Cornell University

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Communication

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My research program at Cornell has focused on examining social interactions mediated by information and communication technology, with a particular emphasis on how people produce and understand language in these contexts. In general, my theoretical approach draws on collaborative action-oriented models of communication, in particular Herb Clark's model of language use, and self-presentational frameworks that describe interpersonal motivations. My research has focused on two types of language phenomenon, verbal irony and deception, and on a number of cognitive and social psychological factors affected by online communication, such as impression formation and management, group processes, and individual differences (e.g., cognitive flexibility, personality traits, etc). Within each of these areas my research tends to be guided by more specific, phenomena-related theory (e.g., for irony, the allusional pretense model, for deception, the interpersonal deception theory, for impression formation the Hyperpersonal model, etc.).

Research Focus

My research group is interested in social interactions mediated by information and communication technology, with an emphasis on how people produce and understand language in these contexts. Our research has focused on two types of language, verbal irony and deception, and on a number of cognitive and social psychological factors affected by online communication.

Outreach and Extension Focus

I believe that communicating research to the public is an important service, especially when that research has relevance to everyday lives (e.g., deception and technology). Since 2004 I have given presentations about my research to Cornell Alumni Associations. I value the opportunity to connect with Cornell Alumni, who always are excited to hear about research and about activities in the Communication Department, in the new Information Science Program, and in CALS.

Teaching Focus

In general, my instructional techniques tend to be the same whether I am teaching in small seminar or a larger lecture course. I would best describe them as Socratic in the sense that I encourage students to process the course material in an ongoing interactive manner. I provide content and ask questions that guide the student through the material with the goal of establishing interaction between speaker and listeners. I encourage critical analytic thinking about ideas and evidence across any area of content being considered in the class. Students are asked to be skeptical and think about the logic and procedures behind scientific information. They are expected to evaluate evidence, and articulate their thoughts both orally and in writing. Although this can sometimes be difficult in a large lecture class, I find that it is possible. I believe these basic skills will serve students beyond the classroom, and ensure that they are more effective communicators and more critical consumers of information in their everyday lives. In smaller classes, I structure the course so that students engage in a research project where they learn how to ask a research question, and how to conduct a study to address that question.

Additional Links
- Website for the Social Media Lab

Departments

- Communication

Concentrations

- Language
- Linguistics
- Technology
- Computer-Mediated Communication
- Computer-Mediated Discourse
- Irony
- Deception
- Lying
- Online Communication
- Psychology
- Social Computing
- Human-Computer Interaction

- Information Science
- Communications

Graduate Fields

- Cognitive Studies
- Communication
- Information Science
- Psychology

Education

- Doctorate
  Dalhousie University
  2002
- Master of Science
  Dalhousie University
  1998
- Bachelor of Science
  University of Victoria
  1996