

Department of Communication & Journalism Graduate Courses

Fall 2023

COMM 601: Foundations of Comm Inquiry (Blanton & Poirot)

Mondays @ 1:00-3:30 pm

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: Multimodal Communication & Creative Research Methods (Villanueva)

Wednesdays @ 1:00-3:30 pm

In an era when communication and higher education are rapidly changing, there is much to learn about multimodality and creative approaches to knowledge production. For example, how can multimodal communication be used to forward an argument or inform dissertation research? How is technology changing the format of the dissertation and academic publications? How can we engage the entire human sensorium in research? How do we ethically collaborate with communities we study? And how might multimodality and technology change the experience of composing and communicating research beyond the traditional academic journal article and monograph? This course addresses the academic research process and the problem of understanding how knowledge production can be argued, represented, and presented in multimodal ways, and considers the lived curriculum and creative capacity of graduate students in the social sciences and humanities. This course will provide a theoretical and methodological space in which graduate students will develop and create new opportunities for alternative dissertation formats and scholarly publication. The course will engage and contribute to the literature on multimedia literacies and multimodality in academia and the ways communication, media, technology, and culture are changing how students research, learn, and disseminate their findings to multiple publics.

COMM 632: Communication & Conflict (Barge)

Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 12:45-2:00 pm

Issues of difference and conflict pervade contemporary society. This course addresses the relationship between communication and conflict—how communication shapes our understanding of conflict situations and how communication creates resources for managing conflict—with an eye on developing practices and intervention to create better social worlds. This course will specifically focus on the way that dialogue can help manage conflict within organizations and communities. We will read original texts from leading dialogue theorists—Mikhail Bakhtin, David Bohm, Martin Buber, and Paolo Freire—and explore how different approaches to dialogue engage conflict management. We will also focus on specific conflict management processes such as negotiation, mediation, and the design of conflict management systems within organizations and communities.

COMM 658: Cultures of Fact (Braman)

Tuesdays @ 2:30-5:00 pm

Today's misinformation and disinformation problems appear within a late phase of facticity – the cultural orientation around the fact, whether towards or away, that has characterized modernity since its emergence in the mid-1600s. Among the many factors that have affected the rise and fall of facticity, technological innovations have transformed every step by which “facts” are produced, with profound

epistemological consequences as well as the social and political issues with which we are familiar. This seminar will begin with the history of facticity, including attention to just what the “fact” is and how it relates to “information” and knowledge (and the history of the sociology of knowledge). We will review late 20th and 21st century theoretical developments that are of importance to those of us who study information, communication, and culture. These include not only postmodern theory, but also such things as incorporating context into analysis and officially “perturbing” data for particular policy purposes as well as culturally-based critiques of facticity. Particular attention will be paid to the role of fact in the functioning of democracy as we have understood it. We will spend some time on legal constraints on and consequences for false information in the US (there are over 1,000 legal provisions just at the federal level and just including statutes, not regulations, that make false information illegal). Readings will conclude with review essays and other key items in the massive literature that has developed and is continuing to develop in this area as it applies, separately, to the production, distribution, reception, uses, and consequences of misinformation and disinformation. Each student will undertake an individual research paper on a topic of their choice, developed throughout the semester in a series of smaller exercises, each of which receives detailed feedback as students build towards their final papers.

COMM 662: Survey of Media Studies (Wallis)

Mondays @ 4:00-6:30 pm

This course will provide graduate students with a broad overview of the field of media studies – the key literature, concepts, questions, topics, and debates – beginning with early foundational texts on mass media and ending with inquiries into the recent explosion of social media, big data, and algorithmic culture. During the semester, a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies that fall primarily within qualitative, critical-cultural traditions will be covered. The class will follow a historical and thematic trajectory by first becoming acquainted with US mass communication research and related Anglo-European contributions through reading primary documents considered foundational to the field. We will then trace various extensions and critiques of these frameworks as well as new theoretical paradigms. In the process we will consider interventions by intersectional and marginalized voices that have reconfigured and reinvigorated the field. We will also look at traditional notions of audiences, industries, and texts and how these are being rethought in an era of big data, artificial intelligence, and participatory surveillance. The course requires substantive reading each week and a research seminar paper. There are no class prerequisites.

COMM 663: Audience Studies (La Pastina)

Tuesdays @ 8:20-10:50 am

In this course we will focus our attention on the ways people consume media messages. Why do people view, read, listen, or engage with a determinate program or message? How do we do it? How are we changed by these interactions? How can we study audiences? And what can we know about them? The goal of this course is to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the many aspects involved in what is normally termed “audiences,” as well as an understanding of the different theoretical and methodological ways in which audiences have been conceptualized and studied. This course focus on cultural studies and interpretive approaches to studying audiences. We will not investigate the effects literature.

The seminar begins with a historical overview of the development of the field and subsequently focus on contemporary trends in the study of audiences, broadly conceptualized to include consumers of media, such as film and television with an emphasis on recent developments in the study social media users. Fandom practices will also be investigated. This course hopes to provide an in-depth understanding of the processes of media consumption and the implications of these phenomena in an increasingly diverse and globalized world.

COMM 670: Culture & Disparity in Health & Health Communication (Tang)
Thursdays @ 2:30-5:00 pm

The rise of globalization and multicultural society calls for more in-depth understanding of the role of culture in health communication. In this seminar, we will examine:

1. how differences in the cultures of different nations, regions, or demographic groups affect people's health beliefs and behaviors and how it can be incorporated in creating more effective health messages.
2. how the discourses of health and illnesses are socially and culturally constructed and how such discourses reflect and reinforce the power inequality in terms of race, gender and sexual orientation.

COMM 689: Communicating Race/Racism in the United States (Wanzer-Serrano)
Thursdays @ 8:20-10:50 am

What is race? What is racialization? What is the relationship between race/racialization/racism and communication? As recent history has shown us, far too often these questions are never asked. Between #CommunicationSoWhite, #RhetoricSoWhite, #ToneUpOrgComm, and more, it is finally becoming clear to those exercising power in our disciplines that the status quo must change. Of course, BIPOC scholars have known this for decades; but our calls were often ignored or co-opted. This graduate seminar will introduce students to key theoretical literatures on race/racialization and racism, and key critical engagements of public discourse centered on race and/or racism. Over the course of the semester, students will be exposed to a variety of perspectives on race and racialization, their manifestation in public culture, and their intersections with gender, sexuality, class, and more. The first unit of the course will engage foundational interdisciplinary readings on the topic of race/racism. The second unit of the course will engage a breadth of communication-focused scholarship (books and journal articles) on the topic from a range of methodological orientations. Students will be evaluated on three main items: (1) active and productive participation in class discussion; (2) completion of a proposal that makes a prima facie case for a final paper that fits the class; and (3) a final paper that explores some dimension of race/racism in public culture and demonstrates an awareness of the semester's readings/discussions.