

## Communication Graduate Courses Fall 2019

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### **COMM 610: Social Science Methods in Communication Research (Blanton)**

**Monday 5:45-8:15**

This course introduces graduate students to social scientific approaches of inquiry as conducted in the field of communication, with a particular emphasis on methods designed to predict behavior. It covers foundations in the philosophy of science, as well as the dominant methodological approaches pursued in communication. By the end of the course, students will be more able to critically evaluate social science research, understand how to select specific methods to address specific questions, and design and implement original research that tests novel theory.

### **COMM 615: Interpretive Methods in Communication Research (Means Coleman)**

**Tuesday, 5:00-7:30**

This graduate-level seminar provides an introduction to the major methodological developments in qualitative research, while specifically offering training in media studies using naturalistic methods. Naturalistic, qualitative research methods is “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with *meaning, not the frequency*, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (emphasis mine, Van Maanen, 1983, p. 9). This course charts the terrain of inquiry paradigms to ground students in the philosophical assumptions behind, and rationales for, the selection of qualitative methodologies and their akin procedures. Emphasis is placed on in-depth interviewing, ethnographic design, and focus group research methods as a means to study interpretive communities, organizations, groups, and individuals. Particular attention is paid to ethical issues associated with conducting qualitative field research.

#### **COURSE GOALS:**

1. To examine the tenets of conventional and emergent research paradigms.
2. To understand the nature of questions served by qualitative methods.
3. To be able to design and carry out a qualitative research project.
4. To understand the major developments in qualitative media studies.
5. To be able to communicate the usefulness and trustworthiness of qualitative research.

### **COMM 638: Crisis Communication (Coombs)**

**Tuesday, 6:00-9:00**

Part of organization communication is the study of public discourse created by the organization. One prominent line of research in organizational public discourse is crisis communication. Crisis communication studies what organizations say and do after a crisis emerges. Crisis communication can have a significant effect on how stakeholders react to and how stakeholders and organizations recover from a crisis. The course will review the dominant theories in crisis communication along with the methods used by those theories. It is important to consider the relationships between the various crisis communication theories and the research methods associated with the theories. Part of the course is understanding what theories are, what theories do, and the relationship between theories and methods. The primary crisis communication theories include stealing thunder, image repair/restoration theory, situational crisis communication theory, and social-mediated crisis communication. When examining crisis communication research, the domain of study is important as well. The domain refers to the nature of the crises being studied. The primary focus in the course will be on organizational crises—crises that affect enterprises such as corporations. This will include special consideration to sports crises—crises that occur with the sport industry. We also will examine the newly emerging area of public health crises.

**COMM 655: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory – The War of Words (Crick)**

**Monday, 4:10-7:10**

This seminar in contemporary rhetorical theory takes its name from the recent posthumous publication of Kenneth Burke's *The War of Words*, which was intended to be a companion volume to *The Rhetoric of Motives*. This work focuses on defining what he calls "The Devices," which are universal strategies of persuasion that are put to use in various ways, for good or for ill, in any rhetorical battle between competing groups for the allegiance of an active audience within a rhetorical situation. Accordingly, this graduate course will study rhetorical theory as a means of revealing the characteristics of wars of words as they occur within diverse historical and contemporary contexts. Burke will establish the foundations of the course, as we explore *The War of Words* and the edited collection, *On Symbols and Society*, but we will also study foundational essays in the discipline of rhetoric that emphasize the agonistic nature of deliberation, persuasion, and propaganda.

**COMM 662: Survey in Media Studies (Dunaway)**

**Thursday, 5:30-8:00**

This course will provide graduate students with a broad overview of the field of media studies – the key literature, concepts, questions, topics, and debates – beginning with early foundational texts on mass media and ending with inquiries into the recent explosion of social media. During the semester, a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies that fall primarily within social scientific traditions (quantitative and qualitative) will be covered, but we will also include and discuss studies from critical cultural traditions. The class will follow a historical and thematic trajectory by first becoming acquainted with US mass communication research and related Anglo-European contributions through reading primary documents considered foundational to the field. We will then trace various extensions and critiques of these frameworks as well as new theoretical paradigms. In the process we will consider interventions by intersectional and marginalized voices that have reconfigured and reinvigorated the field. We will also look at both traditional notions of audiences, industries, and texts as well as newer concepts, including the network society, Web 2.0, user-generated content, mobile communication, and social media.

**COMM 663: Media History (Sumpter)**

**Wednesday, 6:00-8:30**

This seminar examines the intertwining of two "histories"—one that charts communication inventions from the printing press to social media and one that studies the repercussions these inventions had on society and on scholars who developed and refined the field of communication research. Key texts include John Durham Peters and Peter Simonson's *Mass Communication and American Thought* and William J. Bernstein's *Masters of the Word*. Seminar participants will use historical research to broaden their understanding of the development of their particular communication sub-discipline, the key studies in its development, and its future.

**COMM 670: Culture and Health Communication (Tang)**  
**Thursday, 3:55-6:25**

The rise of globalization and multicultural society calls for more in-depth understanding of the role of culture in health communication. This seminar will provide an extensive discussion of both cultural sensitive approach and cultural-centered approach to health communication. The former generally examines how differences in the cultures of different nations, regions, or demographic groups affect people's health beliefs and behaviors and how it can be incorporated in creating more effective health messages. The latter focuses how the discourses of health and illnesses are socially and culturally constructed and how such discourses reflect and reinforce the power inequality in terms of race, gender and sexual orientation.

**COMM 689: Engaged Communication Research (Wolfe)**  
**Wednesday, 4:10-6:40**

This seminar will explore the theoretical, practical, and ethical questions raised in the tradition of engaged research. Rooted in conceptualizations of Communication as a practical discipline, engaged scholars respond to calls for academics to become vigorous partners in seeking responses to the most pressing problems of our time. Together we will explore the relationships between applied communication, communication activism and social justice, public scholarship, and other disciplinary approaches to "engaged" research. This course will examine challenges related to collaborating with community partners, translating academic research for various audiences, and designing meaningful research in light of institutional constraints. Over the course of the semester, students will develop a large-scale public scholarship project, which can take many forms including a blog, podcast series, YouTube channel, or engaged research project in collaboration with a community partner.