NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
CST 201 – INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH (3 CR.)

Course Description

Introduces the field of communication, emphasizing perspectives on theory and research, topical areas within the discipline, basic research methodologies, and a survey of theories in those areas. Covers basic procedures for theory-building, research, and writing about communication. Lecture 3 hours. 3 credits per week.

General Course Purpose

Provides students with an overview of communication studies as an academic discipline through a survey of foundational theories in the field, an introduction to communication scholarship and research methodologies, and provides a gateway for students to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate program in communication. Course is principally designed for students planning to transfer for a major or minor in Communication Studies at a four-year program.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

Students are urged to complete of at least one of the following CST courses: CST 100, CST 110, CST 126, CST 227, or CST 229, as well as ENG 111

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain the evolution of the field of communication and describe the current state of the discipline.
- Students will gain an understanding of components of a theory and be able to identify different approaches to doing research in the field.
- Explain how communication theories vary across the discipline.
- Define, explain, and analyze various communication theories that will prepare the student to commence junior-level communication studies courses after transferring to a four-year college or university
- Identify the major specialization areas within communication studies and assess options for transferring to a four-year academic program in communication studies

Major Topics to be Included:

A. Introduction to Communication
   1. Definitions of Communication
   2. Ways of Knowing
   3. Metatheoric Assumptions for Theory Building
   4. Evolution of the Field
   5. Current Trends in Communication Studies
B. Interpersonal/Intercultural Communication Theories
   1. Major Debates in interpersonal communication scholarship
   2. Uncertainty Reduction Theory
   3. Social Penetration Theory
   4. Symbolic Interaction Theory
C. Rhetorical Theory and Public Relations
   1. Methods of Rhetorical Analysis
   2. Principles of Aristotelian Theory
   3. Burkean Concepts of Dramatism and Pentadic Analysis
D. Mass Communication Theories
   1. Major debates in the field of mass communication
   2. Cultivation Theory
   3. Uses and Gratification Theory
E. Research and Writing about Communication
   1. How to Read Research in the field
   2. How to use the APA and MLA methods of documentation for communication studies