

COMMUNICATION 175-201: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

School of Communication, Room 013 | Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00-2:15 | Fall 2016

Instructor: Brett Ommen

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Office: 900 Lewis Tower

Office Hours: 12:00-12:45, T/Th

Required Texts:

Kyle Conway, *Technology/Form: An Introduction to Media and Cultural Studies*, 2012. Available on Sakai

Jack Lule, *Understanding Media & Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*, 2016. Available at <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=143>

Additional readings on Sakai

Course Description: An introduction to the fundamentals and theories that inform human communication practices, particularly as those practices extend over a range of media technologies. Students examine a range of variables and contexts for human communication. Those contexts are extended by examining the history of media technologies and policies. Finally, students consider analytic and critical perspectives to make sense of the complex relationship between institutions, technologies, and the production and reception of human communication to appreciate human communication's impact on society.

Course Objectives:

- Develop a vocabulary for analyzing the variables and contexts of human communication
- Identify the variables media technologies introduce to human communication practice
- Understand the evolving histories of media technologies, economies, and policies
- Appreciate how media functions as both communication technology and cultural form
- Critique a range of communication practices, media flows, technological shifts, and policies

Attendance:

This course depends on students, both as participants in discussions but also as members of a diverse group of communication practitioners and media users. Being absent from class not only hurts your education, it also degrades the quality of education for your peers. To encourage this collaborative environment, one-third of your participation score is earned by attending class in a timely fashion (1 point for each in-class instruction session we have). The remainder of your in-class grade will be determined by the quality of your contributions to discussion.

Grading:

This course has assignments totaling 1000 points. A: 1000-920, A-: 919-900, B+: 899-880, B: 880-820, B-: 819-800, C+: 799-780, C: 779-720, C-: 719-700, D699-600, F, 600-0

Other Policies:

COMMUNICATION: The instructor has made every effort to keep course materials as accessible as possible. To that end, all of your texts will be available on the course management system and the student is responsible for accessing, reading, and abiding by all assignments, schedules, and policies contained in those documents. The Instructor will make every effort to keep grades updated. Students with concerns about their standing in the course or their understanding of course content and policies should communicate these concerns with the instructor as necessary. Email is an acceptable form of communication for all **non-grade related** matters; for grade-related matters you will need to contact the instructor directly.

SAKAI (<https://sakai.luc.edu>) is an online learning tool that allow us to communicate and collaborate with each other during the semester. You will find on it the course syllabus, e-mail addresses of all course participants, announcements, online assignments, online grade-book, etc.

LOCUS (<https://locus.luc.edu>) is Loyola's information portal for a wide variety of tasks. The instructor posts on Locus the midterm academic alerts and the final grades.

MAKE UP WORK: Make up work will not be allowed (on any assignment or exam) except for cases of extreme emergency. In the event of such an emergency, it is your responsibility to ensure the instructor is notified **prior to** the missed assignment, and that you work with the instructor and Student Services to ensure the absence is documented appropriately. Work will be completed in as timely a fashion as possible.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. ***Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment.*** The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse. It is dishonest to:

- turn in the same work for two classes;
- turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

8/30: Class Introductions	
9/1: History of Communication	History pdf on Sakai
9/6: Communication Variables	Models pdf on Sakai
9/8: Communication Contexts	Culture/ideology pdf on Sakai
9/13: Analyzing Media	Conway Ch. 1
9/15: Method and Form	Conway Ch. 1 (Introduce Media Presentations)
9/20: What makes a medium?	Conway Ch.2 (through 2.2) / Media Use pdf
9/22: Differential media analysis	McLuhan pdf on Sakai
9/27: Print Media Presentations	(based on selections from UM&C)
9/29: A/V Media Presentations	(based on selections from UM&C)
10/4: Convergence and Divergence	Conway Ch. 2 (2.2 to end)
10/6: Media and Public Culture	Conway Chapter 3
10/11: NO CLASS	
10/13: MIDTERM	
10/18: Economics of Media Culture	UM&C 13.1-13.4
10/20: Economics of Media Culture	UM&C 13.5-13.7 (Introduce Group Project)
10/25: Media Genre and Culture	Conway Ch. 4
10/27: Media Genre and Culture	Conway Ch. 4
11/1: Cultural Flow & Circulation	Conway Ch. 5
11/3: Cultural Flow & Circulation	Conway Ch. 5
11/8: Screen Cultures	Conway Ch. 6
11/10: Screen Cultures	Conway Ch. 6
11/15: The Fractured Audience	Conway Ch. 7
11/17: The Fractured Audience	Conway Ch. 7
11/22: Group Presentation Preparation	Netflix article & Gawker Article
11/24: NO CLASS	
11/29: Digital Media	UM&C 11.1-3
12/1: Digital Media	UM&C 11.4-5
12/6: Group Presentations	
12/8: Group Presentations	
12/16: 1-3 Final Exam Session	

ASSIGNMENTS

In-Class Professionalism / Discussion Leadership

100 pts

So much of making sense of communication in our world depends on applying theoretical and critical insights to the actual communication and media environments in our everyday lives. This course depends on students bringing their own media and communication contexts to the class so we can all appreciate the diversity of communication in our world.

Not only is it important for you to bring your experiences to class discussion, it is also crucial that you be actively present in class to foster an intellectually curious and professional environment. Your score in this class will be a measure of your engagement in the class, your contributions to the discussion, and your efforts to help your classmates appreciate alternative perspectives and identify new connections between the course material and the world.

Applied Essays

200 pts

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to submit 10 short essays connecting the week's readings to your own communication and media experiences. These essays are an effort to develop your skills as a communicator, to prepare you for class discussions each week, and to give you an opportunity to practice analysis and criticism of your own communication and media experiences.

By Tuesday at 10am of each assigned week, you will be asked to submit your essay (between 650 and 800 words) in the Sakai blog tool. Your essay should answer the questions:

- 1) Where do I find an idea or ideas from this week's reading in my own life?
- 2) How do the readings apply and/or help me make sense of my communication experience?
- 3) What do this week's readings leave out or fail to account for in your example?

Media History Panels

160 pts

Week 5 will be devoted to covering the history of some standard media forms (Books, Newspapers, Magazines and Recorded Music, Radio, and Film). We'll read Conway's introduction to TV, and then spend one day on Print Media and another on Audio-Visual Media. You will be expected to read the assigned chapter on your medium from the Understanding Media & Culture textbook on Sakai. The class will form panels of 5 students, each responsible for introducing the operations and history of a different medium. 30% of your grade will depend on your performance and participation in class. 30% will be based on your handout for the class. The final 40% will be based on your individual report on the assigned medium.

Panel participation: Be prepared to offer accurate information and communicate the main ideas from UM&C to the class and engage with your fellow panelists to draw out useful insights.

Handout: Each panelist will be asked to produce a handout that includes a timeline of media development and innovations, as well as an index of important people and corporations that contributed to the development of the medium.

Individual report: Each panelist will prepare for the class by writing a brief report that attempts to explain how the history and shifts in the assigned medium create and alter the process of human communication and discusses the ways the medium calls forth a particular brand of audience (while explaining the characteristics of that audience)

Media Disruptions Project

160 pts

By the end of the semester, we will have considered how various media technologies and forms create shifts in the ways we communicate, and what we communicate about. Often times, those shifts are filled with democratic and commercial potential (and sometimes, those things are at odds with each other). In an effort to evaluate your analytic and critical abilities and to look toward future challenges in our communication environment, you will be assigned in groups of 3 to identify a current or pending media development (new technology, policy, or practice) and explain what it is and how it will impact our communication culture.

Are there economic concerns? Political concerns? Does this improve or disrupt life for people? Does it impact all people equally? Is this a global, national, or local shift? How will the change impact the ways humans communicate with each other? How will the change impact the way humans interact with technology? How will the technology promote or fracture cultural flows? These are just some of the questions your presentation can ask and attempt to answer. Students will be expected to deliver a 10-15 minute multimodal presentation and turn in a well-sourced and –written report.

Mid-Term

180 pts

The mid-term exam will include a series of questions about fundamental operations and variables of human communication, the history of media development, (including information from the student media history projects) and the ways media alter communication and culture. The format of the exam will be short answer and essay, and will be a take home examination.

Final Exam

200 pts

The final exam will be held during Final Exam week and will be comprehensive. Questions will include information from student presentations (both history and disruption assignments) as well as from the range of assigned readings. The exam will be short answer and essay and will be held in class.