

SEM. IN COMM. THEORY: INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION—COM 492.001

School of Communication--Illinois State University--John R. Baldwin

Spring 2026—Tue-Thu 12:35-1:50 p.m. Fell Hall 112

Updated 10 Aug 2026

• “Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present impossible” – Maya Angelou • “Prejudice is never easy unless it can pass itself off for reason” –William Hazlitt • “El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz” – Benito Juárez	
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TEXTS AND READINGS:

- Austin, J. T., et al. (2023). (Eds.). *Communication theory: Racially diverse and inclusive perspectives*. Cognella. ISBN: 9781793542007
- Giles, H., & Maass, A. (2016). (Eds.). *Advances in intergroup communication*. Peter Lang. ISBN 9781433130311
- Additional readings will be available on Canvas.
- Note: This syllabus leans upon ideas in syllabi from Jessica Gasiorek and Jordan Soliz.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Research and theory regarding group identity as it relates to face-to-face and mediated communication. Prerequisites: Graduate student status

COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION: Many writers distinguish between “intercultural” and “intergroup” communication in this way: In intercultural communication, *actual* differences between communicators in terms of group-held differences in values, world view, communication norms, and so on, impact their producing or consuming of messages. *Intergroup* communication is where the *perception of self or others as members of groups* impacts message production or consumption, even if there are, in fact, no important differences in “culture” between the communicators.

With this in mind, intergroup communication is related to our seeing ourselves and others in terms of groups, and, thus, is closely related to prejudice of different sources (racism, sexism, ethnic strife, heterosexism). As we see a significant rise in political strife in many cultures, we see that policy makers, social media influencers, organizational leaders, or our dear Aunt Maude create and propel the notion of groups—“us” versus “them” and protect the “image” of their own group by any means possible. These tendencies in group-based thinking, the factors that lead to them, and their impacts on social life, are the focus of this course.

SPECIFIC STUDENT OBJECTIVES: After this course, you should be able to:

- ❖ Demonstrate your ability to understand key notions of the nature of “intergroup” communication
- ❖ Discuss key influences on intergroup thinking (sociobiological, cognitive and psychological sociological/political, rhetorical)
- ❖ Explain and provide examples of the impacts of intergroup thinking on communication processes (producing and consuming of face-to-face and mediated messages)
- ❖ Outline the basic ideas (“tenets”) of social identity theory and explain its connection to other theories of groupness and communication
- ❖ Provide appropriate strategies for addressing a particular type of intolerance in a specific context

REQUIRED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This course is conducted in a seminar format. We discuss shared readings to better understand fundamental issues. As a class, we investigate theory, research, and practice through class presentations of articles and class discussion. There may be some experiential learning, but this is largely done outside of class. Grading and dates are as follows:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Short papers:		200
○ Annotated bibliography for final project	4 Sep	50
○ Journal article extended abstract	11 Sep	50
○ Social Justice interview	25 Sep	50
○ Outgroup observation exercise	6 Nov	50
Final Project: Case Study of Intolerance (10-15 pp. each)		200
Part 1: The Problem	09 Oct	120
Part 2: The Solution	Day of Final	80
TOTAL		400

Description of Assignments

Annotated Bibliography: (50 pts) Create a list of a minimum of 20 academic sources, briefly summarized, that might inform your final project. These should include key theoretical and research sources based on your “case study.” You will draw from these (but might not use all of them and might include sources not in the bibliography). The keys are to *locate and download relevant, worthwhile academic sources that are focused on a single topic and including most important details*. The writing of the entries in the bibliography is not as central to the grading, so you may use AI or journal article abstracts in the journal article to “inform” your summary.

Extended Abstract: (50 pts) In addition to *informally discussing other readings in class*, you will present **one “extended” abstract**. This is a 2-page summary of an article that you choose. Abstracts require students to read the research critically, thinking through theoretical and methodological issues. The article you choose will *likely* relate to your final project and must be a primary study about some aspect of the “problem” of a given type of intolerance (evidence for the intolerance, factors that might influence the intolerance), such as “effects of microaggressions” or “prejudice toward international students” or solutions or strategies to address intolerance (e.g., “changes in classroom structure to increase positive group attitudes,” “social media use to reduce stereotypes”). The article that you summarize does not need to be related to your final project.

Social Justice Interview: Locate and interview a person of a marginalized group who is not part of a group that you belong to (group pre-approved by instructor, no prisoners, minors, or pregnant women). Plan questions (approved by instructor) to have this person talk to you about **their** experience. It is important that you not ask them to speak for a group but just to give you their own experiences. You will not transcribe the interview but listen to it and draw conclusions on how your understanding has changed (or remained the same) from the interview. You will write a brief paper (e.g., 4-5 double-spaced pages) summarizing your experience. This paper does not need to be connected to your final case study.

Out-group ethnographic observation: Alone or with one other student, you will choose a location in which you are in a position of the “other,” specifically, in a position of disadvantage in some way. You will go and be an active participant in the location. Immediately after the event, you will jot field notes about what happened, what you noticed, and, especially, your reaction to the scene as an outsider, considering such things as power, privilege, and intolerance of different

sorts. The final paper—sole authored even if you visit the situation with someone else. It will be about 4-5 double-spaced pages and does not need to be connected to your final case study.

Final project: Case Study: In most of my classes, the type of writing we produce is like a “journal article” or “conference paper” (usually a primary study, with a review of literature, methods and data collection, and analysis of that data). For this class, we are producing a different type of reading—a “book chapter,” as if it is a case study book on contexts of intolerance. These contexts might be “country” contexts but they might also be focused on a context within a culture, such as the university context or healthcare. You will write the paper in two portions (though you do have the option of doing a “data collection” paper instead). The paper can be an individually written paper or a group paper.

Part 1: The Problem: In the first part of the paper (approximately 10-15 pages), provide an introduction (which you can adjust upon completing part 2) and then introduce the “problem” of a particular type of intolerance or of group-based intolerance in a particular context. Ideas include:

- Language prejudice against international students
- Microaggressions related to gender expression in the United States
- The Rwanda genocide (or Biafran War, or Palestinian conflict, or...): An intergroup perspective
- Anti-Indigenous prejudice in Mexico (or the idea of *la Raza Cósmica* as it relates to national pride in Mexico)
- Religious conflict in Ireland
- *Embranquecimento* versus *democracia racial* in Brazil

The “problem” paper discusses evidence of the problem or necessary background (historical, sociological, psychological, etc.) to the problem or the various influences on the problem—or both! We will discuss possible outlines in class. The problem should be informed by theoretical sources from theories presented early in the class. I encourage but do not require you to consider a type or context of intolerance relevant to your own experience (co-cultural, national, identity).

Part 2: The Solution: In this paper, use sources and ideas from class, plus your own review of literature to develop a plan for addressing the problem. The solution should address the nature of the problem as you describe it (for example, “education” might be the solution if the sole nature of the problem is “lack of knowledge” about the other group). This section might be shorter, but total length of the paper (problem-solution) should be 20-25 double-spaced pages of text.

Presentation/wrap-up: In a short, separate paper (ungraded), discuss your plans for taking this project forward. This might take the place of your own action plan—what will *you* do to address the problem that you raised. But you should also include a discussion of current authors in communication that seem interested in this sort of work. At the end of the semester, we will imagine inviting authors you locate to “join” you in bringing the paper to the level of a publishable book chapter. This grade also includes your final presentation grade.

Extra credit: You may take part in research through the School of Communication Research Announcement Board (<https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies>) for extra-credit (5 pts for each ½ hour of research participation). Be sure to keep a screenshot of last page of each study you complete. I also encourage you to attend any class or community presentation related to our class content, such as seminars in different departments about identity, prejudice, and so on, or to watch and do a write-up on documentaries related to our topics on Kanopy (Milner).

Important Notes

1. **Due dates:** All assignments are due in class on day required, in format described in class. Online submissions should be MSWord compatible (not PDF), double-spaced (except for journal article abstracts). LATE work may receive a penalty of up to 10% for each class day late. If lateness is habitual for a given student, stiffer penalties are possible.
2. **Format:** All assignments should be typed and double-spaced, according to American Psychological Association (APA) style manual, 6th ed. **unless otherwise noted** (abstract is single-spaced). Margins should be 1 inch on all sides. No folders, binders, or plastic covers, please.
3. **Identification:** Please use UID only on in-class and take-home essays, rather than your name. Please label any digital files (file names) with your UID and assignment name, to assist grading.
4. **Late work.** Only in extreme circumstances can students get deadline extensions on projects. Students must discuss make-up opportunities with the instructor *in advance* of the missed class period or due date. Turning in multiple late assignments, even with extenuating circumstances, will work against your grade and future student benefits, such as seeking a letter of recommendation.
5. **Non-completion of work:** The failure to complete the *term project* will result in an automatic grade of "F" for that item. If a test or presentation is missed, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor.
6. **Records:** Keep careful records of your progress: attendance, returned papers, etc. until you receive (and are in agreement with!) final grade for course. This is especially true for group assignments. It is your responsibility to keep track of your academic progress.
7. **Plagiarism:** Any form of cheating, including plagiarized papers, will automatically result in a minimum penalty of "F" in the assignment. In some cases, a further sanction may be enforced. **Note that plagiarism includes** (a) use of others' ideas or organization without citation; (b) use of other students' work or your own from other classes without citation; (c) use of words *even with citation*, but without quotation marks to separate the authors' words from your own. Inappropriate use of AI (for example, **ChatGPT**) in paper construction also constitutes a type of plagiarism. For any paper, note how you have used AI, if you have done so.
8. **Changes to syllabus:** The instructor reserves all rights to make changes to this syllabus. However, any changes regarding due dates of assignments or dates of tests will be carried out only by class consensus. In effect, the syllabus is our "contract." If there are updates to schedule, I will post your e-mail account with notification.
9. **Technology Policy:** If we meet online for any reason, do not record any online sessions without permission, according to [FERPA guidelines](#). If you have tech-based issues, contact the Technology Support Center (<https://ithelp.illinoisstate.edu/>). You are not required to have your camera on, but if you do not, it is helpful for me for you to have a picture of yourself or an avatar (instead of a blank screen), so I do not feel like I am "teaching to the void."
10. **Respect:** Demand and show respect! Some topics we discuss may be emotional for you. It is important to show respect for others and their opinions as well as expect the same for your own.

Useful contacts:

- Any student in need of a special accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services, 350 Fell Hall 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD); their e-mail is ableisu@ilstu.edu.
- Student Counseling Services: 438-3655
- Julia Visor Learning Center/Univ College: 438-7100
<https://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/help/>

492-01 SEMESTER SCHEDULE—FALL, 2026

AOS: Austin et al. “reader”; G&M: Giles & Maass C: = Canvas

Date 2026	Topic	Primary Readings & Assignments
1 18 Aug 20 Aug	<i>UNIT 1: Groups and Identity: Basic Theoretical Introductions</i> Class introductions: Who Are You (identity “circles”) Social identity theory	Syllabus; C: Gallois et al., 2018 C: Giles & Maas (G&M1); Greenaway et al. (G&M 2); C: Gallois et al., 2018 identity circle exercise
2 25 Aug 27 Aug	Creating identities: Comm theory of identity; identity gaps Learning identities: Identity development theories (C: Sue & Sue)	C: Hecht et al., 2005; Wadsworth et al. (2008). C: Sue & Sue, 2005 AOS: Minnear (pp. 109-118); Davis & Jones (pp. 119-129) Term Paper topics due
3 1 Sep 3 Sep	<i>UNIT 2: Identity Perspectives</i> Sex and gender Sexual orientation Race/ethnicity	C: Kalbfleisch; C: Hajek et al. (2005) C: Verkuyten; James Baldwin, bell hooks; Coates; Anzaldúa; de la Garza, etc. Annotated bibliography due
4 8 Sep 10 Sep	Whiteness Religion, age, ability	C: Wander et al. (2002), Nakayama & Krizek (1995); Diangelo (2018) C: Klocek et al.; Hummert Extended Abstract due
5 15 Sep 17 Sep	<i>UNIT 3: Causes of (In)tolerance</i> A “layered” perspective of intolerance --sociobiological approach: preservation of gene pool, etc.	C: Allport, 1954; Baldwin & Hecht, 1995 GM 17: Clément et al. C: Reid et al., 2010
6 22 Sep 24 Sep	--psychological approach: stereotypes, cognitive biases, attribution theory --sociology & history: group competition, realistic value conflict	Readings TBA: See Modules Bonilla-Silva; counterpoint reading Social Justice Interview due

7 29 Sep	UNIT 4: Intergroup meets Comm Linguistic prejudice	G&M 4: Dragojevic 11: Gabriel & Gygax
1 Oct	Sociolinguistics of intolerance; changing “face” of intolerance (e.g., microaggressions)	G&M 8: Hegarty et al. C: Wetherell & Potter 5; Sue (2010)
8 6 Oct	Rhetoric of the Other	G&M 7: Haslam et al.; G&M13: Nau; Zompetti (2018): Ch. 7
8 Oct	Black feminist theory	OAS 2: Goins & Austin; OAS 15 Watkins-Dickerson; C TBA: Hall Case Study Part 1 due
9 13 Oct	Communication accommodation (theory)	C: Gallois et al. (2005); Giles et al. (2010)
15 Oct	Identity & NV Comm	G&M 9: Castelli & Galfano; 12: Fasoli et al.
10 20 Oct	Media & social media: Cultivation theory/media effects; framing theory	G&M 5: Stewart; OAS 19: Ramasubramanian G&M Carr et al.
22 Oct	Media “cultural” criticism: cultural studies	OAS 1: Aguilar & Juarez; OAS 17: Molina-Guzmán; OAS 20: Johnson & Peterman
11 27 Oct	Health/Organizational contexts	G&M 14: Woo & Myers; 15: Leach et al.; OAS: Dutta; OAS 13: Hsieh
29 Oct	Educational context	C: Tatum (1997) Ch. 4
12 3 Nov	Relationships, Adaptation	OAS 10 de la Garza; G&M 3: Gangi & Soliz
5 Nov	UNIT 6: Solutions Intergroup contact and dialogue	C: Dovidio et al. (2003) Observation Assignment due
13 10 Nov	Dialogue: Political correctness, “all lives matter,” speech code policies and such	G&M 6: Robinson & Reid; Zompetti; Orbe & Harris
12 Nov	Interpersonal responses: Co-cultural theory and its descendants	OAR 5: Orbe & Albrehi; C: Orbe & Roberts (2012); Razzante et al. (2021)
14 17 Nov	Allyship and coalition building	Readings TBA
19 Nov	Social movements and protest [NCA]	Readings TBA

24-26 Nov	Thanksgiving Break	
15 1 Dec	Structural strategies	Readings TBA
3 Dec	Reading Day—no class	---

Not included: Afrocentrism/Asiacentrism; Orientalism; postcolonialism; social network theory

Final Period: TBA: Present Final Case Studies

Unit 1: Basic Theoretical Introductions

Week 1: The basis: Social Identity Theory

Gallois, C., Watson, B. M., & Giles, H. (2018). Intergroup communication: Identities and effective interactions. *Journal of Communication*, 68(2): 309-317.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx016>

Giles & Maass (Ch. 1) in Giles & Mass (2018): Advances and prospects for intergroup communication.

Greenaway, K., Peters, K., Haslam, S. A., & Bingley, W. (2018). Shared identity and the intergroup dynamics

Optional readings: Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup conflict. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Brooks/Cole.

Week 2: Theories of Identity

Hecht, M. L., Warren, J. R., Jung, E., & Krieger, J. (2005). A communication theory of identity: Development, theoretical perspective, and future directions. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 257-278). Sage.

Wadsworth, B. C., Hecht, M. L., & Jung, E. (2008). The role of identity gaps, discrimination, and acculturation in international students' educational satisfaction in American classrooms. *Communication Education*, 57(1), 64-87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520701668407>.

Sue & Sue (citation forthcoming). Theories of identity development

Minnear, M. (2023). Ethnic-racial socialization and communication. In J. T. Austin, M. P. Orbe, & J. D. Sims (Eds.), *Communication theory: Racially diverse and inclusive perspectives* (pp. 109-118). Cognella,

Davis, S., M., & Jones, M. K. (2023). Strong Black woman collective theory. In J. T. Austin, M. P. Orbe, & J. D. Sims (Eds.), *Communication theory: Racially diverse and inclusive perspectives* (pp. 119-129). Cognella.

UNIT 2: Identity Perspectives

Kalbfleish, P. (2010). Gendered language as a dynamic intergroup process. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 29-39). Peter Lang.

Hajek, C., Abrams, J. R., & Murachver, T. (2005). Female, straight, male, gay, and worlds betwixt and between: An intergroup approach to sexual and gender identities. In J. Harwood & H. Giles (Eds.), *Intergroup communication: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 43-64)

Verfuyten, M. (2010). Ethnic communication and identity performance. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 17-28). Peter Lang.

Choose One:

Baldwin, J. (1955) Stranger in a village (essay): [Microsoft Word - Baldwin\[1\].docx](#)

Anzaldúa, G. (2007). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new Mestiza* (3rd ed.). Aunt Lute: chapter TBA

Coates, T.-N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. One World. Chapter TBA

hooks, b. Representing Whiteness in the Black imagination. (essay):

[hooks_Representing_Whiteness_Black_Imagination.pdf](#)

Wander, P. C., Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2002). Whiteness and beyond: Sociohistorical foundation of Whiteness and contemporary challenges. In T. K. Nakayama & J. N. Martin (Eds.), *Whiteness: The communication of social identity* (pp. 13-26). Sage.

Nakayama, T. K., & Krizek, R. L. (1995). Whiteness: A strategic rhetoric. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 81(3), 291-309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639509384117>

Diangelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for White people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press. Ch. 8: The result: White fragility.

Klockek, J., Novoa, C., & Moghaddam, F. M. (2010). Communication across religions. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 77-88). Peter Lang.

Hummert, M. L. (2010). Age group identity, age stereotypes, and communication in a life span context. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 41-52). Peter Lang.

UNIT 3: Causes of (in)tolerance

Allport, G. (1979/1954). *The nature of prejudice*: Addison Wesley. Ch. 13: Theories of prejudice.

Baldwin, J. R., & Hecht, M. L. (1995). The layered perspective of cultural (in)tolerance(s): The roots of a multidisciplinary approach. In R. L. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 59-91). Sage.

Reid, S. A., Zhang, J., Giles, H., & Harwood, J. (2010). An evolutionary perspective on social identity and intergroup communication. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 277-290). Peter Lang.

Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41(3), 157-175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1985.tb01134.x>

Ruscher, J. B. (2001). *Prejudiced communication: A social psychological perspective*. Gilford Press. [Ch. 3: Developing and using shared stereotypes]

UNIT 4: Intergroup meets Communication

Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1992). *Mapping the language of racism: Discourse and the legitimization of exploitation*. Columbia. Ch. 5: Constructing the community: "Race," "culture," and "nation."

Zompetti, J. P. (2018). *Divisive discourse: The extreme rhetoric of contemporary American politics*. Cognella. Ch. 7: The rhetoric of race and racism.

Gallois, C., Ogay, T., & Giles, H. (2005). Communication accommodation theory. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 121-148). Sage.

Giles, H., Choi, C. W., & Dixon, T. L. (2010). Police-civilian encounters. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 65-76). Peter Lang.

Mastro, D. (2010). Intergroup communication in the context of traditional media. In H. Giles, S. Reid, & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The dynamics of intergroup communication* (pp. 195-207). Peter Lang.

UNIT 5: Contexts:

Tatum, B. D. (1997). "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race. Basic Books. Ch. 4: Identity development in adolescence: "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria"?

UNIT 6: Solutions

Dovidio, J. E., Gaertner, S. L., & Kawakami, K. (2003). Intergroup contact: The past, present, and the future. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(1), 5-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430203006001009>

Orbe, M. P., & Roberts, T. L. (2012). Co-cultural theorizing: foundations, applications, and extensions. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 23, 293-311. DOI: 10.1080/10646175.2012.722838

Razzante R. J., Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (2021). Embracing intersectionality in co-cultural and dominant group theorizing: Implications for theory, research, and pedagogy. *Communication Theory*, 31(2), 228-249. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtab002>

Orbe, M. P., & Harris, T. M. (2015). *Interracial communication: Theory into practice* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Zompetti, J. (2018). *Divisive discourse: The extreme rhetoric of contemporary American politics* (2nd ed.). Cognella. [Introduction]

Useful Resources:

Ashmore, R. D., Jussim, L., & Wilder, D. (Eds.). (2001). *Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction*. Oxford University Press.

Collins, P. H. (2009). *Black feminist thought*. Routledge.

Giles, H. (Ed.). (2012). *The handbook of intergroup communication*. Routledge.

Van Dyke, N., & McCammon, H. J. (Eds.). *Strategic alliances: Coalition building and social movements*.