Course: COMM 450: Issues in Communication
SPICE Title: Computer-Mediated Communication

Instructor: Prof. Dr. David Westerman
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Course Readings: Materials in class will be made available using our course blog:
http://ndsuspicecmc.pbworks.com

Course Format: As an advanced course, you are expected to be prepared to participate in course discussions each day, as I expect you to learn from each other as well as from me (I want to learn from all of you as well). Meetings will typically be comprised of a mix of in-class assignments, lectures, interactive lectures, videos, and discussions.

Tentative Course Schedule:

17-19 July: Week One – Introduction to CMC: Definitions and History: We will spend our time during this week introducing the course and the topic of CMC, including working to define the main topic of computer-mediated communication. We will also focus on the history of the topic, including its roots in organizational communication and consider the social history of communication technologies.

24-26 July: Week Two – Theories of CMC: During our second week of class we will focus our discussion on some of the main theories of CMC. Our focus will be on social scientific theories, and will include media richness theory, social information processing theory, SIDE model, and hyperpersonal model, among others. We will discuss theory with an eye on considering what these theories can tell us about CMC, and what they can be applied to. This week will conclude with student presentations about their application projects.

31 July-2 August: Week Three – Applications/Core Concepts: Week three will bring further discussion of application and will introduce other relevant concepts to the study of CMC. These may include telepresence, social networks, affordances, warranting, context collapse, etc. Our main purpose will be to learn more about what we know about CMC, related to theories discussed previously, but also what we don't yet know, so we can apply to your individual foci.

7-9 August: Week Four – Future of CMC: Communication Technology is constantly changing, but perhaps the more things change, the more they stay the same? Our discussions this week will focus on where social technologies may be headed, including possible discussion of virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence and social robotics. Our goal will be to consider how these future

technologies (and ones not even considered yet) can be understood through theories and concepts previously discussed, but how those theories and concepts may also be challenged in light of these technologies as well. We will conclude the week with student presentations about their application projects.

Major assignments:
Students' proficiency in understanding of course concepts will be evaluated based on:

Attendance (100 points) – As a discussion course, it is imperative that students are present and prepared at each course meeting. Absences are inexcusable, and students will be penalized all 100 points after their first absence.

In Class Assignments (400 points total) – Throughout the course, student's comprehension of course concepts, readings and discussions will be assessed through in-class assignments. There will be 1-3 of these assignments during each class period. They will often take the form of answering questions on your own, but other formats may occur as well.

Application Project (500 points total) – I think that it is important to figure out how course materials and concepts can be applied to our everyday lives. As such, the biggest single assignment for this course will ask you to apply course content in such a way. As I do not know what each of your interests are, this project may look a bit different for each of you. For example, it may be a research study proposal, a white paper about a broad idea, a business proposal, etc. Details on this project will be provided in class, but at a minimum the project will require:

- An abstract that summarizes the project
- A literature review that analyzes/synthesizes knowledge about relevant course content
- An application of that content. This will require arguing for whatever your proposal is proposing, based upon your analysis/synthesis of relevant course content.

Overall, there will be three graded pieces of this project.

- Presentation #1 (100 points). On July 26th, each student will give a short presentation about plans for your project. This is expected to be comprised of a general topic (what do you plan to apply course content to), a theory you think will be relevant, and some preliminary ideas for how/why this theory is applicable.
- Presentation #2 (100 points). On August 9th, each student will give a short, but more complete, presentation about your project. This is expected to be comprised of a more complete argument about what is being applied and how.
- Written Project (300 points). A polished, written version of what is presented upon on August 9th is the culmination of this assignment.

Grading scale:
Grades will be assigned using a 4.0 scale, with the following breakdown:

4.0/A = 900 or more points
3.0/B = 800 – 899 points
2.0/C = 700 – 799 points
1.0/D = 600 – 699 points
0.0/F = 599 or fewer points