

COMM Graduate Courses Fall 2024

COMM 620 (Communication Theory) TuTh 12:50-2:05pm: Barge

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 into communication phenomena?

We will explore a variety of theorizing traditions such as grounded practical theory, conceptual modelling, and computational approaches. The goal is for you to develop your ability to produce theoretical explanations of communication phenomenon, 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 645 (Rhetorical & Textual Methods) Tu 8:30-11:00am: Dubriwny

This course will introduce you to the art of rhetorical criticism, broadening your scholarly, historical, political, and cultural knowledge and providing you with the opportunity to hone your critical capacities. What we learn here should not only help you produce academic work worthy of convention presentation and eventual publication, it also should enrich your cultural perspective and deepen your political judgment. Together we will become rhetorical critics and critical rhetoricians—both assessing and participating in rhetorical engagement.

FAQ:

I don't do rhetoric. I'm not sure this class is for me. Should I take it?

You should take it if you are interested in developing a critical perspective on power & discourse, politics & the public, social change & persuasion, identity & community, etc. etc. You should take it if you're interested in expanding your methodological toolbox to include close textual analysis. You should take it if you are interested in suffrage, reality TV, borders, Abraham Lincoln, space exploration, second wave feminism, family values, citizenship, public memorials, breast cancer, Emmet Till, *The Passion of the Christ*, Birmingham, first ladies, *The West Wing*, or queer and trans sports culture. Yes. We discuss all of these things, and more.

COMM/ ENGL 655: (Contemporary Theories in Rhetoric: Screen Time!): A. Pilsch

This seminar explores the last 50 years of rhetoric through two claims: 1) Reality is experienced through screens that function rhetorically. 2) The work of the rhetorician is one of determining timing. We will be exploring these two claims through two bodies of work: canonical texts of 20th- and 21st-century rhetorical theory and media theory that shades and informs the rhetorical work. Participants will be expected to read thoroughly but will come away with an understanding of the shift in rhetorical thinking from linguistic to infrastructure during the period. Authors to be discussed include Kenneth Burke, Thomas Rickert, Richard Lanham, Raymond Williams, Jean Baudrillard, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, and Susan Leigh Star.

COMM 658 (Communication & Culture: Representation and self-representation in global contexts) Th 8:30-11:00am: La Pastina

This course examines the ways media construct representations of Others as well as how marginalized groups produce their own representations, often creating fissures in dominant narratives of Otherness. We will explore both historical and contemporary cases in global contexts and investigate how new media technologies have become instruments for selfproduction. In this course, representations will be studied as a cultural system where cultural identities, identification and belonging are produced as the result of power imbalances. A range of media, theoretical and methodological approaches will be part of our reading material. From selfies to film and video production by indigenous people to media representations of minorities as well as constructions of other nations in mainstream media, this course allows students to explore the ways media can both be empowering and limiting, keeping in mind that “representations become narrations” as Charles Ramirez-Berg said in his analysis of portrayals of Mexicans in U.S. film.

COMM 662 (Survey of Media Studies) W 4:10-6:40pm: Lopez (MA only)

Survey of research and theory in media studies; overview of the historical and theoretical orientation of media studies and mediated communication; examination of approaches to analyzing media texts, technologies, audiences, reception processes, economics and/or industries. The course will use multimodal approaches to create scholarly projects and papers. Prerequisite: MA standing

COMM 689 (Autoethnography & Performance Studies) Tu 2:30-5pm: Villanueva

How do scholars incorporate the study of the intersectional self and the writing of their lives into social science and humanities research? How can autoethnography perform as a critical site of struggle that advances new inquiries into epistemologies, methods, and cultural politics of knowledge production? Drawing from the lineage of performance studies and sensual scholarship in communication, media, and cultural studies that center the body and embodied approaches to knowledge, this course will examine

autoethnography as critical praxis. A goal of the course will be to sensually examine the mind-body dualism and subjective-objective dichotomy that animate the tensions pervasive in the humanities and social sciences. This examination will transpire through the study of theories and practices of autoethnography. Students in the course will produce their own autoethnography projects through creative research, performative writing, expressive culture, and multimodal scholarship.