

Table 1.1 | Approaches to the Concept of Communication

	Communication Theorized As:	Possible Use in the Organizational Context:
Rhetorical	The practical art of discourse	Considering the communication strategies of organizational leaders during times of crisis
Semiotic	Intersubjective mediation by signs	Studying the ways that organizations create and sustain identity through corporate symbolism
Phenomenological	Experience of otherness; Dialogue	Using dialogue to mediate conflict between two employees
Cybernetic	Information processing	Finding optimal ways to set up a communication network system for employees who telecommute
Sociopsychological	Expression, interaction, and influence	Using knowledge about personality and interaction style to improve conflict management programs
Sociocultural	(Re)production of social order	Looking at the intersection of organizational, national, and ethnic cultures in multinational organizations
Critical	Discursive reflection	Confronting the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace through programs designed to shift beliefs about gender and power

Portions adapted from R. T. Craig (1999). Communication theory as a field. *Communication Theory*, 9, 119-161.

LOOKING AHEAD

Chapters 2 and 3 will take us back to consider several “founding perspectives” that have influenced the study of organizational communication. These approaches originated in other academic fields (e.g., sociology, psychology, management) and in business and industry and provide the foundation on which the field of organizational communication stands. Several aspects of these founding approaches are important to note. First, although these schools of thought provide the historical backdrop for our study of organizational communication, they are not “dead” subjects. Indeed, the influence of these approaches is widely seen in organizations today, and our discussion of them will consider both their historic and current significance. Second, these approaches are largely prescriptive in nature. That is, these theorists were primarily interested in prescribing how organizations should run rather than describing or explaining how they actually do run. Chapter 2 will take us back to the early part of the twentieth century to explore classical and bureaucratic approaches to the understanding of organizational communication. In Chapter 3, we will move to the middle and later years of the twentieth century to consider two related approaches: human relations and human resources. In human