Proposal for a New Course

**NOTE:** All gray text boxes must be completed (even if you just put N/A into them), otherwise the committee must consider the form incomplete.

1. Department: **Communication**

2. Course Number and Title: **COMM 215 Communication, Identity and Community**
   Number of Credits: 4  Total hrs/week: 4

   - Lecture: ☒  Lab: ☐  Recitation: ☐  Seminar: ☐

   For Independent study courses:
   - Research: ☐  Field experience: ☐
   - Clinical Practice: ☐  Internship: ☐
   - Practicum: ☐  Independent Course Work: ☐

3. Semester and year when course will first be offered:
   - **Fall 2011**

4. Catalog Description (please limit to 50 words):
   *This course explores the symbolic and social construction of meaning through the study of social-scientific theories of communication. Considers the implications of communication for group and organizational identity and the formation of relationships in a variety of contexts.*

5. Check if appropriate: Humanities: ☒  Social Science: ☒ (meets minimum degree requirements)

6. Check if appropriate: ☐
   This course will be cross listed with: n/a
   Rationale for cross listing: n/a
   Please attach letters of support from the chairs of each department indicating that the department has discussed the proposal and supports it.

7. a) Could another department or program also be a logical originator of this course (i.e. History of American Education could originate in both the Teacher Education and the History departments)? If yes, what department/program? Please contact the department chair/program director and request a note or email that they are aware of the proposed new course and include that note with the proposal.
   - **No**

   b) Please explain overlap with any existing courses.
   - **None**

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8. Prerequisites (or other restrictions):

None

9. Rationale/justification for course (consider the following issues):

a) What are the goals and objectives of the course?

Students will be able to:

1. explain seminal theoretical constructs related to communication as a symbolic activity, the social construction of meaning, and the development of identity as a communicative act;
2. identify how communication both shapes and is shaped by how we relate to one another and organize ourselves in groups;
3. understand how diverse cultural perspectives influence perception and communication practice;
4. demonstrate understanding of course concepts by effectively solving problems in a team environment;
5. apply these concepts to your life and relationships in both personal and professional contexts; and
6. gather, analyze and evaluate scholarly research.

b) How does the course support the mission statement of the department and the organizing principles of the major?

At a time of great change in communication professions, our distinctive, integrated curriculum discourages specialization in technologies and professional practices that quickly become obsolete. Instead, communication students are exposed to ideas and develop proficiencies that will sustain them for a lifetime. In our department, students become communication experts who write beautifully, speak eloquently, and research effectively. Our students and faculty understand communication as a liberal art.

Towards this end, COMM 215 explores how humans engage in communication to initiate, develop, and maintain relationships across a variety of personal and professional contexts throughout their lives. This course introduces students to the study of communication by exploring foundational theories regarding the symbolic and social construction of meaning and how these bear on our sense of identity, the formation of relationships in a variety of contexts, and the ways in which we organize ourselves into meaningful groups.

10. a) For courses in the major, how does the course enhance the beginning, middle, or end of the major?
COMM 215 is central to the strong core (beginning) of the Communication
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major as it provides students with an introduction to the study of human communication in interpersonal, small group, and organizational contexts. This course provides a theoretical foundation for all mid and upper level courses in the program.

b) For courses used by non-majors, how does the course support the liberal arts tradition including linkages with other disciplines:

Regarding the general-education status of this course, COMM 215 is a disciplinary course in communication. Similar courses are taught at hundreds of universities in the U.S. and elsewhere. Such courses are the product of decades of research in the social sciences concerning relational communication. For example, courses like COMM 215 can be used to fulfill general education requirements at such institutions as Ohio University, George Mason University, James Madison University, San Francisco State University, and Western Michigan University. In addition, liberal arts institutions have engaged questions of effective and ethical communication throughout history. While this is a disciplinary course, communication scholars consider relevant social-scientific research from other disciplines interested in relational communication, including psychology, business, gender studies, anthropology, philosophy, and sociology.

11. Method of teaching:
Lecture, problem-based learning, discussion, group work

12. a) Address potential enrollment pattern shifts in the department or college-wide related to the offering of this course:
none

b) Address potential shifts in staffing of the department as it relates to the offering of this course:
none

c) Frequency of offering:
each fall: ☒ each spring: ☒
every two years: ☐ every three years: ☐
other ☐(Explain): ☐

13. Requirements for additional resources made necessary by this course:

a) Staff:
None

b) Budget:
None

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c) Library:
   None

14. Is this course to be added to the Degree Requirements of a Major, Minor, Concentration or List of Approved Electives?
a) ☐ yes  ☐ no

b) If yes, complete the Change Degree Requirements form(s) and list the name(s) of the major, minor, concentration and/or list of approved electives here:
   Major: Communication
   Minor: Communication

15. Paste syllabus, reading lists, or any additional documentation that can help the committee evaluate this proposal (a syllabus is mandatory).

COMM 215
Communication, Identity and Community

Professor: 
Office: 
Email: 
Phone: 
Class times: 
Office hours: 

Course Description
We engage in communication to initiate, develop, and maintain relationships across a variety of personal and professional contexts every day. Whether the activity is getting to know a new roommate, raising money for your favorite cause, asking your boss for a raise, or ending an unproductive romantic relationship, you typically must communicate with others in order to achieve your goals. This course introduces students to the study of communication by exploring foundational theories regarding the symbolic and social construction of meaning and how these bear on our sense of identity, the formation of relationships in a variety of contexts, and the ways in which we organize our selves into meaningful groups.

Course Objectives
Conscientious study and attendance during this semester should provide you with the ability to:
1. explain seminal theoretical constructs related to communication as a symbolic activity, the social construction of meaning, and the development of identity as a communicative act;
2. identify how communication both shapes and is shaped by how we relate to one another and organize ourselves in groups;

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3. understand how diverse cultural perspectives influence perception and communication practice;
4. demonstrate understanding of course concepts by effectively solving problems in a team environment;
5. apply these concepts to your life and relationships in both personal and professional contexts; and
6. gather, analyze and evaluate scholarly research.

Texts

Student Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3 @ 20% each)</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Activities, Pop Quizzes or Hand-Ins (10 @ 1% each)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facework Field Study (1 @ 10%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Cultural Interview (1 @ 10%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Group Assignment (1 @ 10%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exams:
Exams 1-3 are non-cumulative. They will be multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer.

Class Activities, Pop Quizzes, or Hand-Ins
On ten occasions during the semester, you will have the opportunity to earn points from writing or participating in in-class activities, from pop quizzes on readings or other materials, or from handing in materials I request that you gather from online or media research outside of class. You must be in class in order to earn these points and these cannot be made up because of absence whether excused or unexcused.

Facework Field Study
Objective: To examine facework in a specific context and to apply concepts from the theory to analyze interactions.

Procedures:
You will choose a specific context outside of the classroom in which to observe interactants’ facework. This can be a meeting of a group or organization you belong to, an interaction among friends, a family dinner, etc. You will take detailed notes to which you can refer when writing the paper. Making specific reference to concepts and ideas from the Domenici and Littlejohn textbook, you will write a 3-5 page paper in which you examine:
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1. how interactants present self and respond to others;
2. use of direct and indirect messages and enhancing, threatening or integrating behaviors;
3. and the focus of attention and scope of action (see pp. 17 -21)

Cross-Cultural Interview
Objectives:
1. To examine one’s own perspectives on a communication topic (e.g., gender, conflict, relationship development, leadership, nonverbal, workplace behavior) by comparing them with those of a person who identifies with a different cultural group.
2. To learn more about cultural influences on identity in communication, including a more in-depth understanding of one culture’s perceptions and beliefs.
3. To practice eliciting cultural information from another, which often means encouraging the other to think about assumptions they take for granted.
4. To apply information about cross-cultural communication in order to understand another’s perspective.

Procedures:
You will write a paper in which you assess your own beliefs and practices from your own personal and cultural perspectives. Second, you will interview a person who identifies him or herself with a culture that is different from the ones with which you identify. Arrange to chat with this person for 20-30 minutes about your selected topic. Finally, you will write a 3-5 paper specifically applying the theories we have studied to discuss the differences and similarities between your perspective and that of the person you interviewed.

Case-Study Group Assignment
In leading a case-study discussion, your group’s goal is to generate a 25-30 minute dialog with the class about issues/theories relevant to the case. Your case study will be graded on the following:
1. Demonstrated knowledge of your theory and issues relevant to the case.
2. Following the guidelines in the assignment handout.
3. Your ability to keep discussion flowing, which will rely on your preparation and communication skills.
4. The quality of your group’ case study analysis paper (1 paper generated by the group in cooperation).

The paper requires the use of at least three peer-reviewed journal articles, in addition to the readings we have covered during the course. The paper should be 3-5 pages of text, excluding cover page and references, and should cover the following:

a. In the introduction (about one page), you should provide a justification for looking at the issues you have chosen, along with a thesis statement and a preview of your paper’s organization (what will you cover and in what order?). You will not be able to address all aspects of your case,
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so you should focus on a couple of areas and address them in depth.

Your introduction should explain why these are important issues.

b. In the body, you should expand on each of the issues you have outlined in your introduction. Using materials from the course and your research, you should provide background about the problems on which you are focusing. For each problem, use the literature you have read to provide possible effective solutions to the problems.

c. (about one page) In the conclusion, you should summarize the major arguments in your paper and explain how the contents of your paper can be used to improve health care practice.

You should provide support for the claims that you make and use multiple course concepts in your analysis. You should use a standard 10- or 12-point font and adhere to APA rules for citing sources, references, and format. The paper should be reasonably free of spelling and grammatical errors. You should staple your paper. Papers that receive a grade of A or B will be free of spelling and grammatical errors, organized clearly, and have lively prose. In addition, the analysis will show strong insight and the ability to synthesize multiple, relevant course concepts.

Policies and Procedures:

Technology and electronic devices: It is expected that students will turn off and/or silence all electronic devices during class time. Use of any of these items is NOT permitted until class has ended. If you are unable to resist this temptation, I will ask you to leave. If you have accommodations that allow you to record lectures etc. you must notify the professor in advance with necessary documentation.

Honor code: It is expected that all students will adhere to the College of Charleston Honor Code while completing all course requirements. Plagiarism and other violations will not be tolerated in this class. Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved, and College procedures for Honor Code violations will be followed by the professor. Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://www.cofc.edu/generaldocuments/handbook.pdf.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change by the professor at any time. All changes will be announced in class and on WebCT.

Course Schedule

Course Schedule is subject to change

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Class Topic Assignments Due at Start of Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introductions, Syllabus review, The Symbolic Nature of Communication</th>
<th>Duck &amp; McMahan, Ch. 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Introduction to Verbal Communication</td>
<td>Duck &amp; McMahan, Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Facework</td>
<td>Domenici &amp; Littlejohn, Chs. 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Introduction to Nonverbal Communication</td>
<td>Duck &amp; McMahan, Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Self &amp; Identity</td>
<td>Duck &amp; McMahan, Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exam 1

| Week 6 | Social Constructionism | Gergen, Chs. 1, 2, 4 & 5 |
| Week 7 | Communication and Relationships | Duck & McMahan, Ch. 6; Domenici & Littlejohn, Chs. 3 & 4 |
| Week 8 | Facework in the Community; Cultural and Global Issues | Domenici & Littlejohn, Chs. 5 & 6 |
| Week 9 | Society, Culture and Communication | Duck & McMahan, Ch. 11 |

Facework Paper due

| Week 10 | Small Group Communication & Leadership | Duck & McMahan, Ch. 8 |
| Exam 2 |
| Week 11 | Communication in Organizations - Defining Organizations; | Duck & McMahan, Ch. 9 |

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Week 12
   Communication in Organizations – Language and Socialization about Work,
   Workplace as Culture Cross Cultural Interview Paper due

Week 13
   Relational technology and the construction of identities Duck & McMahan,
   Ch. 12

Week 14
   Communication, identity and community: A synthesis TBD

Week 15
   Final Exam Week Exam 3

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14. Signature of Department Chair or Program Director:

________________________________________

Date: __________________________

15. Signature of Dean of School:

________________________________________

Date: __________________________

16. Signature of Provost:

________________________________________

Date: __________________________

17. Signature of Business Affairs Official

________________________________________

Date: __________________________

18. Signature of Curriculum Committee Chair

________________________________________

Date: __________________________

19. Signature of Faculty Senate Secretary:

________________________________________

Date Approved by Senate: __________________________

Completed form should be sent by the Faculty Senate Secretary to the Registrar. After implementation, information concerning the passed course and program changes will be provided by the Registrar to all faculty and staff on campus.