



Catch Up with Communication Studies

September 2024

Monthly E-Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 1



From the Chair



Welcome to the 2024 Fall Semester! Whether you are a returning Bearkat or just starting your journey at SHSU, we are excited to have you as part of the Communication Studies Department. This semester promises to be filled with new opportunities for learning, growth, and connection. Our amazing Communication Studies faculty have been hard at work building engaging courses that will challenge and inspire you. I encourage you to reach out and make Kat connections with your professors and classmates. Take full advantage of college life, join clubs and activities, go to games, explore all SHSU has to offer. I hope you will dive into your studies with enthusiasm and curiosity. The communication skills you will learn will be invaluable as you prepare for your future careers. Have a great year!

-Dr. Frances Brandau



Graduate Corner



Hello, I'm Dr. Lisa Dahlgren, the Graduate Director for Communication Studies, and I'm excited to welcome you to our program! Graduate school is a thrilling and challenging time, full of opportunities for growth and discovery. As you embark on this journey, please know that I'm here to support you—don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need assistance. Here's to a fantastic start!

-Dr. Lisa Dahlgren



What is Communication?



People often ask communication majors, “What exactly do you study?” With each newsletter, we aim to shed light on what communication studies truly encompass. This week, let’s start with the basics: “Communication is the study of meaning-making. Scholars in this field explore how messages and interactions shape human connections. This broad discipline touches on everything from social influence and professional dynamics to family relationships and political rhetoric. At its core, communication studies focus on understanding the messages we exchange and the behaviors they inspire.”

-Dr. Caleb G. Hubbard



Course Spotlight

COMS3341 Digital Communication Literacy



In today’s world, self-presentation is key. Whether we are making a new friend, preparing for a job interview, setting up a dating profile, or recording an about-me video for our new internship, we constantly have to think about how we present ourselves. In this class, we use a theory-based approach to analyze and create digital messages for a range of different audiences. Throughout the course, students will implement these strategies on their own platforms as they learn to become more literate consumers and creators in digital spaces.

Interested in this course? Message Dr. Anne-Bennett Smithson at abs055@shsu.edu to learn more about it!

Want to see what else we offer? Click the links for our [undergraduate course catalog](#) and our [graduate and professional course catalog](#).



Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Rebekah Chiasson, Assistant Professor



I love communication studies because it’s so applicable to everyone’s lives. Communication is something we engage in from the moment we’re born, but it’s a skill we constantly refine. Teaching communication courses is incredibly rewarding because students can see how the concepts and theories we explore directly apply to their lives, from personal relationships to professional endeavors. Understanding both how to communicate effectively as well as why communication is effective (or not), is at the heart of what makes communication studies so important and exciting.

My research focuses on both interpersonal communication and instructional communication. I aim to understand and enhance supportive communication and promote well-being in both relationship and educational settings. My work uncovers the communicative mechanisms that help individuals navigate and thrive during stressful and tumultuous situations, whether in romantic relationships, peer friendships, or academic environments.

This fall 2024 semester, I'm teaching COMS 3370 Intercultural Communication, COMS 3392 Risk Communication, and COMS 4366 Deceptive Communication. Given my research on close relationships— particularly the turbulence and supportive communication within them— I'm excited about the possibility of teaching courses like Interpersonal Communication, the Dark Side of Communication, Interpersonal Conflict, Social Support and Well-Being, and Relationship Communication. I find classes on interpersonal relationships especially fun because they allow us to draw from our own personal experiences to make meaning of the concepts we learn in the classroom!

A fun fact about me is that my teaching journey began as a snowboard instructor in New Hampshire. During my first lesson, when my student successfully rode down the mountain without falling, their excitement and pride in mastering a new skill made me realize that teaching was something I wanted to pursue for the rest of my life. I also have a 13-year-old cat named Cammi, who has traveled with me to 5 of the 6 states I've lived in. Outside of research and teaching, I enjoy listening to audiobooks and working on art projects. In fact, Cammi has a hand-painted water bowl and food dish that I made myself!

Allyzah Allene D. Cabugao, MA, Lecturer



I chose to pursue communication studies because of the influence my public speaking teachers/Speech and Debate coaches in high school and college had on my confidence and ability to speak my mind. I was quiet and afraid of even saying my name in front of people, but their guidance helped me understand that all voices deserve to be heard, and I shouldn't withhold mine. I decided to pay it forward and work to help others find the confidence to share their voices, regardless of if it is in front of an audience or in one-on-one conversations.

This fall 2024 semester, I am teaching COMS 1361 Public Speaking and COMS 3371 Conflict, Negotiation, and Resolution. I generally teach these courses every semester and have also taught COMS 2382 Communication for Business and Professionals and COMS 3370 Intercultural Communication in the past. I was the student who often hopped around research areas because “everything is just too interesting to stick to one area”, so there are plenty of courses I hope to teach in the future or would sit in on if I could. Did you know we offer courses on deception (COMS 4366), pop culture (COMS 3350), and humor (COMS 3365)? These are the type of courses I wish I had available where I had done my undergrad!

Some quick fun facts about me: I got my Master of Arts in Communication Studies here at SHSU! I was a Graduate Assistant while completing my degree, started working as an adjunct the semester after I graduated, and became a lecturer in spring 2024. Once a Bearkat, always a Bearkat! Outside of communication studies, I tend to collect hobbies. I love pretty much all forms of fiber arts, studio arts, writing, and more. One of my favorite projects is a 14-foot-long scarf I wove. I also have a rottweiler named Kara (after Supergirl) who is sweet but also terrified of flies.



Student Organizations

Lambda Pi Eta



Lambda Pi Eta is the National Communication Society, and SHSU has a chapter for communication majors and minors. This organization is an invitation only membership. To be invited to join the group, you must have above 60 credit hours, 12 hours in communication courses (9 must be at SHSU), above a 3.0 cumulative GPA, and above a 3.25 major GPA. Anyone who fits the qualifications for this organization will receive an email explaining the steps to become a member. Lambda Pi Eta is a prestigious group, and we are excited to recognize those students who qualify. If you have any questions, reach out to Drs. Caleb Hubbard (cghubbard@shsu.edu) or Colton Krawietz.

Watch a message from current Lambda Pi Eta president, Madison Stone, about Lambda Pi Eta.

CommuniKats



The CommuniKats Organization at Sam Houston State University serves as a dynamic platform for college students to improve their communication skills and foster meaningful connections. This organization is recommended for students of all majors who are interested in expanding their communication abilities. The club organizes networking events, guest lectures by university professionals, and collaborative projects that encourage participation and the exchange of ideas. By nurturing these vital communication competencies, the club equips its members with the tools they need to thrive academically, professionally, and personally, preparing them to excel in their future endeavors beyond the college walls.

Contact current CommuniKats president, Kylee Patterson (kmp118@shsu.edu) or follow on Instagram at [@CommuniKats](https://www.instagram.com/CommuniKats) for more information and updates.



Behind the Newsletter



The Kats behind the newsletter! Dr. Caleb G. Hubbard and Allyzah Allene D. Cabugao, MA will be bringing you the latest news and happenings from the Department of Communication Studies students, faculty, and staff.

Here's to the start of an amazing school year!



Summer Happenings

International Association of Maternal Action and Scholarship Conference Presentation: Dr. Kelly Weikle



Dr. Weikle presented her research titled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Construction of ‘Good’ Mothers in American Media at the Turn of the 20th Century”. She reviewed the issues of Ladies Home Journal from the late 1800’s/early 1900’s and critically analyzed how they described good and bad mothering with the goal of broadening our understanding of the influences on our present dominant ideologies of good mothering and maternal duty.

National Storytelling Network Vice Chair Elect: Dr. Caleb G. Hubbard



Dr. Hubbard was recently named the “Vice Chair Elect” for the National Storytelling Network. During his first year he will oversee the National divisions and committees throughout the organization. The three-year term concludes with him as Chair.

The National Storytelling Network envisions a world in which all people “value the power of storytelling and its ability to connect, inspire, and instill respect within our hearts and communities”. They work to advance all forms of storytelling through promotion, advocacy, and education.

Pictured: Dr. Trudy Hanson, previous Chair (left) and Dr. Caleb G. Hubbard (right)

[Click here for more information about the National Storytelling Network.](#)

New Directions in the Humanities Conference Presentation: Dr. Caroline Waldbuesser and Dena Horne, MA



Dr. Caroline Waldbuesser (left) and Dena Horne, MA (right) traveled to Italy this summer to present “The Next Phase of Public Speaking and Classroom Speeches: How Innovations in Public Speaking Preparation Influence Perceptions of Efficacy and Student Satisfaction” at the New Directions in the Humanities Conference.

The conference, held at Sapienza University of Rome, was attended by social scientists from all over the world. The opportunity to share and learn from each other was so interesting!



Pet Spotlight



Bentley is a 2-year-old service dog for his dad Xander! After earning his degree from Dog Training Elite, he accompanies Xander everywhere to keep him safe. When he's off the clock, he enjoys soliciting for attention, toys, and blueberries.

-Bentley
Major in Medical Response
Minor in Cuddles

In my senior year at SHSU, I can confidently say the Communication Studies department has become my home while attending Sam. I'm grateful for the endless kindness, opportunities, and support from the department.

-Xander Cook
Major in Communication Studies
Minor in Political Studies



Important Upcoming Dates

September

Thursday, September 5th

 Last day to register or process schedule changes

Wednesday, September 11th

 Deadline for Fall 2024 graduation applications

 Last day to drop without a "Q" and receive 100% refund for full term

Friday, September 13th - Sunday, September 15th

 Bearkat Family Weekend

Wednesday, September 18th

 Academic advising opens for Spring 2025

Friday, September 20th

 Lambda Pi Eta applications deadline

Monday, September 30th

 Lambda Pi Eta membership dues deadline

October

Saturday, October 12th

 Saturday @ Sam

Wednesday, October 23rd

 **Communication Day: Let's Play!**
CHSS 410, 2:00 - 4:00PM

Come join us as we celebrate Communication Studies and students like you with an afternoon of games, food, and fun! All students are welcome, bring a friend!

Wednesday, October 30th

 Last day to drop with a "Q" for full term courses



Want to be Featured?

Join the conversation and use the form below to help us tell your stories!

[Newsletter
Submission Form](#)



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