Department of Communication & Journalism
Graduate Courses
Spring 2023

COMM 615: Interpretive Methods (La Pastina)
Tuesdays @ 2:00-4:30 pm

This course is designed as an introduction and overview of interpretive research. There will be three main kinds of activities in which we will be involved throughout the class: 1) Discussion of key terms and definitions, underlying epistemologies (ways of knowing), design issues, and a variety of qualitative methods. 2) Discussion and evaluation of a broad spectrum of exemplary studies, demonstrating various topics, designs, applications of theory, methods, and styles of writing. We will be continuously wrestling with the notion of what constitutes a text, so I have deliberatively included various types of texts to interpret. That said, our emphasis will be on texts (written, auditory, and visual) that are created through field-based methods, i.e., within one or more live, ongoing contexts with human participants. Also interspersed in our readings are issues of research ethics, social action research, and investigator identity. 3) Development of your own interpretive research project (and in the process, development of your own interpretive writing style) in the form of a written paper and oral presentation by the end of the seminar. For some or most of you, I expect the paper will take the form of a case study or focused investigation in which you've posed research questions, proposed a well thought-through design for investigating those questions, and used one or more forms of qualitative methods to gather and analyze data (e.g., in-depth interviewing, ethnographic research, participant observation, focus groups, examination of written or visual texts and/or other cultural artifacts). Our objective will be to produce papers of high quality that can be submitted for conference presentations or publication.

COMM 616: Topics in Communication Methods | Computational Methods (Yang)
Thursdays @ 2:00-4:30 pm

This grad seminar introduces computational approaches to collecting, organizing, and analyzing text as data. Both social science researchers and digital humanity scholars can benefit from taking this class. For social scientists, text as data methods can provide insights into concepts of interest, assist the formulation of hypotheses, make predictions and causal inferences. For digital humanity scholars, text as data methods can help discover patterns in their texts and measure how the prevalence of certain characteristics of texts changes over time. In this seminar, we will work with code and learn the basics of the programming languages Python and R. In this seminar, we will cover topics including web scraping, downloading data via API, text pre-processing, Bag of Words, topic models, sentiment analysis, clustering, validation, and supervised machine learning. This seminar will have three components: 1) A lecture; 2) a student-led discussion or demo; and 3) a hackathon where students work on problem sets. There will be no exams. Students will be evaluated on problem sets and the final project.

COMM 620: Communication Theory (Barge)
Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 9:35-10:50 am

This graduate seminar is inspired by Richard Swedberg's classic article, "Before theory comes theorizing or how to make social science more interesting." This class will focus on the process of theorizing, the activities that are associated with crafting a theory or an explanation for communication puzzles, problems, or surprises. This seminar will focus on the following kinds of questions: How do different epistemological traditions and paradigms influence the process of theory construction? What are the processes involved with constructing theoretical explanations for communication phenomena? What is the relationship between theory building and research methods? How can theories be leveraged to understand and intervene in communication phenomena? We will explore a variety of theorizing traditions such as grounded practical theory, conceptual modeling, and computational approaches. The goal is for you to develop your ability to produce theoretical explanations of communication phenomena an ability that is

important across a broad range of scholarship including health communication, media, rhetoric, and organizational communication. The major project associated with the seminar is the development of a theory-oriented paper for convention submission.

COMM 626: Communication Law & Policy (Burkart)
Tuesdays @ 5:30-8:00 pm

Communication Law and Policy presents orthodox and radical traditions of Western legal theory as they pertain to communication, telecommunications, and media studies. We will also engage with current law and policy debates about free speech, privacy, surveillance, media ownership, copyright, and globalization/ deglobalization.

COMM 634: Communication & Gender (Dubriwny)
Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 9:35-10:50 am

Drawing from the literature of the many different subfields of communication— including media studies, rhetoric, organizational communication, health communication, and political communication—this course asks how gender is shaped through communicative practices. The course is organized around thematic modules that (may) include motherhood & reproduction, the politics of representation, leadership, violence & criminal justice, and sex, sexuality & unruly bodies. We will approach the study of gender and communication from a feminist perspective; a background in feminist theory (particularly poststructuralist/performative accounts of gender) is useful although not required.

COMM 689: Special Topics | Mediation, Space, Place & Culture (Villanueva)
Thursdays @ 11:10-1:40 pm

Inquiries into how communication, culture, media, and technology mediate and are mediated by geographic space and place. Emphasis is on human creation of and inscription of meaning on space and place to shape individual and collective identities. How do people, through their practices and their being in the world, form relationships with the locales they occupy (natural, built, and media environments)? How do a place's memories and contested histories shape the communication, expressive culture, and daily lives of people who dwell in these places? How do race, gender, and sexuality co-construct the experience of space and place? How do globalization and transnationalism mediate diasporic spaces and intercultural communication practices? How can we imagine spatial interventions to create a more just world? The readings and theories in the course will be interdisciplinary, building off scholarship in communication, media studies, cultural studies, geography, anthropology, sociology, and ethnic studies.