

Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
CMN 4780: Communication and Culture

1. Catalog description

a) Course Number: CMN 4780

b) Course Title: Communication and Culture

c) Credit: 3-0-3

d) Term to be offered: on demand.

e) Short title: COMM & CULTURE

f) Course Description:

This course provides an overview of key theories, concepts, and approaches to the study of communication and culture as practiced in communication. It covers the history of the academic study of communication and culture, the application of critical methods, cultural studies and communication, and the study of social relations, power and communication.

g) Prerequisites: Completion of CMN 2010, 2040, 3000, 3030 with a grade of "C" or better, and CMN 3270 or CMN 3560 or graduate standing.

h) Initial term of course offering: Fall 2007

2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation

a) Student learning objectives Students will be able to:

1. Identify major theories of communication and culture.
2. Describe the historical development of the critical and qualitative study of communication.
3. Compare and contrast different traditions of critical and qualitative inquiry in communication.
4. Analyze and critically evaluate critical and qualitative research in communication.
5. Analyze contemporary cultural practices from critical/qualitative perspectives in communication studies.
6. [Graduate Students only] Apply the theories and research methods encountered in class to new areas of inquiry.

b) Assessment of student achievement:

Sample Assessment Table for Undergraduate Students

| Course Objective | Course Content | Exams (40%) | Short Papers (20%) | Literature Review (20%) | Class Participation (20%) |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| I. Identify major theories of communication and culture. | Weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 | X | | | X |
| II. Describe historical development of critical and qualitative study of communication. | Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5 | X | X | | |
| III. Compare and contrast different traditions of critical and qualitative inquiry. | Weeks 1, 3, 9, 10, 14 | X | | X | X |
| IV. Analyze and critically evaluate critical and qualitative research in communication. | Weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 | X | | X | X |
| V. Analyze contemporary cultural practices from critical/qualitative perspectives in communication studies. | Weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 | X | X | X | X |

Sample Assessment Table for Graduate Students

| Course Objective | Course Content | Exams (35%) | Short Papers (10%) | Literature Review (10%) | Class participation (20%) | Research Paper (25%) |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| I. Identify major theories of communication and culture. | Weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 | X | | | X | |
| II. Describe historical development of critical and qualitative study of communication. | Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5 | X | X | | | |
| III. Compare and contrast different traditions of critical and qualitative inquiry. | Weeks 1, 3, 9, 10, 14 | X | | X | X | X |
| IV. Analyze and critically evaluate critical and qualitative research in communication. | Weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 | X | X | X | X | X |
| V. Analyze contemporary cultural practices from critical/qualitative perspectives in communication studies. | Weeks 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 | X | X | | | X |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--|---|--|---|
| VI. [Graduate Students only] Apply the theories and research methods encountered in class to new areas of inquiry. | Week 15 | | | X | | X |
|---|---------|--|--|---|--|---|

c) Communication and Culture will be traditionally delivered.

d) Requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit:

(1) In addition to the course objectives for undergraduate students listed under 2.a, graduate students will be asked to apply the theories encountered in Part I of the class as well as the research methods encountered in Part II of the class to new areas of inquiry.

(2) Projects: Graduate students will develop a substantial original research project in the area of communication and culture. This project will require students to apply the theories and methods they encountered through class readings, but it will also require students to incorporate additional outside readings into their research project. Students will be required to expand their knowledge of the class subject in a particular area of specialization.

(3) Separate areas of evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students: While undergraduate students are evaluated based on their discussion papers, exams, literature review and contribution to class discussion, graduate students will also be evaluated based on their research project and an oral presentation based on that project. While the midterm exam will be the same for both undergraduate and graduate students, graduate students will take a longer and more demanding final exam.

e) This course is writing-intensive; written response papers, book review, and daily discussion questions allow for frequent writing activities designed to aid students in their mastery of course content. At least 35% will come from writing assignments and students will be provided the opportunity to revise at least one writing assignment.

3. Sample Outline of the Course

PART I: Historical development and key theories

Week 1: Introduction: An overview of the history of research in communication and culture.

Week 2: Frankfurt School: The influence of the Frankfurt School of critical theory on the study of communication, from 1940s to the present. Discussion of the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Habermas, and others, as they influenced and were taken up by communication scholars.

Week 3: History of British Cultural Studies: Development of cultural studies as a field of inquiry in postwar Britain. Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. Responses to the effects tradition in mass communication. The work of key figures such as Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall.

Week 4: Current British Cultural Studies: Recent research on communication and media audiences, gender, race and ethnicity, and cultural globalization.

Week 5: History of American Cultural Studies: The adoption of cultural studies in the United States. The role of scholars such as James Carey and John Fiske. Differences between British and American cultural studies.

Week 6: Current American Cultural Studies: The role of interdisciplinary research in communication and culture.

Week 7: Communication and postmodern culture. The work of European theorists of media, communication, and postmodernity as they are influenced and taken up by communication scholars.

Week 8: Midterm Exam

PART II: Applications and case studies

Week 9: Historical studies of communication and culture.

Week 10: Communication and everyday life: Studies that observe the role of communication in the practice of everyday life.

Week 11: Cultural industries. The organization and influence of cultural industries on various mediated communication practices.

Week 12: Nationalism, globalization and communication. Analysis of the relationship between global culture and diverse communication practices.

Week 13: Feminist theory and communication. Role of gender and sexual orientation in various communication practices.

Week 14: Communication and technology. Overview of critical theories of communication and technology. Includes historical studies of technology as well as current studies of cyberspace and the internet by communication and cultural studies.

Week 15: Undergraduate students present literature reviews. Graduate students present research projects.

4. Rationale

a) Purpose and need: Presently our students do not get exposed to an in-depth study of an important part of the field of communication. This course will give students a thorough overview of culture as conceptualized within the field of communication. It will deepen students' understanding of qualitative and critical/interpretive inquiry. This course will also increase students' ability to understand communication from multiple cultural viewpoints, and it will thereby increase our students' awareness of and sensitivity to living in a multicultural world. CMN 4780: Communication and Culture will thus aid students to succeed in several key areas of the Dept. of Communication Studies' mission: (1) to develop effective critical thinking skills; (2) to cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility; and (3) to develop the skills essential to successful life within a complex social environment.

b) Justification of the level of the course and prerequisites: CMN 4780 will require that students are familiar with the basic qualitative and critical approaches in the field of communication. CMN 3200 or CMN 3270 provide students with the necessary basic knowledge to succeed in this class.

c) Similarity to existing courses:

(1) While the field of communication and culture informs a number of classes in the Communication Studies curriculum (e.g. CMN 3200, CMN 3220, CMN 3270, CMN 4750, CMN 4770, CMN 4830), CMN 4780 specifically focuses on the critical/interpretive and qualitative study of communication.

(2) CMN 4780 is the only class that provides students with a systematic overview of the theories and methodologies used in the field of communication and cultural studies.

d) Impact on Program(s):

(1) The course will not be required for majors or minors, but will be an approved elective for undergraduate students.

(2) The course will not be required for graduate students, but will be an approved elective.

5. Implementation

a) Faculty members to whom the course may be assigned: Dr. Angela Aguayo, Dr. Suzanne Enck-Wanzer, Dr. Olaf Hoerschelmann, Dr. Shane Miller, Dr. Melanie Mills, Dr. Mehdi Semati

b) Additional costs to students: None.

c) Texts and supplementary materials to be used:

Books:

Stryker Munson, Eve & Catherine A. Warren (Eds.): James Carey: A Critical Reader. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Gray, Ann & Jim McGuigan (Eds.): Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader, 2nd ed.; London: Edward Arnold, 1997.

Mukerji, Chandra & Michael Schudson (Eds.). Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Additional readings on reserve:

- Carey, James. *Culture As Communication*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989. Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 1989. Huyssen, Andreas. "Mass Culture As Woman: Modernism's Other." In *Studies in Entertainment*, Ed. Tania Modleski, 188-207. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Lears, Jackson. *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
- Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Stoltje, Beverly. "Power and the Ritual Genres: American Rodeo." *Western Folklore* 52, April (1993): 135-56.
- Susman, Warren. *Culture As History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Willis, Paul. *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young*. Boulder: Westview, 1990.

6. Community College Transfer:

A community college course will not be judged to be equivalent to a 3000-or 4000-level course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

7. Date approved by the department: 11/04/05

8. Date approved by the college curriculum committee: 4/5/06

9. Date approved by CAA: 4/27/06