

COMM Graduate Courses Spring 2022

COMM 611: Advanced Quantitative Methods (Scherr) **Thursdays, 3:30-6:00 pm**

This class is the follow-up on COMM 610 offered in the previous Fall semester, however, all graduate students are strongly encouraged to join independent of whether they took COMM 610 before or not.

We will recap and intensify our gained knowledge about scientific methods, statistics, and data analysis. We will continue to analyze data together to answer a wide array of research questions and test hypotheses using state-of-the-art data analytical procedures and data visualization. The class focuses on the application and improvement of previously acquired skills in COMM 610 and continues to leave 'statistics anxiety' out of the classroom. The class will be in a collaborative atmosphere in which we either work with your ("bring your own data") or exemplary data to deepen our understanding of what can be done with quantitative datasets of various structures.

We will focus on the *distribution of the data* to facilitate our data analytical decision-making and will work with different *data structures* (e.g., cross-sectional, longitudinal, multi-level) and different *data analytical models* (e.g., random effects vs. fixed effects models; within vs. between vs. combined models; models with latent variables and confirmatory factor analysis). We will continue the approach of "you choose your level of difficulty" (= ● ■ ◆) for your assignments and will continue to work with actual data to find answers to non-trivial and societally relevant research questions using the most recent theories and models of communication research.

We will further sharpen our understanding of how research design and data analysis operate together. We will continue to analyze data together so that everybody will further improve their data analytical skills and will be equipped to handle their empirical master and/or dissertation projects with confidence, while also acquiring important marketable skills for careers outside academia.

Class assignments will cover the operationalization of concepts, the creation of research designs, and the statistical analysis of quantitative data using different forms of evaluation (e.g., class commitment, short quizzes, exams, papers, oral presentations).

COMM 615: Interpretive Methods (La Pastina) **Tuesdays, 8:30-11:00 am**

This course is designed as an introduction and overview of interpretive research. There will be three main kinds of activities in which we will be involved throughout the class: 1) Discussion of key terms and definitions, underlying epistemologies (ways of knowing), design issues, and a variety of qualitative methods. 2) Discussion and evaluation of a broad spectrum of exemplary studies, demonstrating various topics, designs, applications of theory, methods, and styles of writing. We will be continuously wrestling with the notion of what constitutes a text, so I have deliberately included various types of texts to interpret. That said, *our emphasis will be on texts (written, auditory, and visual) that are created through field-based methods, i.e., within one or more live, ongoing contexts with human participants*. Also interspersed in our readings are issues of research ethics, social action research, and investigator's identity. 3) Development of your own interpretive research project (and in the process, development of your own interpretive writing style) in the form of a written paper and oral presentation by the end of the seminar. For some or most of you, I expect the paper will take the form of a case study or focused investigation in which you've posed research questions, proposed

a well thought-through design for investigating those questions, and used one or more forms of qualitative methods to gather and analyze data (e.g., in-depth interviewing, ethnographic research, participant observation, focus groups, etc.). Our objective will be to produce papers of high quality that can be submitted for conference presentations or publication.

COMM 637: Narrative & Collective Organizing (Wolfe)

Tuesdays, 11:30 am – 2:00 pm

This seminar will focus on the role of narrative in communication studies of collective organizing. Stories construct webs of relationships, which provide bases for social action with or against other entities. In this process of relational web-building, narration constitutes collectivities—in-groups and out-groups, “us” and “them”, victims and villains. Beyond character development, stories organize a sense of shared reality by selecting certain details from ongoing streams of experience and suggesting a causal order in the midst of ambiguity and change. For these reasons, narrative is a powerful tool for constructing identities, mobilizing coordinated action, and organizing social worlds. Over the course of the semester, we will consider various perspectives on narrative as theoretical framework, object of inquiry, method of analysis, and equipment for living. The culminating product of the course will be a seminar paper worthy of conference presentation and/or publication.

COMM 658: Communication & Culture – Propaganda/Demagoguery (Mercieca)

Thursdays, 8:30-11:00 am

We will examine how “dark persuasion” techniques like propaganda and demagoguery relate to democracy, democratic deliberation, media, and communication ethics. The course is designed to give graduate students a strong background in issues related to democracy and democratic erosion, demagogues and demagoguery, and the weaponized communication practices of propaganda. We will examine difficult questions of ethics in persuasion, consent, and how to create a productive public sphere. We will examine historical and current cases of demagoguery and propaganda by governments, corporations, politicians, and citizens. We will examine how demagogic and propagandistic messages are created, how they circulate, and how they’re amplified. And, we will examine the shift from the “manufacture of consent” model of propaganda to the “manufacture of dissent” model, among other topics.

COMM 665: Communication & Technology (Wallis)

Thursdays, 12:30-3:00 pm

This iteration of Communication and Technology will focus on feminist approaches to technology, communication, and media studies. The course will introduce graduate students to key theories, concepts, and debates within studies of media and technology from a feminist perspective. In this class we will learn and use the tools of feminist theory to explore the multifaceted interactions between technology, ourselves, and local, national, and international contexts. We will take an intersectional approach, which considers how gender, race, class, sexuality, and other vectors of identity are mutually constitutive with access to and understandings of technology. Themes that thread through the course include the body, labor, place, infrastructure, art, activism, and surveillance. We will approach these topics from a historical perspective as well as a critical, cultural perspective. In the process, we will challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about identity, embodiment, and technology.

COMM 669: Survey of Health Communication (R. Street)

Tuesdays, 2:30-5:00 pm

This course covers health communication theories and research in various health contexts, including the clinical encounter, health care organizations, public health campaigns, and health and digital media. While this is a survey course, we will focus on several themes across all the contexts—(a) how communication can help alleviate health disparities, (b) mental health, and (c) pathways through which communication can contribute to improved health outcomes and healthier behavior. Students will write two short papers (4-6 pages), and a final term paper (10-15 pages). It is hoped that the final paper will be a product the student can develop for conference presentation, publication, and/or conducting a study. This course should be of interest to students in health communication, health education, organizational communication, public health, and those studying digital and social media.

COMM 689: Communication & Black Cultural Studies (Henson)

Mondays, 4:10-6:40 pm

This course introduces students to the critical interdisciplinary field of Black cultural studies. It weaves together Black studies and cultural studies to analyze Black culture as a field of knowledge production, a critical theoretical tool, and an approach to one's unit(s) of analysis. Beyond Black studies and cultural studies, the course is pertinent for communication, anthropology, sociology, literary studies, gender/women's/sexuality studies, education, and media studies scholars. Students will be introduced to the history of Black culture, critical interventions surrounding Black culture, riveting theoretical debates, and emergent developments in the field. Topics to be covered include: Black intellectual thought, Black feminist theory, Black queer studies, the African Diaspora, cultural politics, soul & post-soul aesthetics, media & popular culture, visual culture & racial difference, and marronage.