

# COMMUNICATION

## *and Human Behavior*

Fourth Edition



BRENT D. RUBEN

LEA P. STEWART

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# COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR

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FOURTH EDITION

**Brent D. Ruben**

*Rutgers University*

**Lea P. Stewart**

*Rutgers University*

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# PREFACE

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Each generation faces its own unique problems and prospects. For us there are the challenges of fast-paced technological change, race relations, health care, evolving concepts of marriage and family, changing gender roles, drug and substance abuse, and international conflict.

We also face a host of smaller, but no less significant, challenges on a daily basis: a relationship that doesn't work out, a low grade we receive, a job that doesn't come through, a friend who no longer seems to care, the prejudice or discrimination that inflicts pain, a parent who doesn't understand, a marital conflict that can't be reconciled, or a child who disappoints loved ones.

Whether approached from the perspective of psychology or communication, political science or art, literature or sociology, a knowledge of human behavior can be of great value in our efforts to comprehend and deal with the circumstances we encounter. And, it can also help us understand ourselves, our actions, our motives, our feelings, and our aspirations.

Perhaps the greatest value comes from approaches which draw on a number of disciplinary perspectives. This fourth edition of *Communication and Human Behavior* aims to provide this kind of framework.

## ABOUT THE FOURTH EDITION

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Previous editions of *Communication and Human Behavior* have been well received by students and instructors at the many colleges and universities where they have been adopted. This response has been very gratifying. It has also meant that a number of helpful comments and suggestions on the book have been provided, and as a result this fourth edition improves on its predecessors in a number of respects.

The basic approach—viewing communication as a fundamental life process that is necessary to our lives as individuals, and to our relationships, groups, organizations, cultures, and societies—remains the same. However, in this fourth edition, new and expanded chapters, and refinements in content and organization further clarify the meaning, importance, and implications of this perspective.

The result is a book that is appropriate for an even broader range of audiences than previous editions.

Communication is a topic which, in a certain case, is extremely basic, involving daily activities that we all take for granted—speaking, writing, and listening. At the same time, it is a complex phenomenon that plays a pivotal and far-reaching role in all human affairs.



The challenge for the authors of an introductory text is to capture, explain, and illustrate these more familiar facets of communication, and then to relate and integrate them into a broader framework for understanding the complexity and pervasiveness of human communication processes.

*Communication and Human Behavior* addresses these challenges by providing a book which is expansive and yet integrated, rigorous yet readable, and which links theory and practice.

It does this by:

- Providing a broad introduction to the process and field (Chapter 1).
- Presenting an historical context in which to better understand communication today (Chapter 2).
- Focusing on communication as a basic life process (Chapter 3).
- Analyzing human communication in terms of “invisible” and well as “visible” aspects of the process (Chapter 4).
- Explaining how we receive messages (Chapter 5), and also how we create and send messages using verbal codes (Chapter 6) and nonverbal codes (Chapter 7), and the role media play in these processes (Chapter 8).
- Examining the role of communication in multiple contexts of human life, including individual (Chapter 9), relationships (Chapter 10), groups (Chapter 11), organizations (Chapter 12), cultural/intercultural (Chapter 13), and public and mass communication (Chapter 14).

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, we are very appreciative of the support and helpfulness of Allyn and Bacon. Special thanks to Joe Opiela, Andrea Geanacopoulos, Susan Brown, Paul Smith, and Tim Barnes.

B.D.R.

L.P.S.

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# **COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR**

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# 1

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## COMMUNICATION—DEFINITIONS AND THEORIES

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**com • mu • ni • ca • tion** (kə-mū 'nə-kā 'shən), n. [Fr.; L. *communicatio*; see COMMUNICATE], 1. a transmitting. 2. a giving, or giving and receiving, of information, signals, or messages by talk, gestures, writing, etc. 3. the information, message, etc. 4. a means of communicating; specifically, *a) pl.* a system for sending and receiving messages, as by telephone, telegraph, radio, etc. *b) pl.* a system for moving troops and matériel. *c)* a passage or way for getting from one place to another. 5. the science and art of communicating as a branch of study. Abbreviated **com.**, **comm.**

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