

**COMMUNICATION 4111: LISTENING**  
MWF, 12:30-13:20 (Coates 237)

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“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.”

~ Bryant H. McGill

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

~ Winston Churchill

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Listening is important. At least that is what we are told by nearly everyone we encounter – parents, guardians, friends, romantic interests, teachers, and bosses, just to name a few. Popular phrases such as “Look at me while I am talking to you!” and “Are you listening?” as well as the need to be “a listening ear” suggest a universal recognition of the importance of listening. We are told that planes crash and governments fall due to a failure to listen to instructions or constituents. Politicians love to go on “listening tours.” Several professions are built on listening – therapists, social workers, customer service specialists, and healthcare providers come easily to mind. Pick up a self-help book on effective management or sales and you will find listening is a key contributor to putative success. If you desire to be a parent one day, a key to your success? Ability to listen to your child. Good listeners are said to be good leaders, good parents, good healthcare providers, and good sales people. Good listening is perhaps THE quintessential positive interpersonal communication behavior.

But **what is listening?** That is, what are the defining features of listening, and what are the behaviors that signal good listening? Are these attributes and behaviors universal? If not, what are the boundary conditions that specify the important attributes and behaviors? Is good listening situational? Cultural? Relational? Personal? Can we really tell if someone is listening to us? If so, how? And what are the specific advantages of being a good listener, ensuring that you will have success in personal and professional life when you become one? Can good listening ever be detrimental to success? Is it always in our best interests to listen well? Do all cultures place this much emphasis on listening? What are the costs of being a good listener?

Questions like these constitute my existence as a student of human communication, and I hope they will intrigue you enough to stay in this course. **A thorough understanding of listening can assist you irrespective of your future career trajectory.**

CMST 4111 is intended to provide you with an overview of listening and an appreciation of its complexity and importance in everyday life. **This course seeks to provide you with a strong theoretical foundation for being able to make informed decisions regarding how and why to listen in particular ways in specified contexts.** If you put sufficient time and effort into the material, you will come away with increased ability to listen with respect and with an increased ethical attunement that should allow you to be a better friend, romantic partner, student, manager ... ultimately, a better human. Your increased knowledge of the listening literature and of relevant theories will guide that way.

In the service of these aims, we will read mostly from primary sources, although several narrative reviews will also be utilized to provide historical perspective and synthesis for areas where there is simply too much to read even for a full academic semester. You also are encouraged to bring in material that you find so that we can review and critique it. The utility of the class is highly contingent on students' desire to get the most out of the material.

There is **no formal textbook for the course**. Instead, I have assembled readings for our list of topics, and these readings will be posted to Moodle as the semester progresses. **We will read a lot for this course. If you fall behind, catching up will be tough.**

## **SO, HOW CAN YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN CMST 4111?**

1. Students are expected, in addition to time spent in class, to spend a minimum of an additional 6 hours per week reading and thinking about material and putting forth effort toward the completion of course assignments. Thus, students are expected to **devote at least 9 hours per week** toward the successful completion of CMST 4111.
2. Students are expected to be self-motivated and enjoy learning. **Self-motivated students will come to class and come prepared.** This includes reading and thinking critically about the material assigned for each class period. It will not be advantageous for anyone if I stood in front of the class and lectured until you fell asleep. Thus, lectures will be used to highlight the more challenging aspects of your reading and introduce additional insight not explicitly covered in the text. In addition, I will do my best to bring ideas to life with activities, group work, and other assignments designed to get you involved with the material.
3. **Treat CMST 4111 like a job.** While many of you will land a job that you enjoy out of college, many of you will land a J-O-B. Either way, you need to take that job seriously and work hard. Similar to success in the workplace, coming to class and participating in all activities and discussion will help you succeed in CMST 4111. Conversely, if you arrive late, unprepared, unmotivated, or simply in a bad mood to work there are consequences. You could be written up. You could be demoted. You could be fired. Please don't get fired from CMST 4111.
4. Students are expected to treat the class and the members of the class (including the instructor) with respect. **This class will be interactive,** and you are encouraged to ask questions and express opinions (especially when they differ from something you read or something presented in lecture). Some people may have different opinions than you. Differences of opinion can be expressed without disrespecting other people. Indeed, there is a difference between agreement and understanding. Agreement, whether with instructors, students, or the texts, is not mandatory. Attempting to understand the variety of opinions, however, is. Please keep this in mind during class discussion. Disruptive students may be asked to leave and not return.
5. Students are expected to show respect by **turning off all cell phones other devices** that may interfere with learning. **Do not use your laptop to engage in non class-related activities.** **Read newspapers and material for other courses outside of class time reserved for CMST 4111.** If another class or Charlie Brown or what Paris Hilton ate for lunch is that much more important than CMST 4111, by all means go somewhere else and pay attention to it. Contrary to popular belief, multitasking is not possible (and, in fact, is a misnomer ... more on that later!)

## ASSESSMENT

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### I. Participation (15% of course grade)

This course will rely on a “seminar” style of teaching that emphasizes discussion over lecture. Students should come to class prepared to ask questions about and critique relevant readings. I reserve the right to give quizzes on a daily basis.

Quizzes can:

- test you on the reading you were supposed to do prior to class,
- test you on the material covered in a particular class (including the current one),
- test you on the material we have covered to date, and/or
- test your retention of information presented by a classmate.

For each class day you will earn a letter grade based on your score on any quiz given that day and on your participation in class discussion and activities. Grades for class discussion are assigned as:

- F = not coming to class
- D = coming to class and dozing off, attending IN ANY WAY to an electronic device, reading the paper, or otherwise doing something that is not directly relevant to class; if group work, not fully participating as a group member (expect me to walk around and look at computer screens on a regular basis and for cell phones in laps or under desks)
- C = coming to class and sitting quietly, taking notes and seeming to pay attention; if group work, being a participant but more of the silent type than of the “I have an opinion” type
- B = coming to class and fully participating in any group related activities
- A = coming to class and saying ONE interesting thing or asking ONE interesting question; if group work, presenting at least one of the ideas of the group when called upon, critiquing other groups’ ideas, and/or asking questions of other groups

The participation grade used to calculate your final course grade is the arithmetic average of all your daily participation grades ( $\sum \text{daily grades} / \# \text{days}$ ). At any point in the semester if you have questions about where you stand with regard to participation, please see me.

### II. Journal Entries (10%)

You are required to keep a listening journal. Your journal can be handwritten or typed, and you are required to produce three journal entries per week. In addition to filling out a “Daily Listening Journal Form” (see Moodle), each journal entry should also include 500 to 1000 words that show a serious reflection on how you have behaved as a listener and what your predispositions seem to be.

Good journal entries will begin by reflecting on a specific event (like a conversation), detailing that event including the sights, sounds, smells, and other aspects of the environment. For example, after a conversation with your roommate, reflect on that conversation and how each of you enacted the “listening role.”

- What was the setting?
- Were there any potential obstacles to “efficient and effective” listening?
- What happened immediately prior to that conversation that may have limited your ability to be “fully attuned?”
- What happened during the event that may have placed a barrier to effective listening?
- Could you be fully “in the moment?” Why (not)?
- What impact do you think your listening had on the other?

Then, your entry should reflect on concepts discussed in class that can help to explain the event and how you listened (or how the other listened). After you define the concept and illustrate your understanding of that concept, you can move on to a reflection of how you can improve.

Journal entries may also reflect on your trying out a new listening technique. Entries of this type should start by defining the technique then commenting on why you thought the technique would prove successful in the particular setting you applied it.

- What is the technique and why did you think it would help your listening in this particular situation?
- What was the situation?
- Who were the characters?
- What was the setting?
- What were the sights, smells, sounds, etc. that defined the situation?

Finally, you should comment on how the technique seemed to work.

- Did it improve your listening?
- Why did it fail?
- Will it always work/fail to work? Why (not)?

Journal entries run Monday through Sunday, starting on January 19. So **your first three entries should be written between 01/19 and 01/25.** You are required to have three entries per week for a minimum total of 45 (15 \* 3). Hard copies (photocopies in the case of handwritten entries) of all journal entries are required for each reflection paper (see below). Each entry should include a “Daily Listening Journal Form” followed by your handwritten or typed commentary/reflection. You will receive a separate grade for journal entries at three points in the semester (see below). They will be graded for on-time completion and thoroughness.

### III. Reflection Papers (25%)

Based on your journal entries, you will write three, 3-5 page papers that integrate the content of your journal entries in light of extant theory and research in listening. The purpose of each paper is to bring the research to bear on helping you figure out how to listen better:

- What does listening mean in the particular events that you covered?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What can you do to improve?

For each essay, please include a cover page that includes your name and a title for the assignment. Start the content of your assignment on the next page, line one. Double space your paper, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and set your margins to 1-inch.

Each paper requires a minimum of TWO (2) academic citations, one of which can be a reading from class material. All citations should be formatted according to the 6th edition of the style guide published by the American Psychological Association and included on a separate page from the text with the title "References." A quick guide to APA can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

For each paper, you need to include an "appendix" that contains copies of all journal entries relevant for that paper. You should reference specific entries in your essay clearly so that I can find them and be able to tell how and why that entry is being referenced. There is no need to reference all 15 entries in a single paper, but your paper should reference at least 5 entries. The point here is to find commonalities across entries, so **"A" papers will be more synergistic than laundry-list.** I am not looking for separate paragraphs for each entry; rather, you should seek to find themes that cut across entries. **What do the entries AS A WHOLE teach you?** Use specific entries to illustrate these lessons. Staple your pages together. Unstapled assignments will not be accepted.

Papers are due no later than the following dates:

1. February 23 (Journal entries from January 19-February 22, 15 minimum)
2. March 30 (Journal entries from February 23-March 29, 15 minimum)
3. May 4 (Journal entries from March 30-May 3, 15 minimum)

Paper 1 is worth 5% of your course grade; Papers 2 and 3 are each worth 10%.

Papers 1 and 2 are due at the beginning of the class period (2/23 and 3/30), no later than 12:31. Paper 3 is due by 13:30 on May 4. No exceptions without prior arrangement. Physical copies of all assignments are required unless otherwise noted. Please note that due dates are the last possible date an assignment will be accepted. Early work is encouraged.

### IV. Abstract and Presentation of an Empirically Based Article (5%)

Each student is required to present to the class (4-8 minutes) the content of an empirically-based article on listening. This article needs to be something that you have found on your own and should

be published in an academic journal. Along with your presentation, you should turn in an “abstract” of the article along with a photocopy of the article (see “The Good Abstract”).

All students (or groups of up to 3) must turn in a photocopy of their article for approval no later than February 9, 12:31. Include a cover page with all student names. Presentations can begin on Wednesday, February 18 with no more than TWO (2) per class period. If desired, we can schedule these presentations. Students should bring copies of their abstract to distribute to classmates.

## **V. Examinations (15%)**

Two examinations will be given, one approximately at the midpoint of the semester (March 2-6) and one during the designated final exam period (Tuesday, May 5, 12:30-14:30). Each will be a mix of “objective” questions, short answer, and practical scenarios that call for your theoretical knowledge to explain what to do.

The first exam will be worth 5% of your course grade. The second exam will be worth 10% of your course grade and will include material that spans the entire semester. Students can choose to retain their grade up to the final if they do not wish to take the final. In these cases, the final GPA will be divided by 90% and used to post a final Moodle letter grade.

## **VI. Final Project (30%)**

For your final project, you may choose to work alone or in groups of up to 5. There are several options to fulfil this requirement.

- Develop the proposal for an empirical study, collect and analyze data, and write up your results;
  - If you choose this option, you will need to (a) confirm with me no later than February 13 your intentions, (b) complete online training for working with human subjects no later than Feb. 27, and (c) complete an IRB application for the study no later than March 23.
- Conduct a comprehensive literature review on listening in a particular setting or within a particular domain of interest;
- Write the introductory chapter and outline the remainder of a textbook or self-help book on listening (each chapter after the first will include a one page explanation of its proposed content and an outline of key concepts and theories to be covered);
- Review a book or program of research and write up a traditional “book review” for an academic journal;
- Propose a comprehensive training program on a specific type of listening for a specific type of audience;
- Write a series of blog posts or “self-help” entries for another medium on a particular subject; or
- Create an explanatory video of one or more concepts we discussed in class.

Students must discuss their particular option with the instructor no later than February 27 at 15:00. Each student is responsible for making an appointment prior to February 13<sup>th</sup> at 13:20 for this purpose; failure to do so will result in the deduction of a third of a letter grade for each 24 hour period an appointment is not made. **I will not remind you of your responsibility.**

Because this final assignment will differ based on our initial and subsequent conversations, your specific requirements will likely differ from some of your classmates'. In general, **the final product should consist of 8-10 pages of text and include no fewer than five academic sources.** The look and feel of your specific final product will be negotiated throughout the semester to fit your needs. **Final projects are due on Monday, April 27, 12:31. Students will present their projects during the last week of classes.** Failure to attend presentation days will result in a penalty over-and-above the hit you will take for participation. The first hour of the final exam period will be reserved for any additional presentations.

## **POLICIES**

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*Academic Integrity:* Louisiana State University A&M adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth a guiding mantra for student behavior inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are required to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is a student's individual responsibility to understand the standards of behavior for the LSU community.

*Access:* Please drop by my office when the door is open or make an appointment to speak with me at any point. Part of my job is to assist students in learning course material as well as providing advice for all things academic and professional. If you are having issues in your personal life that are impeding your ability to perform in this class as you normally would it is vital that you speak to me about them before you begin to fall behind. If it can be prevented, I do not want you to slip through the cracks.

*Accommodations:* Louisiana State University A&M is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities: If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with Disability Services (DS). DS is located in 115 Johnston Hall. Phone is (225)578-5919. **To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper DS forms and meet with by January 28, 13:25.**

*Attendance:* Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. The course instructor will determine the validity of a student's reason(s) for absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons (see PS-22). It is not possible to "make up" a daily participation grade, though students who have valid reasons for missing class on particular days will be officially excused from class assuming appropriate documentation is provided. A student who does not have a valid reason for missing class should submit to the instructor a formal letter outlining the reason for missing that class at least 24 hours prior to that class's start time. Only hard copies of letters will be accepted. Letters should follow standard business letter format.

*Correspondence:* I frequently use email as a means for getting in touch with the entire class or with individual students. It is important that regularly check your LSU email account. You should use email to correspond with me regarding areas of confusion, to make appointments, and to indicate

whether you will miss class on a particular day. Do not use email to turn in assignments or ask me to pre-read those assignments.

*Late Work:* All written work is to be handed in on the due date stated in the syllabus (above) and reviewed in the table below. No emailed assignments will be accepted without prior arrangement and with a documented and valid reason. Papers submitted past the deadline will be placed at the bottom of the stack. If I have not yet finished grading the assignments, then there is no penalty for late work. If I have finished grading the assignments, then your work will be read and marked but a grade of “F” will be assigned.

*Personal Emergencies:* If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, you must take responsibility for informing your instructor prior to the date of the work is due. A failure to contact your instructor prior to the due date will result in the application of the late work policy above. Extensions will only be granted for substantiated and documented emergencies. Make-up exams are scheduled only in cases of documented and unavoidable conflicts. You must notify your instructor prior to the exam date to re-schedule.

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#### **ROUGH OUTLINE OF IMPORTANT DATES**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>What is “due”</b>
Jan 19	Start Journal Entries
Feb 9 (12:31)	Photocopy of abstract article for approval
Feb 13 (13:20)	Make an appointment to discuss final project. If Option 1, confirm that option.
Feb 23 (12:31)	Reflection Paper 1 (Journal entries from 1/19-2/22)
Feb 27 (15:00)	If Option 1, human subjects training certificate. If other options, have appointment to discuss final project.
March 4	Midterm Examination
March 23 (12:31)	If Option 1, IRB application.
March 30 (12:31)	Reflection Paper 2 (Journal entries from 2/23-3/29)
May 4 (13:30)	Reflection Paper 3 (Journal entries from 3/30-5/3)

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## CALCULATING COURSE GRADES

The grade you EARN for this class will be based on a formula that weights assignments by their respective percentages. **For all assignments, you will earn a letter grade** that corresponds to the “meaning of grades” found below. Letter grades correspond to a traditional 4.0 scale:

A+ = 4.33	C = 2.0
A = 4.0	C- = 1.67
A- = 3.67	D+ = 1.33
B+ = 3.33	D = 1.0
B = 3.0	D - = .67
B- = 2.67	F+ = .33
C+ = 2.33	F = 0.0

As an example suppose you earned the following grades:

Assignment	Letter Grade	GPA Conversion	Percentage	Final GPA Weight
Participation	B+	3.33	.15	.4995
Abstract	A-	3.67	.05	.1835
Journal	A	4.00	.10	.4000
Reflection 1	B	3.00	.05	.1500
Reflection 2	B+	3.33	.10	.3330
Reflection 3	A	4.00	.10	.4000
Midterm	B-	2.67	.05	.1335
Final Exam	A	4.00	.10	.4000
Final Project	A	4.00	.30	1.200

Your final grade is the sum of the “Final GPA Weight” column ... 3.6995 = A- (for now, LSU counts an “A-” as equivalent to an “A”)

**As always, if you have questions about where you stand in the class see me before it is too late.**

As a rule, grades will not be discussed until 24 hours after grades have been acknowledged. During this time you should review the material in an effort to discern why you did better or worse than you anticipated. **The purpose of this rule is to encourage an intellectual rather than a strictly emotional discussion of your grade.**

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

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Week	Dates	Topics (readings)	Notes/Due Dates
1	Jan 14-16	<b>Course Overview, Class Expectations</b> (Syllabus)	
2	Jan 19-23	<b>How to Read Academic Articles</b>  1.21: Structure of academic articles (Schroeder, Johnson, & Jensen, 1985)  1.23: Working through an example (Beatty & Payne, 1984)	1/19 – NO CLASS, MLK
3	Jan 26-30	<b>Approaches to Studying Listening</b>  1.26: “Quantitative” approaches (Bodie & Fitch-Hauser, 2010)  1.28: “Qualitative” approaches (Purdy, 2010)  1.30: The false dichotomy of the “two approaches” (Bavelas, 1995)	
4	Feb 2-6	<b>What is listening? Implicit Theory Perspectives</b>  2.2: General Dimensions of Listening (Halone, Cunconan, Coakley, & Wolvin, 1998)  2.4: What’s Inside Your Head (Bodie, St. Cyr, Pence, Rold, & Honeycutt, 2012)	

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<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics (with readings)</b>	<b>Notes/Due Dates</b>
5	Feb 9-13	<p><b>What is listening? Scholarly Definitions</b></p> <p>2.9: Listening as a Hypothetical Construct (Barker, Barker, &amp; Fitch-Hauser, 1987)</p> <p>2.11: Listening vs. Hearing I (Lipari, 2010)</p> <p>2.13: Listening vs. Hearing II (Bodie &amp; Crick, 2014)</p>	2/13 - Final Paper Option 1 Decision
6	Feb 16-20	<p><b>Listening Presage</b></p> <p>2.16: Listening Concepts and Metacognition (Imhof &amp; Janusik, 2006; Janusik &amp; Keaton, 2012)</p> <p>2.18: Listening Goals (Gearhart, Denham, &amp; Bodie, in press)</p> <p>2.20: Listening Anxiety (Fitch-Hauser, Barker, &amp; Hughes, 1990)</p>	
7	Feb 23-27	<p><b>Listening Process – Cognition</b></p> <p>2.23: Cognitive Psychology of Listening (Imhof, 2010)</p> <p>2.25: Message Interpretation (Edwards, 2011)</p> <p>2.27: Constructivism (Burlison, 2011)</p>	2/23 - Reflection Paper 1 2/27 - Final Project Decision (Option 1 HS Training)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics (with readings)</b>	<b>Notes/Due Dates</b>
8	March 2-6	<b>Midterm Exam Period</b>  3.2: Review for Midterm  3.4: Take Midterm  3.6: Debrief from Midterm	Study!! Re-Read!!
9	March 9-13	<b>Listening Process – Behavioral</b>  3.9: Listening Skills Perspective (Ridge, 1993)  3.11: What Listeners Do (Bavelas & Gerwing, 2011)  3.13: Behavior in Context, Parenting (Pistrang, Picciotto, & Barker, 2001)	
10	March 16-20	<b>Listening Product</b>  3.16: Feeling Better (Bodie et al., in press)  3.18: Feeling Worse (Perrine, 1993)  3.20: Inability to Listen (Villaume & Reid, 1990)	

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics (with readings)</b>	<b>Notes/Due Dates</b>
11	March 23-27	<p><b>Listening Product (cont.)</b></p> <p>3.23: On not Being Heard (Dutta, 2014)</p> <p><b>Theorizing Listening</b></p> <p>3.25: Early Attempts for “A” Definition (Glenn, 1989)</p> <p>3.27: Power of “Good Theory” (read Purdy, 2011 THEN Bodie, 2011)</p>	
12	March 30-April 3	<p><b>Theorizing Listening (continued)</b></p> <p>3.30: Defining Listening Take 2, It’s a Theoretical Construct (Bodie, 2012)</p> <p>4.1: Exemplar I, No Joke about Affection (Floyd, 2014)</p> <p>4.3: Exemplar II, Neuroscience and Listening (Spunt, 2013)</p>	Final Project Option 1, IRB Applications – 3/23
13	April 6-10	<p><b>Listening in the Workplace</b></p> <p>4.6: Managers Listening (Brownell, 1985)</p> <p>4.8: Who Get to Judge Whom? (Cooper &amp; Husband, 1993)</p> <p>4.10: Listening in Sales (Comer &amp; Drollinger, 1999)</p>	Reflection Paper 2 – 3/30
14	April 13-17	<b>Spring Break, No Class, No Readings</b>	Be safe!!!
15	April 20-24	<p><b>From the Past to the Future of Listening Scholarship</b></p> <p>2.20: What We’ve Learned</p> <p>2.22: A Brief History and Future of Listening Research (Beard &amp; Bodie, 2014)</p>	
16	April 27-May 1	<b>FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>	Final Projects - 4/27

## Full Bibliographic Information for all Assigned Readings

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