Literature review.  Paper details: Demonstrate an expert level understanding of theory and how the theory speaks to everyday phenomena. 5-7 pages in length. 5 sources minimum all of which are to be peer-reviewed journal articles or chapters in edited books that have been published by a reputable academic press — APA formatting and reference style will be required. • 5-7 pages in length — assuming double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman front and not counting titles, headers, figures, notes or reference • 1 theory or substantial theoretical concept that connects your selected source material; your theory will be chosen from the topics listed in the syllabus • 5 scholarly sources minimum, all of which are to be peer-reviewed journal articles or chapters in edited books that have been published by a reputable academic press — APA formatting and reference style will be required • A clear, thoughtful question or problem to which you believe the selected theory may apply More on the Literature Review Literature reviews are discussions of previous theory and research; scholars can write stand-alone literature reviews, but they are frequently part of research reports in journal articles, book chapters, and such. Experts in an area/topic conduct literature reviews in order to determine what the “state of field” is in terms of knowledge about particular subjects. In other words, we do reviews of the existing literature in order to answer the question, “What can we say we know about \_\_\_\_\_\_?” One element of many literature reviews is the “theory section.” This is a passage or section in which academic work that develops and applies a particular theory gets discussed. The writer summarizes, synthesizes and places in context of their own inquiry a substantial number of previous academic texts. In these, you do more than simply “talk about” what you’ve read. Rather, you help the reader see the “background” of your own research, the ideas on which you rely, and the way in which you’re conceptualizing communication. In order to have a coherent approach to a communication problem, you need an appropriate and cogent way to conceptualize communication. Using a particular theory of communication enables us to accomplish just that. So, the above is what a literature review is and why we craft them. Here’s how you should complete the assignment. • Know that you will be writing a literature review, and not a whole research paper. You’re crafting what is usually just one part of a larger research project. • Develop a thoughtful, focused research question or problem. What might you be interested in understanding? What phenomena, issue, or process engages your curiosity? You’ll not be researching this per se, but you should select a theory that’s appropriate for framing the way in which you’ll approach that phenomena in later work. • Select one theory from our course textbook to discuss in your review. o The theory you select should be presented as a chapter in our course textbook. If you wish to concentrate on any communication theory or major concept that is not presented in our textbook, then you must have your selection approved by the course instructor by the mid-point of the semester. o You may write on a theory that has been discussed as a formal part of our class sessions. • Compose a literature review with the following sections (later in the semester, I will point you toward useful internet resources): o A concise introduction of 1-2 paragraphs in which you (1) name and characterize the theory you will discuss, (2) explain the question or problem that grounds your selection of this theory, and (3) previews the remainder of your assignment. o A main section with subsections that engage several of the themes/topics described in a bullet point below. o A focused conclusion of 1-2 paragraphs in which you (1) summarize the chief “lessons” of your literature review and (2) bring closure to your work by reconnecting your review with the question or problem you discussed at the outset. • For the main section of your literature review, you will describe, synthesize, analyze, and/or apply the sources you’ve read. The objective here is to develop expertise about this theory and how it can be used to generate knowledge in response to communication questions and problems. You do this by going beyond just producing a simple “book report” on what you’ve read. Instead, students who earn higher grades will develop and discuss themes/topics that cut across multiple sources. These are examples of potential themes/topics you might develop for the main section of your literature review: o What practical problems or issues does this theory seek to help understand or solve? Has the scope or focus of this theory changed in any way over time? o Amongst the research articles you review, discuss claims or findings that show up in multiple sources. That is, talk about what researchers are “doing with” or “finding with” this theory. o Explain how theorists have changed, added, removed, or emphasized key concepts within the theory over time. o What concepts are most important or illuminating in reference to the problem you’re interested in understanding. That is, why does this theory or particular parts of it “apply” well to the issue or topic in which you’re interested? o What do these articles using a particular theory have in common, such as research methodology, subject matter/topic, etc.? o What questions, problems, disagreements or uncertainties persist across these articles? o What articles or theorists are referenced as seminal, early, or influential? What is the content of these articles or how are they described in others’ work? o Other topics, themes, or discussion points are possible….