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# 2020 USF Open Educational Resources Grant Report

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Good afternoon, USF OER Grant Committee.

Please find attached my final report from my $1000 2020 USF Open Educational Resources
(OER) Grant. Although COVID-19 delayed the submission of this report, the global pandemic
has also made open access materials even more essential to supporting student's access at USF. I
am appreciative of the funding to facilitate this project.

Throughout this process, I was able to ensure that the materials/readings I was offering to
students for free did not violate copyright laws and open my eyes to resources that I did not
know were available. Based on the findings of my analysis, my course readings have been
updated to maximize OER and ensure that student have equal education access.

Given changes in enrollment and other Department of Communication Studies stressors since
March 2020, I have not yet been able to formally share my findings with my department or teach
the courses that were assessed for this project (i.e., I will be teaching one section of these courses
Fall 2022). That said, I look forward to teaching my courses with OER and formally promoting
OER to my department in the coming months. Ultimately, I hope to reduce the costs associated
with accessing materials/readings in other courses across my department.

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**Faculty bio:**

Allison Thorson is a Professor of Communication Studies, Director of the Interdisciplinary Committee on Children and Youth, and Director of the Child and Youth Studies Minor at University of San Francisco. Prof. Thorson also teaches in the Master of Arts in Professional Communication program. Her research focuses on how individuals and families communicatively manage and maintain individual/relational well-being in the context of — often deemed taboo — unexpected, hurtful, or non-normative events (e.g., family communication surrounding parental infidelity) and underexplored relationship types (e.g., work-spouse relationships).

Prof. Thorson teaches courses on family communication, interpersonal communication, communication and aging, dark side, and research methods. Her recent research is published in journals such as *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Family Communication*, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *Family Relations*, and *Communication Studies*. Last, Prof. Thorson is an executive committee member of the Central States Communication Association and an active member of the National Communication Association and Western States Communication Association.

**Courses for which 2020 USF Open Educational Resources Grant was used:**

The materials from two Department of Communication Studies courses were assessed to ensure that the materials being offered to students for free did not violate copyright laws.

Course #1:
COMS 302: Dark Side of Interpersonal and Family Communication (Upper division Communication Studies elective course [200+ students]; Elective course option for Child and Youth Studies minor [90+ students])
- Brief description: According to Brian Spitzberg (1998), the "dark side" is a metaphor used to describe those areas of interpersonal and family communication that are (a) underexplored or "lying in the shadows," awaiting scholarly attention, (b) presumed to be destructive, dysfunctional, evil, immoral, malicious, criminal, abusive, exploitative, or lunatic (c) viewed as dark, but should not be (e.g., things presumed to be bad that function to produce preferred outcomes), and (d) presumed to be good that should not be (i.e., things presumed to be good that function to produce dispreferred outcomes). Although most communication courses have probably oriented students to the ways in which they can communicate more openly, effectively, honestly, etc., this course acknowledges that an examination of the "brighter" sides of communication only provides part of the picture of the characteristics of communication that make up our

everyday lives.

Course #2:
COMS 306: Family Communication (Upper division Communication Studies elective course [200+ students]; Elective course option for Child and Youth Studies minor [90+ students])
- Brief description: In this course, students will examine the changing and complex definition of family. They will explore various family forms and examine family interaction from different theoretical lenses. Specifically, they will look at family systems and communication patterns, family rituals and stories, power, conflict, and stress in families, as well as assess the idea of what constitutes a "functional" family.

## Plan for funding:

I was unsure of how many of the readings that I was providing to students for free did not conform to current copyright laws/regulations. Thus, the goals of this project included:

1) Learn copyright laws related to the use of scanning book chapters for each text/reading.
2) Check to ensure that the required reading materials I was providing to COMS 302 and COMS 306 students for free did not break current copyright laws.
   a. If/when copyright laws were being broken, these readings were identified as not conforming to current copyright laws/regulations and deleted from the course.
   b. If/when copyright laws were being broken, I sought out new, open access, readings for these classes.
   c. If/when copyright laws were being broken, time was spent to update presentations, discussion questions, and exam prep materials and exams based on new readings.

   *An initial consultation with Gleeson Librarian Charlotte Roh and a follow-up meeting with Gleeson Librarian Matthew Collins was completed to understand this process. Additionally, I sought out information from colleagues using online and open-source materials, CET, and ITS.

## Findings of OER analysis:

Before attaining my 2020 OER grant, I did not require students in my courses to purchase any texts or materials. Rather, I posted all of my readings online – some of which I scanned in myself. That said, I was not certain whether I was following current copyright laws/regulations. Thus, the funds and hours used to conduct this analysis were used to (a) identify those situations in which I was or was not in compliance with current copyright laws/regulations and (b) find suitable alternative readings for those instances in which I was not in compliance with current copyright laws/regulations.

Below (column 2) is a list of the potential student costs associated with buying every text/reading for COMS 302 and 306. Colum 3 lists the findings from my analysis. Colum 4 explains the results/revisions that were drawn based on my conclusions.

| Course Assessed | Pre-2020 Textbook / Readings & Costs Associated if Not Provided to Students for Free | 2020 OER Findings | Result/Revision |
|---|---|---|---|
| **COMS 302: Dark Side of Family / Interpersonal Communication** | | | |
| | $6.93 - Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1994). *The dark side of interpersonal communication*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. | Book available in Gleeson Stacks | No change – Because USF has access to these readings, I can continue to provide students with these readings for free |
| | $62.34 - Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (2007). *The dark side of interpersonal communication, 2nd ed*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. | Book available as e-book via Fusion | No change – Because USF has access to these readings, I can continue to provide students with these readings for free |
| | $59.94 - Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, | Book available internet - | No change – Because USF has access to these readings, I can continue to provide students with these readings for free |

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| W. R. (1998). *The dark side of close relationships*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. | BF637.C45 via USF | |
| $78.21 - Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (2011). *The dark side of close relationships II*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. | Book available as e-book eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) | No change – Because USF has access to these readings, I can continue to provide students with these readings for free |
| $42.95 - Olson, L. N., & Fine, M. A. (2016). The darker side of family communication: The harmful, the morally suspect, and the socially inappropriate. New York: Peter Lang. | Book NOT available – modify readings | These readings can no longer be provided to students for free. These readings were replaced with peer reviewed articles to which our students have access:<br><br>Cole, H. E., & Beike, D. R. (2019). Tall tales make fast friends: Exaggerating when retelling previous experiences fosters relational closeness. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *36*, 2287–2306. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518787344<br><br>Scharp, K. M. (2020). Taking sides and feeling caught: Communicative complications for immediate family members of estranged parent–child dyads. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *37*(4), 1053–1072. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519886360<br><br>Yang, L.-Q., Sliter, M., Cheung, J. H., Sinclair, R. R., & Mohr, C. (2018). The dark side of helping: Does returning the favor from coworkers hurt employee work engagement? *Journal of Business & Psychology*, *33*, 741–760. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-017-9522-9 |

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| | | | Liu, E., & Roloff, M. E. (2016). Regret for complaint withholding. *Communication Quarterly*, *64*, 72-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2015.1103280 |
| **COMS 306: Family Communication** | | | |
| | $65.83 - Braithwaite, D. O., Suter, E. A., & Floyd, K. (2017). *Engaging theories in family communication* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. | Book NOT available – modify readings | These readings can no longer be provided to students for free. In addition to replacing readings on the following theories (see Ch. 23 & 24), I am connecting with the authors of these chapters to see if they would be available to Zoom as a "skype a scholar" session. YouTube videos were also found to supplement the introduction of these theories. <br><br> **Chapter 23**: Relational Turbulence Theory: Understanding Family Communication During Times of Change - *Leanne K. Knobloch, Denise Haunani Solomon, Jennifer A. Theiss, and Rachel M. McLaren* – replace with YouTube video of Dr. Jen Theiss giving a talk at Utah State University on relational turbulence in close relationships, September 16, 2016: https://youtu.be/EcdAAxnCpI0 <br><br> **Chapter 24**: Social Construction Theory: Communication Co-Creating Families - *Dawn O. Braithwaite, Elissa Foster, and Karla M. Bergen* – replace with YouTube video on Theories About Family & Marriage: Crash Course - https://youtu.be/yaeiCEro0iU <br><br> ** I am also looking into readings and chapters from Soliz, J., & Colaner, C. W. (Eds.) (2020). *Navigating relationships in the modern family: Communication, identity, and* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *difference.* New York: Peter Lang. This text is available as an ebook for $47.95. |
| | $20.92 - Braithwaite, D. O. & Baxter, L. A. (2006). *Engaging theories in family communicatio n: Multiple perspectives.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. | Book available as e-book via Fusion | No change – USF OER allowed for me to provide students with these readings |
| | $108.90 - LePoire, B. A. (2006). *Family communicatio n: Nurturing and control in a changing world.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (listed as LePoire, see Canvas) | Book available as e-book via ProQuest | No change – USF OER allowed for me to provide students with these readings |

**Conclusions:**

I used my 2020 OER grant to ensure that the materials/readings I was offering to students for free in COMS 302 and COMS 306 were not violating copyright laws. In the process, I learned of many USF library resources that I did not know were available and updated many of my course readings. This experience has not only changed how I plan to utilize open access materials in these select classes, but impacted how I plan to teach every class in the future.

Although most readings I was providing to students for free did not violate any copyright laws, a few readings needed to be updated in order to ensure that I / USF was in compliance. Specifically, the following COMS 302 readings from Olson, L. N., & Fine, M. A. (2016) will be replaced in future semesters with peer reviewed articles to which our students have access:

- Cole, H. E., & Beike, D. R. (2019). Tall tales make fast friends: Exaggerating when retelling previous experiences fosters relational closeness. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *36*, 2287–2306. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518787344
- Scharp, K. M. (2020). Taking sides and feeling caught: Communicative complications for immediate family members of estranged parent–child dyads. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *37*(4), 1053–1072. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519886360
- Yang, L.-Q., Sliter, M., Cheung, J. H., Sinclair, R. R., & Mohr, C. (2018). The dark side of helping: Does returning the favor from coworkers hurt employee work engagement? *Journal of Business & Psychology*, *33*, 741–760. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-017-9522-9
- Liu, E., & Roloff, M. E. (2016). Regret for complaint withholding. *Communication Quarterly*, *64*, 72-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2015.1103280

Relatedly, the following COMS 306 readings from Braithwaite, D. O., Suter, E. A., & Floyd, K. (2017) will be replaced in future semesters with peer reviewed articles/YouTube tutorials/and "skype a scholar" sessions to which our students have access:

- Chapter 23: Relational Turbulence Theory: Understanding Family Communication During Times of Change - *Leanne K. Knobloch, Denise Haunani Solomon, Jennifer A. Theiss, and Rachel M. McLaren* will be replaced with a YouTube video by Dr. Jen Theiss. Specifically, on September 16, 2016 Dr. Theiss gave a talk at Utah State University on relational turbulence in close relationships: https://youtu.be/EcdAAxnCpI0
- Chapter 24: Social Construction Theory: Communication Co-Creating Families - *Dawn O. Braithwaite, Elissa Foster, and Karla M. Bergen* – will be replaced with a YouTube video on Theories About Family & Marriage: Crash Course - https://youtu.be/yaeiCEro0iU
- I am also looking into readings and chapters from Soliz, J., & Colaner, C. W. (Eds.) (2020). *Navigating relationships in the modern family: Communication, identity, and difference.* New York: Peter Lang as I update this course.

To date, I have not yet been able to share my findings with the Department of Communication Studies. That said, I look forward to formally promoting OER to my department in the coming months so we can reduce costs associated with educational access. Relatedly, in the coming semester (Fall 2022), I plan to inform my students of OER materials/readings and track their views of readings on Canvas (comparing them to previous semesters) to ensure that these open materials are being accessed – hopefully at a greater rate than before.

All in all, I would like to thank USF's OER Grant Committee for this opportunity, their guidance, and mentorship throughout this process. Your support has given me a renewed

appreciation for OER and has put student access/learning at the forefront of my pedagogical approach.