

## SPC 3210 MIDTERM REVIEW

### Chapter 1: Introduction to Communication Theory

- **Definitions of Communication**
  - *The relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response.*
  - A social process in which individuals employ symbols to establish and interpret meaning in their environment
  - Communication is the discriminatory response of an organism to a stimulus
  - “the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc., by the use of symbols--words, pictures, figures graphs, etc.”
  - “communication has as its central interest those behavioral situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the latter’s behaviors.”
  - “Human communication has occurred when a human being responds to a symbol.”
  - “the eliciting of a responses through verbal symbols.”
  - **Controversy over communication:**
    - Over 120 different definitions of communication...
    - There are disagreements on definitions because...
    - There are disagreements on the *nature* of communication
    - Communication is *less precise* than other sciences; thus, the study of communication can be more complex.
- **Characteristics of Communication**
  - **Social:** two people; interactive
  - **Process:** on-going and unending, no definable beginning or ending; past interactions affect present interactions; dynamic--continually changing
  - **Symbolic:** words are arbitrarily assigned; concrete and abstract symbols; interpretations may differ based on experiences
  - **Miscommunication/misinterpretation** occurs due to dynamic nature of communication.
  - **Environment:** The situation or context in which communication takes place).
- **Linear Model of Communication-** (Shannon and Weaver 1949)
  - Sender—Message—Channel—Receiver
  - Noise: semantic, physical, psychological, physiological
  - Assumes only one message in the communication process (only one source)
  - Overly simple (feedback is missing)
- **Interaction Model-** (Schramm 1954)
  - *Two way* communication process
  - Communication is ongoing (process) but...

- No simultaneous roles (source/receiver); one can be a sender OR receiver, not both.
- *Feedback* is a key element
- *Field of Experience*: there is an overlap of the sender's and receiver's culture, experience, and heredity in communication
- **Transactional Model** -(Barnlund 1970)
  - *Simultaneous* sender and receiver roles due to...
  - Feedback
  - *Mutual responsibility* to meaning (S and R)
  - Communication influenced by past experiences
  - *Interdependency of messages*, each builds on and effects the next message.
  - Dance (Helix)
  - Most accepted contemporary model
- **The Basic Components of Communication**
  - **Source**: transmits/encodes the message
  - **Encoding**: the process of taking an already conceived idea and getting it ready for transmission
  - **Message**: the stimulus that the source transmits to the receiver.
  - **Channel**: means by which the message is conveyed
  - **Receiver**: decodes the message
  - **Decoding**: the process of taking the stimuli that have been received and giving them meaning through individual interpretation and perception.
  - **Noise**: anything not intended by the information source. It *inhibits* the receiver's accurate reception of the message
    - **Types of Noise**: semantic, physical/external, psychological, physiological
  - **Feedback**: The component that helps make communication a *process*
    - *Occurs throughout* the communication process. Messages we send back to the "source."
    - Some feedback is better than *no* feedback
    - Can be + or -
    - Negative feedback can sometimes be more helpful than positive feedback
    - Verbal or nonverbal
    - Immediate/delayed
    - Critical/supportive
    - Low monitoring/high monitoring (totally honest/highly guarded)
    - *Accurate* feedback is important to communication improvement

## **Chapter 2: Talk about Theory**

- **Theory Defined**
  - *A set of systematic informed hunches about the way things operate*
  - An abstract system of concepts and their relationships that help us to understand a phenomenon
- **Objective Approach**
  - Assumes that *truth is singular* and is accessible through unbiased sensory observation.
  - Committed to uncovering cause-and-effect relationships (Griffin, 2012, p. 14).
  - Goal is to explain and predict human behavior.
  - Social scientists often use this approach
- **Interpretive Approach**
  - The linguistic act of assigning meaning or value to communicative texts.
  - Assumes that multiple meanings or truths are possible.
  - Rhetorical critics often use this approach
- **Distinguishing between Objective and Interpretive: *Epistemology***
  - **Epistemology:** The study of origin, nature, method and limits of knowledge
  - *How we know what we know*
  - **Objective:**
    - Truth is singular; not dependent on local conditions
    - Good theories are reflective of nature
    - Good theories represent reality
    - Truth is objective
  - **Interpretive:**
    - Truth is socially constructed through communication
    - Social reality is always in flux
    - Knowledge is viewed through a particular standpoint
    - Truth is subjective
- **Distinguishing between Objective and Interpretive: *Determinism vs. Free Will***
  - **Determinism:** the assumption that behavior is caused by heredity and environment.
  - **Free Will:** every human act is ultimately voluntary
  - **Objective**
    - Determinism
    - Explain human behavior in causal terms and...
    - ...In terms of *prior* stimulus
  - **Interpretive**
    - Human Choice
    - Explain human behavior in terms of conscious intent.