scale assessment, to a competent speaker evaluation, NCA has shown professional attention to the fundamental nature of evaluating something so human—the ability to communicate effectively. Resources for the assessment of student learning are available on the NCA website at www.natcom.org/assessmentresources.
COMMUNICATION AND ASSESSMENT
Communication and Assessment Division

Although outside the defined parameters of the National Communication Association, the work of Dr. Trudy Banta regarding the assessment of student learning has impacted the efforts of all academic disciplines. One of Dr. Banta’s most important contributions is her reassurance that it usually takes a decade for a cultural shift to occur in the acceptance and development of an assessment program—giving context to and relieving anxieties of many faculty members and administrators. Furthermore, her connection between the most important activity we do as educators (evaluating student learning) and Communication studies lies in the nexus of human interaction and cultural development through the communication strategies used to position the work of assessment into the patterned set of behaviors in the life of an academician or an organization. Dr. Banta hosts an annual Assessment Institute, produces a bi-monthly newsletter (Assessment Update), and offers more assessment resources for Communication professionals at www.assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu.
In his national award-winning “Ideology as Communication Process” (1978), William R. Brown argued that, at bottom, communication—not economic, market, or political forces—drives social change. In the article, he explicated the communication process by which we construct, maintain, and change our ideological systems, thereby encouraging or discouraging social change. A model, derived from the essay, highlights the communication strategies, tactics, and maneuvers of social-change interventions and provides a framework for planning social change attempts, large and small. In “Ideology,” Brown illustrated how science itself is an ideological system constructed, maintained, and changed via communication. In later articles, he used the model to show the communication dynamics underlying historic shifts in U.S. race relations. Brown concluded that although ideological systems come and go, the communication process generating and driving those systems remains constant.
People often think about conversations in their mind such as rehearsing what they are going to say for an anticipated encounter. People imagine conversations with friends, loved ones, and adversaries for a variety of purposes (Honeycutt, 2003). Honeycutt was the recipient of the Communication and Social Cognition Division Distinguished Book Award in 2006 for his initial book on imagined interactions, where he describes six functions (rehearsal, self-understanding, relational maintenance, managing conflict, catharsis, and compensations) and eight attributes (frequency, proactivity, retroactivity, valence, dominance, discrepancy, specificity, variety) reflecting personality and sex differences in how people use them. Retroactive imagined interactions often occur in television shows in terms of “flashbacks” as characters relive prior conversations in their mind. Research reveals associations between frequency, dominance, ruminating about conflict, and narcissism as well as significant associations between lack of compensation, relational maintenance, and narcissism.
In his 1963 book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Erving Goffman develops the theory of stigma. Goffman identifies stigma as an attribute that is deeply discrediting to someone. Stigma is then used to negatively categorize one’s physical appearance, place within society, and system of beliefs and actions. The stigmatized want acceptance from society and will respond by making a direct attempt to correct what they view as incorrect assumptions about themselves. Stigmatized individuals will come together to support one another and to promote codes of conduct for navigating through a society that deems them inferior. These social groups help to bring awareness and re-educate others that the stigmatized individual is still human and a member of society.
Grounded Practical Theory (GPT) is a method for developing theories that can be used to reflect on the problems people encounter as they engage in particular communication practices, and the practical options and ideal principles that guide their choices about how to act. The GPT method requires careful empirical observation and qualitative analysis of a practice as a basis on which to articulate normative theoretical claims. For example, Karen Tracy spent several years observing, recording, and analyzing academic discussions before writing her 1997 book, *Colloquium: Dilemmas of Academic Discourse*. Her GPT of academic discussion proposes that participants should strive to maintain a balance between competing ideals of rigorous criticism and personal support. Introduced by Robert T. Craig and Karen Tracy in 1995, GPT has since been applied in studies of communication practices ranging from alternative organizations, to crisis negotiations, medical interviews, and public meetings.
In 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force attempted to communicate to the public a revised mammogram screening policy, intended to expand women’s health care options. But, in the end, it appeared to have inadvertently limited those options. Susan Opt’s study of the USPSTF’s efforts was published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* in 2012 and suggests ways to avoid USPSTF’s pitfall. First, people advocating policy change should identify the social system’s perceptions of need to anticipate better its responses to the messages. Next, they should remember that social-system change always occurs in cooperation with other stakeholders and identify and build relationships with those groups. Finally, they should attend to the systemic nature of social change and attempt to anticipate and create responses to possible side effects of their social-change attempts. Overall, her essay highlighted an overarching need—to improve our lives—that appears to underlie all policy-making efforts.
Driven by communication, are we moving toward a “global village” or disjointed “villages”? The concepts of meaning-as-use and language games, developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein and first published in 1953 in his Philosophical Investigations, provide a fruitful perspective on this question. Wittgenstein proposes that meaning is never “transmitted” in interactions. Instead, bound by the rules of interactions, the meaning emerges in them. Wittgenstein calls them “language games,” asserting that the communication occurring in one context can be no more understood in another context than the choices produced by the rules of one game can be understood within the rules of another game. As such, the meaning cannot be transferred from one “language game” to another: communication is meaningless without the context. Since its publication, Wittgenstein’s work has fundamentally influenced communicative action as well as social constructivism theorists, and produces an important insight into online communities of thought facilitated by social networks.
The contemporary world is exploding with information. People now learn most of what they know and believe about the world not by direct experience but through communication. Similarly, modern connectivity has ushered in a world of diversity and competing values. In his work on problematic integration theory, Austin Babrow has argued that communication is most important to deciding how to act when we are faced with great uncertainty about matters of potentially enormous consequence such as health, illness, and environmental risk. Similarly, communication is vital to individuals and to society by shaping what we take to be impossible and what lies within the realm of possibility. As uncertainties, risks, and competing values multiply, miscommunication becomes more perilous and competent communication more necessary to societal and planetary health.
Communication center research continues to develop, with many new and exciting projects underway throughout the country. In particular, centers are exploring best practices for honing Communication pedagogies that begin in their spaces and contribute to student success in the classroom and workplace. This process also includes the development of cutting-edge pedagogical approaches. Adding to the growing body of Communication center research, Carpenter, Valley, Napier, and Apostel’s “Studio Pedagogy: A Model for Collaboration, Innovation, and Space Design,” published in the 2012 collection Cases on Higher Education Spaces, sets a trajectory for Communication center research. This chapter suggests that we focus on critical and creative thinking, information fluency, integrative collaboration, interactivity, visual thinking, and dynamic spaces (and staff members) as criteria for studio pedagogy that resonates with students in the 21st century. Importantly, these criteria are flexible and portable across a variety of Communication centers and institutional contexts.
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY MODELS
Communication Centers Section

Cross-disciplinary partnerships typically promote learning and opportunities for Communication scholars to expand their reach and provide instruction to individuals outside the discipline. Ellis, West, Grimaldi, and Root (2012) published a case study in Russell Carpenter’s book, Cases on Higher Education Spaces: Innovation, Collaboration, and Technology, which highlights a unique program that utilizes a leadership and Communication center to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaborations inside and outside the academy. Furthermore, the authors detail how utilizing a cross-disciplinary partnership model (e.g., teams containing individuals with expertise in Communication, leadership, and discipline-specific content) provides more comprehensive instruction to students and improves learning outcomes. The case also details how physical, virtual, and external space can be used to support programmatic goals through cross-disciplinary collaborations.
Communication centers support students by providing safe places to receive feedback, ask questions, and discuss oral communication needs. Centers are judgment-free spaces where the primary goal is to meet each speaker where they are. Some students visit Communication centers to receive support on course assignments, while others have personal or professional goals. Conversations between speakers and consultants start with strangers who enter into interpersonal or intergroup communication. William Gudykunst’s (1985) work on complex Anxiety/Uncertainty Reduction Theory (AUR) provides guidance for Communication consultants as they work with speakers. For example, AUR highlights that strangers trigger anxiety and uncertainty during relational development. Furthermore, AUR highlights components of effective communication and identifies mindfulness as a way to manage anxiety and uncertainty. Center consultants who are trained in mindfulness are better prepared to engage in anxiety and uncertainty management and communicate effectively with speakers during consultations.
COMMUNICATION CENTERS AND THE BASIC COURSE
Communication Centers Section

Approximately 1.3 million students participate in a basic Communication course at a college or university each year (Beebe, 2013). The basic Communication course is foundational to the discipline of Communication and Communication centers. Morreale, Worley, and Hugenberg (2010) found that over 76 percent of students enroll in a basic Communication course that includes public speaking as part of the curriculum. Centers are part of the basic Communication course, and yet are separate. This makes it more difficult to fully capture what each and every center provides to an academic institution (Yook & Atkins-Sayre, 2012). LeFebvre and LeFebvre’s study (2014) offers a descriptive investigation of Communication centers at colleges and universities from center directors. This investigation reports and discusses the nature and state of centers so that it may inform others about how to develop, maintain, and compare centers’ trends and tendencies. It appears that these centers will continue to play a larger role in the education of 21st century college students.
COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH
Community College Division

In 2008, Communication Education published “Communication Education in U.S. Community Colleges,” a comprehensive research project conducted by the Community College Section of NCA. The study was conducted to supplement the lack of community college-specific data and analysis in the ongoing series of basic course surveys published in Communication Education. Of the 579 community colleges contacted, 279 (50 percent) responded. The survey revealed that 83 percent of community colleges require at least one Communication course to fulfill the general education requirement, with an average, initial class size of 26 students. However, 76 percent of the colleges had more part-time than full-time Communication faculty. The NCA community college research project advanced the scholarship of teaching by demonstrating how community colleges (representing close to 50 percent of all undergraduates) serve their students as dedicated instructors and strong advocates of Communication education.
GREAT IDEAS FOR TEACHING STUDENTS
Community College Division

GIFTS (Great Ideas for Teaching Students) sessions at NCA conventions are a gift from the Community College Section. The GIFTS concept was conceived and developed in the mid-1980s as a way of expanding NCA Annual Convention offerings for faculty members who primarily teach undergraduate Communication courses. Raymond “Bud” Zeuschner designed and facilitated the first and subsequent GIFTS session for several years. With only a few exceptions, the GIFTS sessions have been chaired by Community College Section members. The increasing number and high quality of submissions have led to three GIFTS sessions at every convention, as well as similar sessions at regional association meetings. Submission acceptance has become highly competitive and reflects sophisticated Communication pedagogy. Presenters include well-published scholars as well as graduate students. Begun as a grassroots effort, GIFTS is well-established and demonstrates the continuing need for new ideas and materials to improve Communication education.
The most critical question facing those who direct and teach introductory Communication courses is not: Which course should we offer or require? Rather, it is: What core principles and competencies should form the basis of introductory Communication courses, regardless of context? In 2012, a group of scholars came together to consider what those principles and competencies might be. In 2013, as a part of his presidential initiative focused on strengthening the basic course, NCA President Steven Beebe formally recognized the group by designating them as a presidential taskforce. While the group’s work is ongoing, they have identified a set of seven core competencies that will receive further attention as they continue to research and gather feedback about their discoveries. The aim of this work, in part, is to offer justification for the centrality of Communication education as a part of general education and the undergraduate curriculum.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION
Community College Division

Transportation planners are required by law to involve people who are affected by decisions in planning improvements to services. Like other kinds of planners, they struggle with how best to engage people. Often called “hard-to-reach,” populations of youth, minorities, and people with low incomes are underrepresented in public involvement processes. The Partnership for Inclusive, Cost-Effective Public Participation (originally funded by the Federal Transit Administration) explicitly works with people who are underrepresented. Students studying Communication at a community college have been shown to be effective at using their social networks and community relationships to build on existing trust and goodwill to create deliberative discussions engaging the public in transportation planning discussions. This instructional model has been adapted by several other states and can be applied toward subject areas beyond transportation.
Service learning is a pedagogical tool used to combine meaningful community service work with theoretical application. Community college educators such as Shirlee Levin, Professor Emerita of the College of Southern Maryland, have long claimed the natural connection between Communication Studies and service learning. Integral to the development of service learning practices, community college educators have championed Communication theory and helped thousands of community college students become more involved citizens. This combination of pedagogical practice and civic engagement is a natural fit for community college professors and students to engage in, as one of the primary missions of community colleges is to serve their local communities. Thus, service learning provides an ideal backdrop for promoting Communication Studies beyond the walls of academia.
Every day we hear news reports about adults engaging in sexual abuse of children. Using specific concepts derived from Luring Communication Theory developed by Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, and Rogers (2007), Anna Marie Campbell studied adult male sex offenders and their communication strategies with child victims. Published in 2009 in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, Campbell found that sex offenders use two major techniques to groom a child victim to engage in a sexual relationship. The first strategy involves the presentation of a false “face” of someone who appears to be helpless and non-threatening to the child. The second strategy utilizes manipulation of the child’s emotional attachments to other adults and coercive tactics to ensure the child does not disclose to other adults the true nature of the relationship between the sex offender and the child.
The Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse (Benoit, 2007) argues that candidates use messages to persuade voters that they are better than opponents. This can be achieved through three functions: acclaims (positive statements about self), attacks (criticisms of opponents), and defenses (refutations of attacks). These functions can occur on two topics, policy (governmental action and problems amenable to governmental action) and character (personality). Predictions (e.g., acclaims are more common than attacks, which in turn are more common than defenses; policy is discussed more often than character; incumbents usually acclaim more and attack less than challengers) have been confirmed with analysis of U.S. presidential campaign messages (announcement speeches, acceptance addresses, primary and general TV spots, debates, and direct mail advertising), in non-presidential messages (congressional and gubernatorial TV spots, congressional, gubernatorial, and mayoral debates), and in debates and TV spots in other countries around the world.
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