COMMUNICATIONS (COMM)

COMM 123 Critical Approaches to Popular Culture
Popular culture has been alternately condemned as too trivial to warrant attention and too powerful to resist. Its consumers have been dubbed fashion victims, couch potatoes, and victims of propaganda. This course considers these critiques, as well as those that suggest that popular culture can be emancipatory, allowing for the creation and renegotiation of meaning. Over the course of the semester, we consider the impacts of various forms of popular culture, and discuss their effects on how we see ourselves and others. We explore the ever-shifting distinctions between high, middlebrow, and low culture and analyze how power and resistance structure the production and consumption of popular texts.
Taught by: Lingel
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 125 Introduction to Communication Behavior
This course introduces students to the theoretical models and research methods used to study communication and behavior, with a focus on mass media processes and effects. Topics examined include: the social construction of meaning through communication, effects of media violence, children's responses to educational television, the political impact of the news, and the influence of social media on relationships, and the role of media in creating and perpetuating gender, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. The aim of the course is to provide students with (1) a general understanding of research on attitudinal and behavioral aspects of mediated and interpersonal communication, and (2) the basic conceptual tools needed to critically evaluate the assumptions, theories, and empirical evidence supporting conclusions about communication behavior and media effects. Toward this end, thought the paradigms of critical and cultural studies will be reviewed briefly, the class will focus on social scientific approaches to understanding communication behavior. Students have the option of producing a multi-media capstone project or writing a term paper on a communication behavior-related topic of their choice. This class meets twice a week (WF) as a lecture and once a week (M) in smaller group seminars.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 130 Media Industries and Society
The aim of this course is to prepare you to work in the media business as well as to be an informed citizen by acquainting you with the work and language of media practitioners. The class also investigates the exciting, and to some employed there) scary changes taking place in the news industry, the advertising industry, the movie industry, and several other areas of the media system. In doing that, the course ranges over economic, political, legal, historical, and “cultural” considerations that shape what we see when we go online, use social media, watch TV, read books, play video games, and more. You'll never look at media the same way again.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Turow
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 203 Media, Culture & Society in Contemporary China
This course studies contemporary China in the context of globalization. Starting with an analysis of the origins of economic reform and the struggles for political change in the 1970s and 1980s, the course moves on to cover critical issues in the twenty-first century, including migration and work, middle class consumerism, youth, religion, media and communication, environmental degradation, new forms of inequality, civil society and popular protest. Taking a sociological approach, this course introduces methods and theories for analyzing institutions, inequality, and social change.
Taught by: Yang
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 238
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 210 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
This course is a general overview of the important components of social research. The goal of the course is to understand the logic behind social science research, be able to view research with a critical eye, and to engage in the production of research. It will cover defining research problems, research design, assessing research quality, sampling, measurement, and causal inference. The statistical methods covered will include descriptive and inferential statistics, measures of association for categorical and continuous variables, inferences about means, and the basic language of data analysis. Course activities will include the use of statistical software, lectures, class exercises, reading published scientific articles, and discussing research featured in the news.
Taught by: Jemmott
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 211 Media Activism Studies
This seminar provides an introduction to the politics and tactics underlying various types of media activism. The class will examine interventions aimed at media representations, labor relations in media production, media policy reform, activists’ strategic communications, and “alternative” media making. The course will draw from an overview of the existing scholarship on media activism, as well as close analyses of actual activist practices within both old and new media at local, national, and global levels. We will study how various political groups, past and present, use media to advance their interests and effect social change. Each member of the class will choose one case study of an activist group or campaign to explore throughout the semester.
Taught by: Pickard/Various
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 213 Social Media and Social Life
The irruption of social media as a means of communication has been said to transform many dimensions of social life, from how we interact with significant others to how we engage in public life - but has it, really? Regardless of the specific technology (blogs, micro-blogs, social networking sites, peer-to-peer networks), social media make interdependence more prevalent, and exposure to information more pervasive. But social networks, and the ties that bring us together, have long mediated the way in which we obtain information, engage in public discussion, and are recruited or mobilized for a public cause. So what has social media brought to the table that is new? This course will evaluate the evidence that can help us answer this question, as well as challenge conventional views and discuss questions that remain open. The effects of social media on ideological polarization, social influence and peer pressure, agenda-setting dynamics, and the formation and effects of social capital are examples of the substantive topics and theoretical debates that will be considered.
Taught by: Gonzalez-Bailon
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 214 Media and South Asia
This course examines the historical development of media institutions across the Indian subcontinent, and how media texts have helped to shape post-colonial national/cultural/religious/social identities, nationalism, and geopolitical relations. The course looks at how the post-colonial State in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka) has interacted with media industries, and the implications of this interaction.
Taught by: Balaji
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: SAST 110
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 225 Children and Media
This course examines children's relationships to media in their historic, economic, political, and social contexts. The class explores the ways in which "childhood" is created and understood as a time of life that is qualitatively unique and socially constructed over time. It continues with a review of various theories of child development as they inform children's relationship with and understanding of media. It reviews public policies designed to empower parents and limit children's exposure to potentially problematic media content and simultaneously considers the economic forces that shape what children see and buy. The course also provides a critical examination of research on the impact of media on children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Students in this course produce a prototype for an educational children's media product as their final project.
Taught by: Woolf
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 226 Introduction to Political Communication
This course is an introduction to the field of political communication, conceptual approaches to analyzing communication in various forms, including advertising, speech making, campaign debates, and candidates’ and office-holders’ uses of social media and efforts to frame news. The focus of this course is on the interplay in the U.S. between media and politics. The course includes a history of campaign practices from the 1952 presidential contest through the election of 2016.
Taught by: Jamieson
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: PSCI 232
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 230 Advertising and Society
This course explores the historical and contemporary role of the advertising industry in the U.S. media system. The course will cover the social history of advertising; the structure of today's advertising industry; the workings of advertising in digital media; and critical analyses of advertising's role in society. In addition to academic writings, the class will read industry reports to understand contemporary strategies and processes.
Taught by: Turow
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 234 Ethnography and Media for Social Justice
How do qualitative social scientists study urban communities? What kinds of powerful tales can be told about urban lifestyles and social issues in places like Philadelphia? This course will allow students to study various ethnographic treatments of urban communities in the United States, using films, articles, TV serials, and books as guides for the framing of their own independent research on the streets of Philadelphia. Students will also form production teams of two or three people, and these production teams will be responsible for (i) identifying and researching an important urban issue in contemporary Philadelphia and (ii) turning that research into a 15-30 minute video documentary or podcast. Mixing video/audio journalism with ethnographic methods will enhance their skills at archival and social research, from participant observation and interviewing techniques to sound editing and production. This course is intended to be a rigorous and exciting opportunity for students to tell empirically grounded stories using the voices of their participants and the sounds of the city.
Taught by: Lingel
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 270 Global Digital Activism
This seminar examines the forms, causes, and consequences of global digital activism, defined broadly as activism associated with the use of digital media technologies (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones, and the Chinese Weibo). The goal is to provide students with a theoretical tool-kit for analyzing digital activism and to develop a critical understanding of the nature of contemporary activism and its implications for global social change. Major cases to be examined include the "Occupy Wall Street" movement in the US, the Arab Spring, the "indignados" protests in Spain, and internet activism in China. Students are required to conduct primary, hands-on research on a contemporary case (or form) of digital activism and produce a final research paper. This research project may be done individually or in small groups.
Taught by: Yang
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 275 Communication and Persuasion
This course examines theory, research, and application in the persuasive effects of communication in social and mass contexts. The primary focus will be on the effects of messages on attitudes, opinions, values, and behaviors. Applications include political, commercial, and public service advertising, propaganda, and communication campaigns (e.g. anti-smoking). Students will develop their own communication campaign over the semester. The campaign will include defining and analyzing the persuasion problem, the target audience's characteristics and media habits, and then reating a persuasive message consistent with research and practice targeted to the problem and its solution.
Taught by: Cappella/Staff
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 282 Sick and Satired - The Insanity of Humor and How it Keeps Us Sane
This course will examine how and why humor, as both an instigator and peacemaker, might be considered one of the most influential and profoundly useful forms of communication devised by human beings. The unique ability of jokes and satire to transcend familiar literary and journalistic forms for the purpose of deepening (or cheapening) socio-philosophical arguments and to inspire (or discourage) debate and participation in public conversations about innumerable political and social issues will be explored. The fearless analytical nature of both high and lowbrow comedy will be examined, as well as its defective qualities. The course will enable students to consider, through analysis of both contemporary and historical examples, the political and cultural satirist's unique role in society as a witness, a predictor and, in some circumstances, an instigator of public and private debate. We will examine the role of satire in revealing and mediating differences between disparate social groups based not solely on language differences, but also on political affiliation, cultural identity, ethnicity, gender, religious fellowship, sexual orientation, and socio-economic caste.
Taught by: Booth
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 290 Special Topics in Communication
This is an intermediate level special topics course that covers varying topics in communication. For more information about the course, please see: https://www.asc.upenn.edu/academics/undergraduate-program/curriculum-and-major-requirements
Taught by: Various Instructors
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 292 WARNING! Graphic Content - Political Cartoons, Comix and the Uncensored Artistic Mind
This course examines the past, present and future of political cartooning, underground comix, graphic journalism and protest art, exploring the purpose and significance of image-based communication as an unparalleled propagator of both noble and nefarious ideas. The work presented will be chosen for its unique ability to demonstrate the inflammatory effect of weaponized visual jokes, uncensored commentary and critical thinking on a society so often perplexed by artistic free expression and radicalized creative candor.
Taught by: Booth
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 300 Public Space, Public Life
Public space as a mediated system of communication anchored in embodied practice. Historical aspects, public space as a cultural signifier, how the organization and regulation of collective spaces facilitates and enriches or hinders common life, public space as a critical component of democracy.
Taught by: Marvin/Staff
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 301 Introduction to the Political Economy of Media
This course has two aims. First, assuming that communications are central to any society, it situates media systems within larger national and international social relationships and political structures. Second, this course critically examines the structures of the communication systems themselves, including ownership, profit imperatives, support mechanisms such as advertising and public relations, and the ideologies and government policies that sustain these arrangements. Considering case studies ranging from traditional news and entertainment media to new digital and social media, the course provides a comprehensive survey of the major texts in this vibrant sub-field of media studies.
Taught by: Pickard/Various
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 310 The Communication Research Experience
In this hands-on course students will work with active researchers in the Communication Neuroscience lab at Penn to gain experience in how research works. Students will have the opportunity to interact closely with a mentor and will gain experience conceptualizing research questions, designing experiments, and collecting and analyzing data. In fall 2019, the course "field experiment" will examine how to increase voter turnout among Penn students, but the specific research approaches taken to this topic will be driven by students’ interests (e.g. in persuasion, marketing, network science, etc). Prerequisite: COMM 210, an equivalent research methods class, or permission of the instructor.
Taught by: Falk
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: COMM 210 (Communication Research Methods) or permission of the instructor.
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 311 Peace Communication
When me and you becomes us and them, a suite of psychological processes are amplified or come online. In this course, we will examine the forces that drive people to engage in intergroup conflict through the lenses of evolutionary biology and psychology, and then examine the effectiveness of communications-based interventions at easing conflict. In the first part of the course, we will learn about the theoretical work on intergroup psychology; in the second part, we will examine the specific processes that drive conflict (e.g., stereotypes, prejudice, dehumanization) and how they are measured using both explicit self-report and implicit measures (e.g., physiology, neuroimaging); in the third part, we will explore the interventions that have been demonstrate to work (and fail) to decrease intergroup conflict. No prior experience in psychology or neuroscience is required.
Taught by: Bruneau
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 313 Computational Text Analysis for Communication Research
In this “big data” era, presidents and popes tweet daily. Anyone can broadcast their thoughts and experiences through social media. Speeches, debates and events are recorded in online text archives. The resulting explosion of available textual data means that journalists and marketers summarize ideas and events by visualizing the results of textual analysis (the ubiquitous ‘word cloud’ just scratches the surface of what is possible). Automated text analysis reveals similarities and differences between groups of people and ideological positions. In this hands-on course students will learn how to manage large textual datasets (e.g. Twitter, YouTube, news stories) to investigate research questions. They will work through a series of steps to collect, organize, analyze and present textual data by using automated tools toward a final project of relevant interest. The course will cover linguistic theory and techniques that can be applied to textual data (particularly from the fields of corpus linguistics and natural language processing). No prior programming experience is required. Through this course students will gain skills writing Python programs to handle large amounts of textual data and become familiar with one of the key techniques used by data scientists, which is currently one of the most in-demand jobs.
Taught by: O’Donnell
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 318 Stories From Data: Introduction to Programming for Data Journalism
Today masses of data are available everywhere, capturing information on just about everything and anything. Related but distinct data streams about newsworthy events and issues -- including activity from social media and open data sources (eg: The Open Government Initiative) -- have given rise to a new source for and style of reporting sometimes called Data Journalism. Increasingly, news sites and information portals present visually engaging, dynamic, and interactive stories linked to the underlying data (e.g. The Guardian DataBlog). This course offers an introduction to Python programming for data analysis and visualization. Students will learn how to collect, analyze, and present various forms of data. Second, because numbers and their visualizations do not speak for themselves but require context, interpretation, and narrative, students will practice making effective stories from data and presenting them in blogs and other formats. No programming experience is required for this class.
Taught by: O’Donnell
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 322 History and Theory of Freedom of Expression
Can Donald Trump be punished for suggesting his followers might beat up journalists at rallies? Why doesn’t the law have a way to stop false tweets, especially his as President? Is money really speech so far as the First Amendment goes? Doesn’t that tilt the discussion to always favor what the rich say? Is shouting “Heil Hitler! Heil Trump!” at a performance of Fiddler on the Roof the same as crying fire falsely in a crowded theater? Can school authorities punish high schoolers for performing a Nazi salute in their prom photo? Should Alex Jones be banned from Twitter as well as Facebook? Can racist speech be banned on the Penn campus? What are the considerations to be debated in these examples? If we were going to fashion laws about speech limits all over again in our media-saturated world, would they be different from the ones we have? Does the First Amendment- invented for a print community in which most people were non-literate compared to the ultra-connected world we have today, and in which media were wholly different from those we have now -wisely apply to the world we’re in? This reading and discussion seminar examines the philosophical fundamentals that framed the First Amendment, its interpretation by the Supreme Court over time, and recurring arguments to limit or extend its protections that are reflected in current and past controversies. It also examines the advantages and problems of civil society censorship, the kind that gets people banned from social media or fired from their jobs for controversial speech, like the NFL’s threats to fire players for taking a knee. All societies make laws to limit speech. What are these limits in the United States, and are they the ones we want?
Taught by: Marvin
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 323 Contemporary Politics, Policy and Journalism
This course explores modern media and their impact on government and politics. It primarily covers the post-Watergate/post-Vietnam era of journalism. Each week focuses on specific topics and areas of post-Watergate journalism, as well as current press coverage of national events over the prior week. This course gives students the opportunity to interact and discuss the intersection of the press, politics, and public policy with some of the leading practitioners in the field.
Taught by: Hunt
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 327 Critical Explorations in Global Communication
How do our smartphones relate to the housing crisis in San Francisco, labor conditions in China, respiratory diseases in Ghana, and nineteenth-century utopian visions of universal peace? This course explores these and other linkages between globalization and communication by examining how media industries, technologies, and practices impact transnational actors and issues. Course themes include the changing nature of journalism, state and corporate surveillance, the environmental impacts of digital artifacts and activities, and the commodification of the nation. While focusing on the early twenty-first century, the course also historicizes contemporary narratives of digital globalization in order to illuminate their cultural roots. Course materials draw on academic scholarship as well as videos and texts from US and international media. Students will learn to identify the roles played by media and communication in the process of globalization and to analytically employ concepts relating to global communication such as cosmopolitanism, cultural hybridity, free flow of information, neoliberalism, and technological determinism.
Taught by: Budnitsky
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 330 The Hidden World of Privacy Policies
The US Federal Trade Commission considers privacy policies essential for internet sites and apps. Lawyers for firms with internet sites and/or apps spend much time writing privacy policies. Yet surveys show that most Americans don't read the policies and in fact cannot understand them because of their legal jargon. Moreover, surveys indicate, most Americans don't even correctly understand what the label privacy policy means. The aim of this course will be to examine this crucial but misunderstood aspect of modern life. You will learn how to read privacy policies, how to understand their strategic business purposes within the internet industry, and how to think about the implications for society when the key rules of surveillance and privacy are hidden from all but a relative few. You will also work with others in the class to create and carry out a survey of college students’ understanding of privacy policies. There will be one exam and a paper related to the survey.
Taught by: Turow
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 332 Survey Research and Design
Survey research is a small but rich academic field and discipline, drawing on theory and practice from many diverse fields including political science, communication, sociology, psychology, and statistics. Surveys are perhaps the most ubiquitous tool of measurement in the social sciences today. Successful practitioners develop expertise in the art and science of survey methodology, including sampling theory and practice, questionnaire instrument development and operationalization, and the analysis and reporting of survey data. Survey researchers are scientists of the method itself testing various practices by which surveys can be improved upon, as well as developing a keen understanding of the nature of error in surveys and how to control it. This course offers an overview of survey research and design. It is highly experiential but also based upon introductory statistical theory and analysis.
Taught by: Dutwin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PSCI 332
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 339 Critical Perspectives in Journalism
This course aims to provide students with a critical understanding of journalism. It combines theoretical perspectives on the making of news with primary source material produced by and about journalists. Students will analyze theoretical material on journalism—about how news is made, shaped, and performed—alongside articles and broadcasts appearing in the media, interviews with journalists in the trade press, and professional reviews. Topics include models of journalistic practice, journalistic values and norms, gatekeeping and sourcing practices, storytelling formats in news, and ethical problems related to misrepresentation, plagiarism, and celebrity.
Taught by: Zelizer
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 377 Philosophical Problems of Journalism
This course explores the relationship between journalism and philosophy by examining particular issues in epistemology, political philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics. Topics will include: the concept of a “fact”, the role of the press in the state; whether journalists (like doctors and lawyers) operate according to specialized “professional” ethics; and the limits of journalism as a literary or visual genre. Course readings will include philosophical texts, breaking print journalism, and blogs that specialize in media issues.
Taught by: Romano
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 388 Ritual Communication
This course explores the significance of rituals as communicative events in contemporary American culture. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which rituals contribute to the making and re-making of social groups, be they ethnic, religious, familial, or institutional. And we will also attend to the obverse: the ways in which rituals create and perpetuate boundaries between “us” and “them” and between “appropriate” and “deviant” social behavior. Issues of race, class, gender, nationality, religion, age and sexuality will be central to our exploration of how rituals function. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze individual rites of passage – from quinceanera to funerals – as well as rituals that mark transitions on a far larger scale such as presidential inaugurations. We will explore rituals that unfold at the local level as well as those that most of us experience only in mediated forms. Students will get hand’s on experience conducting original ethnographic fieldwork and will learn how to develop compelling research proposals.
Taught by: Paxton
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 390 Special Topics in Communication
This is a special topics course that covers varying topics in communication. For more information about the course, please see: https://www.asc.upenn.edu/academics/undergraduate-program/curriculum-and-major-requirements
Taught by: Various Instructors
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 393 Political Polling
Political polls are a central feature of elections and are ubiquitously employed to understand and explain voter intentions and public opinion. This course will examine political polling by focusing on four main areas of consideration. First, what is the role of political polls in a functioning democracy? This area will explore the theoretical justifications for polling as a representation of public opinion. Second, the course will explore the business and use of political polling, including media coverage of polls, use by politicians for political strategy and messaging, and the impact polls have on elections specifically and politics more broadly. The third area will focus on the nuts and bolts of election and political polls, specifically with regard to exploring traditional questions and scales used for political measurement; the construction and considerations of likely voter models; measurement of the horserace; and samples and modes used for election polls. The course will additionally cover a fourth area of special topics, which will include exit polling, prediction markets, polling aggregation, and other topics. It is not necessary for students to have any specialized mathematical or statistical background for this course.
Taught by: Dutwin
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: PSCI 333
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 395 Communication and the Presidency
This course examines the vital aspect of communication as a tool of the modern Presidency. Reading and class discussions focus on case studies drawn from modern Presidential administrations (beginning with FDR) that demonstrate the elements of successful and unsuccessful Presidential initiatives and the critical factor of communication common to both. This course is also an introduction to primary research methods and to the use of primary research materials in the Presidential Library system.
Taught by: Eisenhower
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 397 New Media and Politics
This course seeks to trace the evolving relationship between new media technologies and political power, process, and change from multiple perspectives: the citizen/voter, the campaign, and the news media. Major theories of communication and persuasion are the foundation of this course. We will apply these theories to each of the above perspectives beginning with a brief history of U.S. political campaigns before the advent of the internet in presidential campaigns in 1996. From there we will take a deeper dive into the landmark changes brought on by new media technologies to mobilize, persuade, inform, and raise money around modern presidential campaigns and the relationship between the president and the news media. Finally, we will examine issues of social media activism, including its use as a tool for social and political change in the U.S. and around the world. New media include, but are not limited to, social media, the internet, email, texting, blogging, and “Big Data.”
Taught by: Winne
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 402 Arab Uprisings: Local and Global Representations
This course explores the Arab uprisings as a battleground where multiple narratives battle for visibility across a variety of media platforms. We will examine local and global representations of the popular movements that have swept Arab countries since December 2010, analyzing different media, styles and modalities of representations. We will focus among other things on social media, political humor, graffiti, and the human body as instruments of communication, and focus on various related debates and polemics about the political impact of technology, the effectiveness of political satire, and the role of gender and sexuality in revolutionary politics. The overall approach of the course is critical/theoretical.
Taught by: Kraidy
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 404 Media and Politics
Media and Politics will examine multiple issues specific to the past and present political media environment in the United States. Focus will be primarily, though not exclusively on the contemporary news media (as opposed to political advertising and other marketing-oriented communications). Topics will include the rise of partisan media, selective exposure, news as entertainment, etc. Reading expectations will be relatively heavy, and under the supervision of the professor, students will be expected to write a research paper on a topic not directly a part of the course material.
Taught by: Mutz
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PSCI 404
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 407 Understanding Social Networks
Digital technologies have made communication networks ubiquitous: even when we can't really notice them, they mediate most aspects of our daily activities. Networks, however, have always been the backbone of social life: long before Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, or other similar platforms, communication created channels for information diffusion that linked people in myriad other ways. Through letters, commerce, or simply face to face interactions, people have always been exposed to the behavior of others. These communicative ties embed us into an invisible web of influence that we can make tangible and analyze. This course will teach you how to map those connections in the form of networks, and how to study those networks so that we can improve our understanding of social life. The goal is to help you grasp the consequences of connectivity, and how small changes in the structure of our ties can lead to big differences in how networks behave.
Taught by: Gonzalez-Bailon
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 419 Communication, Culture & Revolution: A Global Approach
This seminar explores revolutionary communication and cultural expression. Looking at revolutionary movements from a global and comparative perspective, we will examine modalities of communication through which revolutionaries—progressive and regressive, from the French Revolution to ISIS—express themselves, describe and attack incumbent regimes and other opponents, call for new ideological solidarities, and construct revolutionary political identities. Revolutionary contexts are considered as battlegrounds where multiple narratives contend for visibility. We will explore relevant debates, historical and contemporary, concerning the political impact of technology, the use of violence, and the role of gender and sexuality in revolutionary politics. We will focus on social media, digital video, political humor, graffiti, and the human body as instruments of communication. The overall approach of the seminar is theoretical, critical and global.
Taught by: Kraidency
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 423 Communication and Social Influence Laboratory
Considerable resources are devoted to constructing mass media campaigns that persuade individuals to change their behavior. In addition, individuals powerfully influence one another without even knowing it. Still, our ability to design and select optimal messages and interventions is far from perfect. This course will review investigations in social and cognitive psychology and communication sciences that attempt to circumvent the limits of introspection by using biological and implicit measures, with particular focus on neuroimaging studies of social influence and media effects.
Taught by: Falk
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: COMM 275 or a media effects or persuasion course at ASC, psych, or Wharton
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 431 Is Public Opinion the Voice of the People?
Democracy relies on mechanism in which the public communicates with policy makers. This course examines the extent to which public opinion effectively represents this mechanism. We begin with historical conceptions of public opinion tracing back to ancient Athens and 18th century enlightenment thinking. We then consider the extent to which public opinion can be captured by modern day polling, or whether it only emerges after considered deliberation and discussion. We then discuss the ways in which elite rhetoric and the media move public opinion, including through the use of public opinion polls. Finally, we ask whether policymakers are actually sensitive to the voice of the people or only the voice of some of the people.
Taught by: Lelkes
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 432 Digital Inequalities
Digital information and communication technologies are intertwined with our everyday lives, from banking, to working, and dating. They're also increasingly crucial parts of our most powerful institutions, from policing, to the welfare state, and education. This course examines the ways that these technologies combine with traditional axes of inequality like race, gender, and class in ways that may deepen social inequality. We'll consider major approaches to understanding digital inequalities and apply them to case studies of both problems and solutions. Students will learn to critically analyze policies and programs from a variety of perspectives, and to evaluate the promise of digital technologies against their potential perils.
Taught by: Ticona
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 439 Media Criticism
Criticism has at its core an assumption of judgment about the target or performance being evaluated. Yet whose judgment is being articulated? On which basis and authority? To which ends? And with which effects? This course examines the shape of contemporary media criticism, focusing on its meaning function in different domains of popular culture (including music, television, news, and film) and the patterns by which it is produced. Students will become acquainted with theories and ongoing debates about contemporary media criticism themselves. The course aims to sensitize students to the nuances of their own consumption of criticism and patterns by which it is typically produced.
Taught by: Zelizer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 441 The Impact of the Internet, Social Media, & Information Technology on Democracy
At the turn of the 21st century, many claimed that the internet would make the world a more democratic place. Have these prophecies borne out? We examine the effects the internet has had on democracy.-looking at research that examines whether, for instance, the internet has increased or decreased inequality, polarization, and political participation. In addition to reading and discussing empirical literature, we will also test many of the theories in this course through hands-on workshops in data analysis.
Taught by: Leikes
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 459 Social Networks and the Spread of Behavior
This course explores the nature of diffusion through social networks, the ways networks are formed and shaped by social structures, and the role they play in health behavior, public policy, and innovation adoption. Topics include: the theory of social networks; the small world model of network structure; constructing models to represent society; the social bases of the adoption of innovations and the spread of new ideas; the role of social networks in controlling changes in public opinion; the emergence of unexpected fashions, fads, and social movements; and the connection between social network models and the design of public policy interventions. Students will learn how to use the agent-based computational modeling tool “NetLogo”, and they will work directly with the models to understand how to test scientific theories. We will examine the basic theory of social networks in offline, face-to-face, networks, as well as the role of online networks in spreading new ideas and behaviors through social media. Long standing debates on the effects of social networks on changing beliefs and behaviors, their impact on social change, and ethical concerns regarding their potential manipulation will be given careful consideration throughout. Students will be taught new skills that will enable them to use and develop their own agent-based models.
Taught by: Centola
Prerequisite: COMM 210 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication; SOCI 100 Introduction to Sociological Research; COMM 310 The Communication Research Experience; or Permission from the Instructor
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 485 Globalization and the Music Video
This seminar focuses on the music video genre to explore topical and conceptual issues at the heart of the globalization of the media and cultural industries. After a formative period largely grounded in North America and Western Europe, the music video migrated to other parts of the world in the 1990s as a wave of privatization and liberalization engulfed national media systems worldwide. Based on a variety of scholarly and trade readings about the globalization of media and culture, the changing media and creative industries, and the music video genre itself, questions to be tackled include: What changes when a media form migrates from its original context? What does the content of music videos reveal about socio-economic and cultural change worldwide? How do music videos rearticulate gender and sexuality, and nationalism? What transnational circuits of ideas, images and ideologies are enabled or constrained by music video?
Taught by: Kraidy
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 491 Communication Internship
This seminar provides a scholarly counterpart for students' internships in various communication-related organizations. Through individually-selected readings, class discussion, and individual conferences, students develop their own independent research agendas which investigate aspects of their internship experience or industry. In written field notes and a final paper, students combine communication theory and practice in pursuit of their individual questions.
Taught by: Haas
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 493 Independent Study
The independent study offers the self-motivated student an opportunity for a tailored, academically rigorous, semester-long investigation into a topic of the student's choice with faculty supervision. Students must complete and file a designated form, approved and signed by the supervising faculty member and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies. This form must be received by the Undergraduate Office before the end of the first week of classes in the semester in which the independent study will be conducted.
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 494 Honors & Capstone Thesis
The senior thesis provides a capstone intellectual experience for Honors students and Communication and Public Service Program (ComPS) participants. Students conduct a primary research study on a communication-related issue over the course of two semesters. Students should consult with and arrange for a faculty supervisor no later than the summer before senior year. Students must also file a designated form and topic statement, approved and signed by the supervising faculty member, no later than the first day of class. Required of all students planning to enroll in COMM 495 or COMM 499 in the Spring. All Honors students must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the end of junior year for eligibility. See the Annenberg website for complete eligibility requirements.
Taught by: Ben-Porath/Woolf
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 495 COMPS Capstone Thesis
Second semester of two semester thesis course. Successful completion of Comm 494 is required for enrollment. The capstone thesis is a requirement for all Communication and Public Service Program participants. Students complete the primary research project started during COMM 494. For students graduating with a 3.5 cumulative GPA after completing COMM 495 with a grade of 3.7 or higher, the capstone thesis may be designated as a senior honors thesis in communication and public service.
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Prerequisites: Written proposal approved by both thesis supervisor and major chair.
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 498 Experimental Design
The main goal of this course is to familiarize students with experiments, quasi-experiments, population-based survey experiments and field experiments as they are widely used in the social sciences. By the end of the course, students will be expected to understand what it is about a study that allows for a strong causal inference. Whether one is reading about studies in a newspaper or reading academic journal articles, it is important to know how to distinguish convincing versus unconvincing evidence of any given claim. As a final project, students will be expected either to develop their own original experimental design or to analyze the evidence pertaining to a causal claim of their choosing based on what they have learned in class. Throughout the course of the semester, we will also consider how to deal with the issue of causality as it occurs in observational studies, and draw parallels between experimental and observational research.
Taught by: Mutz
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COMM 615, PSCI 439, PSCI 635
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 499 Senior Honors Thesis
Second semester of two semester thesis course. Completion of Comm 494 with a grade of 3.3 or higher and a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the end of the Fall semester of senior year are required for enrollment. The Senior Honors Thesis provides a capstone intellectual experience for students who have demonstrated academic achievement of a superior level. Students complete the primary research project started during COMM 494.
Two terms. student may enter either term.
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 500 Proseminar
Introduction to the field of communications study and to the graduate program in communications. Required of all degree candidates. Open only to graduate students in communication.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
0.0 Course Units

COMM 522 Introduction to Communication Research
The logic of scientific inquiry and the nature of research. Hypothesis development, research design, field and laboratory observation and experimentation, measurement, interviewing and content analysis, sampling, and basic statistical analysis. Required of all degree candidates. Open only to graduate communication students.
Taught by: Delli Carpini/Hornik
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 523 Qualitative Ways of Knowing
How do social scientists create new knowledge? What are the qualitative processes and philosophies of knowing for communication scholars? This course provides students with a range of theories and frameworks for gathering data and developing claims, as well as understanding the limits of social science inquiry. Key areas of focus are identifying research questions, research ethics, understanding evidence, making causal claims and scholarly writing. COMM 523 is required of all degree candidates and open only to graduate communication students.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 525 Introduction to Political Communication
This course is designed as a PH.D.-level introduction to the study of political communication, and is recommended as a foundational course to be taken early in ones course of study for students interested in political communication as a primary or secondary area of research and teaching. As an introduction to the field it is structured to cover a wide-range of topics and approaches, including media institutions and the effects of both mass mediated and deliberative communications. While no single course can provide comprehensive coverage of a subfield with as long and diverse a history as political communication, our hope is that you will leave this course with a strong grasp of the major theories, trends, methods, findings and debates in this area of study, as well as the gaps in our knowledge and promising directions for future research.
Taught by: Moehler
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 530 Advertising and the Digital Age
It is impossible to understand the development of the contemporary digital era without understanding the role played by the advertising industry, broadly the understood. From the launch of first popular web browsers in the mid-1990s, various forms of marketing communication have shaped the most popular activities—from search to social to apps—and redefined the ways companies think about individuals in society. The aim of this course is to study these developments historically and contemporaneously. First we will range across the history of advertising and its related social force, consumerism, through the late 20th century. We will next investigate the forces that guided the rise of the internet as a commercial medium in the face of an earlier ethic that decried that very idea. Then we will dive into the ways marketers attempt to guide the internet and other digital media to their benefit by exploring a range of key contemporary activities: the rise of the smartphone as a marketing device, programmatic advertising, personalization strategies, location and cross-platform targeting and attribution, online retailing, the responses of brick and mortar retailers, advertisers’ roles in the cratering of print media, native advertising/branded content, the rise of “influencers,” and the transformation of “television” as a product, an activity, and an industry. We will read industry documents and other materials to assess how all these activities actually “work” and what drives them. Then we will consider their societal implications through a variety of lenses, including surveillance, privacy, pluralism, and democracy.
Taught by: Turow
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 553 Computational Social Science Research Seminar
This is a graduate research seminar in which top researchers in the field of Computational Social Science will present cutting-edge research. Our focus will be on carefully reading the speaker’s work, and discussing in detail their theoretical models, empirical methods, and overall scientific contribution. Participants will also present in the seminar, which will help to prepare them for professional presentations of their work at conferences and job talks. This seminar will meet weekly.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 575 Social Psychology of Communication
Contributions of social psychology to understanding communication behavior: message systems; social cognition; persuasive communications; attitude formation and change; face-to-face interactions and small group situations; strategies of attributional and communicative interpretation; mass communication effects; social influence and networks.
Taught by: Cappella
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 594 Intro To Networks
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 595 Social Psychology of Communication
Theories of health behavior change and the potential role for public health communication; international experience with programs addressing behaviors related to cancer, AIDS, obesity, cardiovascular disease, child mortality, drug use and other problems, including evidence about their influence on health behavior; the design of public health communication programs; approaches to research and evaluation for these programs.
Taught by: Hornik
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 615 Experimental Design and Issues in Causality
The main goal of this course is to familiarize students with experiments, quasi-experiments, survey experiments and field experiments as they are widely used in the social sciences. Some introductory level statistics background will be assumed, though this is a research design course, not a statistics course. By the end of the course, students will be expected to develop their own original experimental design that makes some original contribution to knowledge. Throughout the course of the semester, we will also consider how to deal with the issue of causality as it occurs in observational studies, and draw parallels to experimental research.
Taught by: Mutz
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: COMM 498, PSCI 439, PSCI 635
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 623 Seminar on Communication, Behavior, and Health
Seminar members will critically review theory and research on communication, behavior, and health, with the goal of suggesting new directions that research might take. Theories of health behavior, methodological issues in health behavior research, and strategies to improve health-related behaviors, including sexual risk behaviors, physical activity, diet, and medication adherence, using a variety of approaches will be studied.
Taught by: Jemmott
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 630 Historical Trends of Mass Communication Research
An introduction into the field of mass communication research covering classic studies from the late 19th century through 1970s. Emphasis is on the societal, organizational, political, and other considerations that shaped the field.
Taught by: Turow
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 637 Public Health Communication
Theories of health behavior change and the potential role for public health communication; international experience with programs addressing behaviors related to cancer, AIDS, obesity, cardiovascular disease, child mortality, drug use and other problems, including evidence about their influence on health behavior; the design of public health communication programs; approaches to research and evaluation for these programs.
Taught by: Hornik
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 639 Communication and Cultural Studies
This course tracks the different theoretical appropriations of "culture" and examines how the meanings we attach to it depend on the perspectives on culture suggested by anthropology, sociology, communication, and aesthetics, and then considers the tensions across academic disciplines that have produced what is commonly known as "cultural studies." The course is predicated on the importance of becoming cultural critics versed in alternative ways of naming cultural problems, issues, and texts. The course aims not to lend closure to competing notions of culture but to illustrate the diversity suggested by different approaches.
Taught by: Zelizer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 660 Content Analysis
An introduction to content analysis, the analysis of large bodies of textual material, also called message systems analysis, quantitative semantics, propaganda analysis, and (computer-aided) text analysis. The course inquires into the theories, methods, and empirical problems common to these analytical efforts: sampling, text retrieval, coding, reliability, analytical constructs, computational techniques, and abductive inference. It illustrates these problems by studies of mass media content, interview or panel data, legal research, and efforts to draw inferences from personal documents typical in psychology and literature. Students design a content analysis and do the preparatory work for an academic or practical research project. They may also use the opportunity of forging available theories into a new analytical technique and test it with available texts, or solve a methodological problem in content analysis research.
Taught by: Krippendorff
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 665 Digital Media and Social Theory
This course explores critical issues in contemporary society through the lens of digital media studies and social theory. The goal is to build constructive dialogues between digital media studies and contemporary social theory. Special attention will be given to how social theory may inform the theorizing and empirical analysis of digital culture, politics, and practices. We will read monographs on globalization, power and control, dissent and protest, self and community, and the public sphere as they relate to digital media technologies. They include works by McLuhan, Castells, Turkle, Papacharissi, Lievrouw, Bimber, W. Chun and more. These monographs will be examined alongside the works of Gramsci, Foucault, Williams, Habermas, Bourdieu, Giddens, and Melucci. Students are required to submit weekly reading reports, make oral presentations, and complete a term paper.
Taught by: Yang
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: SOCI 664
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 673 Arts & Propaganda
This course (seminar) deals with examples of controversy or struggles, through public art or exhibition, to define or proclaim, contest or reinforce national identities. Some are internal debates, within national boundaries, some are transnational and exist in a global frame. In most instances, there are sharp disputes—having to do with history and its interpretation and representation, about the role of museum & implications for legitimacy, about the relationship of patronage to power. Some sessions will be rooted in art history and iconography, some in the use of archival material to bring fresh perspectives to bear, some on aspects of law and regulation.
Taught by: Price
Course offered fall; even-numbered years
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 675 Message Effects
Current research, theory and statistical methods for assessing the effects of messages. Specific focus on messages designed to have a persuasive effect on attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviors. Experimental and non-experimental research from mass and interpersonal communication, health, social psychology, advertising, political science and journalism will be considered. Unintended effects—such as the consequences of violent pornography—are not considered.
Taught by: Cappella
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: COMM 575
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 684 Data Visualization for Research
Empirical research employs data to gain insights and build a theoretical understanding of the world. An appropriate visualization of data is key to illuminating hidden patterns and effectively communicate the main findings of research. This course will discuss the visualization strategies of published research, give recommendations of best practice, and discuss tips and techniques for specific research purposes (i.e. hypothesis testing, group comparison) and data structures, including temporal, geographic, and network data. This course will equip you with tools you can use to learn through visualization and to communicate more effectively your own research.
Taught by: Gonzalez-Bailon
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 697 Popular Culture and Politics
Not surprisingly, most research regarding the media’s impact on political attitudes, opinions, knowledge and behaviors focuses on news and public affairs genres, ignoring the vast majority of media content labeled “entertainment.” Spurred in part by technological, economic, cultural and political changes that have increasingly blurred the line between news and entertainment, a small but growing body of empirical research is exploring the political influence of popular culture. In this course we will critically review this literature, focusing on issues of theory, methods, findings and implications.
Taught by: Delli Carpini
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 699 Advanced Project in a Medium
Proposal written in specified form and approved by both the student’s project supervisor and academic advisor must be submitted with registration. Open only to graduate degree candidates in communication. One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 701 Introduction to the Political Economy of Media
This course has two aims. First, assuming that communications are central to any society, it situates media systems within larger national and international social relationships and political structures. Second, this course critically examines the structures of the communication systems themselves, including ownership, profit imperatives, support mechanisms such as advertising and public relations, and the ideologies and government policies that sustain these arrangements. Considering case studies ranging from traditional news and entertainment media to new digital and social media, the course provides a comprehensive survey of the major texts in this vibrant sub-field of media studies.
Taught by: Pickard
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 703 International Communication: Power and Flow
The tumultuous rise of new media technologies, including the Internet and social media, combine with grinding geopolitical change to create dramatic changes in law and policy regarding speech and society. This course is an examination of current dilemmas in historical context; about strategic communications in contrast or challenge to goals of free expression and to the exercise of power over the flow of information. Taking relevant contexts, including societies in transition, authoritarian societies, states and societies in conflict, we explore the relationship of the state and other entities to the flow of words and images, and how these messages impact public opinion, stability, and democratic growth. We start with a theoretical orientation focused on two competing paradigms—the paradigm of free expression and the paradigm of national identity, conflict management, and sovereignty. The class will then explore several case studies viewed through the lens of narrative theory. Areas of discussion may include case studies such as Ukraine, Russia, Syria, Iran and, as well, the drama of the development of global internet policy.
Taught by: Price, M.
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: LAW 914
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 706 Analysis of Election Data
This course is intended to serve as a workshop for students interested in the empirical analysis of elections, public opinion and political communication more generally. The centerpiece of the course will be an original research paper produced by each student on a topic of his or her own choosing. The requirements for these papers are fairly open, but demanding: the research papers must a) involve empirical analysis of a major election data set, b) be oriented toward answering an original research question selected with the guidance of the instructor, and c) aim to be of publishable quality. There are no formal prerequisites for the course. However, if you have less than two semesters of statistical training, and/or no formal background in the study of elections, public opinion or political communication, then this is probably not the right course for you. In order to be able to formulate an original research question, you need some background in the literature, which is provided by other courses, but is not a formal part of this course.
Taught by: Mutz
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: PSCI 805
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 712 Race, Media and Politics
“Race” has and continues to play an important role in American politics. In this course we will critically review the relevant Communication and Political Science literature with an eye towards understanding: (1) the role of the mass media in the construction and dissemination of race as a sociopolitical concept; (2) how race affects political attitudes, opinions and behaviors; (3) the unique methodological problems researchers face in studying racial attitudes and opinions; and (4) shortcomings in the existing scholarship on race, media and politics and how these shortcomings might be addressed.
Taught by: Delli Carpini
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 715 Political Communication
This course examines the role of political communication in influencing political attitudes and behaviors. Because of the broad nature of the topic, course readings and lectures will be interdisciplinary, drawing on research in sociology, history, psychology, political science and communication research. There are two primary goals for the course. One goal is to acquaint graduate students with the wide-ranging literature on political communication. A second major goal is to stimulate ideas for original research in the field of political communication. Toward this end, by the end of the semester students will be expected to be sufficiently familiar with the field to propose original studies on topics of their choosing. The formulation of an original research question and research design will be an important component of the final examination.
Taught by: Mutz
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PSCI 715
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 721 Theory and History in Global Communication
For more than a half century, global communication theory has been shaped by interaction between worldwide geopolitical developments on the one hand, and theoretical trends in the social sciences and humanities on the other hand. This course is designed to give you a firm grasp of the historical trajectory of global communication theory and to develop knowledge of the central debates that have animated the field since the mid-20th century. We will discuss how these debates have changed, under what circumstances, and how contemporary scholarship wrestles with them; and how language and jargon in the field has shifted from "international" to "global." We will also explore why some key issues and media have received relatively scant attention in global communication research, while others have arguably been overemphasized. We will read a mixture of primary sources by luminaries in the different paradigms that have dominated global communication, complemented with secondary texts that are carefully selected to give you a sense of the architecture of the field, an understanding of what sub-areas of global communication scholarship are published and the journals and presses that publish in those sub-areas.
Taught by: Kraidy
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 722 Theories and Methods in Qualitative Research
The objective of this course is to ensure that students have a grasp of the fundamental theories and methods of qualitative research. After spending time immersing ourselves in the metatheories that shape social science research, we will address ethical issues that emerge in all human subjects research (qualitative and otherwise), focusing primarily on responsible treatment of participants and their data. Then we will work through a series of research techniques, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, ethnography, discourse analysis and participatory mapping. With the goal of providing practical instruction on qualitative methods and a grounding in theoretical issues, this course is meant to prepare students for conducting a broad range of qualitative research projects in communication and media studies.
Taught by: Lingel
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 727 Evaluation of Communication Campaigns
The various roles of research in campaign work: foundational research, formative research, monitoring research, summative evaluation research, policy research. The place for a theory of campaign effects. The ethics of evaluation research. Alternative designs, measurement, statistical and analytic approaches.
Taught by: Hornik
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 745 Media Ethnography: Theory and Practice
This course will allow students to conduct 'critical readings' of ethnographic engagements with television, radio and film as cultural phenomena. We will examine how ethnographers use their method and genre to understand the production, reception and circulation of mass media. We will also draw on contemporary social/critical theory to unpack some of the epistemological assumptions organizing and anchoring such qualitative work. (The internet will also be discussed.)
Taught by: Jackson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 760 Language and Social Constructions of Reality
This seminar explores the principles and processes by which realities come to be socially constructed and discursively maintained. It serves as an introduction to the emerging epistemology of communication, which is concerned less with what communication is than with what it does, constitutes, and actively maintains, including when being studied. The seminar develops analytical tools to understand how realities establish themselves in language and action, how individuals can become entrapped in their own reality constructions, how facts are created and institutions take advantage of denying their constructedness. After reading several exemplary studies, students explore the nature of a construction on their own. The seminar draws on the discourse of critical scholarship and emancipatory pursuits, which are allied with feminist writing, cultural studies, and reflexive sociology. It is committed to a dialogue of inquiry and takes conversation as an ethical premise.
Taught by: Krippendorff
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 741 Media Effects Research Design
This course will include three components. Part one will focus on readings and lectures about media effects research design, with some emphasis on exposure measurement, and on constructing out-of-laboratory designs including natural and quasi experiments, longitudinal and time series designs and designs appropriate for evaluating persuasive campaigns. Part two will be case focused, asking for design critiques of current published research studies. Part three will provide an opportunity for development of designs relevant to students' own interests.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 745 Media Ethnography: Theory and Practice
This course will allow students to conduct 'critical readings' of ethnographic engagements with television, radio and film as cultural phenomena. We will examine how ethnographers use their method and genre to understand the production, reception and circulation of mass media. We will also draw on contemporary social/critical theory to unpack some of the epistemological assumptions organizing and anchoring such qualitative work. (The internet will also be discussed.)
Taught by: Jackson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 760 Language and Social Constructions of Reality
This seminar explores the principles and processes by which realities come to be socially constructed and discursively maintained. It serves as an introduction to the emerging epistemology of communication, which is concerned less with what communication is than with what it does, constitutes, and actively maintains, including when being studied. The seminar develops analytical tools to understand how realities establish themselves in language and action, how individuals can become entrapped in their own reality constructions, how facts are created and institutions take advantage of denying their constructedness. After reading several exemplary studies, students explore the nature of a construction on their own. The seminar draws on the discourse of critical scholarship and emancipatory pursuits, which are allied with feminist writing, cultural studies, and reflexive sociology. It is committed to a dialogue of inquiry and takes conversation as an ethical premise.
Taught by: Krippendorff
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 788 Research Seminar on Internet Experiments
In the last decade, new studies have used Web-based experimentation to identify previously unobservable features of communication networks - from processes of cumulative advantage, to the spread of innovations, to the emergence of cooperation. This course offers a deep-dive into the design, creation and execution of Web-based experiments. Students will learn the core principles of Web-based experimental design, which will prepare them to design their own Web-based studies. Students will learn the relationship between theory and methods through a careful analysis of the theoretical implications of past Web-based experiments (both in terms of their value for some scientific problems, and their limitations for others). To this end, students will explore Web-based experiments through the lens of the theories that motivate them. Discussions and assignments will focus on eliciting both the strengths and limitations of this approach with specific emphasis on identifying the scientific potential for new studies. Longstanding debates concerning the value of identification and replication in social science, alongwith the relationship between theoretical models, observational data and experimental data, are given careful consideration throughout. Students will be exposed to new ways of conducting empirical research that will prepare them to design their own Web-based experimental studies.
Taught by: Centola
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 799 Independent Research
Proposal written in specified form and approved by both the student’s project supervisor and academic advisor or another member of the faculty must be submitted with registration.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 801 Filter Bubbles, Long Tails, & Information Cascades: Methodology for a Fragmented Media Environment
Scholars and pundits have made many claims in recent years about the impact that digital technologies, and social media in particular, play in shaping access to political information and the formation of beliefs. However, all these claims rely on specific measurement instruments and research designs that are not always appropriately scrutinized or evaluated. This course will discuss the different analytical approaches that can be used to measure media consumption, selective exposure, bias, opinion formation, and the diffusion of information in the online media environment. Our goal is to assess the strength and weaknesses of different research designs with an eye on how to best triangulate available evidence and advance in a cumulative fashion in this important research domain.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 815 Labor, Communication and Technology
Debates about the future of work, automation, and the working conditions of of on-demand work have opened up new questions rooted in long intellectual lineages. This course introduces students to key theoretical perspectives and concepts in the study of labor, communication, and technology from the 19th and 20th centuries and examines their relevance to 21st century issues. We will examine the meaning of labor from Marxist, post-industrial, cultural, and sociological perspectives as well as the place of labor in communication scholarship. We will also examine the relationship between digital transformations of the workplace and new forms of surveillance, social stratification and inequality.
Taught by: Ticona
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 824 Critical Race Media
Taught by: Jackson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 841 The Ethics of Forgetting: Media at Risk of Deletion
Taught by: Lingel
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 855 Polarization and Partisan Discord
Taught by: Lelkes
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 865 Digital Inequalities: Theories & Method
Taught by: Ticona
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 875 Journalism, Truth, and Trust
Taught by: Roudakova
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 880 The Social Neuroscience of Communication
This interdisciplinary course focuses on understanding the mechanisms of social thinking, media effects and interpersonal communication across multiple levels of analysis. We use the brain as one powerful window to understand and predict outcomes that are challenging to predict otherwise. The course will cover foundational readings and involve weekly, seminar style discussions of recent papers in social neuroscience, neuroeconomics and communication science.
Taught by: Falk
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COMM 889 Cultural Sociology
Studies culture as values, scripts, practice, performance, and style in the contexts of everyday life, social class and status groups, social movements, and status groups, social movements, and changes of communication technologies. Approaches politics, society, institutions, identities, and social change as dynamic processes and complex interactions at both micro/meso and meso/macro levels. Examines the production, reception, circulation, and effects of signs, symbols, and stories. Readings include both classic authors (Elias, Simmel, Bakhtin, Goffman, Foucault, Bourdieu, Raymond Williams, etc) and contemporary works from sociology and communication studies.
Taught by: Yang
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 561
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 891 Censorship: Global Sur
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COMM 892 Critical Data Studies
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit