

Truth, Ethics, and Deception

COM 320-320 | Fall 2019 | 3 Credit Hours

Lecture

Professor: Dr. Darrin J. Griffin

Teaching Assistant: Mr. Samuel D. Hakim

"Lying is a generous term." ~Lloyd E. Morris

Class meetings are on Thursdays from 6:30pm - 9:00pm in Reese Phifer Room 216

Contact Information

Professor website: www.darringriffin.com

TA email: sdhakim@crimson.ua.edu

Professor's Teaching Philosophy: I teach to champions!

Course Communication Policy: Please correspond with the teaching assistant for matters related to the course. If you want to connect with the professor please do so during office hours or a phone call during business hours. Email correspondence is restricted to contacting the teaching assistant – Dr. Griffin will not respond to emails related to this class.

All office hours and contact information for the professor and TA are posted and updated on Blackboard.

Prerequisites

COM 100: Rhetoric and Society, COM 101: Principles of Human Communication, or COM 220: Interpersonal Communication

Course Descriptions

The University of Alabama Course Catalog Description: An introduction to the major concepts, theories, and issues related to deceptive communication in a variety of arenas, such as relationships, the law, and the media. Students will learn about flaws in research on deception, how effective studies can be conducted, and will develop an enhanced ability to detect deception in everyday life.

Class Description: This course will not teach you how to lie or to become a better liar. You will not learn how to become a better poker player, nor will you become a master of deception detection! This class will introduce you to the intriguing study of truth and deception in social science. The class begins by requiring students to think about the dynamics of truth and knowledge, followed by a discussion of ethics, and ending with a journey into the multifaceted world of lying and deception. The class surveys the study of deception through a wide array of fields and topics of communication: ethics, interpersonal communication, business & organizational, cyber communication, relationship & family, television & media, advertising, political & law enforcement, American history, health, and animal behavior. The topics will assist students in being able to identify deceptive behavior and understand it in ways that will benefit their professional and personal lives.

This course addresses the following **National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication** (visit www.natcom.org/LOC):

LOC #5: Critically analyze messages

- Identify meanings embedded in messages
- Articulate characteristics of mediated and non-mediated messages
- Recognize the influence of messages
- Engage in active listening
- Enact mindful responding to messages

LOC #7: Apply ethical communication principles and practices

- Identify ethical perspectives
- Explain the relevance of various ethical perspectives
- Articulate the ethical dimensions of a communication situation
- Choose to communicate with ethical intention
- Propose solutions for (un)ethical communication
- Evaluate the ethical elements of a communication situation

Required Text

Knapp, M. L., Earnest, W., McGlone, M. S., & Griffin, D. J. (2019). *Lying and deception in human interaction* (3rd ed.) Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.
ISBN: 978-15-24970-05-5

The campus bookstore has this textbook in stock. Also, an electronic version of the textbook can be purchased from the publisher for a reduced rate. A link to the publisher's website to purchase either a hardcopy or e-book is available on Blackboard.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to create informed citizens who possess a healthy amount of skepticism while simultaneously learning a robust understanding of truth and deception in everyday life and in the public sphere.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you will:

- Increase your understanding of truth and ethics
- Become familiar with key concepts and differentiate between lying and deception
- Discuss major theoretical concepts in the field of deception research
- Analyze your use of "the truth" in sustaining and creating interpersonal relationships
- Explore how cyber contexts influence honesty and deception
- Evaluate the research findings on deception detection
- Understand how deception influences many areas and facets of life

Outline of Topics

- Unit 1: Perspectives on lying and truth
- Unit 2: Ethical perspectives
- Unit 3: Nonhuman & child deception
- Unit 4: Public, political, & written deception
- Unit 5: Self-deception & performance of deception
- Unit 6: Specialists of deception
- Unit 7: Deception detection
- Unit 8: Visual deception & conclusion of course

Exams and Assignments

Overview of Assessments and Points:

Assessment	Points
Syllabus Quiz #1 (online via Blackboard)	20
Attendance	20
Student Introduction & "What I Know" Paper	25
Syllabus Quiz #2 (Friday November 7th in class)	50
Textbook Reading Homework Quizzes (10 total)	10
Interview About Truth	100
Library Book Assignment	100
What I learned & Reflection on Student Learning Outcomes Paper	75
Textbook Reading Exam - In class on Thursday December 5th, 6:30pm – 9:30pm	100
<i>Makeup Textbook Reading Exam - During final exam time, Thursday December 12, 7:00pm - 9:30pm</i>	
	Total Points 500

Knowledge of the course readings and concepts will be evaluated via the assessments in the course (i.e., table above). More specific details for each assessment are provided below. These items will allow students to earn course points (see grade rubric below in section on "Grading Policy" for final grade calculations).

Below are details describing each course assessment. Due dates are in the course schedule that is available on Blackboard.

Syllabus Quiz #1

This assessment will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions and requires students to illustrate that they have read, studied, and understand the course syllabus. This is an online quiz that will be available on Blackboard.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken during class time using a variety of mechanisms. Students who are not present will not earn the points for that day and should refer to the attendance policy presented later in the syllabus if they would like to earn back the missed points.

Student Introduction & “What I Know” Paper

Students are asked to write a paper that introduces themselves and provides a review of how the student currently thinks about truth, ethics, and deception. A template and rubric for the paper will be posted on Blackboard; students must use the template to type their paper to earn full credit. This assessment will provide us with an overview of your personal, academic, and professional background and pre-existing philosophies on truth, ethics, and deception. You will also be asked to include a recent color photograph of yourself to help us learn your name. This paper **MUST** be uploaded to Blackboard in PDF format - uploading any other file format will result in point deductions.

Syllabus Quiz #2

This quiz will act as a refresher of the course syllabus and will take place after the date students can withdraw from the class without a "W" on their transcript. The quiz will take place during class time and the date is posted on the course schedule. It will resemble the first syllabus quiz in question format. The purpose of revisiting the syllabus is to make sure at the mid-point of the semester that everyone is on the same page regarding expectations for completing the course.

Textbook Reading Homework Quizzes

For the majority of chapters in the book students will complete a homework quiz. Some of these will take place at the beginning of class and some will be administered via Blackboard and due before class starts. The quizzes consist of five multiple choice questions. Some of the quizzes will be timed - students are strongly encouraged to read the chapters before taking the quizzes as the assessment assess mastery and understanding of course concepts. Another goal of this assessment is to help prepare students for the exam at the end of the semester.

Interview About Truth

Students will be provided with a direction sheet that includes question prompts for an interview of someone who has a PhD on the topic of truth. This person should not be affiliated with UA in any capacity and they must not study communication. The goal is to find a person with a PhD and to reach out to them via email and ask if they will answer several questions about truth - then in a second email the questions will be provided to the interviewee. We will provide students with a template for sending an email to the person and the follow-up questions will be scripted. Your task will be to find a person with a PhD, ask them to participate, and then to send them the questions. Students will ultimately synthesize their responses into a response paper. All details, instructions, and rubrics for this assessment will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

Library Book Assignment

Students are asked to find a book at the library which relates to some element of deception. Physically finding, checking out, and reading parts of this book will be required to complete this assignment. The goal of this assessment is to make

connections to class material and information from our textbook. A template/rubric will be discussed in class and provided on Blackboard.

What I Learned & Reflection on Student Learning Outcomes Paper

At the conclusion of the course we will ask you to write a 1,000-word (minimum) paper that expresses what you have learned from the textbook and class. You will also evaluate how the Student Learning Outcomes were covered/met in this course. A template/rubric for this paper will be discussed in class and provided on Blackboard.

Textbook Reading Exam

This course has one exam! It will take place in class on Thursday November 21st at 6:30pm. It will consist of **100 questions** using multiple choice format. The exam is comprehensive and will cover the 10 chapters of the textbook as tested on the reading quizzes. The material for the exam comes entirely from the textbook. Please arrive on time to take the exam - once the first person to finish the exam leaves the room no other students will be allowed to begin the exam. We will discuss all details related to the exam in class throughout the semester.

Makeup Textbook Reading Exam

The makeup exam is for students who are absent and miss the first exam or those who wish to improve their score from the original exam. This exam will consist of **100 questions** and is offered during the final exam time, Thursday December 12th, 7:00pm - 9:30pm. Arrive on time because once the first student completes the exam and leaves the room no other students will be allowed to begin the exam. If a student takes the original exam and also this makeup exam, the higher of their two scores will be used in the final grade calculation.

Final Letter Grades

Students are evaluated in their performance and learning via points. The total number of points are shown on the assessment table above. At the completion of the semester student's total course points (including any extra credit earned) will be summed to assign the final letter grade based on the Letter Grade Rubric (Grading Policy Section below). Do not calculate your grade or conduct any mathematics - simply use the point to letter grade rubric to determine your final letter grade at the end of the course based on your total number of points. PLEASE do not contact the professor or TA near the end of the semester and ask for opportunities for points or explain that you did math and rounded up your points for a higher letter grade. These types of requests will be ignored. We welcome students to communicate with us throughout the semester on how to improve and earn the most points possible. Also, any extra credit offered is extra - it does not alter the grading rubric. Use the rubric. Use the rubric - do not calculate your grade. Use the rubric! We will not do any math to calculate your grade - please do not send us your algorithms or request that we do math (we are communication experts not math folks). We will use the rubric. UTR!

Visit the registrar's website on Faculty Grade Reporting (subsection Grade Terminology: <https://registrar.ua.edu/faculty-staff/grade-reporting/>) to read more about the meaning of letter grades. Extra credit will be given in this course, so you should take advantage of it to help you earn your desired letter grade. However, the best way to earn the desired letter grade is by completing assessments and working to understand and follow the course content.

Grading Policy

Final Points	Letter Grade	Final Points	Letter Grade
500 – 483	A+	317 – 298	D-
482 – 468	A	297 – 0	F
467 – 448	A-		
447 – 433	B+		
432 – 418	B		
417 – 398	B-		
397 – 383	C+		
382 – 368	C		
367 – 348	C-		
347 – 333	D+		

Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework

To avoid any confusion and ambiguity please read the makeup policy for each assessment in the table below. Overall, if a student needs to miss an assessment given

in class for a university sanctioned excuse then the student is responsible for communicating with the professor or course TA more than 24 hours in advance (on a business day) about the need for a makeup. For example, if a student will miss an assessment on a Monday the student must communicate this by Friday of the previous week - communicating an absence or missed work on the day of the absence will not be allowed. In these cases, points will be deducted. Our suggestion is to attend office hours before any university sanctioned absence or reach out in the preferred methods as offered in the communication policy. Failure to communicate an absence or missed assessment in advance will void the ability to earn the full points. In cases where an absence cannot be communicated in advance, immediate notification to the professor or course TA is required. Waiting more than 24 hours after an absence or missed evaluation will void any possibility of a makeup without loss of points. This is a communication course – reach out and inform us immediately when you will miss an assessment. An email to the TA or a phone call/voicemail (during business hours) to the professor will serve as appropriate means of initiating the process for makeup without penalty of lost points.

Assessment	Makeup Policy
Syllabus Quiz #1	Can be made up within one week of the due date in office hours for 50% of the points. Questions will be open-ended and short answer response.
Attendance	See Attendance Policy below.
Introduction & "What I Know"	Can be turned in within one week of the due date for 50% of the points.
Syllabus Quiz #2	Makeup in office hours within one week of the due date. Questions will be open-ended response type and only worth 50% of original points.
Textbook Reading Homework Quizzes	Each student in the course will be given <u>one</u> "benefit of the doubt" pass for the Homework Reading Quizzes. To obtain this credit you need to attend office hours within one week of the deadline for the particular quiz in question. We will allow you to retake it and make a note that you have used your one benefit of the doubt.

Interview about the Truth	Students who miss the deadline to turn in this assessment will be allowed to turn it in via a "late" submission link on Blackboard. This will result in a 50% deduction in points and the link to upload the assignment will expire one week after the original deadline.
Library Book Assignment	Turning this assessment in late will result in a 50% deduction of the original points. The extended deadline for a late submission is...you guessed it...one week after the original deadline.
What I learned...	This paper cannot be turned in late because of the short amount of time remaining at the end of the semester for us to grade this assessment. Turn it in and earn the points or fail to turn it in and...lose these points.
Textbook Reading Exam	If you need to make up this assessment please attend the Makeup Textbook Reading Exam during the final exam time slot. Do yourself a favor and study hard for the first one, don't miss it, and you won't have to hang out with us during the final exam time. Imagine all the awesome places you could be instead of in the classroom during finals week!
Makeup Textbook Reading Exam	Nice try!

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend class and to arrive before class starts. Don't be that student. Please arrive before the start of class. Don't be a late student. Be a champion – be early and reap the benefits of getting a good seat. If you have a situation that causes tardiness to be a central part of your role in this class you might consider changing your schedule to another class during the add/drop period (first week of classes). Students who have special circumstances should communicate with the professor and/or TA immediately about these situations.

In accordance with university attendance policy, "students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered. Class attendance is regarded as an academic

matter, and the use of attendance records in grading (or for other purposes) is left to the discretion of the faculty member responsible for the course.” In this course you cannot accomplish the learning outcomes without being present, therefore the following attendance policy was established. We will take attendance throughout the semester. If you miss class on a day where attendance is taken and you would like to make up those points you can do so by performing the following procedure. First, you will need to attend one of our office hours within a week of your absence and explain your absence to us. To earn the full points, you will need to show evidence of a university sanctioned excuse. If no sanctioned excuse can be provided then you will only be eligible for 50% of the points. Next, to make up the three hours missed of class students will be required to watch films or documentaries about the class topic that was missed. Arrangements to watch these videos will be made with the course TA and several *makeup* video days will be offered throughout the semester. Students wanting to earn back missed attendance points must attend these sessions to make up the missed class time. Failure to attend office hours within one week of your absence to provide an excuse/documentation for your absence followed by attending one of the scheduled *video make up dates* will nullify your chances of earning the attendance points from the day you missed class.

Notification of Changes

The professor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the professor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the professor will notify students in class (by Blackboard announcement when in class announcements are not possible; e.g., during weather events) and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes. Please attend class so you can be informed of any changes that occur in this course during the semester.

Response to a Person with a Weapon (e.g., Active shooter)

Should a shooter or a person with a weapon appear on campus, call the University Police 205-348-5454 or 911 as soon as safely possible. The University Police Department is trained to deal with this incident and will respond immediately upon notification. If this type of incident should take place on campus during our class please follow the professor’s instructions and requests. In general, each situation is

different, so no single procedure will work in all circumstances. You will have to make the best decision based on your particular situation. Always be aware of your surroundings as you determine how best to protect yourself. The Department of Homeland Security offers the following suggestions (and these are supported by the UA Police Department) during an event involving a threatening person with a weapon: **Run:** If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. **Hide:** If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the threatening person (active shooter) is less likely to find you. **Fight:** As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the threatening person/active shooter.

You can read more about the details and suggestions offered for an active shooter scenario at the UA emergency preparedness website – <https://ready.ua.edu/shooting-incident/>

Grade Requirement Statement

Students must earn a “C-” or better in all required and elective courses in the COM major/minor. A “C-” or better is required in all external courses required by the major whether they serve as a prerequisite to a major course or are simply required by the major. COM 320 serves as an elective course to satisfy the major and minor requirements for Communication Studies.

Technology Policy

Please use technology to participate in the class. Students using technology to communicate with others outside of the classroom or to focus on information not related to the class topic will be asked to refrain from that behavior.

Class Participation

This is a lecture course. I anticipate doing most of the talking and leading the class through lessons and discussion. However, I expect every student to be an active member of the class and to participate by listening and adding to the discussion/lecture. For this reason, I do not allow excessive note-taking (word-for-

word) either by hand or by computer. This request and my style of teaching might be viewed by some students as unorthodox, but I believe that it has many benefits. You will need to experience it to understand its benefits. Instead of taking extensive notes, I ask that you come to class prepared, which means you have read the material carefully and can answer questions about the chapter when asked. In this course, I will call on students as much as possible to involve the audience, stimulate conversations, and to engage us all. Please anticipate being called on at any time. You may find this uncomfortable at first, but I think you will agree with me that this will help make this a better course. This is a communication course! As a reminder - all assessments come from the reading, nothing from lecture will be on the exam. So, you are now free to relax, listen, think, and participate in class discussions.

Standard University Statements

Below you will find the standard university statements. These are standardized across all syllabi at the institution. Those who are not familiar with the information within these statements should visit the web links for more information. Please note that there is the possibility of questions on the syllabus quizzes which cover practices and procedures as outlined in the statements/sections below. In other words, if you are shooting for all the points on the syllabus quizzes...read on.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement on Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.