Communication Mosaics

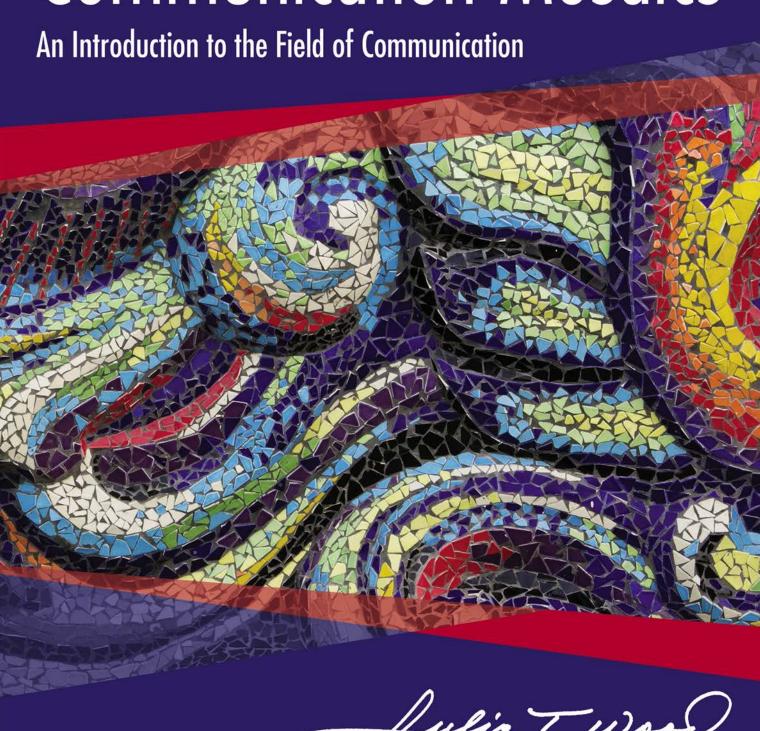## An Introduction to the Field of Communication

Julia T Wood

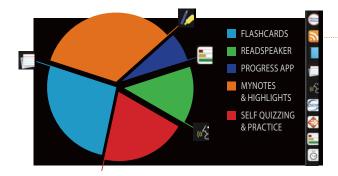# MindTap™

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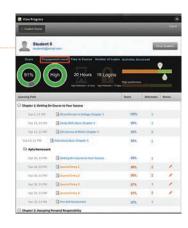— Student, San Jose State University

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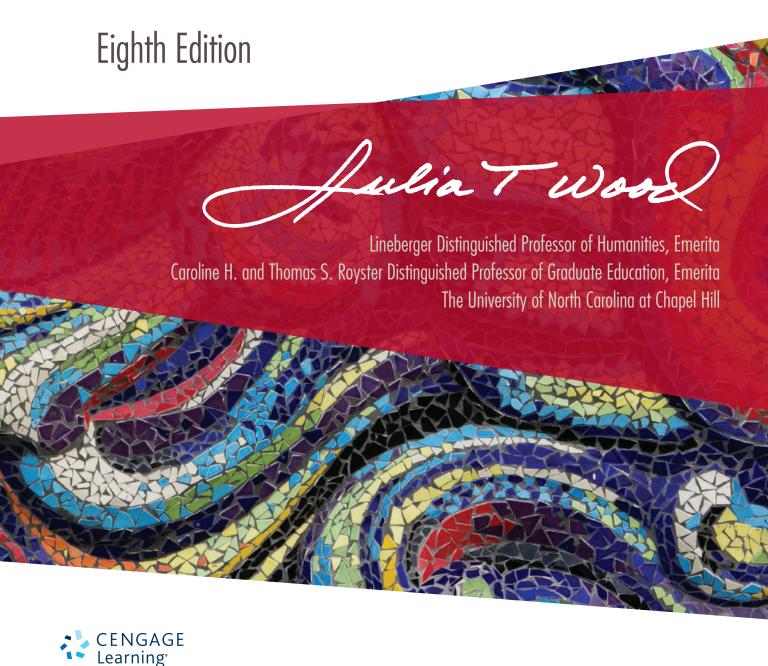— Student, Franciscan University of Steubenville

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Communication Mosaics

An Introduction to the Field of Communication

Eighth Edition

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TAKE ACTION

Preface

I wrote *Communication Mosaics* to support survey courses that introduce students to the field of communication. Unlike other versions of the introductory course, the survey approach usually doesn't include performance assignments such as giving speeches. Instead, the survey course aims to provide a comprehensive view of the communication field, giving attention to topics beyond those that can be covered in performance-oriented introductory classes—such topics include mass communication, organizational communication, and digital communication—and focusing on conceptual understanding of the breadth and importance of communication in many spheres of our lives.

Responses to earlier editions of this book indicate that many faculty appreciate a textbook specifically designed to support a survey approach to the introductory course. Student response to previous editions and 15 years of class testing indicate that students, too, find *Communication Mosaics* useful in giving them an expansive introduction to the communication discipline. In addition to welcoming the approach of this book, faculty and students have been generous in offering suggestions, which I've used to improve this edition.

In the pages that follow, I explain my vision of this book and the features I've woven into it and then call attention to changes I made in preparing the current edition.

Communication as a Mosaic

As the title of the book suggests, communication is an intricate mosaic composed of parts that are distinct yet interrelated. All of the parts work together to create the whole of communication. This book increases students' awareness of the importance of basic communication skills and processes and shows students how those common elements surface in specific forms and contexts of communication.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I introduces students to the discipline of communication, discusses foundations for the study of communication, and describes careers for people who have strong communication backgrounds and skills. Chapter 1 introduces the book, identifies values of studying communication, defines and models communication, and describes careers for people who have strong academic training in communication. Chapter 2 surveys the discipline's evolution and methods of conducting research so that students understand the long and rich intellectual history of the field. This chapter also highlights the discipline's breadth by identifying its primary areas of research and teaching. Part II consists of six chapters, each of which focuses on one of the basic processes and skills that are central to a range of communication situations and goals. These basic communication skills and processes are:

◆ Perceiving and understanding

◆ Engaging in verbal communication

◆ Engaging in nonverbal communication

xvii

◆ Listening and responding

◆ Creating communication climates

◆ Adapting communication to cultures and social communities

These basic skills and processes shape the character and effectiveness of communication in a wide range of settings, although how each functions varies from one context to another. For example, we may use different listening skills when trying to understand a close friend and attending to television news.

Part III shows how the basic communication processes and skills covered in Part II function in seven specific contexts:

◆ Communication and personal identity

◆ Communication in personal relationships

◆ Communication in groups and teams

◆ Communication in organizations

◆ Public communication

◆ Mass media

◆ Computer-mediated communication

The MindTap for *Communication Mosaics* includes a chapter-length discussion of how the processes and skills covered in Part II apply to interviewing.

Features of *Communication Mosaics*

Accenting this book are six features that enhance students' learning and ensure the scholarly integrity of content.

Accessible, Conversational Style

I write in a conversational style that encourages students to engage the ideas in this book. I refer to myself as "I" rather than "the author," and I address students as "you" rather than "the student." I also use informal language, such as contractions, just as people do in everyday conversations. In the opening chapter of the book, I introduce myself to students so they know something about my view of communication and my motivations for writing this book.

Another way in which I've personalized my writing style is by including examples from a range of people. At times, I offer reflections from my own life. In addition, I enlarge the conversation beyond just the reader and me by including in all chapters reflective comments from students at my university and other campuses around the country. To protect privacy, I've changed the names of the students who wrote the commentaries.

Learning about communication should be enjoyable. I don't think textbooks have to be dry or burdened with unnecessary jargon. When it's necessary to use specialized terms, I define them so that students understand what they mean, but I've written this book in an accessible, personal style to make it more interesting to read.

Foundation in Research and Theory

A textbook is only as good as the research and theory on which it is built. *Communication Mosaics* draws on the impressive body of research and theory developed by scholars of communication as well as scholars in other fields.

Communication Mosaics reflects my belief that theory and practice go together. Years ago, renowned scholar Kurt Lewin said, "There is nothing so practical as good theory." His words remain true today. In this book, I blend theory and practice so that each draws on and enriches the other. Effective practice is theoretically informed: It is based on knowledge of how and why the communication process works and what is likely to result from different kinds of communication. At the same time, effective theories have pragmatic value: They help us understand experiences in our everyday lives. Each chapter in this book is informed by the impressive theories and research generated by scholars of communication and other fields. To ensure that the perspectives and skills in this book reflect current knowledge of effective communication practices, this edition includes more than 200 new references.

Integrated Attention to Social Diversity

Social diversity is a defining feature of our era. The United States and the world include people of different ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, races, ethnicities, sexes, abilities, spiritual commitments, and economic circumstances.

These differences affect how we communicate. Thus, the idea of universal communication goals and principles must be replaced with understandings of how diverse people use communication to accomplish goals and how they adapt communication to fit a range of contexts. *Communication Mosaics* emphasizes social diversity in three specific ways. First, Chapter 8 offers in-depth coverage of the relationships between communication and culture: how cultural factors influence communication style, how communication shapes culture, and how we adapt our ways of communicating to particular people and contexts. Second, I weave research on social diversity into all chapters of the book. For example, Chapter 10 explains differences in how women and men typically communicate in personal relationships, and Chapter 14 discusses differences in how mass media represent men and women and people of different races. Third, examples in the chapters, as well as photographs, feature a wide range of people and cultural contexts.

Coverage of Digital Media

Digital media increasingly infuse our lives, and this is reflected throughout this edition of *Communication Mosaics*. Every chapter includes examples and research related to both mass communication and social media we use for social, educational, professional, and political purposes. For example, Chapter 4 notes how language has changed in response to digital technologies. We have coined new words (*hypertext, IM*) and developed new meanings for existing words (*mouse, cyberspace, virtual reality*). Texting and tweeting have led to abbreviated ways of communicating: brb (be right back), h8 (hate), AYT (are you there?), 2G2BT (too good to be true), 9 (parent in room), 99 (parent is no longer watching or no longer in room), and dropping vowels in words (whl = while, nxt = next, tmrw or 2mrw = tomorrow). Chapter 10's coverage of personal relationships examines how social media affect the ways in which we meet and get to know friends and romantic partners and the means we have for maintaining

long-distance relationships. You will also find a full chapter, Chapter 15, on CMC. In this chapter, I discuss the ways we use CMC—especially social media—and then explore the impact of CMC on how we think, relate, and act in personal, professional, and social contexts. Finally, every chapter in this edition includes a main section in which I discuss relationships between that chapter's topics and digital media.

I've also written digital activities to extend students' learning online in the Mind-Tap for *Communication Mosaics*—for details, see Resources for Students and Instructors, below.

Student Commentaries

Woven into each chapter are commentaries from students' journals and papers. Although students in my classes wrote many of these, students at other universities have also sent me their reflections, many of which are included in this edition. I include student commentaries because in more than 30 years of teaching I've learned that students have much to teach each other and their instructors. The commentaries show how different people relate communication principles and research to their own lives. I encourage students who use this edition to send me their comments and reflections so the next edition can reflect their perspectives and experiences too.

Pedagogical Features

A sixth focus of this book is features that are specifically designed to maximize learning.

Learning Objectives Opening each chapter are learning objectives that orient students to the chapter and help them organize how they read and study the material.

Engage! Featured in each chapter are "Engage!" boxes that highlight communication research and the role of communication in everyday life. I use these boxes to call students' attention to particularly interesting aspects of communication in a variety of settings.

Practical Application Every chapter in Parts II and III of this edition provides concrete guidelines for communicating effectively (appearing in a highlighted section under the heading "Guidelines for …"). In addition, each chapter includes "Take Action" exercises that invite students to apply skills and principles as they read about them. Some of these exercises encourage students to practice a particular skill, perhaps by engaging in civic life or service learning. Others invite students to observe how communication concepts and principles discussed in the text show up in everyday interactions. Still others ask students to reflect on the ways in which particular skills, theories, or concepts have shaped who they are and how they communicate. Finally, at the end of each chapter, I include questions that invite students to discuss and reflect on what they've learned in the chapter.

End-of-Chapter Resources Following each chapter are study resources gathered under the heading Review, Reflect, Extend. These resources include questions that encourage students to reflect on and discuss what they have read and to extend and apply the material presented in the chapter, as well as a list of key concepts (with page references), and further recommended resources, including articles, books, films, and online sites.

Highlighted Key Terms Within each chapter, I've boldfaced key terms that students should learn. All boldfaced terms are repeated in the margin of the page on which they first appear and in a list at the end of each chapter to encourage students to check their retention after they have read the chapter. By each term, I've noted the page on which the term first appears and is defined so that students can easily review concepts. Boldfaced terms are also defined in the glossary at the end of the book.

Experience Communication Case Study At the end of most chapters, I present a short case study that illustrates how ideas covered in the chapter show up in actual communication. To make the cases engaging and realistic, the MindTap for *Communication Mosaics* also provides videos of the scenarios presented in each case study and questions that ask students to apply chapter theories and principles.

The transcripts at the ends of Chapters 2 and 13, and the online videos available for each, are not case studies. Instead, the scenario for Chapter 2 features Tim Muehlhoff, a professor of communication at Biola University, being interviewed by a student about the relevance of ethics to communication, and the video for Chapter 13 is a speech by Elizabeth Lopez, a student in an introductory public speaking class.

Changes in This Edition

Teaching at a public university has made me sensitive to the cost of textbooks. I am not willing to publish new editions of my books with only cosmetic changes. Instead, I insist that a new edition offer substantive changes to justify the expense to students. Instructors who are familiar with previous editions of this book will notice significant changes in this edition that are responsive to generous feedback from reviewers, instructors, and students.

MindTap® for Wood's *Communication Mosaics,* 8th Edition

MindTap for Wood's *Communication Mosaics,* 8th Edition is a personalized teaching experience with relevant assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and improve thinking, allowing you to measure skills and comprehension with ease. MindTap allows you to set your course, elevate thinking, and promote better outcomes. Learn more in the Student Resources section, below.

Enhanced Coverage of Computer-Mediated Communication

Faculty who have adopted previous editions of this book will notice that I have updated Chapter 15, Digital Media and the Online World, with material on the ever-changing ways that we use digital media to craft identities; connect with others; and participate in education, work, and political and social organizing. I have also added information on best practices for managing digital media so that they enhance our lives.

In addition to revising Chapter 15, this edition further integrates attention to CMC with a new section in every chapter that focuses specifically on CMC in relation to the chapter's topics.

Condensed Coverage of the Communication Field

This edition heeds reviewers' suggestion to abridge Chapter 2, which introduces students to the field of communication. I continue to think it is important to discuss the field's origins so that students appreciate the rich intellectual history of the discipline. In this edition, however, my discussion of the field's history and current character is more concise.

The Latest Research about Human Communication

This edition includes more than 200 new references. The infusion of new research ensures that *Communication Mosaics* reflects up-to-date scholarship. For example, Chapter 12, Communication in Organizations, includes new information on the challenge of negotiating a balance between commitments to work and commitments to other facets of life. Chapter 14, Mass Media, includes recent research that demonstrates bias in mainstream media such as television and films. And, as noted above, I have rewritten Chapter 15, Digital Media and the Online World, to reflect the latest knowledge about how digital media affect our lives, including our communication and how we can best manage their roles in our lives.

Streamlined Presentation

I've worked to avoid the phenomenon of "page creep," which happens when authors add new material to each new edition of a book without condensing or eliminating any of the material in previous editions. Throughout the book, I've reduced the number of features, tightened prose, and eliminated dated research. This edition is slightly shorter than the previous one, yet it includes new information and features to encourage application of concepts and principles.

- ◆ FYI boxes have been renamed Engage! to better promote student interaction with the content. Many Engage! features contain interactive Critical Thinking Questions.

- ◆ Sharpen Your Skill boxes have been renamed Take Action. These exercises now appear in the end-of-chapter section.

- ◆ Critical Thinking Questions have also been added to select photo captions throughout.

Revised Coverage of Public Speaking

I have recast Chapter 13, Public Communication. As faculty know, it's difficult, if not impossible, to teach public speaking in a single chapter, yet that is all the space allotted in a book that surveys the broad field of communication. To offer students an interesting introduction to public communication, I have rewritten the chapter as an extended example in which a student body president named Harper prepares a speech to give at his graduation. Following Harper through the processes of thinking, research, organization, and practice, allows me to introduce principles of public speaking in an embodied, rather than abstract manner. In addition, adopters of this book have access to five chapters I have written that provide detailed instruction in preparing informative and persuasive speeches. Those additional chapters are available through Cengage Compose, Cengage Learning's customized learning materials program. Contact your local Cengage Learning consultant for more information on Cengage Compose.

Improved Order of End-of-Chapter Features

To facilitate improved student comprehension, I have reordered the end-of-chapter features as follows:

Summary

Experience Communication Case Study

Key Concepts

Review, Reflect, Extend

   Reflect and Discuss

   Take Action

Recommended Resources

New Interior Design

Finally, this edition has a more open, uncluttered design. Previous editions included many photos, cartoons, and in-text feature boxes. A number of students and faculty commented that all of these features made the pages feel crowded. In response, I have included fewer photos, cartoons, and feature boxes in this edition, and I have moved the skill-building exercises to the ends of chapters.

I hope that this edition of *Communication Mosaics* retains the strengths that instructors and students valued in previous editions while also benefiting from generous suggestions for improvement.

Resources for Students and Instructors

Accompanying this book is an integrated suite of resources to support both students and instructors.

Please note: If you want your students to have access to the online resources for this book, you can order them for your course. These resources can be bundled with every new copy of the text or ordered separately. If you do not order them, your students can purchase them directly from www.cengagebrain.com. Please consult your local Cengage Learning sales representative or **www.cengagebrain.com** for more information, user names and passwords, examination copies, or a demonstration of these ancillary products.

Instructor Resources

Instructors who adopt this book can request a number of resources to support their teaching.

◆ **The Instructor's Resource Manual** offers guidelines for setting up your course, sample syllabi, chapter-by-chapter outlines of content, suggested topics for lectures and discussion, and a wealth of class-tested exercises and assignments.

◆ **Instructor's Web site.** The password-protected instructor's Web site includes electronic access to the Instructor's Resource Manual and downloadable versions of the book's Microsoft® PowerPoint® slides. To gain access to the Web site, simply request a course key by opening the site's home page.

◆ **Cognero.** Cognero is Cengage's full-featured online testing system that allows users to create assessment questions and tests. Instructors have all of the features that are used to from Examview® with a number of valuable enhancements. These include: browser-based application, questions organized in a central database, real-time software and content updates, reordering of questions on a test automatically, feedback attached to questions or answers, and easy integration and exportation to an LMS platform.

◆ *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to the Basic Course* is available to instructors who adopt this textbook. Katherine G. Hendrix, who is on the faculty at the University of Memphis, prepared this resource specifically for new instructors. Based on leading communication teacher training programs, this guide discusses some of the general issues that accompany a teaching role and offers specific strategies for managing the first week of classes, leading productive discussions, managing sensitive topics in the classroom, and grading students' written and oral work.

Student Resources

Students have the option of utilizing a rich array of resources to enhance and extend their learning while using *Communication Mosaics*.

◆ **MindTap for Wood's *Communication Mosaics*, 8th Edition.** This edition's pedagogy is built on a strengthened learning architecture, based on skill building, application, and critical thinking, integrated carefully in MindTap—a personalized teaching experience with assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and improve thinking, allowing instructors to measure skills and outcomes with ease. With MindTap, students are able to use dynamic technological resources, including interactive videos; find high-value gradable activities; and practice in an engaging, personalized online environment. MindApps that are provided support building a speaking outline, practicing, and presenting speeches.

◆ *The Art and Strategy of Service-Learning Presentations,* **Second Edition,** is available bundled with *Communication Mosaics*. Authored by Rick Isaacson and Jeff Saperstein of San Francisco State University, this handbook provides guidelines for connecting service-learning work with classroom concepts and advice for working effectively with agencies and organizations.

◆ *A Guide to the Basic Course for ESL Students* is available bundled with the book. Specifically for communicators whose first language is not English, it features FAQs, helpful URLs, and strategies for managing communication anxiety.

Acknowledgments

Although my name is the only one that appears as the author of this book, I could not have written it without the help of many people. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the support and assistance of a number of people who have influenced how I think and write.

I am deeply indebted to the Cengage Learning team. Everyone on that team has been extraordinarily professional and helpful throughout the evolution of this book. Leading the group is Nicole Morinon, senior product manager for speech communication, whose energy, support, and insight seem infinite. In addition to Nicole, I am grateful to other key members of the team: Monica Eckman, product director, and Kate Scheinman, senior content developer editor. Also integral to this edition were Kristin Davis, marketing manager; Colin Solan, product assistant; Jessica Badiner, media developer; Heather Preston, copy editor; Dan Saabye, content production manager; Sumathy Kumaran, project manager; Kathleen Shapiro, proofreader; Farah Fard, IP project manager; Jananie Kulasekaran, image permissions researcher; and Dharanivel Baskar, text permissions researcher.
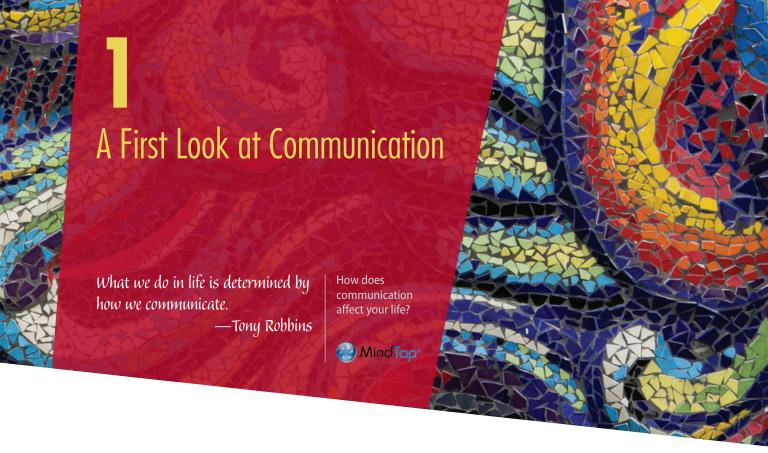
This book is truly a collaborative effort that involved and reflects the contributions of everyone on the team.

I am particularly grateful to scholars and teachers of communication who contributed helpful comments and suggestions that guided this revision: Becki Bowman, McPherson College; Anita Chirco, Keuka College; Lynn Cockett, Juniata College; Katherine Dawson, University of Louisiana at Monroe; Mark Frederick, Regent University; Joe Habraken, University of New England; Zach Henning, University of Southern Indiana; Liliana Herakova, Holyoke Community College; Sarah Hill, Western Illinois University; Allison Holmes, Davidson County Community College; Patricia Linder, Middle Georgia State College; David Nelson, Valdosta State University; Clyde Remmo, Columbia College; Terri Russ, Saint Mary's College; Abbie Syrek, University of Nebraska Omaha; and David Zanolla, Western Illinois University.

The ideas in this book were also influenced by students in my classes and by students at other colleges and universities around the country. They provided insightful feedback and suggestions for ways to improve *Communication Mosaics*. In class discussions, conferences, e-mail, and written comments, students push me to do more and tell me which communication issues are prominent in their lives. Invariably, students teach me at least as much as I teach them. Because students are so thoughtful, I include many of their reflections as Student Voices in this book.

Finally, I thank those with whom I am closest. For more than 40 years, Robert (Robbie) Cox has been my partner in love, life, and work. Robbie is my greatest fan and my most rigorous critic, and both his support and his criticism shape all that I write. Special friends, Ruth, LindaBecker, Shelly, and Robin, sharpen my thinking and writing by testing my ideas against their experiences communicating with others. My sister Carolyn remains one of the most positive, perceptive, and delightful

presences in my life, as do my youngest friends: Michelle, who is 25; Daniel, who is 21; and Harrison, who is 17. These young people continuously remind me of the magic and wonder in human relationships. And of course I must express my appreciation to the four-legged members of our family: our dog, Cassidy, and our cats, Always Rowdy and Rigby. When I am having a bad writing day, these three remind me that playing ball and brushing them are important parts of life.

1

A First Look at Communication

What we do in life is determined by how we communicate.
—Tony Robbins

How does communication affect your life?

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Learning Objectives

Topics Covered in This Chapter	After studying this chapter, you should be able to . . .
The Value of Studying Communication	Differentiate among the three beneficial outcomes of studying communication: personal, professional, and civic.
Defining Communication	Discuss the importance of each of the four key terms in the definition of communication.
Models of Communication	Diagram elements in the transactional model of communication from your observation of a specific communication interaction.
Careers in Communication	Identify six careers that value the skills acquired by communication majors.
Digital Media and Communication	Adapt the four key terms in the definition of communication to the context of digital media.

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Start with a quick engagement activity and **review** the chapter Learning Objectives.

◆ At the end of this term, the person you've been dating will graduate and take a job in a city a thousand miles away. You're concerned about sustaining the relationship when you have to communicate across the distance.

◆ At work, you're on a team that includes people from Mexico and Germany. You've noticed that in some ways they communicate differently from American-born work-ers. You aren't sure how to interpret their styles of communicating or how to interact effectively with them.

◆ You can't keep up with the e-mail, texts, and posts on your Facebook page. Although you love staying in touch with everyone, you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of communication that pours in.

◆ You volunteer at a literacy center where you teach children as well as adults to read. You believe the program would be more effective if the director did more to build a sense of community among volunteers. You want to encourage her to do that with-out seeming to criticize her.

◆ You want to advocate for a proposal to decrease waste that is put in the local landfill, but you don't have formal training in public speaking. You wonder how to organize your ideas to persuade others to support the proposal.

From the moment we arise until we go to bed, our days are filled with communication challenges and opportunities. Unlike some subjects you study, communication is relevant to every aspect of your life. We communicate with ourselves when we psych ourselves up for big moments and talk ourselves into or out of various courses of action. We communi-cate with others to build and sustain personal relationships, perform our jobs, advance in our careers, and participate in social and civic activities. Even when we're not around other people, we are involved in communication as we interact with mass media and social media. All facets of our lives involve communication.

Although we communicate continually, we aren't always effective. People who do not have strong communication knowledge and skills are limited in their efforts to achieve personal, social, professional, and civic goals. In contrast, people who communicate well have a strong advantage in all spheres of life. For this reason, learning about communica-tion and developing your skills as a communicator are keys to a successful and fulfilling life.

Communication Mosaics is written for anyone who wants to learn about human com-munication. If you are a communication major, this book and the course it accompanies will give you a firm foundation for advanced study. If you are majoring in another disci-pline, you will gain a basic understanding of communication, and you will have oppor-tunities to strengthen your skills as a communicator, which will help you throughout life.

This first chapter provides an overview of the book and the discipline of communi-cation. To open the chapter, I first introduce myself and point out the perspective and features of the book. Second, I describe how communication is related to our personal, social, civic, and professional life. Third, I define communication and discuss progressively sophisticated models of the communication process. Fourth, I identify careers that people with strong backgrounds in communication are qualified to pursue. Finally, we discuss connections between communication and digital media.

An Introduction to the Author

As an undergraduate, I enrolled in a course much like the one you're taking now. In that course, I became fascinated by the field of communication, and my interest has endured for more than 40 years. Today, I am still captivated by the field—more than ever, in fact. I see communication both as a science that involves skills and knowledge and as an art that reflects human imagination and wisdom. Because communication is central to our lives, it is one of the most dynamic, fastest-growing fields.

When I was a student, I always wondered about the authors of my textbooks. Who were they? Why did they write the books I was assigned to read? Unfortunately, the authors never introduced themselves. I want to start our relationship differently by telling you something about myself. I am a middle-aged, middle-income, European-American woman who has strong spiritual beliefs and a deep commitment to education. For 40 years, I have been married to Robbie (Robert) Cox, a professor and a leader in the national Sierra Club.

As is true for all of us, who I am affects what I know and how I think, feel, and communicate. Therefore, some of what you'll read in this book reflects what I have learned in my research, teaching, and life. I grew up in a small rural town in the South. I also grew up in an era marked by movements for civil rights and women's rights, which shaped my values and fueled my commitment to civic engagement. I learned early that my experiences are not the only source of knowledge. I talk with others who have different perspectives than my own and I look to scholars to augment my direct observations and experiences. The hundreds of references at the end of this book have shaped both my understanding of human communication and the way I introduce you to the field.

Other facets of my identity also influence what I know and how I write. My thinking is influenced by my roles as a daughter, sister, romantic partner, friend, aunt, teacher, scholar, and member of civic groups. On a broader level, I am defined by the categories that Western culture uses to classify people—for instance, race, gender, socioeconomic level, and sexual orientation. The groups I belong to have given me certain experiences and insights and, conversely, I lack the experiences and insights that come with membership in other groups. As a woman, I understand discrimination based on sex because I've experienced it multiple times. Being middle class has shielded me from personal experience with hunger, poverty, and bias against the poor; and being heterosexual has spared me from being the direct target of homophobia and understanding how it feels to be marginalized because of my sexual identity. Because Western culture tends to treat whites as the norm, not as a distinct racial category, I was not socialized to think about my race and its meaning. However, critical race theorists have taught me to interrogate whiteness as fully as any other racial category.

Although I can use cultural categories to describe myself, they aren't as clear or definitive as we sometimes think. For instance, the category "woman" isn't as homogenous as the single noun suggests. Women differ from one another because of race–ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability and disability, and a range of other factors. Likewise, a particular race is not a homogenous category. Members of any race differ greatly as a result of factors such as ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual and religious values, abilities and disabilities, and so forth. The same is true of people we can place in any category—they are alike in the particular way that defines the category, yet they are also different from one another in many ways.

Like me, your experiences and group memberships have shaped your identity and your perspectives. How are you similar to and different from others who belong to the same culturally defined groups in which you place yourself? If you are a man, for instance, how is your identity as a man influenced by your racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, spiritual commitments, and so forth? What insights do your experiences and identity facilitate and hamper?

Although our identities limit what we personally know and experience, they don't completely prevent us from gaining insight into people and situations that are different from our own. As I mentioned before, critical race theorists have taught me to think analytically about whiteness as a racial category. Mass media and computer-mediated communication (CMC) give me knowledge of diverse people and situations all over the world. All of these resources allow me—and you, if you choose—to move beyond the limits of personal identity and experience to appreciate and participate in the larger world. What we learn by studying and interacting with people from different cultures and social communities expands our appreciation of the richness and complexity of humanity. In addition, interacting with people whose lives and communication differ from our own enlarges our repertoires of communication skills.

The Value of Studying Communication

Communication is one of the most popular undergraduate majors (McKinney, 2006; Schmitt, 2014). One reason for this popularity is the relevance of communication knowledge and skills to success in all aspects of life. In order to advance in professional life, you'll need to know how to present your ideas effectively, build good relationships with colleagues, monitor your perceptions, manage conflicts constructively, and listen thoughtfully. To have healthy, enduring personal relationships, you'll need to know how to communicate support, deal with conflicts, and understand communication styles that are different from your own. To be an engaged citizen, you'll need critical thinking skills and the verbal ability to express your own points of view. In short, communication skills are vital to personal and professional well-being and to the health of our communities and society.

Because you've been communicating all your life, you might ask why you need to study communication formally. One reason is that formal study can improve skill. Some people have a natural talent for music or athletics. Yet they can become even better musicians or athletes if they take voice lessons or study theories of offensive and defensive play. Likewise, even if you communicate well now, learning about communication can make you more effective.

Personal Life

We develop our personal identities through the process of interacting with others (Mead, 1934). In our earliest years, our parents told us who we were: "You're smart," "You're so strong," "You're such a clown." We first see ourselves through the eyes of others, so their messages form the foundations of our self-concepts. Later, we interact with teachers, friends, romantic partners, and co-workers who communicate their views of us. In addition, we learn who we are and how others perceive us as we engage mass communication and social media.

The profound connection between communication and identity is dramatically evident in children who are deprived of human contact. Case studies of children who

ENGAGE!

Ghadya Ka Bacha

Ghadya Ka Bacha, or the "wolf boy," was found in 1954 outside a hospital in Balrampur, India. He had callused knees and hands, as if he moved on all fours, and he had scars on his neck, suggesting he had been dragged about by animals.
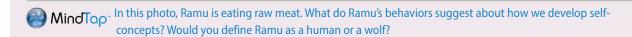
Ramu, which was the name the hospital staff gave the child, showed no interest in others but became very excited once when he saw wolves on a visit to a zoo. Ramu lapped his milk instead of drinking as we do, and he tore apart his food.

Most doctors who examined Ramu concluded that he had been socialized by wolves and therefore acted like a wolf, not a person (Shattuck, 1980).

© Hulton Archive/Getty Images

MindTap In this photo, Ramu is eating raw meat. What do Ramu's behaviors suggest about how we develop self-concepts? Would you define Ramu as a human or a wolf?

have been isolated from others for a long time show that they have no concept of themselves as humans, and their mental and psychological development is severely hindered by lack of language. The ENGAGE! box on this page presents a dramatic example of what can happen when human infants are deprived of interaction with other humans. A large body of research shows that social isolation is as dangerous to health as high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, or alcoholism (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010).

Substantial research shows that communicating with others promotes personal health, whereas social isolation is linked to stress, disease, and early death (Fackelmann, 2006; Kupfer, First, & Regier, 2002; McClure, 1997). College students who are in committed relationships have fewer mental health problems and are less likely to be obese (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010). Heart disease is more common among people who lack strong interpersonal relationships (Ornish, 1998), and cancer patients who are married live longer than single cancer patients ("Cancer," 2009). Clearly, healthy interaction with others is important to our physical and mental well-being.

Personal Relationships

Daniel Goleman, author of *Social Intelligence* (2007), says humans are "wired to connect" (p. 4). And communication—verbal and nonverbal, face to face or mediated—is the primary way that we connect with others. For that reason, effective communication is the heart of personal relationships. We build connections with others by revealing our private identities, asking questions, working out problems, listening, remembering shared history, and making plans for the future. To learn more about Daniel Goleman's work, go to the online resources for this chapter.

A primary distinction between relationships that endure and those that collapse is effective communication. Couples who learn how to discuss their thoughts and feelings,

listen mindfully, adapt to each other, and manage conflict constructively tend to sustain intimacy over time. Friends also rely on good communication to keep in touch, provide support, and listen sensitively, and families that practice good communication are more cohesive and stable (Galvin, Braithwaite, & Bylund, 2015). Communication in personal relationships does a lot more than solve problems or allow partners to make personal disclosures. For most of us, everyday talk and nonverbal interaction are the essence of relationships (Schmidt & Uecker, 2007; Wood & Duck, 2006a,b). Although dramatic moments affect relationships, it is our unremarkable, everyday interaction that sustains the daily rhythms of our intimate connections (Duck & McMahon, 2012; Goleman, 2011; Wood & Duck, 2006a,b). Partners weave their lives together through small talk about mutual friends, daily events, and other mundane topics. Couples involved in long-distance romances miss being able to share small talk.

In addition to studying how communication enhances relationships, interpersonal communication scholars investigate the role of communication in destructive relationship patterns such as abuse and violence. Teresa Sabourin and Glen Stamp (1995) have identified strong links between verbal behaviors and reciprocal violence between spouses. Other communication scholars (Lloyd & Emery, 2000; Wood, 2001b, 2004b) have documented a range of social and interpersonal influences on violence between intimates.

Sandy's comment is the first of many student voices you'll encounter in this book. In my classes, students teach me and each other by sharing their insights, experiences, and questions. Because I believe students have much to teach us, I've included reflections written by students at my university and other campuses. As you read these, you will probably identify with some, disagree with others, and be puzzled by still others. Whether you agree, disagree, or are perplexed, I think you will find that the student voices expand the text and spark thought and discussion in your class and elsewhere. I also welcome your comments about issues that strike you as you read this book. You may send them to me in care of Cengage Learning, 20 Channel Center Street, Boston, MA 02210.

Sandy

When my boyfriend moved away, the hardest part wasn't missing the big moments. It was not talking about little stuff or just being together. It was like we weren't part of each other's life when we didn't talk about all the little things that happened or how we felt or whatever.

Professional Life

Communication skills are critical for success in professional life. The value of communication is clearly apparent in professions such as teaching, law, sales, and counseling, where talking and listening are central to effectiveness.

In other fields, the importance of communication may be less obvious, but it is nonetheless present. Leaders at organizations such as *The New York Times*, FedEx, and GlaxoSmithKline list communication as vital to their organizations' success (O'Hair & Eadie, 2009). Health-care professionals rely on communication skills to talk with patients about medical problems and courses of treatment and to gain cooperation from colleagues, patients, and families for continued care. Doctors who do not listen well are less effective in treating patients, and they're more likely to be sued than doctors who do listen well (Beckman, 2003; Levine, 2004; Milia, 2003). Further, good communication between doctors and patients and among medical staff is related

to effective treatment of patients (Rosenbaum, 2011; Salas & Frush, 2012). The pivotal role of communication in healthcare makes it unsurprising that an increasing number of medical schools base admissions, in part, on applicants' communication skills, especially their ability to work in teams (Harris, 2011).

It's not surprising that most employers list communication skills as one of the top qualities in job candidates (Hart Research, 2013; Rhodes, 2010; Selingo, 2012). Even highly technical jobs require communication skills. Specialists have to be able to listen carefully to their clients and customers in order to understand their needs and goals. Specialists also need to be skilled in explaining technical ideas to people who lack their expertise. Ann Darling and Deanna Dannels (2003) asked engineers whether communication skills were important to their professional effectiveness. The engineers reported that their success on the job depended on listening well, presenting ideas clearly, and negotiating effectively with others. Fully 75 percent of the engineers said that communication skills had consequences for their career advancement. Sean, an older, returning student, makes this observation about the relevance of communication skills to his professional success:

Communication skills are critical for career success.

Slobodan Vasic/iStockphoto.com

Sean

I'm taking this course because I need communication skills to do my job. I didn't think I would when I majored in computer science and went into technology development. But after two years, another guy and I decided to launch our own technical support company. We had trouble getting investors to provide start-up capital, because neither of us knew how to give an effective presentation. We had the tech skills but not the communication ones. Finally, we got our company launched and discovered that we didn't know much about how to supervise and lead either. Neither of us had ever taken courses in how to motivate and support people who work for you. So I'm taking this course as a night student, and I think it will make a major difference in how I do my job and whether our company succeeds.

Civic Life

Communication skills are vital to the health of our society. From painting on the walls of caves to telling stories in village squares to interacting on the Internet, people have found ways to communicate with each other to organize and improve their common social world (Keith, 2009). To be effective, citizens in a democracy must be able to express ideas and evaluate the ethical and logical strength of communication by public figures. To make informed judgments, voters need to listen critically to candidates' arguments and responses to questions. We also need to listen critically to proposals about goals for our communities, the institutions at which we work, and the organizations on which we depend for services.

Civic engagement is more than paying attention to politics and voting. It is also working with others—formally and informally, in small and large groups—to identify needs of communities and society and then to find ways of meeting those needs. John Dewey, a distinguished American philosopher, believed that democracy and communication are intricately connected. He argued that while democracy depends on citizens' voting, it is more basic and important that citizens interact. Dewey insisted

ENGAGE!

Bowling Together?

When Robert Putnam published *Bowling Alone* in 2000, it caused quite a stir. In it, he claimed that Americans are increasingly disconnected from one another and their communities. Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, amassed evidence showing that Americans at the end of the 20th century were 25 to 50 percent less connected to others than they had been in the late 1960s.

Because he believed that diversity is a strength and that working together makes individuals and the country stronger, Putnam wanted to know what could bring us back together. Working with Lewis Feldstein, who has devoted his life to civic activism, Putnam began searching for examples of people who were connecting with each other to work on community and collective projects.

In *Better Together* (2003) Putnam and Feldstein present 12 stories of diverse people who are working together to build and strengthen their communities. Although the 12 examples are diverse—ranging from Philadelphia's Experience Corps, in which volunteers tutor children from impoverished backgrounds, to UPS: Diversity and Cohesion, which has changed the UPS company from one run almost exclusively by white males to one in which minorities and women have a strong presence in management—they have one thing in common: building and using social capital. The people involved in these efforts realize that they need to build networks of relationships and then draw on those networks to reach goals that are not attainable by individuals working (or bowling) alone.

To promote civic engagement, Putnam, Feldstein, and others established a Better Together initiative at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. If you'd like to learn more about building and using social capital, go to the Better Together website by going to the book's online resources for this chapter.

MindTap™ To what extent do you agree with Putnam's claim that people are increasingly disconnected from one another?

that it's vital that citizens talk and listen to each other—they must share ideas, question each other's positions, debate and argue, and collaborate to build communities that are stronger than any individual could build. Without sustained, vigorous communication among citizens, democracy fails. To learn more about John Dewey and his philosophy, go to the book's online resources for this chapter.

Communication skills are especially important for effective interaction in an era of globalization, where we have daily encounters with people of different races, genders, sexual orientations, and traditions. Diversity in the United States, as elsewhere, is the norm. In 2000, 64 percent of Americans were Caucasian, but the prediction is that there will be no single majority race by 2043 (Cooper, 2012; Milbank, 2014). We live, work, and socialize with people who communicate differently than we do. Friendships and workplace relationships between people with different cultural backgrounds enlarge perspective and appreciation of the range of human values and viewpoints. Scott Page (2008), a professor of complex systems, points out that people with greatly different backgrounds and perspectives make for more productive, creative organizations. In much the same way that the health and evolution of a species depends on a rich genetic mixture, the well-being of human societies depends on diversity.

A recent survey shows that nearly half of first-year students at colleges and universities think that learning about other cultures is essential or very important (Hoover, 2010). Colleges and universities provide superb opportunities to get to know diverse people and to learn about their experiences, values, and cultural traditions.

The number of students from countries other than the United States who enroll in U.S. colleges and universities is at its all-time high (McMurtrie, 2011).

communication A systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings.

Luanne

I used to feel it was hard to talk with people who weren't raised in the United States like I was. Sometimes it seems that they have a totally different way of talking than I do, and we don't understand each other naturally. But I've been trying to learn to understand people from other places, and it really is making me realize how many different ways of communicating people have. With so many cultures now part of this country, nobody can get by without learning how to relate to people from other cultures.

David

As an African-American male, I sometimes feel as though I am a dash of pepper on top of a mountain of salt. I have attended many classes where I was the only African American out of 50 or even 100 students. In these classes, the feeling of judgment is cast down upon me for being different. Usually what I learn about is not "people," like the course says, but white people. Until I took a communication course, the only classes that included research and information on African Americans were in the African-American curriculum. This bothered me because white Americans are not the entire world.

Luanne was a student in one of my courses, and David wrote to me after taking a basic communication course at a college in the western United States. Luanne's reflection shows that she is aware of the importance of understanding the communication of people from cultures that differ from her own. David's comment illustrates the importance of weaving diversity into the study of communication. Communication, then, is important for personal, relationship, professional, and civic life. Because communication is a cornerstone of the human experience, your decision to study it will serve you well.

Defining Communication

We've been using the word *communication* for many pages, but we haven't yet defined it clearly. **Communication** is a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings. Let's unpack this definition by explaining its four key terms.

ENGAGE!

U.S. Demographics in the 21st Century

The United States is home to a wide range of people with diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, and geographic backgrounds. And the proportions of different groups are changing. Currently, one in three U.S. residents is a minority. By 2043, non-Hispanic whites will be a minority. The following shifts in the ethnic makeup of the United States are predicted to take place between 2010 and 2050 ("Demographics," 2009; Milbank, 2014; "Quick Facts, 2011"):

	2010 (%)	2050 (%)
Black	12.6	13.0
Asians	4.8	8.0
White, non-Hispanic	63.7	46.0
Hispanics & Latino/a	16.3	30.0
Other	3.0	5.0

Numbers do not total 100 percent because some respondents marked multiple categories.

MindTap™ How do you think the predicted demographic changes might affect facets of culture such as personal relationships and work?

Process

Communication is a **process**, which means that it is ongoing and dynamic. It's hard to tell when communication starts and stops, because what happens before we talk with someone may influence our interaction, and what occurs in a particular encounter may affect the future. That communication is a process means it is always in motion, moving forward and changing continually.

Systems

Communication takes place within **systems**. A system consists of interrelated parts that affect one another. In family communication, for instance, each family member is part of the system (Galvin, Dickson, & Marrow, 2006). The physical environment and the time of day also are elements of the system. People interact differently in a classroom than on a beach, and we may be more alert at certain times of day than at others. The history of a system also affects communication. If a workplace team has a history of listening sensitively and working out problems constructively, then when someone says, "There's something we need to talk about," the others are unlikely to become defensive. Conversely, if the team has a record of nasty conflicts and bickering, the same comment might arouse strong defensiveness.

Because the parts of a system are interdependent and continually interact, a change in any part of a system changes the entire system. When a new person joins a team, he or she brings new perspectives that, in turn, may alter how other team members behave. The team develops new patterns of interaction and forms new subgroups; thus, team performance changes. The interrelatedness of a system's parts is particularly evident in intercultural communication. When a corporation moves its operations to a new country, changes infuse everything from daily interaction on the factory floor to corporate culture.

Systems are not collections of random parts, but organized wholes. For this reason, a system operates as a totality of interacting elements. A family is a system, or totality, of interacting elements that include family members, their physical locations, and their jobs and schools. Before systems theory was developed, therapists who worked with disturbed members of families often tried to "fix" the person who supposedly was causing problems in a family. Thus, alcoholics might be separated from their families and given therapy to stay sober. Often, however, the alcoholic resumed drinking shortly after rejoining the family because the behavior of the "problem person" was shaped by the behaviors of other family members and other elements of the family system.

In a similar manner, organizations sometimes send managers to leadership training programs but do not provide training for the manager's subordinates. When the manager returns to the office and uses the new leadership techniques, subordinates are distrustful and resistant. They were accustomed to the manager's former style, and they haven't been taught how to deal with the new style of leadership.

Because systems are organized wholes, they are more than simple combinations of parts. As families, groups, organizations, and societies evolve, they discard or adapt old patterns, generate new patterns, lose some members, and gain new members. When new topics are introduced on blogs, new bloggers join, some established members go silent, and patterns of communication are reconfigured. Personal relationships grow beyond the two original parts (partners) to include trust or lack of trust, shared experiences, and private vocabularies. Systems include not only their original parts but also changes in those original elements and new elements that are created as a result of interaction.

process An ongoing continuity, the beginning and end of which are difficult to identify; for example, communication.

system A group of interrelated elements that affect one another. Communication is systemic.

Systems vary in how open they are. **Openness** is the extent to which a system affects and is affected by outside factors and processes. Some tribal communities are relatively closed systems that have little interaction with the world outside. Yet most cultures are fairly open to interaction with other cultures. This is increasingly true today as more and more people immigrate from one culture to another and as people travel more frequently and to more places. The more open the system, the more factors influence it. Mass media and communication technologies expand the openness of most societies and thus the influences on them and their ways of life.

A final point about systems is that they strive for but cannot sustain equilibrium. Systems seek a state of equilibrium, or **homeostasis**. That's why families create routines, organizations devise policies and procedures, individuals develop habits, groups generate norms, online communities develop conventions and abbreviations, and cultures generate rituals and traditions.

Yet no living system can sustain absolute balance or equilibrium. Change is inevitable and continuous. Sometimes, it's abrupt (a company moves all of its operations to a new country); at other times, it's gradual (a company begins to hire people from different cultures). Sometimes, influences outside a system prompt change (legislation affects importing and exporting in other countries). In other cases, the system generates change internally (an organization decides to alter its marketing targets). To function and survive, members of systems must continually adjust and change.

Communication is also affected by the larger systems within which it takes place. For example, different cultures have distinct understandings of appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Many Asian cultures place a high value on saving face, so Asians try not to cause personal embarrassment to others by disagreeing overtly. It is inappropriate to perceive people from Asian cultures as passive if they don't assert themselves in the ways that many Westerners do. Arab cultures consider it normal for people to be nearer to one another when talking than most Westerners find comfortable, and, in Bulgaria, head nods mean "no" rather than "yes." Different regions of the same country may also have different ways of communicating as Steve notes in his commentary. Even within a single region, there are differences based on ethnicity, religion, gender, and other factors. Therefore, to interpret communication, we have to consider the systems in which it takes place. In Chapter 8, we'll discuss different communication practices in diverse cultures.

Steve

It took me a long time to get used to Southerners. I'm from the Midwest and there we don't chat everybody up like Southerners do. We talk if we have something to say, but we don't talk just to talk. When I first moved here, I thought most of the people I met were real busybodies because people I hardly knew would say things like "you should come to my church" or "mark your calendar for the supper to raise money for schools" like I wanted to go to those. Then I started dating a girl who was born near here and she "decoded" Southern culture for me. She explained that "you should come" is not a command, which is what it sounded like to me, but an invitation because Southerners want to be hospitable and include everyone. She also told me I was being perceived as very standoffish because I didn't chat back like Southerners do.

Symbols

Communication is symbolic. We don't have direct access to one another's thoughts and feelings. Instead, we rely on **symbols**, which are abstract, arbitrary, and ambiguous

openness The extent to which a system affects and is affected by its surrounding environment.

homeostasis A state of equilibrium that systems strive for but cannot sustain.

symbols Arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract representations of phenomena. Symbols are the basis of language, much nonverbal behavior, and human thought.

representations of other things. We might symbolize love by giving a ring, by saying "I love you," or by closely embracing someone. A promotion might be symbolized by a new title and a larger office (and a raise!). In Chapter 4, we'll look more closely at symbols. For now, just remember that human communication involves interaction with and through symbols.

Meanings

Finally, our definition focuses on **meanings**, which are at the heart of communication. Meanings are the significance we bestow on phenomena, or what they signify to us. Meanings are not inherent in experience itself. Instead, we use symbols to assign meanings to experience. We ask others to be sounding boards so we can clarify our thinking, figure out what things mean, enlarge our perspectives, check our perceptions, and label feelings to give them reality. In all these ways, we actively construct meaning by interacting with symbols.

Communication has two levels of meaning (Pinker, 2008; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). The **content level of meaning** contains the literal message. If a person knocks on your door and asks, "May I come in?" the content-level meaning is that the person is asking your permission to enter. The **relationship level of meaning** expresses the relationship between communicators. In our example, if the person who asks, "May I come in?" is your friend and is smiling, you would probably conclude that the person is seeking friendly interaction. But if the person is your supervisor and speaks in an angry tone, you might interpret the relationship-level meaning as a signal that your supervisor is not satisfied with your work and is going to call you on the carpet. The content-level meaning is the same in both examples, but the relationship-level meaning differs.

The relationship level of meaning is often more important than the content level. The relationship level of meaning may affirm connection with another person (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). For example, this morning Robbie said to me, "I've got a meeting at noon, so I won't be home for lunch." The content-level meaning is obvious—Robbie is informing me of his schedule. The relationship-level meaning, however, is the more important message that Robbie wants to stay connected with me and is aware that we usually eat lunch together. Likewise, the content level of meaning of text messages is often mundane, even trivial: <waz up?> <not much here. U?> On the relationship level of meaning, however, this exchange expresses interest and a desire to stay in touch. The Engage box on the right invites you to pay attention to both levels of communication in your interactions.

Models of Communication

To build on our definition of communication, we'll now consider models of the human communication process. Over the years, scholars in communication have developed a number of models that reflect increasingly sophisticated understandings of the communication process.

Linear Models

Harold Laswell (1948) advanced an early model that described communication as a linear, or one-way, process in which one person acts on another person. This is also called a *transmission model* because it assumes that communication is transmitted in a

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straightforward manner from a sender to a receiver. This verbal model consists of five questions:

Who?

Says what?

In what channel?

To whom?

With what effect?

Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949) refined Laswell's model by adding the concept of **noise**, which is anything that interferes with the intended meaning of communication. Noise may distort understanding. Figure 1.1 shows Shannon and Weaver's model. Although linear, or transmission, models such as these were useful starting points, they are too simplistic to capture the complexity of human communication.

Interactive Models

The major shortcoming of the early models was that they portrayed communication as flowing in only one direction, from a sender to a receiver. The linear model suggests that a person is only a sender or a receiver and that receivers passively absorb senders' messages. Clearly, this isn't how communication occurs.

When communication theorists realized that listeners respond to senders, they added **feedback** to their models. Feedback is a response to a message. Wilbur Schramm (1955) pointed out that communicators create and interpret messages within personal fields of experience. The more communicators' fields of experience overlap, the better they understand each other. Adding fields of experience to models clarifies why misunderstandings sometimes occur. You jokingly put down a friend, and he takes it seriously and is hurt. You offer to help someone, and she feels patronized (Figure 1.2).

Transactional Models

Although the interactive model was an improvement over the linear one, it still didn't capture the dynamism of human communication. The interactive model portrays

noise Anything that interferes with the intended meaning of communication; includes sounds (e.g., traffic) as well as psychological interferences (e.g., preoccupation).

feedback Verbal or nonverbal response to a message. The concept of feedback as applied to human communication appeared first in interactive models of communication.
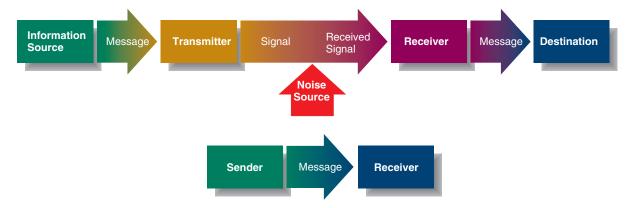
Figure 1.1 The Linear Model of Communication
Source: From Claude Shannon and Warran Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Copyright 1949, 1998 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Used with permission of the authors and the University of Illinois Press.

Field of experience   Field of experience

Message

Encoder
Source
Decoder

Decoder
Receiver
Encoder

Feedback

Figure 1.2 The Interactive Model of Communication
Source: Adapted from Schramm, 1955.

communication as a sequential process in which one person communicates to another, who then sends feedback to the first person. Yet people often communicate simultaneously. Also, the interactive model designates one person as a sender and another person as a receiver. In reality, communicators both send and receive messages. While handing out a press release, a public relations representative watches reporters to gauge their interest. The "speaker" is listening; the "listeners" are sending messages.

A final shortcoming of the interactive model is that it doesn't portray communication as changing over time as a result of what happens between people. For example, new employees are more reserved in conversations with co-workers than they are after months on the job, during which they get to know others and learn organizational norms. Figure 1.3 is a transactional model that highlights the features we have discussed.

Consistent with what we've covered in this chapter, our model includes noise that can distort communication. Noise includes sounds, such as a lawn mower or background chatter, as well as interferences within communicators, such as biases and preoccupation that hinder effective listening. In addition, our model represents communication as a continually changing process. How people communicate varies over time and in response to their history of relating.

The outer lines on our model emphasize that communication occurs within systems that affect what and how people communicate and what meanings they create. Those systems, or contexts, include the shared systems of the communicators (campus, town, culture) and the personal systems of each communicator (family, religious and civic associations, friends). Also note that our model, unlike previous ones, portrays each person's field of experience and his or her shared fields of experience as changing over time. As we encounter new people and grow personally, we alter how we interact with others.

Finally, our model doesn't label one person a sender and the other a receiver. Instead, both are defined as communicators who participate equally, and often simultaneously, in the communication process. This means that at a given moment in communication, you may be sending a message (speaking or wrinkling your brow), listening to a message, or doing both at the same time (interpreting what someone says while nodding to show you are interested). To understand communication as a transactional process is to recognize that self and others are involved in a shared process: Communication is *we*-oriented (How can we understand each other? How can we work through this conflict?) rather than *me*-oriented (This is what I mean. This is what I want.).

Social Systems

Time$_1$

Communicator A's
Field of Experience

Communicator A

Shared
Field of
Experience

Symbolic
Interactions
Over Time

Noise

Time$_2$

Communicator B

Communicator B's
Field of Experience

Time$_n$

Communication

Figure 1.3 A Transactional Model of Communication
Source: Adapted from Wood, 1997, p. 21.

In summary, the most accurate model of communication represents it as a transactional process in which people interact with and through symbols over time to create meaning.

Careers in Communication

You may wonder what kinds of careers are open to people with strong backgrounds in communication. As we've seen, communication skills are essential to success in most fields. Attorneys, accountants, bankers, doctors, and other professionals need communication skills to be effective. In addition, people who major in communication are particularly equipped for certain careers.

Research

Communication research is a vital and growing field of work. Many faculty members combine teaching and research. In this book, you'll encounter a good deal of academic research that helps us understand how communication works—or fails to work.

In addition to academic research, communication specialists help organizations by studying processes such as message production and marketing. Companies want to know how people respond to advertisements, logos, and product names. Communication researchers also assist counselors by investigating the ways in which communication helps and harms relationships.

Education

Teaching others about communication is another exciting career path for people with extensive backgrounds in the field. Across the nation, communication teachers at all levels are in demand. Secondary schools, junior colleges, colleges, universities, technical schools, and community colleges offer communication classes.

The level at which people are qualified to teach depends on how extensively they have pursued the study of communication. Generally, a bachelor's degree in communication education and a teaching certificate are required for teaching in elementary, middle, and high schools. A master's degree in communication qualifies a person to teach at community colleges, technical schools, and some junior colleges. The doctoral degree in communication generally is required of university faculty, although some universities offer nontenured, fixed term positions to people with master's degrees.

Although generalists are preferred for many teaching jobs, college-level faculty members often specialize in certain areas of communication. For instance, my research and teaching focus on interpersonal communication and gender and communication. Other college faculty members specialize in areas such as intercultural communication, family communication, health communication, and organizational dynamics.

Communication educators are not limited to communication departments. In recent years, more and more people with advanced degrees in communication have taken positions in medical and business schools. Doctors need training in listening sensitively to patients, explaining complex problems and procedures, and providing comfort, reassurance, and motivation. Similarly, good business people know not only their businesses but also how to explain their businesses to others, how to present themselves and their companies or products favorably, and so on.

The Nonprofit Sector

Communication skills and knowledge are vital to careers in the nonprofit sector. Former students of mine who are in nonprofit careers are working with homeless citizens, securing housing for poorer citizens, advancing environmental goals, and teaching literacy. Jobs such as these require strong communication skills. You have to be willing and able to listen and learn from people who are quite different from you in their backgrounds, goals, abilities, and dreams. You must know how to encourage, motivate, and support others and how to build strong teams of staff and volunteers. You must be able to establish a climate of mutual trust and respect with populations that—often for good reason—don't easily trust others. All of these are communication skills.

Mass and Digital Communication: Journalism, Broadcasting, Public Relations, and Advertising

Strong communication skills are necessary for careers in journalism, public relations, broadcasting, and advertising (Ihlen, Fredrikson, & van Ruler, 2009; Nerone, 2009; Smith, 2009). Good journalists know how to listen carefully and critically when conducting interviews. They also know how to write clearly, whether for newspapers or blogs, so that readers are drawn to their stories and speak effectively so viewers understand what their broadcast reports.

Effective public relations depend on understanding actual and potential clients and consumers and adapting messages to their interests, goals, and concerns. Effective advertising professionals help companies brand products so that consumers associate a product with a particular key message or theme. McDonald's advertising team has been effective in branding McDonald's as family-friendly; Porsche is branded as "the ultimate driving experience"; and Nike is identified with the "just do it" attitude.

Training and Consulting

Consulting is another career that welcomes people with backgrounds in communication. Businesses train employees in group communication skills, interview techniques, and interpersonal interaction. Some large corporations have entire departments devoted to training and development. People with communication backgrounds often join these departments and work with the corporation to design and teach courses or workshops that enhance employees' communication skills.

In addition, communication specialists may join or form consulting firms that provide communication training to governments and businesses. One of my colleagues consults with nonprofit organizations to help them develop work teams that interact effectively. Other communication specialists work with politicians to improve their presentational styles and sometimes to assist in writing their speeches. I consult with attorneys as an expert witness and a trial strategist on cases involving charges of sexual harassment and sex discrimination. Other communication consultants work with attorneys on jury selections and advise lawyers about how dress and nonverbal behaviors might affect jurors' perceptions of clients.

ENGAGE!

Careers in Communication

Learn more about careers open to people with strong training in communication. The National Communication Association publishes *Pathways to Careers in Communication.* In addition to discussing careers, this booklet provides useful information on the National Communication Association and its many programs. Visit the National Communication Association's website using the link provided in the online resources for this chapter.

Human Relations and Management

Because communication is the foundation of human relations, it's no surprise that many communication specialists build careers in human development or in the human relations departments of corporations. People with solid understandings of communication and good personal communication skills are effective in public relations, personnel management, grievance management, negotiation, customer relations, and development and fund-raising.

Communication degrees also open doors to careers in management. The most important qualifications for management are not technical skills but the abilities to interact with others and to communicate effectively. Good managers know how to listen, express ideas, build consensus, create supportive climates, and balance tasks and interpersonal concerns in dealing with others. Developing skills such as these gives communication majors a firm foundation for effective management. The ENGAGE! box on page 16 shows you how to learn about careers in communication that might appeal to you.

Digital Media and Communication

In every chapter, we will explore connections between chapter content and digital media. The ideas we have discussed in this introductory chapter are related to social and online media in several ways. First, consider how the values of communication that we identified are achieved using digital media. For instance, we rely on social media to maintain personal relationships. On social networking sites such as Facebook, we post updates and photos that let friends know what's happening in our lives and to learn what is happening in others' lives. We also use social media to establish and maintain professional ties. LinkedIn, for example, allows people to network professionally. We also use online and social media to engage in civic life—signing online petitions, blogging about issues that matter to us, and reading online newspapers and the blogs of others whose opinions we respect.

You might also consider what the definition of communication implies for interacting via digital media. When we talk with people face-to-face, we are aware of their immediate physical context, which is not the case with much online and digital interaction. We may not know who else is present and what else is happening around a person we text. When the systems within which communication occurs are unknown to us, it's more difficult to interpret others. For instance, does a delayed response mean the person you texted is angry, is thinking over what you said, or is talking with people he or she is with? Also, because nonverbal communication is restricted online and especially digitally, we may miss out on meaning, particularly on the relationship level.

Our definition also emphasizes process—changes in communication that happen over time. Think about how online and digital communication have evolved in the course of the

Social media can enrich or compete with face-to-face communication.

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past two decades. When e-mail first emerged, most people treated it much like let-ter writing: An e-mail started with "Dear" or "Hello" and ended with a closing such as "Thank you" or "Sincerely." As e-mail became more popular and as all of us were flooded with e-mail messages, the opening and closing courtesies largely disappeared. As e-mail traffic continued to increase, abbreviations started being used: BRB (be right back), LOL (laughing out loud), and so forth. Texting and tweeting brought more innovation in use of symbols. Vowels are often dropped; single letters serve for some words (u for you, r for are); and phrases, rather than complete sentences, are acceptable. The rules of grammar, syntax, and spelling have also been loosened by digital natives who assume the autocorrect function edits correctly.

Overview of *Communication Mosaics*

To provide a context for your reading, let me share my vision for this book. Its title reflects the idea that communication is an intricate mosaic composed of basic processes and skills that are relevant to the range of situations in which we interact. Although all of the basic processes and skills affect communication in every situation, the prominence of each one varies according to context. For instance, in public speaking, presentation style stands out, and communication climate is less obvious. Conversely, in team interaction, communication that nurtures a productive climate may be more pronounced than a commanding presentational style.

Communication Mosaics is divided into three parts. Part I includes this and one additional chapter that introduces the discipline of communication by explaining its history, research methods, contemporary breadth, and career options.

Part II introduces you to six basic communication processes, concepts, and skills:

◆ Perceiving and understanding others

◆ Engaging in verbal communication

◆ Engaging in nonverbal communication

◆ Listening and responding to others

◆ Creating and sustaining communication climates

◆ Adapting communication to cultural contexts

Part III explores seven communication contexts that are common in our lives:

◆ Communication with yourself

◆ Interaction with friends and romantic partners

◆ Communication in groups and on teams

◆ Communication in organizations

◆ Public speaking

◆ Mass communication

◆ Digital media

Summary

In this chapter, we've taken a first look at human communication. We noted its importance in our lives, defined communication, and discussed models, the most accurate of which is a transactional model that emphasizes the dynamism of communication. Next, we discussed career paths for people who develop strong communication skills. We then traced relationships between the foregoing topics and digital media. Finally, we previewed the remainder of the book so that you have a clear overall sense of what lies ahead.

Experience Communication Case Study

The New Employee

Apply what you've learned in this chapter by analyzing the following case study, using the accompanying questions as a guide. These questions and a video of the case study are also available online with your MindTap Speech for *Communication Mosaics*.

Your supervisor asks you to mentor a new employee, Toya, and help her learn the ropes of the job. After two weeks, you perceive that Toya is responsible and punctual, and she takes initiative on her own. At the same time, you note that she is careless about details: She doesn't proofread reports, so they contain errors in spelling and grammar, and she doesn't check back to make sure something she did worked. You've also noticed that Toya seems insecure and wants a lot of affirmation and praise. You want to give her honest feedback so she can improve her job performance, yet you are afraid she will react defensively if you bring up her carelessness. You ask Toya to meet with you to discuss her first two weeks on the job. The meeting begins:

You: Well, you've been here for two weeks. How are you liking the job?

Toya: I like it a lot, and I'm trying to do my best every day. Nobody has said anything, so I guess I'm doing okay.

You: Well, I've noticed how responsible you are and how great you are about being a self-starter. Those are real strengths in this job.

Toya: Thanks. So I guess I'm doing okay, right?

You: What would you say if someone suggested that there are ways you can improve your work?

Toya: What do you mean? Have I done something wrong? Nobody's said anything to me. Is someone saying something behind my back?

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1. What would you say next to Toya? How would you meet your ethical responsibilities as her mentor and also adapt to her need for reassurance?

2. What responsibilities do you have to Toya, to your supervisor, and to the company? How can you reflect thoughtfully about potential tensions between these responsibilities?

3. How would your communication differ if you acted according to a linear model of communication, as opposed to a transactional one?

MindTap™

Key Concepts

Practice defining the chapter's terms by using online flashcards.

communication, 9
content level of meaning, 12
feedback, 13
homeostasis, 11
meaning, 12
noise, 13

openness, 11
process, 10
relationship level of meaning, 12
symbol, 11
system, 10

MindTap™

Reflect, personalize, and apply what you've learned

Review, Reflect, Extend

The Reflect and Discuss, and Take Action features that follow will help you review, reflect on, and extend the information and ideas presented in this chapter. These resources, and a diverse selection of additional study tools, are also available online at the MindTap Speech for *Communication Mosaics*.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Form groups of five to seven. Have one third of groups use the linear model of communication to describe communication in your class. Have one third of groups use the interactive model to describe communication in your class. The final third of groups should use the transactional model to describe communication in your class. As a class, identify what each model highlights and obscures. Which model best describes and explains communication in your class?

2. Interview a professional in your field of choice. Identify the communication skills that he or she thinks are most important for success. Which of those skills do you already have? Which skills do you need to develop or improve? How can you use this book and the course it accompanies to develop the skills you need to be effective in your career?

3. Go to the placement office on your campus and examine descriptions of available positions. Record the number of job notices that call for communication skills.

MindTap™

TAKE ACTION

1. Noticing Levels of Meaning in Communication
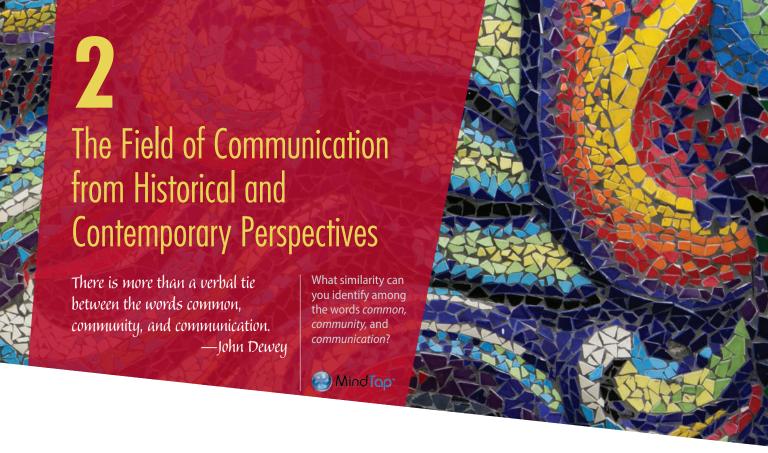
The next time you talk with a close friend, notice both levels of meaning.

- What is the content-level meaning?
- To what extent are liking, responsiveness, and power expressed on the relationship level of meaning?

Recommended Resources

1. Visit the website of the National Communication Association (NCA), which can be accessed by going to the book's online resources for this chapter. Click links to learn about the mission, history, and programs that the NCA offers. Click on Educational Resources and then on Communicating Common Ground under the Education tab to learn about NCA's service learning project in which many students are involved.

2. Watch the film *An Unfinished Life.* Analyze the communication among the four main characters, with a focus on the system within which they operate. What are the elements of the system? Identify two changes in the relationship system, and then trace how those changes affect all parts of the system as the film evolves.

3. Visit the Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, which can be accessed by going to this chapter's online resources. At this site, you'll find information about Seattle's Student Voices Project, a one-year curriculum focused on civic education. Consider talking with administrators on your campus about a curriculum in civic engagement.

2

The Field of Communication from Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication.
—John Dewey

What similarity can you identify among the words *common, community,* and *communication*?

MindTap™

Learning Objectives

Topics Covered in This Chapter	After studying this chapter, you should be able to . . .
The History of the Communication Field	Given historical milestones outlined in the text, explain how the field of communication responds to the changing character and needs of individuals and society.
Conducting Research in Communication	Recognize the four primary approaches to communication research.
The Breadth of the Communication Field	Identify the eight primary areas of the modern communication field.
Unifying Themes in the Communication Field	Discuss three themes that unify the diverse areas that comprise the field of communication.
Digital Media and Communication	Reflect on how the three unifying themes of communication relate to digital communication.

My father loved to tell me stories about my ancestors—his parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. When I was seven years old and bored with his stories, I asked my father what any of that "ancient history" had to do with me. He responded by telling me that the family members who came before me shaped his identity and my own. He went on to tell me that I couldn't understand who I was without understanding the history of my family.

At the time, I didn't fully appreciate my father's wisdom, but I did start listening with more attention to his stories of our family history. In the years that followed, I realized he was right. My father's parents and grandparents had been farmers. Although he became an attorney, my father retained a deep love of animals and land, which he passed on to me and my siblings. I discovered that my impulsive personality was not new in the family; Charles Harrison Wood, my great-grandfather, had been known for being rash. Later, when it became clear that I had a keen talent for organizing, I felt a kinship with my father's mother, whose organizational skills had been well known in our home county.

Just as you can't fully appreciate who you are without knowing your family's history, you can't understand an academic discipline without learning about its history. This chapter introduces you to communication field's evolution. We first discuss the long and rich intellectual history of the discipline. Second, we discuss methods of conducting research that are used by communication scholars. The third section of the chapter surveys the major areas of the contemporary field and highlights themes that unify the different areas. The final section of the chapter applies what we've discussed to digital media.

The History of the Communication Field

As the title of this book suggests, communication is a mosaic, each part of which contributes to the overall character of the field. The mosaic has become more complex since the discipline's birth more than 2,500 years ago.

Classical Roots: Rhetoric and Democratic Life

One theme in the mosaic is that communication plays a vital role in democratic societies. The art of rhetoric was born in the mid-400s B.C. in the Grecian port city of Syracuse on the island of Sicily. At that time, the Sicilians had just overthrown the oppressive political regime led by a tyrant who had taken their land and impoverished them. After ousting the tyrant, the citizens established a democratic society. The first order of business was to regain property that the former government had taken from the people. A man named Corax, along with his pupil Tisias, taught citizens how to structure speeches, build arguments, and present cases for recovering their property in law courts. In other words, the communication field came into existence to answer a pressing need of citizens in a democracy.

Aristotle played a particularly key role in developing the first theories of rhetoric (Borchers, 2006). He understood that citizens could participate fully in democracy only if they were able to speak well and engage in discussion and debate about issues of the day. Building on the teachings of Corax and Tisias, other ancient teachers, notably Plato and Aristotle, taught their students how to analyze audiences, discover ideas and evidence to support claims, and organize and deliver speeches clearly and dynamically.

Learning from Ancient Theorists

You can study with great ancient rhetorical theorists online. To read *Gorgias,* one of Plato's most famous texts, and to read a summary of Aristotle's views of rhetoric, go to the book's online resources for this chapter.

One of the enduring contributions to our knowledge of rhetoric was Aristotle's thinking about how persuasion occurs (Figure 2.1). He theorized that there are three ways to persuade (Figure 2.1). **Ethos** is based on a speaker's credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and good will). **Pathos** is appeals to listeners' emotions. **Logos** is logic and reasoning. If you think about your experiences in listening to speakers, you're likely to discover that, like people in Aristotle's time, you respond to ethos, pathos, and logos.

ethos One of the three forms of proof; proof based on the speaker's credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and goodwill).

pathos One of the three forms of proof; proof based on appealing to listeners' emotions.

logos One of three forms of proof; proof based on logic and reasoning.

Liberal Education

Centuries after Aristotle taught, rhetoric held a premier spot in liberal education in Europe and the United States. By the 19th century, many of the most prestigious universities in the United States established chairs of rhetoric, held by distinguished scholars and civic leaders. Among these was President John Quincy Adams, who held the first Boylston Professor of Rhetoric Chair at Harvard University (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1991). In the 1800s and early 1900s, rhetoric was taught as a practical art that prepared people for responsible participation in civic life. The emphasis on teaching that marked this period explains why the first national professional organization, founded in 1914, was named the National Association of Teachers of Public Speaking.

In the 1900s, the communication discipline began to broaden beyond public speaking. In the early 20th century, philosopher John Dewey championed progressive thinking. For Dewey, this also meant championing communication in a broad sense. He realized that to have any impact on cultural life, progressive thinking must be communicated. In others words, people must be able to voice their ideas and to listen thoughtfully and critically to the ideas of others; they must talk, listen, debate, and discuss.

Dewey's interest in progressive thinking grew out of the political context of postwar America. After the two world wars, communication professionals felt an urgent need to understand the development of prejudice against social groups, willingness to follow authoritarian leaders such as Hitler, the effects of propaganda, and changes in attitudes and beliefs.

In the early 1900s, two major professional communication organizations were formed. The first was the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), which was founded in 1912. AEJMC promotes both academic and applied journalism, and it sponsors research journals and conferences on journalistic practice, scholarship, and teaching. Today, AEJMC has more than 3,500 members worldwide.
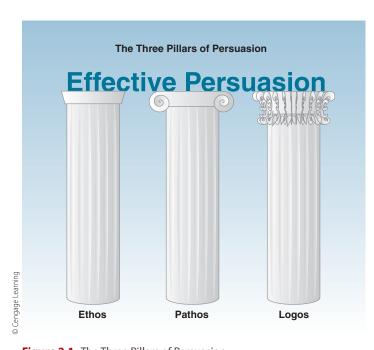

The Three Pillars of Persuasion

Effective Persuasion

Ethos   Pathos   Logos

Figure 2.1 The Three Pillars of Persuasion

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The second organization was founded in 1914. Because its original members were speech teachers, it was called Speech Teachers of America (STA). However, that name did not endure. The organization has changed its name three times, each change signaling evolution in the organization's scope and view of itself. The current name is the National Communication Association (NCA), and it has thousands of members in 20 countries.

In the mid-20th century, another part of the mosaic of communication was added: scientific, quantitative research, which gained prominence in almost all of the social sciences. The formation of the International Communication Association (ICA) in 1950 signaled a growing interest in scientific research in the communication field. Today, both NCA and ICA have international memberships, and both promote research of all types.

Broadening the Field

The 1960s and 1970s saw yet another addition to the communication mosaic. In the United States, this was a time of exceptional social and political upheaval. The civil rights movement and the second wave of the women's movement shook up long-standing patterns of personal and social relations. At the same time, youth culture ushered in new ideas about how people should interact and what was important in life. Many college students felt that personal relationships should receive more time and attention than the traditional curriculum provided. Responding to these currents in social life, the communication discipline expanded to include interpersonal communication. Many colleges and universities began to offer classes in family communication, nonverbal communication, and interaction in intimate relationships

Beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present day, the relationship between communication and power in cultural life has become increasingly prominent in the communication mosaic. The tumultuous 1960s and 1970s were marked by social and political movements that questioned established power hierarchies. As mentioned above, two of the most notable of these movements were the civil rights movement, which challenged racial discrimination in the United States, and the women's movement, which challenged conventional gender roles in both public and private realms of life. Many scholars and teachers of communication embraced a critical focus on social movements and began to investigate the communicative

Communication is a primary tool in protests for social change.

dynamics that social movements employ and the ways in which social movements affect individuals and society.

The expansion of the field's interests to questions of power reflects the influence of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1970, 1972a, 1972b, 1978), who was deeply concerned with who is and who is not allowed to speak in a society. More specifically,

Foucault illuminated the ways in which culturally entrenched rules—often unwritten and unacknowledged—define who gets to speak, to whom we listen, and whose views are counted as important.

Building on Foucault's ideas, a number of communication scholars study the ways in which some people's communication is allowed and other people's communication is disallowed or disrespected. Equally, these scholars seek to empower people whose voices historically have been muted so that they can participate fully in public and private interactions that shape the character of personal and collective life. Consider one example. Historically, decisions about environmental issues that affect the health and environment of communities have been made almost entirely by privileged citizens: scientists and people in white-collar and technical professions. Left out of these vital discussions have been many blue-collar workers, unemployed or underemployed people, and citizens without formal education (Cox & Pezzullo, 2016; Martin, 2007). These citizens often are made voiceless by institutional barriers and administrative practices that define their concerns and their ways of speaking as inappropriate. Pezzullo (2007, 2008) and others (Agyeman, 2007; Norton, 2007; Sandler & Pezzullo, 2007) engage in research that increases our understanding of ways to empower those who suffer environmental hazards and who have not had a voice in their communities and the larger society.

Interest in the relationships between communication and power has reshaped many areas of the field. Rhetorical scholars have broadened their focus beyond individual speakers. Many of today's rhetorical scholars study gay rights, pro-life and pro-choice, environmental, and other social movements. They examine coercive tactics, symbolic strategies for defining issues (think of the power of terms such as *pro-choice* and *pro-life* compared with *pro-abortion* and *anti-abortion* or *pro-choice* and *anti-choice*), and how social movements challenge and change broadly held cultural practices and values.

Scholars in other areas of the field share an interest in how communication shapes and is shaped by the historical, social, and political contexts in which it occurs. Today, faculty in interpersonal and organizational communication conduct research and teach about how new technologies affect personal relationships and reshape societies, how organizational cultures and practices affect employees' productivity and job satisfaction, and how national trends such as downsizing and outsourcing affect workers' job commitment.

As this brief historical overview shows, the field of communication responds to the changing character and needs of individuals and society. Perhaps this is why the field has expanded, even during periods of downsizing at many colleges and universities. Just as Aristotle's students found that communication skills allowed them to participate in their society, today's communication faculty equip students with skills for understanding and participating in the present era.

Conducting Research in Communication

Like other scholarly disciplines, communication is based on knowledge gained from rigorous research (Baxter & Beebe, 2004; Carbaugh & Buzzanell, 2009; Reinhard, 2007). So that you can understand how scholars acquire knowledge, we'll discuss four primary approaches to communication research. These approaches are not incompatible; many scholars rely on multiple approaches. Further, even scholars who do not use multiple methods in their own research stay abreast of research that employs a range of methods.