



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Illinois State University

Spring 2021 COM Graduate Seminar Descriptions

COM 433: Leadership Communication

Dr. Lance Lippert
Wednesdays 6:30-9:20 p.m.

Course Description: The focus of this seminar is on leadership communication, how leadership communication influences individual and organizational change, and the role of leadership communication in creating readiness for change. Although grounded in relevant leadership and organizational theory, the goal of the course is to blend theory with practical application in various contexts and processes. Primarily, the basic areas of the course include: contemporary theory and research, developing strategies for influencing individual and organizational change through leadership communication, and application of theory and applied strategies in pertinent interest areas.

Instructional Strategies: Instructional strategies include: (1) textbook, professional journal readings, and popular press readings, (2) discussions, case studies, and interviews with relevant organizational and public leaders, (3) semester research project which will apply relevant literature and theory to practical contexts, and (4) assessment in the form of several short position papers, a mid-term exam, and several reports.

COM 462 (Section 1): Seminar in Critical Studies in Mass Communication Topic: (Pop) Cultural Studies

Dr. Lauren Bratslvasky & Dr. Lindsey Thomas
Mondays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

In this course, we will work together to explore critiques of media and popular culture, which includes a wide range of areas of study such as institutions, technologies, texts, genres, and audiences. We will examine popular media through the lens of cultural studies theorists, typically focusing on one scholar each week and how their work has been applied to studies of pop culture. We begin with exploring how cultural studies scholars intervened in dominant paradigms that did not value popular culture as legitimate areas of scholarship. The majority of the seminar focuses on foundational writings by scholars from historically marginalized groups (who, thus, tend to fall outside of the “traditional cultural studies canon,” and whose work offers immense contributions to our understandings of culture and abilities to analyze and critique media structures and products). In practice, this is a theory course that is interdisciplinary, alongside a survey of analytical methods common in cultural studies, which tend to be self-reflexive and draw from textual, institutional, ethnographic, and historical methods of analysis. This class utilizes readings, discussion, and written assignments to explore and engage (pop) cultural studies.

Note: Although this is a “Mass Communication” seminar, it bridges areas of study and is appropriate for all students interested in the construction and/or critique of culture.

**COM 462 (Section 2):
Seminar in Critical Studies in Mass Communication
Topic: Representations of Race, Class & Gender in Media**

**Dr. Phil Chidester
Thursdays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.**

Course Description: What's up with "The Tiger King?" What are Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion REALLY saying? Why the kerfuffle over the new "Mulan" film? Black Lives Matter, anyone? And what to make of the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election – how does the candidate we're going to vote for speak to who we are (or at least what is the news telling us about this)?

How do mediated depictions of difference both generate and reinforce our perceptions of self and other – key components in the overall process of communication? What is symbolic representation, and how does this concept relate to the process of identification? How are our various personal and group identities "managed" by the images and messages we are exposed to on a daily basis? Which media theories explain the importance of – and potential hazards posed by – the messages about self and other that we receive through media channels? How do media depictions and culture intersect and reinforce one another? Which analytical lenses (Marxism, postmodernism, critical analysis, cultural analysis) best explain the impacts of media representations? And how do messages of and about race, class and gender function independently – and in complex combinations – as tools to support structures of power in our contemporary world? Exploring and answering these and other vital questions about media representations will be the focus of this course.

As I think about it, a much more accurate title for the course would be "Representations of Identities in Media." Race, class and gender as a title recalls the very first seminar I took in my graduate program, and it also reflects the identities that have received the most attention among critical communication scholars over the past few decades. But there are all kinds of other identities – sexual identities, religious identities, national identities, identities based on physical abilities – that deserve our attention as scholars. So if you're interested in exploring the juxtaposition of media and identity, this is the class for you! Studies of any kind of mediated identity (or intersections of multiple identities) are absolutely welcome here.

To succeed in this seminar, students won't need a formal background in media studies, or in critical theories about race, class and gender. What they will need is an open mind – a willingness to reconsider how, what and why we communicate through the symbols that constitute our modern media landscape.

Instructional Strategies: Course assignments, activities and expectations will include: various readings pulled from the literature on symbolism, representation, and theories of identity and mediated communication; discussions on course theories and topics; in-class oral presentations on assigned readings; brief written responses to reading and class questions; a final academic paper analyzing some aspect of identity representations in the media; and finally, plenty of informal in-class analysis of media texts. In other words, we'll be watching, listening to and talking about a lot of media messages!

COM 472: Seminar in Intercultural/Interethnic Communication

Dr. John Baldwin
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:15 p.m.

Course Description: Research and theory regarding culture, "race," and ethnicity as these relate to communication, including verbal/nonverbal differences, cultural adjustment, conflict resolution, and communication of intolerance.

Course Overview: This course is designed to facilitate your investigation and critique of key content areas of intercultural communication. The goal is for you to gain an overview of *research/theory content* and of *methodologies* pertinent both to the *workplace* and to *academia*. The course will cover international aspects of communication (communication differences, culture shock, etc.) as well as "American" culture. We will also consider intolerance based on perceived group/culture differences, *not* limited to "interethnic" communication but also considering other bases of identity and intolerance.

COM 474: Seminar in Interpersonal Communication **Topic: Technology in Close Relationships**

Dr. Aimee Miller-Ott
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

In this seminar, we will examine the many ways in which communication technologies (e.g., cell phones, social media, video chat, email) have been integrated into our everyday communication with family, friends, and others. We will explore how these technologies and the ways people are using them influence interpersonal communication and relationships, and we will address relevant theories that have emerged in mediated and mobile communication.

COM 478: Seminar in Public Relations Research: Case Studies

Dr. Mary Beth Deline
Thursdays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

Public interest PR highlights the strategic use of PR for social change on issues regarding the environment, health, risk and science. This course will explore theories, research and practice in public interest PR. Students will learn about the range of PR tools and their application to urgent and emergent social issues.

Seminars will be both instructor and student led, and we will use readings, discussions and written assignments to investigate these areas. The first part of the course will examine key public interest concepts using case study exploration. Concepts will range from critical epidemiology to environmental racism and we will use cases ranging from the current pandemic to the Flint water crisis. The second part of the course will introduce PR interventions to such cases through a 'Three Fixes' perspective (Heberlein, 2012). The 'Three Fixes' refers to intervention design through cognitive, technological and structural pathways. PR interventions we discuss will range from needs assessments to crisis response strategies to campaigns.

COM 481: Seminar in Communication Education: Communication Pedagogy

Dr. Cheri Simonds
Mondays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

This course explores the theories and research that inform best practices in teaching communication. Students will engage in several instructional strategies that can be implemented in any communication classroom (public speaking, hybrid, communication research methods, communication technologies, communication theory, family, gender, health, interpersonal, intercultural, mass, organizational, public relations, rhetoric, small group). Students will hone their teaching/training skills and explore publication opportunities in premier communication journals.

COM 496: Seminar in Rhetorical Theory **Topic: Rhetoric & Cultural Studies**

Dr. Joseph Zompetti
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

This is an advanced seminar in rhetorical theory. The topic rotates every year, so this may be retaken by students who have had 496 before. For Spring 2021, we will investigate the intersections of cultural studies and rhetoric. This course will be highly theoretical, beginning with a brief introduction on rhetoric, then a brief examination of key critical theory and theorists, and then a thorough investigation of different areas of cultural studies theories, such as feminism, hegemony, semiotics, visual rhetoric, racialized rhetoric, etc.

The focus of the seminar will be on rhetorical theory that informs and is informed by cultural studies, such as conjunctural analysis, British Cultural Studies, and critical rhetoric – but we will also explore areas of cultural studies that lend themselves to rhetorical analysis, such as the cultural dynamics of music, film, television, social media, politics, etc. The specific areas of application will be student-driven.

The course will include quite a bit of reading, class discussion, and a conference-length and quality paper. The course is intended for anyone interested in culture, critical studies, rhetoric, etc. We welcome rhetorical novices as well as veterans.

COM 497 Seminar in Quantitative Communication Research Methods

Introduction to quantitative methods of scholarly research and the critical evaluation of research in communication. Must be taken by first year graduate students.

Section 1: Dr. John Hooker, Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00-5:15 p.m.

Section 2: Dr. Kevin Meyer, Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20 p.m.

Here is a list of the undergraduate courses that graduate students can take for credit. Not all of these courses are being offered in the spring 2021 semester. You can find whether these are offered for that semester by searching on Course Finder. You must also verify with your advisor that the course is being taught by a member of the graduate faculty.

COM 302 Communication Criticism
COM 303 Controversy and Contemporary Society
COM 304 Freedom of Speech and Press
COM 306 Documentary Storytelling and Production
COM 312 Broadcast History
COM 317 Digital Post Production
COM 318 Social Dynamics of Communication Technologies
COM 319 Motion Graphics and Visual Effects
COM 320 Mass Media: Cultural Criticism and Problems
COM 320a01 - Mass Media-Cult Crit & Problems: Identities In Latin American Pop Culture
COM 321 Campaign Communication and Message Design
COM 323 Theory and Research in Small Group Communication
COM 324 Theory and Research in Persuasion
COM 325 Theory and Research in Interpersonal Communication
COM 328 Negotiation
COM 329 Organizational Communication
COM 331 Human Communication and the Aging Process
COM 351 Advanced Writing for Mass Media
COM 355 International Public Relations
COM 356 Executive Speechwriting
COM 360 Mass Media: Theory and Effects
COM 361 Mass Media Law, Policy, & Ethics
COM 364 Broadcast Management
COM 366 Web Production and Design
COM 367 Ethical Problems in Mass Media
COM 369 International Communication Systems
COM 370 Psychology of Language
COM 371 Political Communication
COM 372 Theory and Research in Intercultural Communication
COM 373 Internal Public Relations
COM 375 Communication and Leadership
COM 381 Issues in the Teaching of Communication
COM 385 Editorial and Feature Writing
COM 390 Topics in Contemporary Communication Issues