

CMST 4111: Imagined Interactions and Intrapersonal Communication

Cogito ergo sum—I think therefore, I am –French philosopher, Rene’ Descartes
Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching—C.S. Lewis
Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.—
Albert Einstein

Fall Semester 2014

Class location/time: 109 Coates, TTh 9-10:20 am

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Office Hours: TTh 10:30 – noon or by appointment

Course Objectives: People daydream everyday. This is a special course devoted to intrapersonal communication in terms of people communicating with themselves through mental imagery. A mechanism for studying intrapersonal communication is the analysis of imagined interactions. Imagined interactions occur when we imagine talking to someone in our minds with individuals who are important in our lives including family members, romantic partners, work associates, and rivals. We may use them before a job interview or after an argument. Following are seven specific objectives for the course:

1. To describe and understand intrapersonal communication--to study decoding, storing and retrieving information in the human mind;
2. To consider the relationship between intrapersonal communication and other levels of communication;
3. To understand the functions of intrapersonal communication in everyday life in terms of mental health;
3. To understand physiology and brain functioning of imagined interactions in terms of biofeedback;
4. To understand imagined interaction conflict-linkage theory and how ruminating about past grievances is common and why it is hard to “forgive or forget;”
5. To self-consciously experience intrapersonal processes;
6. To improve intrapersonal communication skills;
7. To read and report on research on imagined interactions.

Sampling of theories to be covered:

Symbolic interactionism
 Communibiology
 Script theory
 Role theory
 II conflict-linkage theory
 Dialogue theory
 Cognitive dissonance
 NV Functions

Texts:

Honeycutt, J. M. (2003). *Imagined Interactions: Daydreaming about Communication*. Cresskill Hills, NJ: Hampton.

Honeycutt, J. M. (2011). *Imagine that: Studies in imagined interaction*. Cresskill Hills, NJ: Hampton.

Policies:

All grades are posted on Moodle. **I make one attempt to turn back test results and assignments.** After that, they are placed in a holding file for the duration of the semester.

ADA Statement: The American with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations during the first two weeks of class.

Music of the Day: I previously played drums and harmonica in three bands. I have researched how music affects moods and how background music affects communication and arguing. I love music (classic R& R, some jazz & symphony) and will play music before class begins. The songs vary in positive or negative feelings, rhythm, and intensity. Some are instrumental most are lyrical. Some of the songs you may enjoy while others you may dislike. You may listen to your iPod if you desire. However, there is one song that reflects the theme of this course that I will discuss in class. Hence, I will play the song numerous times throughout the semester. Additionally, there are many songs about daydreaming, mental imagery, communication, arguing, conflict, relationships, love, jealousy, and the power of fantasy.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally as adults. Students are expected to be in class on time. Coffee/soda/water is permissible as long as it's not a distraction. Unless it can be consumed without disturbing others, please avoid bringing food into class. Do not read newspapers, listen to iPods, or browse the internet during

class activities. I may call on you in class to discuss what you are browsing and how it pertains to the topic at hand. Do not leave class unless prior permission has been granted. The central premise regarding classroom etiquette is to respect others by practicing simple manners. This is required in business organizations and so it is here.

Format of the class: Most of our class meetings will be conducted in a mixed lecture and discussion format. We will use a portion of our class time to present information designed to supplement, reinforce, or clarify the ideas introduced in the reader. Another portion of our class time will be devoted to questions, group presentations/discussions, or exercises related to intrapersonal communication problems (e.g., rumination, introspection, self-monitoring).

Although my evaluation of your "participation" in the class will be somewhat subjective, you can take steps to enhance your grade. First of all, read the assigned material *before* class, so that you will be able to listen intelligently to what I (and others) may say during lectures and discussions. Secondly, try to make helpful, timely, and informed contributions to our discussions. Finally, if I give you an exercise to work on, either in class or out of class, be ready to contribute. In short, take responsibility for your own learning: come to class and come prepared.

Course Requirements

Undergraduate Students:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Test 1	22%
Test 2	23%
Test 3	25%
Interview about IIs	8%
Group presentation	16%
Attendance/Activities	6%

A = 90%+

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F < 60

Graduate Students:

Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Test 3	20%
Research Paper	30%
Class Presentation	10%

Examinations: There will be three exams using large 8.5 x 11 scantron sheets that you must provide (Get them at the LSU Barnes & Noble Bookstore on Highland Drive). The exams consist of true-false, multiple choice, and matching items. Students are expected to take the tests during the assigned time on the syllabus. Students who will miss an examination due to an authorized university activity should make arrangements to take the test in advance. The exams contain 60-65 objective items. The exams will cover the material presented in the lectures and in the book. Exams 2 and 3 are not comprehensive. "Make-up" exams will be given only in the cases of documented accident, illness, or emergency.

Interview: You are responsible for conducting an interview dealing with the frequency and topics of imagined interactions. The interview consists of going to a public place such as a mall, park, LSU quad/parade grounds and asking two people what they were daydreaming about, if anything when you approached them. **Distinguish daydreams from imagined interactions for the interviewees.** Daydreaming questions--1. Ask them if they daydream more or have more imagined interactions on a daily basis? 2. What happened in their most recent daydream? 3. How long ago was the daydream? 4. What is the purpose of their daydreams? 5. When do they daydream, e.g., while driving, before falling asleep, at work, walking, mowing, cleaning, studying, etcetera?

Imagined Interaction questions-- 6. Ask them how often they imagine talking with someone who is close to them? 7. Ask them how often their imagined interaction occurs in bouts.* 8. Ask them the topic of their imagined interactions how they feel about what they imagine? 9. How often the conversations actually take place? 10. Do they enjoy these imagined interactions and why? 11. Ask them how often they argue with someone in their mind. 12. Do they enjoying imagining arguing and why? *13. When is the last time that you had bouts of IIs in which you had a lot of them regarding a person, topic, event, or something else?

*A bouting behavior is defined as an activity that may occur over a time period that is relatively infrequent. Yet when it occurs, the activity occurs in quick, intense bouts. Binge drinking is an example of a bouting behavior for some people. It occurs infrequently, but in concentrated bouts. Another classic example is eating behavior that occurs infrequently over a day. Yet, for many people, it occurs regularly at three time periods, morning (breakfast), noon (lunch) and evening (dinner). There is very little eating behavior outside of these time periods, but eating occurs in these bouts which may be intense. Similarly, IIs may occur infrequently, but then after an intense argument, the person is caught in an absorbing state where they ruminate about the conflict.

Indicate what you learned about daydreaming and IIs from the interviews. The purpose of the interviews is to convey a working knowledge of course concepts. Hence, it is critical that you choose and define selected course concepts and then demonstrate how the interviewee's responses reflect the concept in action. For example, do IIs keep relationships as well as conflict alive in everyday life? How do imagined interactions help or hinder people? Do imagined interactions cause people to have increased self-

confidence? Higher grades will be based on the extent that followup, secondary probing questions are used including asking them “why” they responded in a given way and asking for elaboration. The failure to elaborate is a major shortcoming of these interviews.

Attendance and Activities: In accordance with LSU Faculty Senate and university policy, attendance in this class is required. There is a strong correspondence between class attendance and grades. Regular attendance is expected in order to best achieve the course objectives. You will not be penalized for missing two days which is equivalent to a week of unexcused absences when I take roll, but you will still be responsible on the exams for any lecture material covered, so be sure to get notes from someone. Each unexcused absence beyond two will lower your final grade by one percentage point (1%). Those faithful souls who miss no more than two classes will have one percentage point (1%) added to their final grade.

Occasionally, you will write a response to a question about the topic under discussion. Also, a series of unannounced pop quizzes at the end of class may be given based on the day's lecture. You may not make up missed activities unless you have documentation from a university-sponsored or NCAA event.

Group Research Project Presentation:

Everyone in organizations must work on committees whether they are social isolates and like working alone or whether they like working with others. The fact of the matter is that you will be working in groups in businesses. Some groups will be productive while others waste time and are unproductive. Unproductive groups in business are replaced by capable individuals. I will divide you into 5 groups containing 5-8 members. Your task is to choose an imagined interaction topic. Initially, you have your choice of whom you want to work. Subsequently, I will randomly assign others into a series of group research projects. The groups will have a chance to choose a topic for in-depth library research out of class. The group will review relevant research studies in an area. The group will make a class presentation of their research using Powerpoint derived from research reports from social science journals.

The research groups will deliver to the class a presentation in which a DVD or electronic video may be shown (this is optional but favorably viewed) that conveys a sample of the subjects' responses if interviews are part of the presentation. The presentation will consist of a review of empirical studies in the area and results of the group's own investigation. These presentations will last for the entire class period. The presentation should begin with a discussion of why this is an important area to investigate, why this is of personal interest to the group members, previous results of studies, and current results of surveys or interviews.

You will receive two grades for this assignment. The first grade is a collective grade based on the quality of the presentation in terms of clearly showing the review of literature in an area, quality of tapes, and presentation of current results.

Each group will turn in a research report of 12-18 pages that contains a brief review of literature in the area, summary of previous findings, list of references, current interview results and an appendix containing the subjects' answer for understanding who is on the tapes. Appropriate citation using APA format (6th edition) should be followed in the group research report. An example of APA format is found in the book written by me. I want you to learn and be creative with this assignment. For example, your videotape could contain "skits" about imagined interactions or other communication concepts.

The second grade is based on individual peer evaluations of self and other's contributions to out-of-class meetings, contribution to the project, division of labor, and carrying out assigned duties. Unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that in some groups, there may be one or two individuals who essentially are not motivated, irresponsible, disinterested, give excuses for being too busy, and do not carry their load of labor. In fact, they may try to piggyback on the work of others such that one or two individuals end up doing a great deal of the work in order to salvage a group-based grade. Confidential peer evaluations reveal the extent of division of labor and establish equity based on unequal division of labor.

Potential, sample topic areas:

1. Induced imagined interactions and physiological arousal (blood pressure & heart-rate variability)
2. Imagined interactions as a bouting behavior in which they periodically with short, intense bouts with certain people about focused topics
3. Relationship between daydreaming, night dreaming, and imagined interactions
4. Imagined Interactions Keeping Relationships or Conflict Alive
5. Using imagined interactions to compensate for the lack of opportunity to state complaints; chilling effect
6. Imagined interactions in dealing with long-distance relationships
7. Music therapy and imagined interactions
8. Deception and imagined interactions
9. Communication, argumentative skills deficiency & compensation in imagined interactions
10. Gender differences in imagined interactions & listening
11. Any of the topics from IMAGINE THAT: STUDIES IN IMAGINED INTERACTION (You would read the chapter of your interest and EXPAND beyond it)

Possible Graduate Student Papers: Graduate students will write a paper for a conference presentation. It may be part of projects that I am currently working on including the following:

1. Use of imagined interactions to examine teasing episodes-- What is the relationship between features of II and teasing? What is the relationship between personality and teasing?
2. IIs as a bouting behavior—When IIs occur infrequently, what episodes initiate bouts of them?

3. Its functions as correlates of night dreaming—What are the associations between IIs and night dreams in terms of recall and other variables including use of visual and verbal imagery?

Tentative Daily List of Topics and Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
T Aug. 26	Course introduction; Levels of communication	
Th Aug. 28	Types & functions of Daydreaming; Differences among fantasies; Hallucinations, voicing, & IIs	Imagined Interactions Chp. 1;
T Sept. 2	Mindlessness versus mindfulness of Communication	
Th Sept. 4	Symbolic interactionism and prenatal communication	Imagine That Chp. 11

Attributes & Functions of IIs

T Sept. 9	Attributes of IIs	Imagined Interactions, Chp. 2; Introduction from Imagine That
Th Sept. 11	Functions of IIs	Imagined Interactions Chp. 3
T Sept. 16	IIs among College Roommates & with Parents	Imagined Interactions Chp. 4
Th Sept. 18	Attachment theory and IIs	
T Sept. 23	Test 1	
Th Sept. 25	Third-Party IIs	
T Sept. 30	Oral histories & IIs; humor Interviews are due	
Th Oct. 2	No class—Fall holiday	

Context & Compensation Studies

T Oct. 7	Music therapy & communication	
Th Oct. 9	Different types of listening	
T Oct. 14	Bereavement & Online IIs	Imagine That Chps. 4, 7
Th Oct. 16	Communication Apprehension	

T Oct. 21 Symbolic convergence Imagine That Chp. 11

Th. Oct. 23 Deception & Rehearsal

Managing Conflict

T Oct. 28 II conflict-linkage theory Imagined Interactions Chp. 5

Th Oct. 30 II conflict-linkage theory continued Imagine That Chps. 1-2

T Nov. 4 Test 2

Th Nov. 6 Group presentation 1

T Nov. 11 Group presentation 2

Th Nov. 13 Physiology & imagined interactions Imagine That Chp. 3

T Nov. 18 IIs in intercultural communication Imagined Interactions Chp. 6

Th Nov. 20 Prayer/loneliness among soldiers & homeless
Imagined Interactions Chp. 7

T Nov. 25 Group presentation 3 Imagine That Chp. 6

Th Nov. 27 No class—Thanksgiving

T Dec. 2 Group presentation 4 Imagine That Chp. 9

Th Dec. 4 Group Presentation 5 Imagined Interactions Chp. 8

Note: Test 3 is in finals week on Saturday, Dec. 13 from 12:30-2:30 pm