

COMM Graduate Courses Spring 2024

COMM 610: Social Science Methods in Communication (R. Street)

TR 12:45-2:00

Examination of social science research methods, including design, measurement, and analysis of descriptive, interventional, and experimental research in evaluating and conducting research projects. The final product is a research paper worthy of conference presentation and/or publication.

COMM 615: Interpretive Methods in Communication (A. La Pastina)

T 8:20-10:50

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 deliberately 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 (or a research proposal) 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).

COMM 628: Political Communication (Y. Yang)

R 2:30-5:00

Political communication is an interdisciplinary domain influenced by disciplines such as communication science, political science, psychology, sociology, information studies, and more. This course will draw upon perspectives from these diverse disciplines to understand the intricate interplay between media and politics. Throughout this seminar, we will survey classic works, current research, and emerging trends in the field. It aims to familiarize students with specific sub-areas of political communication, including government press relations, disinformation, campaigns, public opinion and policy, and

collective action. The seminar will cover a range of theories and subjects that touch on different processes and players, and span various contexts, levels, and methodologies.

In the seminar, students will engage with the content through active and critical reading, informed class discussions, and papers that build upon their own research interests. At the end of the semester, students will have learned about several strands of literature in the field of political communication. They should be comfortable with the basic theories, definitions, concepts, and be able to apply these theories and concepts to their own research interests.

COMM 636: Survey of Organizational Communication (A. Wolfe)

T 2:30-5:00

This course provides an introduction and overview of major theories, themes, and key works in organizational communication. As a field of study, organizational communication analyzes how communication processes create, maintain, and transform organizations, as well as how people coordinate, control, and resist collective action. When we understand how *organizing* works we are better equipped to critique and change undesirable structures and consciously shape our own experiences with organizational life. As a survey course, this seminar is designed to provide a foundation on which to build rather than an exhaustive overview. As such, we will review the historical development of organizational communication as a research area, survey major topics of inquiry, and identify what it means to study organizing as a communication phenomenon.

COMM 640: Rhetorical Theory (J. Mercieca)

TR 12:45-2:00

COMM 640, Rhetorical Theory will explore the relationships between different schools of thought in what traditionally has been thought of as rhetoric and philosophy. In our discussions we will treat rhetorical theory as inherently bound up with the study of ethics, politics, and epistemology. The guiding assumptions of this course are twofold: first, rhetorical theory is a central part of the history of ideas; and, second, rhetorical theory is implicitly and explicitly a part of all philosophy—even those theories that we would not ordinarily consider to be about rhetoric. By the end of this course you will be well versed in the history of the idea of rhetorical theory, which will give you a much more sophisticated understanding of communication in general. Our readings will draw from ancient Greek and Roman texts through today.

COMM 659: Communication & Citizenship in the Public Sphere (N. Crick)

R 8:20-10:50

“Optimism about democracy is today under a cloud,” wrote John Dewey in 1927. And so it remains under a cloud in the 21st century. Yet despite the constant threat of its decline and disappearance, the democratic ideal remains a powerful motivating force. This course

will study democracy through the concepts of citizenship, rhetoric, and the public sphere, exploring it from multiple perspectives, including social movements and fascism, post-modernism and pragmatism, political theory and propaganda. Book will include Jean Baudrillard *Simulacra and Simulation*, James Jasper *The Art of Moral Protest*, Jurgen Habermas *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Hannah Arendt *Crises of the Republic*, Edward Bernays *Propaganda*, Walter Lippmann *Public Opinion*, John Dewey *The Public and Its Problems*, Robert Paxton *The Anatomy of Fascism*, and Kenneth Burke *On Symbols and Society*. Students will engage in lively guided seminar discussions, write several short 2-page artifact analysis papers, and compose a final seminar paper in conversation with the readings of the course.

COMM 665: Communication & Technology (Y. Xia)

W 4:10-6:40

What is technology, what does it do, and what do people do with it? This interdisciplinary course provides an overview of core concepts and frameworks for the critical study of communication technologies. We will focus on contemporary digital technologies, though the course will start off with historical and theoretical writings on studying technology writ large. Class readings explore the intersection between communication research and the social-scientific study of technology, drawing from diverse fields such as science and technology studies (STS), sociology of knowledge, and feminist technology studies. Students from social-scientific or humanistic backgrounds, studying any subfield of communication or other related disciplines, are welcome as long as technology, broadly construed, speaks to their research or teaching interests.