

Week 2 Theory Traditions

COMM 2100 Introduction to Comm Theory
SI Session

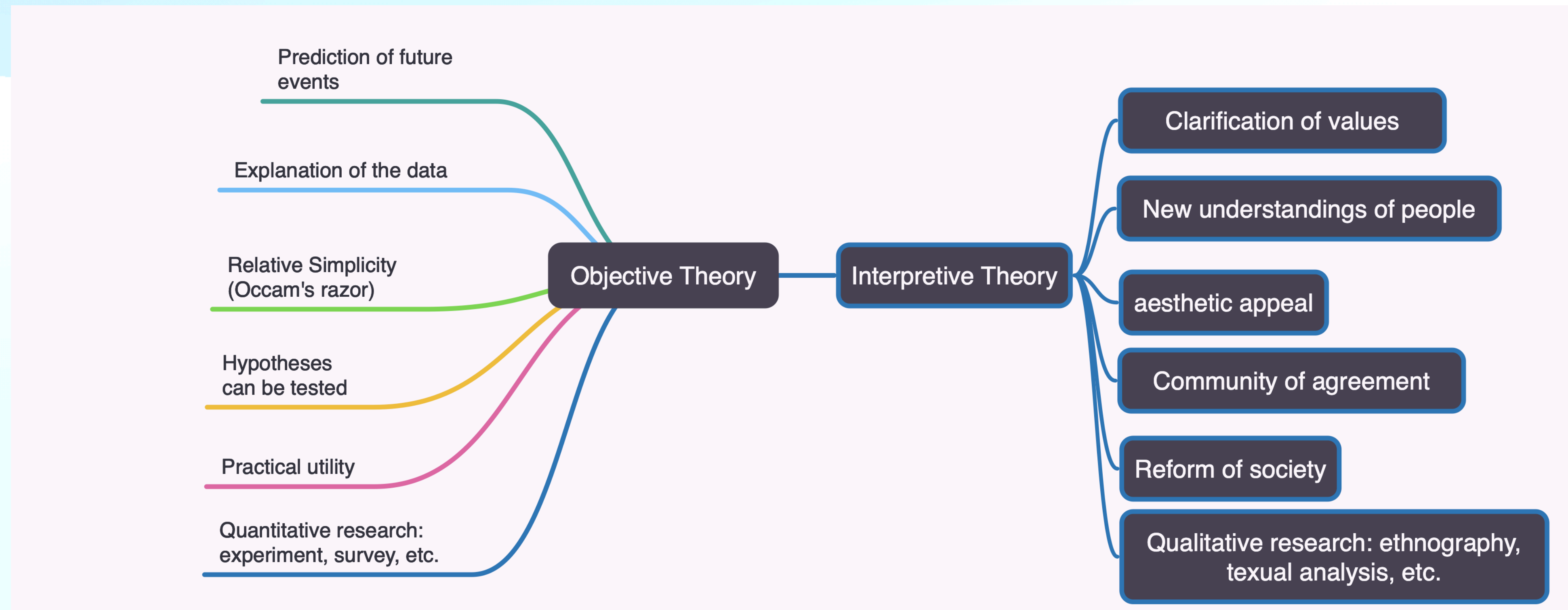
Kristen (Jing) Zhang

What makes a good theory?

- This about things you've learned in school. How do you know whether the knowledge you've been taught is right and good?

Good Objective Theory vs. Good Interpretive Theory

- What sorts of questions are best answered with numbers? What sorts of questions are best answered with words?
- All theories have trade-offs.



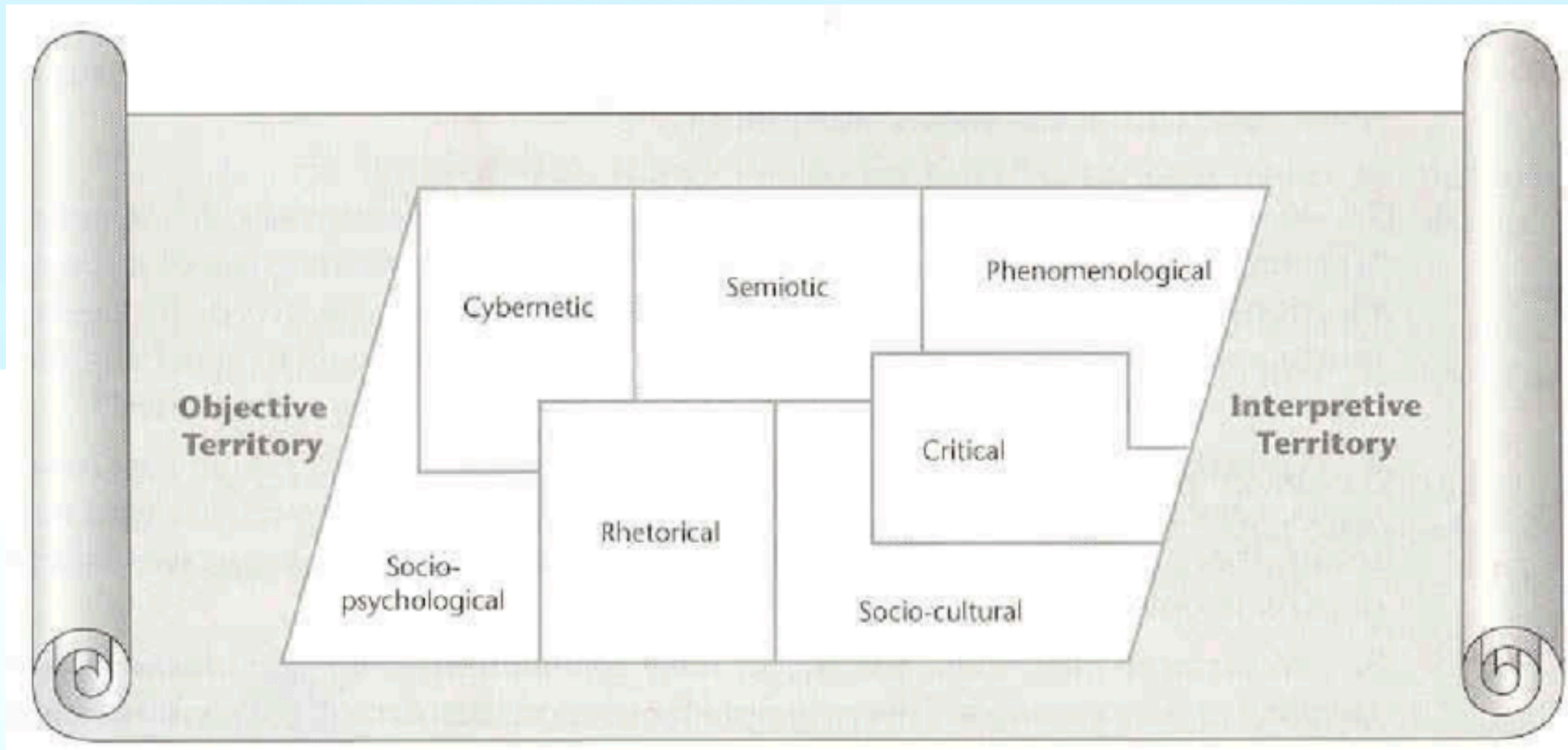
Parsimony - is it always a good thing?

- parsimonious \neq no-brainer
- parsimonious \neq lack of explanation/hard to understand
- parsimonious = easy to understand
- parsimonious = no extraneous baggage

Objective explanation/subjective understanding

- Is this a dichotomy?
- The practical utility in objective standards.
- self-referential imperative: “include yourself as a constituent of your own construction” (p. 32)

Communication theory traditions in a time scale



- (p. 47)

Rhetorical | Ancient Greek

Critical | 1920s

Cybernetics | postwar

phenomenological | 1950-60s

Semiotic | 1910s

Socio-psychological | 1930-40s

Socio-cultural | postwar

Into the Socio-Psychological Tradition

Four Founding Fathers



Harold D. Lasswell

The Model of Mass Communication



Paul F. Lazarsfeld

Propaganda



Political Communication



Kurt Lewin

Small Group Theory



Organizational Communication



Carl I. Hovland

Persuasion



Health Communication/PR

“Crossroad where many have passed but a few have tarried”

— — Wilbur Schramm (1963)

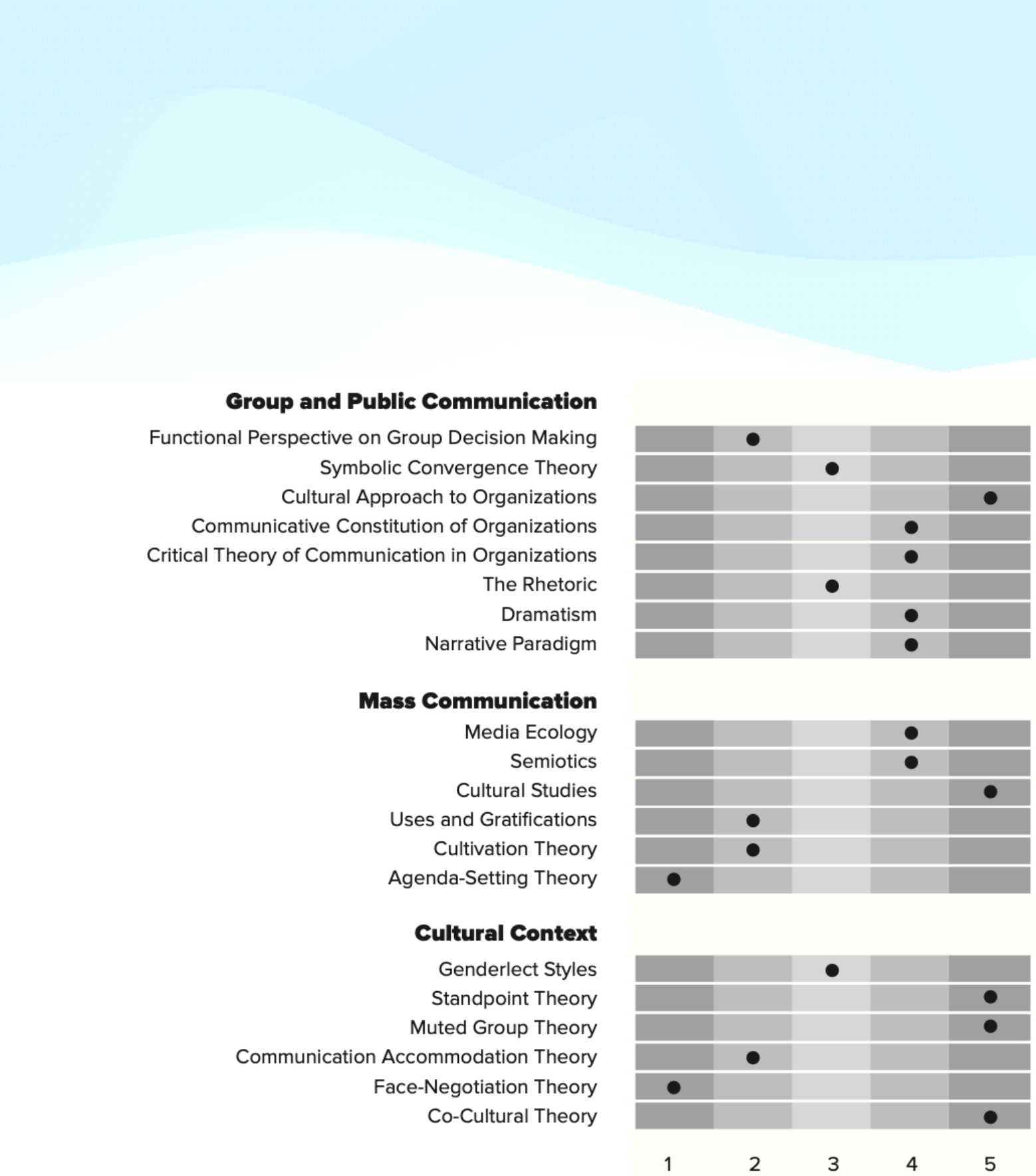
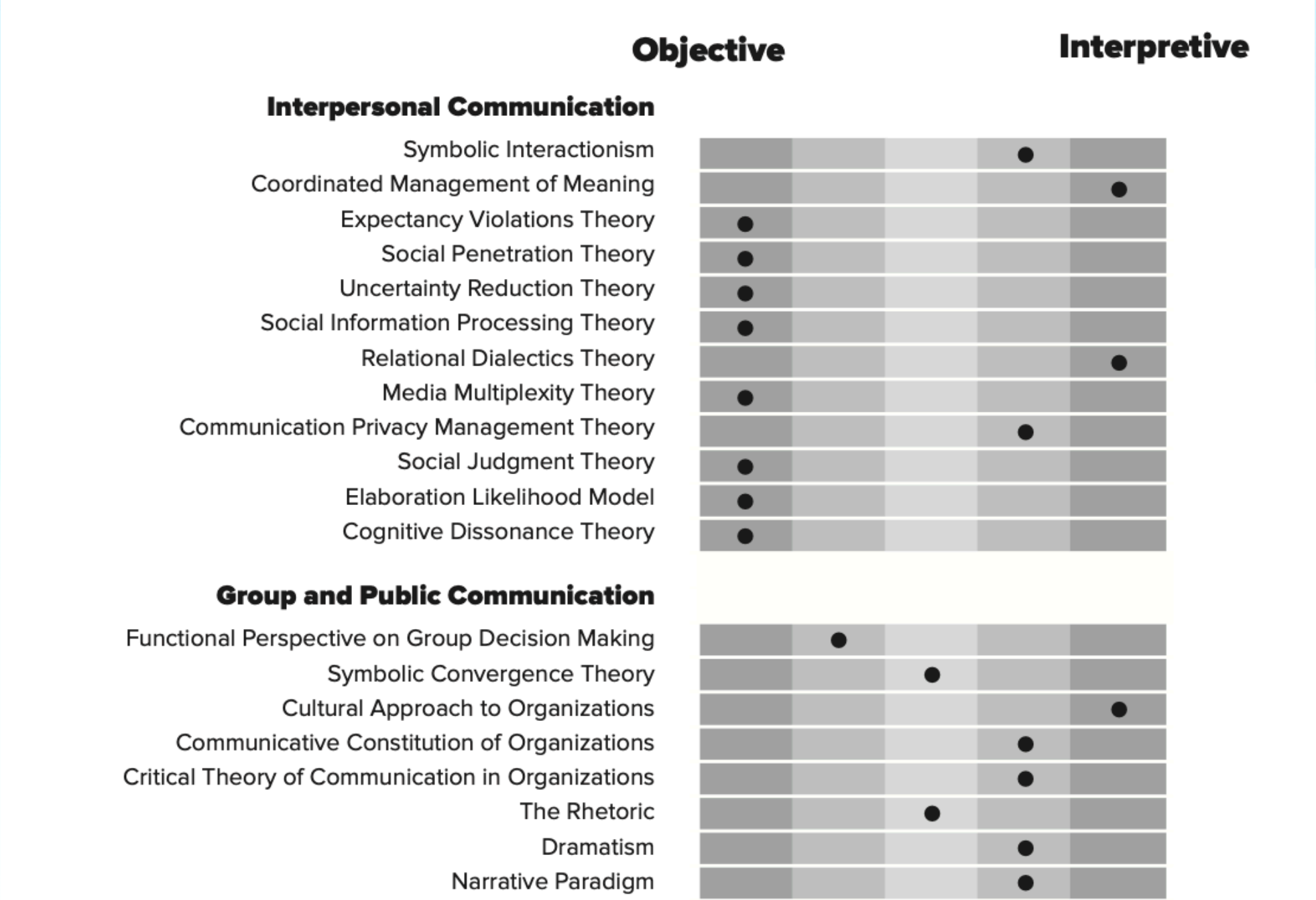


FIGURE 2-1 Classification of Communication Theories According to Objective/ Interpretive Worldview

Thank you!
See you next week!