

UMASS DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Current Graduate Courses

Spring 2008 Graduate Courses

(All courses carry 3-credits unless otherwise indicated. Course Eligibilities are as of April 2007 and are subject to change.)

613: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication Theory

Cronen 304 Machmer

Seminar. A survey of research traditions in the study of interpersonal communication. The course will examine the distinct philosophies, theories, and methodologies of these traditions, as well as samples of research from each. Links to other sub-disciplines such as public communication, media research, and cultural studies will be made, thus demonstrating how some studies cross traditional research boundaries. Course requirements include class readings, discussion, and one or more essays (such as a literature review, an explication of an approach to interpersonal communication, a comparison of research traditions, or a review of specific applications of an approach). (Course capacity is 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral, Masters Graduate COMM majors

665: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory

Gencarella Olbrys 414 Machmer

Seminar. Rhetoric is a troubling thing. Sometimes conceptualized as acts of seduction, sometimes as adornment, sometimes as oratory, sometimes as any attempt at persuasion, sometimes as meta-discursive theory, the definition of rhetoric changes with each performance of rhetoric. Rhetoric unfolds in the world of contingencies and concerns the relationship of aesthetic experience and judgment, so any aversion to a single and immutable definition is understandable. Still, some ideas are recurrent: rhetoric involves the human creation of a social world and the calling of others into that world through symbolic practices. This class is a seminar contemporary rhetorical theories. It is designed to introduce graduate students to the range of rhetorical theory and to probe the possibilities for what it means to act rhetorically. Questions of rhetoric's relationship to discourse, politics, public deliberation, identification, aesthetic veils, cultural critique, and practical reasoning are explored in detail. The relationship between rhetorical studies, cultural studies, and performance studies are similarly engaged in depth. The main assignments are three response papers to the readings throughout the semester. Readings (tentatively) include Kenneth Burke, Judith Butler, Ralph Cintron, Thomas Farrell, and edited volumes by John Lucaites and Celeste Condit (*Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*), Lawrence Prelli (*Rhetorics of Display*), Thomas Rosteck (*At the Intersection: Cultural Studies and Rhetorical Studies*), and Jack Selzer and Shannon Crowley (*Rhetorical Bodies*). (Course capacity is 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral, Masters Graduate COMM majors

691B: Seminar in Media Theories

Geddes 307B Machmer

This seminar approaches media theories as socially constructed within specific historical-geographical contexts. Thus, a good deal of attention is given to the development of a comparative framework, and to the way theory parallels both the aspirations and practices associated with modernity, postmodernity and (post)coloniality. We will examine a range of perspectives on mass mediated communication, including critical cultural studies (European-American as well as 'Other' traditions from Latin America and Asia), 'mainstream American theory' (e.g. two-step flow, uses and gratifications,

empiricism, modernization), and theories that address the emergence of 'new media', networks, and subjectivity. Students will write short periodic responses to the readings and present material orally. In addition, students will write two papers (7-12 pages each) responding to two questions (proposed by the student and to be negotiated with the instructor) on the assigned readings and topics. Prerequisite: Willingness to engage media theory within a comparative framework. (Course capacity is 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral, Masters Graduate COMM majors

733: Cultivation Analysis

Morgan 317 Machmer

This seminar will focus on the theoretical assumptions and methodological procedures of cultivation analysis. The first part of the course will be devoted to the theory itself, in terms of how it has developed and how it fits in with other related perspectives and approaches. We will examine various critiques of the theory as well as responses to those critiques. A paper dealing with relevant theoretical issues will be due about half-way through the course. The second part of the course will emphasize the nitty-gritty of the design and execution of cultivation analysis. Students will conduct guided secondary analysis of existing data bases (e.g., the NORC General Social Survey) to explore the methodological and procedural implications of the approach. A statistical analysis using the models and procedures of cultivation analysis will be due at the end of the semester. (Course capacity is 10)

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor

Course Eligibility: Doctoral, Masters Graduate COMM majors

791D: Seminar - Media and Political Culture

Romantan 412 Machmer

How do media play in the production of political culture change and stasis? How do practices/symbols/processes etc. associated with political culture not only illustrate, but also manufacture compliance/dissent? How do transnational social movements generate and sustain transnational political cultures via today's global media? Why do some media narratives of conspiracy or threat lead to the formation of specific political cultures in contexts such as the post 9/11 state or authoritarian regimes, whereas others do not? How can one better understand sites of domination and resistance using a comparative analysis of cultural consistencies and inconsistencies? Is political culture a cul-de-sac or an emancipating site for communication scholarship?

This seminar attempts to address these questions via a survey of the relevant main concepts, theoretical debates, and methodological approaches in the study of political culture. Traditional views consign political culture to sets of political values and "common knowledge" used in political games. Yet, there is more to political culture than that. After reviewing classic (Weber, Durkheim, Gramsci), orthodox (Banfield, Pye, Mead, Almond, Verba), and neo-orthodox scholarship (Inglehart, Huntington etc.), the seminar will delve into alternative approaches to culture pioneered in anthropology (Geertz, Wedeen, Malkki), and in sociology (Bourdieu, de Certeau, Wacquant, Sewell, Brubaker, Swidler) in order to redefine the conceptual boundaries of political culture and to discuss the ways in which these approaches speak to communication scholarship. The seminar asks what are the consequences for communication of recoding (1) political culture as practices (actions, strategies, habits and norms of political agents), (2) political culture as systems of political signification (language and other semiotic systems), and (3) political culture as a process that enables agents to continuously change systems of signification. The survey of scholarship will be accompanied by empirical studies on the mediated use of political culture by totalitarian, authoritarian and liberal-democratic states, by historical and contemporary social movements acting in national and transnational spaces or by international organizations entrusted with global/regional economic governance.

Course Eligibility: Doctoral & Masters Graduate students

793J: Seminar - Global Seminar Cities

Ciecko 306 Machmer

This seminar focuses on cities as audiovisual spaces of modernity in global cinema. Topics to be considered include representational politics and issues of culture; relevant concepts such as metropolis, cosmopolitics, and industrialization; urban history and spectatorship; and urban locations and "film city" studio simulacra. Possible cities to be considered include Cairo, Paris, Tehran, Bombay, Havana, and others. (Course capacity 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral & Masters Graduate COMM majors

794R: Seminar - Communication for Development and Social Change**Servaes 401 Machmer**

This course will explore the theory and practice of communication for development and social change. Beginning with the nature of development and communication in social change, the course will deal with the key approaches in this field, in particular communication and modernization, communication and dependence, and communication in participatory communication. Case studies of participatory communication projects will be used as examples (e.g. community radio, HIV-Aids in Asia, The Millenium Development Goals, and the communication of major UN- and bilateral agencies and NGOs). (Course capacity is 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral & Masters Graduate COMM majors

Class Notes: This class will meet on a variable schedule throughout the spring semester. All students interested must attend the introductory session on Tuesday, January 29, 2008 in Machmer 401 at 4:00 p.m.

794W: Seminar - Language, Power, and Identity**Bailey 307A Machmer**

In this course we explore ways in which language use can be related to larger questions of identity and power. How does language use reflect these larger social constellations? How does language use contribute to constituting them? At a more abstract level, the course is thus about relating individual actions and meanings in the here-and-now to the larger sweep of social history. We will read a range of works, primarily ethnographic, that link empirical language data and social theory in addressing these relationships. Students will use ideas and theories from the course to write a final paper using data that they collect independently or to which they already have access. (Course capacity is 10)

Course Eligibility: Doctoral & Masters Graduate COMM majors OR permission of instructor