

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Professor: Eric Eisenberg, Ph.D. Dean of Arts and Sciences

Hello. My name is Eric Eisenberg. And I welcome you to Introduction to Communication. My field is the field of communication. I studied communication at Rutgers and Michigan State University. And I've since gone on to be professor of communication and, more recently, Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Florida.

This course could be one of the most important courses that you ever take in your college career. The value of an introductory course in communication is that you learn about things that matter in all of the different settings that are important in your life. And so, for example, you will learn about communication as it impacts family, relationships, relationships with children and parents. You will learn about communication in the workplace. You'll learn about communication in health contexts. And all of that will be useful to you not just professionally, but also personally in terms of navigating your personal lives.

There are a number of different things that you will take away from this class that you will find useful. The first thing that you will learn is different ways of thinking critically about the communication that's all around you. And so one of the things that-- it's very important in today's world, which is so saturated with communication information from social media, and from the traditional media, and alternative media, is that we have to become much more critical consumers of communication. And so a lot of what you will learn in this class focuses on learning to critically analyze and make sense of the media that you already experience.

Having become dean of the College of Arts and Sciences about six years ago, and being in a leadership position at the University, has really caused me to reflect on what does it take to be able to lead people and to be able to make positive change in the world. And what I've found is that the skills that I learned as a communication major in the 1970s at Rutgers are the ones that really prepared me to be successful as a leader at this point in my career. And so what I would encourage you to do is I would encourage you to think about the theories, and concepts, and skills that you are exposed to in this class as generalizable and transferable, both in terms of your personal life, in terms of what makes for a good marriage, what makes for a happy family, but also in terms of your role as a citizen in society and participating in making your community better, and then finally, in terms of your own professional success.

I have found again and again in my own life that the technical part of the work can be learned. But the part that really, really separates people is their ability to relate to others, to collaborate, and to communicate. And so I would encourage you to value that and to develop that in yourself through your work in communication. I wish you all of the best with this. I'm in love with the field of communication. It's been a wonderful area of study for me. And I hope it can be for you, as well.