COMMUNICATION FOUNDATIONS

GRADO EN COMUNICACIÓN Y MEDIOS DIGITALES

Professor: RUTH PALMER
E-mail: rpalmer@faculty.ie.edu

Academic year: 18-19
Degree course: FIRST
Semester: 1º
Category: BASIC
Number of credits: 6.0
Language: English

PREREQUISITES

This course introduces communication students to some of the key methods, theories, concepts, and empirical research central to the study of mediated forms of communication, both old and new. It examines the factors that influence the media and the influence of media on culture and society. The goal of the course is to arm students with critical skills and conceptual tools to a) identify strengths and weaknesses of various media theories; b) understand and analyze current cultural and socio-political phenomena related to media and communication; c) critically evaluate communication research as well as various communications strategies; and d) go on to specialize in a wide variety of areas within the communication field.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

Develop an understanding of key communication theories and the forces behind them. Apply these theories to contemporary issues and problems in society, communication research, and strategy.
Apply concepts used in communications to understanding actors in social, political and corporate realms.
Use social scientific principles to critically evaluate the assumptions, theories, and empirical evidence that support conclusions about media's impact in society.
Use scholarly, theoretical, and empirical evidence to craft oral and written arguments about the interactions between communication and society.

METHODOLOGY
In this course students learn through a combination of in-class lectures, activities, and discussions, and individual reading, writing, and research that takes place primarily outside the classroom. Class sessions focus on one or two main theories or topics related to mass or new media, which are introduced in the readings. Students prepare for class by doing the assigned readings and submitting short responses to those readings prior to class. During class these concepts are further explicated and critiqued through interactive lectures, activities, and discussions. Students then practice applying the theories and concepts they have learned in a midterm and final exam, as well as a series of written exercises over the course of the semester, in which they demonstrate their growing command of the material and ability to use it with increasing independence to analyze communication issues and questions that interest them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methodology</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>26.67 %</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>26.67 %</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual studying</td>
<td>20.0 %</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>150 hours</td>
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PROGRAM

SESSION 1
**Please note that the schedule below is subject to change based on the needs and interests of the students.**
Introduction:
Topics: Course introduction
Reading: no readings due.

SESSION 2
Debating Current Communication Issues
Topics: Practicing reading & debating communication-related issues in class
Reading: TBD

SESSION 3
What do we mean by communication and media?
Topics: Defining fundamental terms
B.C.: "The Rise of Mass Media" from McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory (chapter 2) (s-c)

SESSION 4
How have people studied mass communication over time?
Topic: An overview of how mass communication theory has evolved over time.

SESSION 5
Mass Society Theory
Topic: Can mass media have direct effects on people? Can it control the masses?
B.C.: "Establishing the Terms of the Debate Over Media: The First Trend in Media Theory—Mass Society and Propaganda Theories." pp. 29-41 only (Chapter 2) (Book)
Also, watch MIT professor Sherry Turkle’s TED talk, “Connected, but Alone?”

SESSION 6
War of the Worlds Case Study
Topic: Applying mass society theory and propaganda theory
Podcast: RadioLab show on “The War of the Worlds.”
Podcast: A follow-up piece on “War of the Worlds”

SESSION 7
Early Propaganda theory
Topic: Origins and debates about propaganda
SESSION 8

Using Social Science to Study Communication
Topic: Why – and how – can we use social science methods to study media?
****Also due: War of the Worlds Essay. Bring a paper copy to class!****

SESSION 9

Limited effects theories 1: Selectivity. Method: Experiments
Topic: Rise of Limited Effects 1: Hovland’s experiments and the theory of selectivity. Discussion of experiments
B.C.: Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future (pp. 91-100)
Video: Watch at least 30 minutes of Leni Riefenstahl’s famous Nazi propaganda film, “The Triumph of the Will”

SESSION 10

Limited effects theories 2: Two-step flow theory. Method: Surveys
Topic: How does the two-step flow of communication work? Discussion of survey methodology.
B.C.: Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future (pp. 100-113)

SESSION 11

Two-step flow applied. Method: focus groups
Topic: How do marketing professionals apply two-step flow theory? Discussion of the methodology of focus groups.
Video: The documentary, “Generation Like”

SESSION 12

Uses and gratifications theories. Method: interviews
Topic: Introduction to Uses and Gratifications Theory and discussion of interviewing methods.

SESSION 13

Uses and Gratifications Applied
Topic: What does uses and gratifications theory look like in practice?
Also, Listen to this episode of "Hilltop House", one of the radio dramas Herzog discusses in her article.

SESSION 14
The Rise of Critical and Cultural theories
Topic: Introducing Critical and Cultural approaches
B.C.: Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future (chapter 5, through the middle of p. 147 only) (Book)

SESSION 15
Cultural studies case study: Girls and Youtube
Topic: Analyzing meaning-making practices in daily life
R.A.: "Branding the Post-Feminist Self: Girls Self-Production and Youtube," (s-c)

SESSION 16
A closer look at the political economy of the media industry
Topic: How do economic pressures affect news content?
B.C.: Chapter 2, "The Economics of the Media Industry," in Media/Society, pp. 31-70. (s-c)
R.A.: "Let me explain why Miley Cyrus’s VMA performance was our top story this morning," from the satirical newspaper The Onion (s-c)

SESSION 17
Continuing our discussion of the political economy of the media industry
Assignment: No additional readings. Catch up on readings from Session 16 if you are behind.

SESSION 18
Midterm exam
Topic: an in-class, closed book exam

SESSION 19
Agenda setting and priming. Method: content analysis
Topic: Introducing the theories of agenda setting and priming.
Video: Watch the film: "Wag the Dog" at home

SESSION 20
SESSION 20
Framing
Topic: Framing
SESSION 21
The spiral of silence
Topic: How might the media influence us to express some opinions and hide others?

M.D.: The Spiral of Silence and the Social Nature of Man
R.A.: The Spiral of Silence: How Pollsters got the Colombia-FARC Peace Deal So Wrong

SESSION 22
Knowledge gap and Cultivation theories
Topic: Two approaches to media and learning
**Between Session 22 and 23 Wag the Dog Essay Due**

SESSION 23
Theoretical approaches to understanding new media
Topic: Comparing theories for understanding new media

SESSION 24
Continuing with theoretical approaches to new media
Topic: Comparing theories for understanding new media
R.A.: “Making New Media Make Sense,” Personal Connection in the Digital Age, 22-49 (s-c)

SESSION 25
Current Debates in Digital Media.
Topic and Readings TBD

SESSION 26
Current Debates in Digital Media
Topic and Readings TBD

SESSION 27
Current Debates in Digital Media
Topic and readings: TBD
SESSION 28
Current Debates in Digital Media
Topic and Readings TBD

SESSION 29
Current Debates in Digital Media
Topic and Readings TBD

SESSION 30
Final Exam
BIBLIOGRAPHY
The followings books or articles used in this course will be:

5.1. COMPULSORY
Title: Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future
Author: Baran, Stanley J. and Davis, Dennis K.
Publisher / Edition / Year: Cengage Learning/ 7th/ 2015
ISBN / ISSN: 978-81-315-2912-6
Medium: PRINT ELECTRONIC

IE LIBRARY PERMALINK: https://ie.on.worldcat.org/courseReserves/course/id/10684964
BUY YOUR BOOKS HERE

EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
Evaluation is based on a student’s attendance and participation in the sessions; in-class quizzes and exercises; two essays; a mid-term exam; and a final exam (which will include an essay students prepare at home). Evaluation for each component is described below and will be discussed in greater detail in class prior to each assignment.

6.2. EVALUATION AND WEIGHTING CRITERIA
The final evaluation is determined on the basis of the elements below.

Attendance (10%) 
You are expected to come to class. It is mandatory to attend 70% of the classes. Students who do not comply with this percentage of attendance lose the 1st and 2nd exams and go directly to the 3rd one.

Ten percent of your grade will be objectively calculated based on your attendance according to the following rubric:

Grade & Attendance Criteria
5 9 absences, the maximum allowed before you automatically fail the class
6 8 absences
6.5 7 absences
7 6 absences
7.5 5 absences
8 4 absences
8.5 3 absences
9 2 absences
9.5 1 absence
10 0 absences

Informed Participation and contribution to the learning atmosphere (10%)
Beyond simply showing up, participation in class discussions and activities is an important component of this course. Recall that listening carefully is as important a component of participation as speaking. Please be aware of your own style of participation: if you find it difficult to speak up in class, push yourself to do so. If you realize you tend to dominate discussions, make a point of listening to others.
Your participation grade at the end of the semester will be based cumulatively on your contributions over the course of the semester. Participation is graded using the criteria below, which are adapted from:
The average level of participation usually satisfies the criteria for a “7”, which would correspond to a “B”.

Grade 0-4,9
Criteria:
- Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.
- Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

Grade 5,0-6,9
Criteria:
- Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.
- Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).
- Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.
- Demonstrates sporadic involvement.

Grade 7-8,9
Criteria:
- Demonstrates good preparation: knows reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.
- Offers interpretations and analysis of reading material (more than just facts) to class.
- Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds thoughtfully to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.
- Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.

Grade 9,0-10,0
Criteria:
- Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed readings exceptionally well, relating it to other material (e.g., other readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.).
- Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class material (e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further).
- Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.
- Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

In-Class Writing (15%)
Class discussion only works well when the majority of students have done the reading. Periodic short quizzes on the readings or exercises in class are designed to give you an extra incentive to keep up with class readings and continually review the material so you will retain it.

2 Short Essays (30% total -15% each)
You will be required to submit 2 short essays during the semester. These essays are intended to give you the opportunity to apply the theories and concepts from the course to questions that are of particular interest to you, as well as to hone your academic writing skills. As such, you may be asked to hand in different components of the essays ahead of time for review, including thesis statements and outlines. Detailed instructions and grading criteria for each of these will be handed out and discussed in class.

Midterm Exam (15%)
A closed-book, in-class exam will be given in the second half of the course. The exam will cover the readings, lectures, and discussion topics covered up to that point, and is designed to assess whether you have done the required work and understood the course ideas. The exam will include a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions. A study guide will be handed out in advance of the exam, and considerable class time devoted to preparing for it.

Final Exam (20%)
The final exam will consist of an in-class exam that covers the material from the entire course, as well as an essay that students will prepare at home. Detailed instructions and grading criteria for the final exam will be distributed and discussed in class later in the semester.

RETAKE POLICY
Each student has 4 chances to pass any given course distributed in two consecutive academic years (regular period and July period).
Students who do not comply with the 70% attendance rule will lose their 1st and 2nd chance, and go directly to the 3rd one (they will need to enrol again in this course next academic year).
Grading for retakes will be subject to the following rules:
- Students failing the course in the first regular period will have to do a retake in July (except those not complying with the attendance rules, which are banned from this possibility).
- Dates and location of the July retakes will be posted in advance and will not be changed. Please take this into consideration when planning your summer.
- The maximum grade that a student may obtain in any type of retake will be 8 out of 10.
- The retakes will consist of a comprehensive exam, as well as an essay completed by the student at home and submitted by the date of the retake. The grade will depend only on the performance in this exam; continuous evaluation over the semester will not be taken into account. This exam will be designed bearing in mind that the passing grade is 5 and the maximum grade that can be attained is 8.
- The students in their third attempt must do: Two short essays (20% each) and one final exam consisting of an in-class exam and a take-home essay (30% each).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 short essays</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class writing</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed participation</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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Professor: RUTH PALMER
Ruth Palmer is a full-time Assistant Professor of Communication at IE University, where her current and past courses include Communication Foundations; Public Opinion, Persuasion, and Engagement; Political Communication; Media Relations (in the Master of Corporate Communication); and Negotiation and Public Speaking. She has also taught in the IE-Brown University Summer Program, and co-directed the IE Communications Lab. Dr. Palmer’s research explores how people think about and relate to the news media. Her book Becoming the News: How Ordinary People Respond to the Media Spotlight (Columbia University Press, 2018) explores how it feels for private citizens to interact with journalists and become the subject of a news story. Her articles have appeared in the academic journals Journalism, Journalism Studies and Literary Journalism Studies, as well as in publications aimed at the journalism community and general public, including the Columbia Journalism Review, Nieman Lab, and Zócalo Public Square. She received her PhD in Communication from Columbia University in 2013. Before pursuing her doctorate she earned a B.A. in Comparative Literature from Bryn Mawr College, and worked in the Artistic Administration Department at the Metropolitan Opera.

IE University bio: http://www.ie.edu/university/faculty/ruth-palmer/
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OTHER INFORMATION

CODE OF CONDUCT IN CLASS

1. **Be on time**: Students arriving more than 5 minutes late will be marked as “Absent”.
   Only students that notify in advance in writing that they will be late for a specific session may be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

2. **If applicable, bring your name card and strictly follow the seating chart**. It helps faculty members and fellow students learn your names.

3. **Do not leave the room during the lecture**: Students are not allowed to leave the room during lectures. If a student leaves the room during lectures, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter and, therefore, will be marked as “Absent”.
   Only students that notify that they have a special reason to leave the session early will be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

4. **Do not engage in side conversation**. As a sign of respect toward the person presenting the lecture (the teacher as well as fellow students), side conversations are not allowed. If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. It you do not want to ask it during the lecture, feel free to approach your teacher after class.
   If a student is disrupting the flow of the lecture, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

5. **Use your laptop for course-related purposes only**. The use of laptops during lectures must be authorized by the professor. The use of Social Media or accessing any type of content not related to the lecture is penalized. The student will be asked to leave the room and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

6. **No cellular phones**: IE University implements a “Phone-free Classroom” policy and, therefore, the use of phones, tablets, etc. is forbidden inside the classroom. Failing to abide by this rule entails expulsion from the room and will be counted as one absence.
7. **Escalation policy: 1/3/5.** Items 4, 5, and 6 above entail expulsion from the classroom and the consequent marking of the student as “Absent.” IE University implements an “escalation policy”: The first time a student is asked to leave the room for disciplinary reasons (as per items 4, 5, and 6 above), the student will incur one absence, the second time it will count as three absences, and from the third time onward, any expulsion from the classroom due to disciplinary issues will entail 5 absences.