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.

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/Corequisites

Recommended fluency in Standard American English and proficiency in reading and writing at English 111 level. Prior completion of at least one of the following CST courses is recommended:  CST 100, CST 110, CST 126, CST 227, or CST 229.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- Explain the evolution of the field of communication and describe the current state of the discipline.
- Comprehend the components of a theory and understand the interplay among theory, communication, and application.
- Identify different approaches to doing research in the field and the role of theory within this process.
- 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. Assumptions for Theory Building
   4. Evolution of the Field
   5. Current Trends in Communication Studies

B. Interpersonal/Intercultural Communication Theories
   1. Symbolic Interaction Theory
   2. Uncertainty Reduction Theory
   3. Expectancy Violations Theory
   4. Social Penetration Theory
   5. Social Exchange Theory
   6. Relational Dialectics Theory
   7. Cognitive Dissonance Theory
   8. Face-Negotiation Theory
C. Group and Public Communication Theories
   1. Methods of Rhetorical Analysis
   2. Groupthink
   3. Functional Perspective of Decision Making
   4. Cultural Approach to Organizations
D. Mass Communication Theories
   1. Media Ecology
   2. Uses and Gratification Theory
   3. Cultivation Theory
   4. Agenda-Setting Theory
E. Research and Writing about Communication
   1. How to Read Research in the field
   2. How to use the APA documentation for Communication Studies