

COMM 8020: Communication Theory II
Mondays, 4:00 p.m.-6:45 p.m.
Zoom / Lee Hall 318

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Office: 401 Strode Tower

Office hours: M/W 12-2 p.m., and by appointment

(all appointments to take place over Zoom until further notice)

Catalog Description

Surveys theories and analytic concepts used in the pluralistic field of communication. Draws on qualitative, rhetorical, critical, aesthetic, and humanistic traditions.

Course Summary

The theories sustaining and driving Communication as a field and discipline are vast. This course is designed to familiarize graduate students with a number of important conversations, concepts, and theoretical approaches related to critical communication theory. Unlike scientific theory, critical theory does not rely on formal, structured models, but is more indebted to abstraction and reflection on lived conditions.

Taking to heart Gilles Deleuze's claim that "Theory is exactly like a box of tools: it must be made useful," this course is not only interested in training you to read and respond to theory (although we will do a good bit of that), but significant portions of class time will be devoted to open conversations about incorporating the ideas we encounter into research design, case study analysis, and other elements of appropriately rigorous frameworks. This is to say: while "theory" and "practice" are often conceived as two different spheres, we will think them as two sides of the same coin. We will explore, through our seminars, what it means to live, work, and research *theoretically*, and how we might embody the ideals, ethos, and critical concerns we encounter along the way.

This particular iteration of COMM 8020 draws on the Professor's expertise in Cultural Studies to architect a road map through theory that positions the implications of power, identity, lived experience, and resistance as recurring tropes. Whenever possible, we will situate our readings in the context of their development, learning about the intellectual history of this work.

This is not a production or hard skills development class. Class time is not devoted to training or to lab work. This seminar is designed to help graduate students understand relevant literatures, traditions, and concepts, and to start implementing them in their own research design and writing through conversation, debate, and writing.

"Blended/Hybrid" Course

Our course is listed as "Blended/Hybrid," meaning we have a classroom assigned and can host some percentage of students in a face-to-face environment each week. During our first course meeting, we will discuss what you would prefer to do and what would be most beneficial for your learning.

Throughout the spring semester, vaccines for COVID-19 will (hopefully) continue to roll out across the country. If we are fortunate enough to receive the vaccine in a timely manner, we will move to face-to-face instruction. We will follow university guidance on this decision as the situation unfolds.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this semester, students should:

- Understand relevant concepts in communication theory
- Discuss key elements of theoretical texts through careful reading
- Summarize and synthesize the relationships across literature
- Apply theory to relevant studies through written and oral communication
- Produce full manuscripts demonstrating their understanding of key theories

Required Texts

We will be reading three full-length books over the course of our semester. You can readily find these used, check them out of a library, purchase an e-book version, or share copies with one another—whichever is the most affordable means for you.

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959)

<<https://www.amazon.com/Presentation-Self-Everyday-Life/dp/0385094027/>>

Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006)

<<https://www.amazon.com/Queer-Phenomenology-Orientations-Objects-Others/dp/0822339145/>>

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1967)

<<https://www.amazon.com/Social-Construction-Reality-Sociology-Knowledge/dp/0385058985/>>

All other readings will be provided for free as .pdf files on our Canvas course site.

Course Policies

Environment: This is a graduate seminar. You should expect to work hard and to self-initiate. I will do my best to guide you along the way. Part of a seminar is to discuss and debate disagreements in the room. You are invited to disagree with me, or with your classmates, but you must always do so from a position of respect that listens to and processes their viewpoint before responding. Disrespect of anyone's beliefs—academic or otherwise—will not be tolerated at the seminar table.

Reading: This course requires a good deal of reading, so please do your best to keep up. Theory, in particular, is a very difficult genre of reading. My best advice for you is to not get lost in the weeds, but to look for overarching ideas, claims, and concepts that seem to be most appropriate or interesting to you, and try to work on understanding the larger picture. You are expected to have completed all of the assigned readings before coming to class.

Office hours: I strongly encourage you to visit with me at some point during the semester to discuss your research interests/ideas, progress in the course, etc. One of the benefits of graduate seminars is to be able to work closely with faculty, and I encourage you to utilize me as needed throughout this course and your time at Clemson.

Academic integrity: I expect honesty in all of the work you do for this course. Plagiarism, in particular, of any sort is never tolerated and will be dealt with through prescribed University protocol. Please review all expected Code of Conducts for Clemson University.

Late work: Late work will earn a reduced grade and may not receive written feedback.

Absences: You are expected to attend every meeting. However, should you need to miss class due to serious illness, a religious observance, or any other traditionally “excusable” reason, please let me know *in advance of our class meeting.*

**Clemson Policies and Student Services
(an incomplete list;
if you need help connecting with other services on campus, please let me know)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Clemson University seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should make an appointment with Arlene Stewart, Director of Student Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disabilities Services when they meet with instructors. Please be aware that

accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester. In order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), faculty must follow instructions contained in letters issued by the office of Student Disability Services.

G-20 Redfern Health Center

<http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/>

864-656-6848 sds-l@clemson.edu

Clemson Academic Integrity Policy

Students who violate the Clemson Academic Integrity Policy in any way will receive a failing grade (i.e., an “F”) for this course. The policy:

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a “high seminary of learning.” Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and

respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

1. Any breach of the principles outlined in the Academic Integrity Statement is considered an act of academic dishonesty.
2. Academic dishonesty is further defined as:
 1. Giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid on any academic work;
 2. Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts;
 3. Attempts to copy, edit, or delete computer files that belong to another person or use of Computer Center account numbers that belong to another person without the permission of the file owner, account owner, or file number owner.
3. All academic work submitted for grading contains an implicit pledge and may contain, at the request of an instructor, an explicit pledge by the student that no unauthorized aid has been received.
4. It is the responsibility of every member of the Clemson University community to enforce the Academic Integrity Policy.

Title IX (Sexual Harassment) Statement

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix>.

Academic Success Center

The Academic Success Center provides free services, including tutoring, academic coaching, and academic skills workshops, for all Clemson students. Visit <https://www.clemson.edu/asc> for more information.

Writing Center

Clemson University's Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring for all Clemson students. Visit <https://clemson.mywconline.com> for more information.

Cooper Library

Reference librarians are available in person and via text, phone, email, and chat to answer your research questions. Visit Ask a Librarian for more information at <https://libraries.clemson.edu/ask>

Technical Support

If you are having hardware or software problems, CCIT's Service Desk may be able to help you. Contact them at ITHELP@clemson.edu with a detailed description of your problem.

Academic Advising

Academic advising (<<https://www.clemson.edu/academics/advising/index.html>>) is an ongoing educational process that connects the student to the University. Academic advising supports the University's mission of preparing students for learning beyond the confines of the academy. Academic advisors represent and interpret University policies and procedures to students and help students navigate the academic and organizational paths of the institution.

Academic Grievances

Students are advised to visit the Ombuds' Office (<<https://www.clemson.edu/administration/ombudsman/index.html>>) prior to filing a grievance. After discussion with the undergraduate academic ombudsman, students should contact Undergraduate Studies (864-656-3022) for assistance filing official paperwork.

Registrar

The Registrar's office provides information about important deadlines, degree and program requirements, and other key information, including use of iROAR to add, drop, or withdraw from courses.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Stress, anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders are increasingly common among undergraduate students across the United States. The university provides students with counseling and psychological support services. If you are struggling with your mental health and well-being in any way, I encourage you to reach out to these services. You can find more information at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/redfern/menta-health>

Assignments

A note on grading: A graduate seminar is a bit unlike an undergraduate class, where percentages and letters are more omnipresent. There is, in other words, an expectation that you will be doing "A" level work in this class, and that you will put your best foot forward in everything you do. I am happy to meet with you at any point during the semester to discuss your performance in the course if you are feeling overwhelmed or uncertain about your work or standing in the class.

Weekly passages: 10%
Participation and attendance: 10%
Seminar paper: 30%
Seminar paper proposal: 5%
Seminar paper presentation: 10%
Reading facilitation: 15%
Mock exam: 10%
Oral defense: 10%

Participation and Attendance (10%): Seminars are guided—and sustained—by the participation all of you bring to the table. You should come prepared to discuss the week's material in detail. You

should have questions and ideas, and be respectful of others' questions and ideas. The best advice I can give about being at a graduate seminar table is this: understand, affirm, appropriate, and add; try not to diminish, dismiss, or destroy. Be, as Kathleen Fitzpatrick calls it, *generous thinkers*.

I discourage the following modes of engagement:

(1) "The torpedo": Please don't simply try to sink an author's argument. Although you're welcome to disagree, make a good faith effort at positively, constructively, and creatively engaging with the reading materials on their own terms.

(2) "The omission": Although criticizing a text on the basis of its blind spots can be worthwhile, I ask you *not* to develop an entire critique around what the author did not do. Begin by trying to appreciate what she/he/they did accomplish more or less successfully.

(3) "The ace-in-the-hole": Doubtless, the reading materials will provoke you to think about other texts you've encountered, either in your other graduate seminars or in your undergraduate or extracurricular readings. Avoid comments that start with, "If only you had read..." Although making connections to texts you've read outside of this class is a worthwhile exercise in longer research papers and presentations, in general it's best to keep your comments focused on the text(s) at hand. That way, hopefully, everyone can follow along and nobody will feel alienated.

Weekly Passages (10%): To help keep our seminar on track, you will need to type up **three** particularly provocative, perplexing, and/or poignant passages from across the assigned readings for that week. For each passage, you should also include 1-5 sentences explaining why you selected that passage, and any questions you have about it. These responses are "low-stakes writing," and are designed to help me see the places you are struggling with and connecting to in our readings. Please come prepared to discuss these passages and ask questions about them, and make sure to e-mail them to me when we adjourn for the day.

Reading facilitation (15%): Once during the semester you will lead our group in a conversation about one of the week's reading selections. You're welcome to structure the discussion however you see fit. At minimum, you should:

- (a) Provide a *brief* overview of the author's main argument, theory, and/or concept
- (b) Push the class to engage in a thoughtful, critical dialogue about the text by highlighting specific passages, concepts, issues, themes, connections you find to be important or challenging.
- (c) Prepare at least two directed questions that engage particular elements of the reading for us to discuss.
- (d) Provide a concise, pointed handout that highlights key features of the reading. E-mail it to the group before the start of the seminar (or print it out if we return to face-to-face instruction)

I will “steer” the discussion as needed throughout facilitation, but this assignment allows each of you the opportunity to work on developing an agenda and distilling complicated literature for a classroom discussion.

Mock Exam (10%): On February 22, each of you will receive via e-mail a “mock exam question” that simulates an open-book Masters exam. The question will ask you to draw together major ideas, trends, and debates from the first half of the class, and prepare a 6-8 page response to this question over a ten day period. You will be graded Pass/Fail on your ability to answer the question in the allotted space and time requirements, and on your ability to appropriately and adequately represent the theory. More details will be provided in class in the weeks leading up to this mock exam. The goal is to give you some familiarity with the graduate exam process, should you decide to do exams.

Oral Defense (10%): In the week following your mock exam, each of you will meet with me individually for an approximately 20-minute defense of your exam. This will simulate a graduate defense and give you some experience and preparation for what it looks like to engage in a conversation about an exam answer (a process that is also used for defending a thesis prospectus and final thesis). In order to allow you to focus on doing your best, this will be a “Pass/Fail,” based on your ability to engage with and respond to my questions.

Seminar Paper (30%): At the end of the semester, you will submit a 15-20 page seminar paper that is predominantly focused on one of the following two directions:

- 1) *Applying* material from our readings to some sort of text/practice/phenomenon/etc. (e.g.: How does Horkheimer and Adorno’s culture industry model connect to Disney Plus? Or how does Habermas’s transformation of the public sphere connect to the anti-vaccination movement?)
- 2) *Extending* material to review other relevant literatures (e.g. what are the other ways Communication scholars have conceptualized political economy, and how has that shaped research into social media companies? Or how has performativity been studied in relationship to text messaging or other forms of written communication?)

Whichever pathway you develop, you are expected to engage a range of academic publications from **both** our course **and** found through outside research; to have an argument which guides the seminar paper; and to write with maturity and thoughtfulness, as if this were something that could be submitted to a conference or journal.

You are encouraged to meet and talk with me about this project throughout the semester.

Seminar Paper Proposal (5%): On March 22, you should submit a one-page proposal outlining what you intend your seminar paper to cover, and explaining how it either applies or extends material from our course. The purpose of this assignment is to commit to the direction of your seminar paper.

Seminar Paper Presentation (10%): During our last class meeting of the semester, each of you will give 12-15 minute presentations summarizing the work, arguments, and contributions of your seminar paper. You should consider this a rough pass at a potential conference presentation of this work. All arguments and findings are expected to be provisional, knowing that you will still likely be working on your seminar papers into exam week.

COURSE CALENDAR

Preface: (Re)defining Theory

Chapter One: (Re)defining Theory

Monday, January 11

1. Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory" (pp. 188-243)
2. D.N. Rodowick, "*Theoria* as Practical Philosophy" (pp. 7-12)
3. Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power" (pp. 205-217)

Chapter Two: *No class—MLK Jr Holiday*

Monday, January 18

Part I: Communication and Power

Chapter Three: Political Economy

Monday, January 25

1. Vincent Mosco, "Definitions and characteristics" and "Schools of thought" from *The Political Economy of Communication* (pp. 21-64)
2. Dallas W. Smythe, "On the Audience Commodity and its Work" (pp. 230-256)
3. Eileen Meehan, "Gendering the commodity audience: Critical Media Research, Feminism, and Political Economy" (pp. 311-321)
4. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (pp. 31-41)

Chapter Four: The Public Sphere

Monday, February 1

1. Jürgen Habermas, "Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere" and "Social Structures of the Public Sphere" from *The Transformation of the Public Sphere* (pp. 1-56)
2. Zeynep Tufekci, "A networked public" (pp. 3-27)
3. Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, "What constitutes meaningful participation?" (pp. 153-194)
4. Ganaele Langlois, "Participatory culture and the new governance of communication: The paradox of participatory media" (pp. 91-105)

Chapter Five: Difference

Monday, February 8

1. Stuart Hall, "Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities" (pp. 63-82)
2. Edward W. Said, "The Scope of Orientalism" (pp. 31-73)
3. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (pp. 1-24)
4. Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness" (pp. 82-108)
5. Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity" (pp. 1-41)

Chapter Six: Subjectivity and Control
Monday, February 15

1. Michel Foucault, "Body/Power" (pp. 55-62)
2. Michel Foucault, "Panopticism" (pp. 206-213)
3. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (pp. 3-7)
4. Alexander Galloway, Introduction to *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (pp. 2-28)
5. James N. Gilmore, "Alienating and reorganizing cultural goods: Using Lefebvre's controlled consumption model to theorize media industry change" (pp. 4474-4493)

Chapter Seven: Aesthetics
Monday, February 22

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (pp. 665-685)
2. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" (pp. 56-64)
3. Laura Mulvey, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" (pp. 198-209)
4. Allan Sekula, "The body and the archive" (pp. 3-64)
5. Chantal Mouffe, "Agonistic politics and artistic practices" (pp. 85-105)

Part II: Communication and Existence

Chapter Eight: Media
Monday, March 1

1. Harold Innis, "The Bias of Communication" (pp. 457-476)
2. Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message" (pp. 1-18)
3. Friedrich Kittler, Preface and Introduction to *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (xxxix-xli, 1-19)
4. John Durham Peters, "God and Google" (pp. 315-376)

Chapter Nine: Culture
Monday, March 8

1. Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" (pp. 92-100)
2. Stuart Hall, "Culture, Media, and the 'Ideological Effect'" (pp. 298-335)
3. Lawrence Grossberg, "The Heart of Cultural Studies" (pp. 7-55)
4. Jennifer Daryl Slack, "Cultural Studies in Black and White" (pp. 875-902)
5. Ted Striphas, "Caring for Cultural Studies" (pp. 1-18)

****Spring break March 15**

Chapter Ten: Phenomenology
Monday, March 22

1. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (entire book)
2. Vivian Sobchack, "A Leg to Stand On: Aesthetics, Metaphor, and Materiality" (pp. 205-225)

Chapter Eleven: Performance
Monday, March 29

1. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (entire book)
2. Alice E. Marwick and danah boyd, "I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience" (pp. 114-133)
3. James N. Gilmore, "To affinity and beyond: Clicking as communicative gesture on the experimentation platform" (pp. 333-348).

Chapter Twelve: Social Constructionism
Monday, April 5

1. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (entire book)
2. James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication" (pp. 11-28)

Chapter Thirteen: Stories We Tell
Monday, April 12

1. Meaghan Morris, "History in Cultural Studies" (pp. 1-30)
2. Lawrence Grossberg, "From Trump to the Conjuncture" (pp. 3-52)
3. Michel de Certeau, "Making History: Problems of Method and Problems of Meaning" (pp. 19-55).

Chapter Fourteen: Presentations and conclusions
Monday, April 19

Seminar paper presentations

Exam week

Seminar papers due via email to Dr. Gilmore by April 28, 2021 at midnight via e-mail in a .docx or similar format (please no pdfs)

Course Bibliography

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- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. New York: Verso, 1993.
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- Innis, Harold A. "The Bias of Communication." *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 15, no. 4 (1949): 457-476.
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Marwick, Alice E. and danah boyd. "I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience." *New Media & Society* 13, no. 1 (2010): 114-133.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994 [1964].

Meehan, Eileen R. "Gendering the Commodity Audience: Critical Media Research, Feminism, and Political Economy" in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (pp. 311-321). Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Morris, Meaghan. *Too Soon, Too Late: History in Popular Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

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Mouffe, Chantal. *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. New York: Verso, 2013.

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