"Comm, Identity, and Context" Syllabus, Summer 2024

Course Information

Speaking, reading, and writing are integral parts of everyday life. In this course, we not only examine how social identities and contexts shape each of these communicative acts, but we also practice projecting different context-dependent voices in speaking, reading and writing exercises.

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COMM 107S (3 units)
Summer 2024
Monday/Wednesday, 10:30am-12:20pm

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Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Natalie Neufeld (she/her/hers)
You can call me Natalie in emails and when we talk.

Email address: nneufeld@stanford.edu
Or you can message me through Canvas (but if I don't reply within 24 hours on there, send me an email!)

Student/Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm on Zoom, or email me to make an appointment.
        Join me (Natalie) and your peers to discuss the material being covered in class, questions or concerns you might have, and other related issues. Please join even if you don't have any questions. You can listen in on the conversation (which might spark questions for you), or we can use the time to get to know each other. Use the Zoom meeting links provided in Canvas.

Course Description

Speaking, reading, and writing are integral parts of everyday life. In this course, students not only examine how identities and contexts shape each of these communicative acts but will also learn to develop different context-dependent voices in speaking and writing exercises. The course will emphasize four main learning goals for students. One, students will be introduced to communication as a concept and a field by learning a selection of communication theories. Two, students will understand how different mediums influence communication, both in content and structure of messages. Three, students will explain how different social identities and contexts influence people's reading, writing, and speaking. Four, students will practice different styles of reading, writing, and speaking according to various hypothetical audience expectations and

genre restrictions. In addition to weekly readings and frequent small homework assignments, students will be asked to propose (by week six) a final project (due week eight) in which they compare texts from a genre of choice and then emulate them in their own original work.

Course Learning Goals

Through active engagement and completion of course activities, you will be able to:
- Learn basic communication theories
- Understand how mediums of communication influence the communication itself (in content and/or structure)
- Explain how different social identities and contexts influence people's reading, writing, and speaking
- Practice different styles of reading, writing, and speaking according to different audience expectations and genre restrictions

Content of the class

In this class, we will address the first, second, and third learning goals primarily by reading (homework) and talking through (in class) academic articles published in the field of communication. All address the questions "What is communication?" "How does communication vary?" and/or "Why do people communicate (like that)?" More specific weekly topics are outlined in the calendar at the end of this syllabus.

We will also address these three goals to a lesser extent with speeches, podcasts, short videos, and popular articles published in magazines and newspapers. Again, all will be assigned as homework but discussed in depth during class time.

We will address the fourth learning goal first by analyzing everything we read (or listen to or watch) as homework. Students will outline in class the OPCVL of each assigned reading (or video): Origin, Purpose, Content, Value, Limitations. This exercise will allow students to understand how work is created for a purpose, so that they may emulate such practice. In addition, students are expected to bring every day the worst sentence from any one of the assigned texts. In class, students will workshop the poorly constructed sentences, replace their workshopped fix into the sentence's original context, then examine the broader context for more opportunities for edits.

With OPCVL in mind and with "worst sentence" workshops under their belt, students will be prepared to complete frequent writing assignments ranging from writing a persuasive paragraph to producing an academic essay to drafting an obituary. For their final project, students are allowed to generate any genre of written or non-written text, like a short video or podcast, that they choose.

Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Inclusion

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and situations be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, which may include but not limited to: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, political affiliation, culture, and so on. I acknowledge that there is likely to be a diversity of access to resources among students and plan to support all of you as best as I can. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support your peers in doing so as well.

Along with our course commitments, Stanford University is committed to providing a safe living and learning environment in which every person is valued and respected, inclusion is assured, and free expression and debate are encouraged. Protected Identity Harm Reporting establishes a mechanism for addressing situations involving intended or perceived acts of intolerance. In such instances, we wish to proceed thoughtfully, providing support to all of those affected, while also affirming that we value differences, free expression and debate as sources of strength for our community. Please visit intolerance.stanford.edu to submit a report.

Course Materials

Technology: You will need to have access to a device that connects to the internet so that you can access email and Canvas. All course details and materials will be posted on our Canvas course site. Students can borrow equipment and access other learning technology from the Lathrop Learning Hub. For tech support, see Student Tech Resources and Support.

Readings: Weekly readings will be made available on Canvas under Files > Readings > week _x_ readings.

Other media files: Videos and/or audio recordings of speeches and scenes will be linked (hyperlinks to YouTube) on Canvas under Files > Other media.

Coursework and Grading Scheme

This course is worth 3 units of credit, which means you may be asked to complete up to 9 hours of work per week, including class time. Between weekly participation in whole-class meetings, this leaves approximately 5 hours of work outside of class that you may be asked to do. The class schedule in the last section of the syllabus highlights assignments and due dates so that you can plan your work for the quarter accordingly. The table below summarizes the kinds of work you will be asked to do and their contributions to your course grade.

Overview:
Weekly readings must be completed before class so that you can earn participation points in class meetings. Most weekly assignments will be various writing exercises, which will become increasingly demanding as the quarter progresses. In their final project proposal, students pitch a final project emulating a genre of their choice—flash fiction, academic article, mop commercial, etc.—by submitting an essay outlining comparisons between two examples of that genre. For the final project, students submit their original sample of the genre of their choice.

See percentage breakdown on next page:

Category	% of course letter grade	Notes
Attendance and participation in class	30%	2 free absences, no questions asked - Each additional absence takes 2% off a student's final grade - Arrival more than 10 mins late counts as an absence
Weekly assignments	30%	- Weekly assignments will be discussed in class; as such, they must be submitted on time - If students want full or partial credit (at instructor's discretion) for unsubmitted

		weekly assignments, they must bring late work to an office hours appointment
Final project proposal	30%	● All components must be submitted on time; late submissions receive a 0 grade ● If students do not receive full credit for their first submission, their proposal may be revised and resubmitted during office hours appointment for full credit (at instructor's discretion)
Final project	10%	● All components must be submitted on time; late submissions receive a 0 grade

Course Policies

Presence and Participation

Thinking through difficult issues is most productive and most fun when done out loud in the company of others! This is why attendance and participation is a large part of your course grade (30%).

- You get 2 "passes" to be absent from class or section, no questions asked.
- Being 10 minutes or more late to a class or section counts as an absence.
- Each absence after your two freebies takes 2% off your final grade.
- Even if an absence is one of your two "passes," any work due at that class/section is subject to the policies below.
- Students who anticipate persistent challenges to participating in class or submitting work on time should follow up with Natalie as soon as possible.

Deadlines and Late Submissions

Assignment deadlines are listed in the course schedule to enable you to effectively plan work completion. Accordingly:

- **No late submissions are accepted.**

That said, life happens! So:

- **Submit what you have on time,** *no matter what shape it is in.*
  - If you receive a grade you are unhappy with, make an office hours appointment to revise and resubmit directly with me. You must email Natalie to schedule an office hours appointment within 24 hours of receiving your grade. You may do this once per assignment, on as many assignments as there are in the quarter.
  - The only assignment you may not revise and resubmit is the final project. If it is not submitted by 11:59pm on the last day of class, the student will receive a 0. If the student has extenuating circumstances, they must let Natalie know within 24 hours after the submission deadline.

The Honor Code

Class meetings and sections in this course will be highly interactive, you will hear plenty of great ideas from your peers, and if things go as planned, you might even *change your mind* based on what others say! However, you will be evaluated in this course as an individual and are expected to cite sources and individuals from whom you have learned and borrowed as a display of academic, intellectual, and creative integrity. Failure to do so is a violation of Stanford's Honor Code and is a serious offense, even when the violation is unintentional. Conduct prohibited by the Honor Code includes all forms of academic dishonesty, among them unpermitted collaboration and representing others' work as one's own. Please review Stanford's Honor Code, and documentation and citation resources from the Hume Center for Writing and Speaking. When in doubt,

contact your section leader.

Extended Absences

Despite our efforts to take precautions and protect ourselves and those around us, it is possible that one or more of us in the class will get sick, will need to give care to someone sick, or for other reasons will require an extended absence during the quarter.

- If a student requires an extended absence before more than 70% of coursework is completed, there might be opportunities to Withdraw from the course, or develop a schedule for making up and submitting coursework later in the quarter. Students in this situation should talk to a staff member at the Office of Accessible Education and to the instructor as soon as possible.
- If a student requires an extended absence after at least 70% of coursework is completed at a passing grade or higher, students may request an Incomplete. Incompletes do not award any credit and can drop students below the minimum required unit load. This could negatively impact academic progress, graduation, NCAA and Veteran's certifications, and financial aid. Students in this situation should talk to their section leader to discuss options.

Exam Policy

There are no exams in this course.

Course Privacy Statement

As noted in the university's recording and broadcasting courses policy, students may not audio or video record class meetings without permission from the instructor (and guest speakers, when applicable). If the instructor grants permission or if the teaching team posts videos themselves, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university. Students who need lectures recorded for the purposes of an academic accommodation should contact the Office of Accessible Education.

Course Policies for Use of Generative AI

While artificial intelligence (AI) tools can be valuable in certain contexts, in this course it is important that students develop their own skills and abilities to research, think critically, and communicate without the use of this technology. To maximally gain from the intentionally designed learning experiences in the course, it will be crucial that all members of the course community rely on personal efforts rather than use of AI tools. In fact, in many cases, it will be the effort itself (not the product) that is most valuable!

For this class, all assignments should be written in your own words. Just as you cannot take credit for others' writing in your assignments, you cannot use paraphrasing software ("spinbots") or AI writing software (like ChatGPT) and submit the output as your own. Doing so in this is a violation of the [Stanford Honor Code](#). At the beginning of the quarter, we will identify examples of AI tools and discuss what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty. This will help to ensure that we are all on the same page about the policies for this course and how they connect to our learning outcomes.

While the use of AI tools to complete class assignments is not permitted, there are many campus resources available and I am committed to helping you succeed. I welcome you to visit "Student Hours" or set up an appointment to chat with me about the use of AI or any other topics! Please also check out the Learning Resources section of the syllabus, which includes information about tutors and coaches, who can provide guidance to help you hone even stronger writing (or other academic) skills.

Masking Policies for In-Person Instruction

Stanford University is no longer mandating the [use of masks indoors](#) in most circumstances. However, masking indoors continues to be strongly encouraged and some of us might feel more comfortable wearing masks even when it is not required. All of our preferences are reasonable, and it is important that we treat each others' preferences with respect and care. In the first couple of weeks of class, we will formulate community commitments for how we will interact with one another. One of the issues we will explicitly discuss is honoring our respective preferences for COVID-19 health and safety beyond the bare requirements, so that we each feel comfortable and prepared to learn in class. You can find the most current policies on campus masking requirements on the [COVID-19 Health Alerts](#), and [policies on student testing here](#).

Course Policies for In-Person Instruction

All live instruction and participation in this course will be in person. In addition, given how interactive class time will be, there will be minimal lecturing and few reasons to support class recordings. However, we understand the unpredictability that remains in our lives and circumstances may arise that will interfere with your ability to attend class. This might include the possibility that you, your peers, or we, the teaching team, wake up one morning not feeling too well, or might need to quarantine or isolate for the safety of everyone. In light of these considerations, I request that you:
- skip class if you're feeling unwell.
- make an office hours appointment to discuss your weekly assignment that was due during the class period you missed.

- remember that for students required to miss more than 4 days of class due to medical reasons, I will devise an alternative plan for you to complete coursework if needed.

I want you to learn, and enjoy learning, in this course as much as possible, and I am committed to meeting you where you are and helping you complete the course successfully. Please reach out to me, your [Academic Advisor](#), or both, to discuss your concerns and questions so that we can work together to address them.

Academic Accommodations

Stanford is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students. Disabled students are a valued and essential part of the Stanford community. We welcome you to our class.

If you experience disability, please register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate your needs, support appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Academic Accommodation Letter for faculty. To get started, or to re-initiate services, please visit oae.stanford.edu.

If you already have an Academic Accommodation Letter, we invite you to share your letter with me. Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared at the earliest possible opportunity so I may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course.

Students who are immunocompromised should register with the OAE as soon as possible.

Student athletes who anticipate challenges in being able to participate in class or submit assignments on time should speak to a course instructor or teaching assistant as soon as possible about available alternatives or allowances.

Other Academic Resources

Have you ever noticed that elite performers across different fields—from athletes to musicians to leaders—work regularly with coaches? No matter what the domain and where you are starting from, consistent practice, reflection, and guidance from others can help you improve your skills. In the academic context, this includes specific skills, such as essay-writing or quantitative problem-solving, as well as the more general skills of learning (anything) effectively and maintaining your well-being. Stanford has a wide range of tutors, coaches, and other resources to help you up your game. Which will you take advantage of?

For this course, we especially recommend:
- [Writing tutors](#) from the Hume Center for Writing and Speaking, to sharpen your essay-writing skills
- [Academic coaches](#) from the Center for Teaching and Learning, to help you manage your time and work effectively
- [Study halls](#), organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning, to work and learn in quiet companionship with other students

Other campus resources include:
- [Study Tips and Tools](#), from the Center for Teaching and Learning
- [Undergraduate Advising Directors](#), Academic Advising
- [Well-Being services](#), including [well-being coaches](#), Vaden Health Center
- [Subject Matter Tutoring](#), Center for Teaching and Learning
- [Language Conversation Partner Program](#), Center for Teaching and Learning
- [Tutoring for Student Athletes](#), AARC
- [English as a Second Language (ESL) courses](#) for international graduate students
- [Student Tech Resources & Support](#), includes support for personal devices and Stanford services

Course Schedule

Subject to change, based on student feedback and input!

Table 1 Course Schedule

Week & Topic	Assignments, Activities, & Deadlines	Estimated Time to Complete	Deadline Time (Pacific)
Week 1: Introduction to Communication	Readings, one small writing assignment Class activities	Readings: 3 hours Small assignment: 1 hour	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)
Week 2: Mode differences in communication	Readings, two writing assignments Class activities	Readings: 2 hours Assignments: 2 hours	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)

Week 3: Race/ethnicity differences in communication	Readings, two writing assignments Class activities	Readings: 2 hours Assignments: 2 hours	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)
Week 4: Sex/gender differences in communication	Readings, two writing assignments Class activities **Midterm student feedback**	Readings: 2 hours Assignments: 2 hours	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)
Week 5: Genre differences in communication	Readings, one writing assignment Class activities	Readings: 1 hour Small assignment: 1 hour Project proposal: 2 hours	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)
Week 6: Genre differences in communication II	Readings Workshop project proposal during Monday class Activities during Wednesday class	Readings: 1 hour Project proposal: 3 hours	Project proposal **due** at start of Wednesday class
Week 7: Hierarchy differences in communication	Readings, two writing assignments Class activities	Readings: 2 hours Assignments: 2 hours	Readings and assignments due at start of each class (10:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays)

Week 8: Age differences in communication	Readings, one assignment Workshop time for **final project** during Wednesday class	Readings: 1 hour Assignment: 1 hour Final project: 2 hours	Readings and assignment due at start of Monday class (10:30am) **Final project due** at end of Wednesday class (12:20pm)
End-Quarter Period	**No final exam**		