

COMM Graduate Courses

Fall 2022

COMM 601: Foundations of Comm Inquiry (Blanton & Wanzer-Serrano)

Tuesdays @ 8:30 - 11:00 am / Bolton 213

This course explores critical, humanist, and social scientific epistemologies and research traditions in Communication Studies. The purpose of the course is to foster appreciation and understanding of the distinctions among various modes of inquiry so that students will develop research literacy in Communication as a multi-method discipline. To accomplish these goals, students will engage readings and guest lectures that focus on theories and principles of research design and practices. And from these various engagements, students will be asked to articulate the differences among Communication research traditions as those differences and similarities inform the development of their own research programs.

COMM 616: Content Analysis (Street)

Tuesdays, 2:30 - 5:00 pm / Bolton 213

This is a methods course. It will focus on analyzing the content of messages and text (words mostly, but some images) of various sorts, including social and mass media, conversations, interviews, speeches, advertisement, and other communicative content. Key methodological foci will include sampling, conceptually grounded category construction, calculation of intercoder reliability, and analysis of data using quantitative methods. We will cover a variety of content analysis methods, both human and computer generated. The course will be a mix of lecture, discussion and in class activities. The end goal will be a research paper, sole or co-authored (if two students wish to work together) that can be submitted for conference presentation and (ideally) publication after completion of the class. Grading will be based on class assignments, class presentations, and the final research paper.

COMM 645: Rhetorical & Textual Methods (Poirot)

Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:10 - 5:25 pm / Bolton 213 – *stacked w/advanced UG seminar*

“Rhetorical & Textual Methods” is a writing intensive course that surveys historical and contemporary rhetorical and textual analytic practices. Students will be asked to: (1) engage exemplar rhetorical/textual analyses of oral, visual, written, and digital “texts,” (2) reflect on the epistemological assumptions of varying rhetorical/textual analytic traditions, (3) write extensively and participate in peer writing groups, and (4) compose a rhetorical/textual analysis. The course will be stacked with an upper-level undergraduate course. Prior knowledge of, or experience with, the study of rhetoric or rhetorical/textual analysis is welcome, but is not expected. Students will be required to describe and identify their own goals for the course. An individualized final project, which reflects the student’s goals, prior experience with rhetorical/textual analysis (or lack thereof), and the course’s learning outcomes, will be negotiated between each student and me.

COMM 655: Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric (Crick)

Thursdays, 8:30 - 11:00 am / Bolton 213

Rhetoric is about the social struggle over meaning, and hence, over power. It is about how people use language and symbols to replace one thing with another and transform the way a community or society thinks, feels, and behaves. To understand this process, we must know what society is, what makes it possible, what obstacles it faces, what it fears and desires, what it acknowledges and ignores. Rhetoric is ultimately about how people act as agents of social change, using whatever symbolic power they can harness to move people from this place to that place. This course addresses broader questions concerning the function of rhetoric in the public sphere, the situational character of discourse, the role and character

of audience, the relationship between rhetoric and truth, the impact of the media and technology on message dissemination and interpretation, and the psychological and sociological structures that enable rhetorical persuasion. We will read books by Kenneth Burke, Bruno Latour, Roland Barthes, Hannah Arendt, Marshall McLuhan, and Michel de Certeau.

COMM 661: Media, Culture, & Identity (Henson)

Thursdays, 3:00-5:30 pm / Bolton 213

This seminar focuses on representations of identity in media and popular culture. Discussions and readings center on how media affect users' identities and in turn how identities shape media. We will learn about and critically evaluate prominent theories relating to intersectional identities, difference/diversity, and media studies. Media will be analyzed as sites for negotiation and construction of intersectional identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, sexual orientation, social class, (dis)ability, nationality, citizen status, and religion. The course will examine the impacts and effects of media stereotypes on both dominant and marginalized groups. We will reflect on the role of media in reinforcing and challenging power, privilege, oppression, bias, discrimination, and inequities. It will also delve into positive storytelling, counter-narratives, and media initiatives that resist mainstream portrayals through activism and media justice. Students will design and develop a research project on a media topic of their choice that advances the theories and concepts learned in this course in meaningful ways. This course counts towards the Digital Humanities, Women's & Gender Studies, and Africana Studies graduate certificates. Students from all backgrounds and methodological orientations are welcome to enroll.

COMM 664: Media Processes & Effects (Lueck)

Tuesdays, 11:30 am - 2:00 pm / Bolton 213

This seminar takes a social-scientific approach and builds on knowledge about seminal mass media concepts. It extends this knowledge by systematically exploring cognitive and affective processes that form the explanatory mechanisms underlying media effects. Mass media have been alternately feared, bemoaned, used, and dismissed as tools to change beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. These rival views are informed in part by findings that media appear to affect some people but not others. To understand how and why media might have attitudinal and behavioral effects it is useful and necessary to explore how people psychologically engage with media information. This seminar takes a social-scientific approach and focuses on psychological concepts and theories concerning individual cognitive and affective processing of the content of both traditional and new electronic media. In this connection, the focus is on how individuals respond to media content. Inevitably, however, the discussion will place individual behavior in the social context of groups (literal and virtual), organizations, and the larger milieu of society and changing technologies.

COMM 689: Participatory and Engaged Communication Research (Wolfe)

Thursdays, 11:30 am - 2:00 pm / Bolton 213

This seminar will explore the theoretical, practical, and ethical questions raised in the traditions of participatory action and engaged research, as academics respond to calls to become vigorous partners in seeking responses to the most pressing problems of our time. Together we will explore the relationships between applied communication, communication activism and social justice, participatory critical rhetoric, public scholarship, and other disciplinary approaches to participatory and collaborative research. This course will examine challenges related to collaborating with community partners, translating academic research for various audiences, and designing meaningful research in light of institutional constraints. Over the course of the semester, students will develop a large-scale project, which can take many forms including a blog, podcast series, YouTube channel, or research project in collaboration with a community partner.