



Dennis Robertson, Ph.D.

*Professor of Communication, School of
Humanities*



Dr. Dennis Robertson grew up in the newspaper business in Northeast Arkansas. Although his entire family were farmers, Dr. Robertson chose journalism as his profession of choice early in life. At the age of 12 he became a beat reporter for his hometown newspaper – covering school news regarding his junior high school class. After school on certain days he hung out at the newspaper office, learning to develop film, set type, write headlines and captions, and do other miscellaneous chores around the shop. Before he left for college six years later, he was publishing the newspaper while the owner/publisher traveled on extensive vacations.

Enticed to Southern California on a basketball scholarship, he gave that up for a full-ride scholarship in journalism, serving as the university's weekly newspaper editor and working part-time as a public relations specialist in University Advancement. At the conclusion of his undergraduate years, Dr. Robertson began his first graduate degree in public relations at California State University. Later he was selected to attend the prestigious Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California, where he worked with world-renowned media scholar Everett M. Rogers. He received a Master's degree in public relations and media management at USC. Although he worked as a public relations specialist for a cultural foundation in Pasadena, he taught journalism and public relations as an adjunct at a local college. Later he was persuaded to give up corporate communication for life as a college professor – a choice he has never regretted. He began his Ph.D. in Communication at USC, and completed the doctorate at the University of Texas, Austin.

Dr. Robertson was baptized as a teenager at the Blue Cane Baptist Church – a country church his great-grandfather built and his grandmother attended for 90 years. The church is still going strong today. Dr. Rob – the name he inherited from students several years ago – gave his first sermon there, and since has served as Interim Pastor for a number of churches; the two most recent being First Baptist Church, Gladewater, where Dr. Rob lives with his wife Janet on Lake Gladewater, and Emmanuel Baptist Church in White Oak, where he currently serves as Interim Pastor.

Although Dr. Rob served as Vice President for Student Affairs at ETBU from 2008-2012 – which he says was one of the greatest experiences of his life – he is back doing what he loves to do as a Professor of Communication in ETBU's Department of Communication Studies. He came to ETBU as a professor and chair of the Communication department in 2005.

What brought you to ETBU?

I was teaching public relations and advertising at the University of Texas, Tyler, but had decided to take a position at Sam Houston State as professor of radio and television in the Dan Rather School of Communications. Weeks before I left for that professorship, I got a call from ETBU – totally out of the blue – asking if I would be interested in interviewing for the position of professor and chair of the Communication department. Although I had an outstanding job offer from SHSU, I did come over for an interview. I loved the University, and the people, the minute I stepped foot on campus. ETBU was a Christ-centered university, and I knew that's where I needed to be. I called Sam Houston State to say thanks, but no thanks, within a day or two.

What makes a student successful in your class?

The desire to be a better communicator, and the passion to learn what professional communication is all about.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned from your ETBU colleagues?

To care deeply for every student, in and out of the classroom, while encouraging and supporting each other in all endeavors. The faculty and staff here are tremendously collegial, and it makes coming to work much more enjoyable.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned from your ETBU students?

Life is wonderful, and you're never too old to revel in it.

How do you promote Christian scholarship in your classroom?

I teach and believe that Christ is everywhere, and in everything. He is the Great Communicator, the Great Designer, the ultimate authority in all our endeavors. All that we want to photograph, or write about, or design around, was created by Christ for people. Give God the glory in all things.

Academic Credentials

B.A., Ambassador College;
M.A., California State University;
M.A., University of Southern California;
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin