CMST 7900: Introduction to Graduate Study in Communication Studies  
Fall 2015, MW 1:30-2:50 p.m., 153 Coates

There are few earthly things more beautiful than a university, a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know, where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see. John Masefield

The word “academic” is a synonym for irrelevant. Saul Alinsky

In order to understand alternative points of view it is important that a theorist be fully aware of the assumptions upon which his [sic] own perspective is based. Such an appreciation involves an intellectual journey which takes him [sic] outside the realm of his [sic] own familiar domain. – Burrell & Morgan

…communication research is a field, not a discipline. In the study of man, it is one of the great crossroads where many pass but few tarry. Wilbur Schramm

Work in the field of communications … is a somewhat transient way- station where people can meet who don’t quite want to commit themselves to the field of literature (as monopolized by English departments) or to the social science (as monopolized by departments of sociology or political science). David Riesman

In a sense, we have never really been a discipline … Our reality is messier and much more interesting than that.  
Bill Keith & Pat Gebrke

Many of the differences within our field spring from the fact that most of us are either openly practicing or closet rhetoricians. 
Gary Crnkhit

…humans are hardwired by the privacy of their experience to have communication problems. John Durham Peters

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Course Description:  
CMST 7900 provides an introduction to graduate study and is required for students declaring an emphasis in Communication Studies. Taking this course seriously will provide you with a foundational understanding of the Communication Studies landscape as well as the larger academic culture within which that landscape is situated. The class requires you to think critically about a range of topics including, but not limited to, (a) the role of higher education in an increasingly diverse society, (b) the place of Communication Studies in the academy, (c) your own place within Communication Studies, (d) the metatheoretical and methodological commitments that mark scholars as taking positions on human communication, and (e) the possibility of synthesis. Ultimately, this class will give you the tools and vocabulary to speak to scholars inside and outside Communication Studies and who hold a range of perspectives. Too often, scholars critique the work of others without truly understanding the assumptions underlying that work and the vocabulary used therein. By increasing awareness of our differences, we come to a greater appreciation of each other as scholars looking to improve the lives of everyday communicators. Thus, this class also seeks to promote dialogue, conversation, and debate among students and faculty about the strengths and limitations of different approaches to the study of human communication.
**Course Objectives:**
1. To introduce students to academic culture.
2. To provide a core base of knowledge that promotes intellectual debate and dialogue.
3. To assist students in elaborating their own responses to foundational questions concerning different approaches to the study of human communication.
4. To encourage students to think about the idea of synthesis, its possibility, and its ramifications.

**Required Texts:**

The graduate faculty want to emphasize that writing is a process. Consequently, this seminar approaches the task of writing an essay by taking you through one version of that process and breaking it down into a series of smaller and more focused writing tasks and exercises. We do not have the time to devote a complete explication of the process, but students are expected to familiarize themselves with the readings listed below. Revising and seeking the input of colleagues is at the heart of writing successfully for publication. Developing a schedule with good work habits that accomplish your writing goals on a regular and frequent basis will impact your success in all your coursework and, ultimately, in your academic career. Naturally, writing assignments will make up the bulk of your grade in this course.


All other readings are made available on the Moodle course page. Students are encouraged to purchase copies of books from which readings are pulled, to use this class not only as an introduction to Communication Studies and the academic life but to also start your personal library.
Assignments and Evaluation

NOTE: Deadlines are the last day the paper will be accepted, not the day that I expect the paper. Early submissions are always welcomed and are, in fact, encouraged. When you find yourself thinking, “Wow, this is a slow week,” don’t be fooled! You should be equally full most weeks of the semester if you pace yourself appropriately. Feel free to take an extra nap during “slow weeks,” but certainly do some “catch-up work” and “read and work ahead” because it is the calm before the storm.

1. All students are expected to attend all class sessions, complete assigned readings, and participate regularly in class discussions. The class will NOT be successful without your participation. Thus, attendance and participation is worth 20% of the final course grade.

2. To facilitate class discussion, you will prepare several brief (500-1000 words) reaction statements. The reaction statements should be read aloud during class meetings when appropriate and will help provide the basis for class discussions. The purpose of these reaction statements is to organize and stimulate discussion; hence, they should be focused and brief. Each weekly set of required readings is accompanied by discussion questions which may serve as a basis for your reaction statements. If, however, students are moved to write about an issue not reflected in these questions, they are free to write a reaction statement addressing that issue. Obviously, a brief reaction statement cannot provide detailed responses to the discussion questions; rather the purpose of the paper is help students begin drawing together ideas about what they have read. It is important to make a claim and back it up with evidence; the length of the assignment makes it impossible to do justice to more than one major claim.

Reaction statements will be turned in each class period. Each class, one student is responsible for a reaction statement. Reaction statements will count a total of 10% of the final grade. Students will sign up for their reaction statements the first or second class meeting of the course.

3. At three points in the semester, students will write short position papers (5 page max, 12-point font, 1 inch margins, double spacing, 1 additional page for references), each of which will require you to take a position on an important issue, provide reasons to support your position, and anticipate and respond to possible counter-arguments. Each paper will count 10% toward the final course grade.

- Paper I is meant to allow you to defend (or deride) Communication Studies as a viable disciplinary pursuit. This paper is due on September 21.
- Paper II is meant to explore your commitments as a scholar of human communication. This paper is due on October 5.
- Paper III is meant for you to take a position regarding whether scientific, interpretive, and critical approaches to communication study are incommensurable or reconcilable. This paper is due November 23.

You will turn in two copies of each paper. The first copy is for me and should be a hard copy. The second copy is for a group of your classmates and should be submitted through Moodle. All studies are expected to give feedback on ONE paper (and I will assign those roles later). Feedback is due seven (7) days after the paper’s deadline (e.g., 9/28 for 9/21).
4. All students will prepare a major paper. The paper should focus on a communication phenomenon of interest to the student and present a compelling rationale for its study.

My expectation is that these papers will involve a review and assimilation of the theoretical and empirical work related to a particular phenomenon. At the end of the semester, you should have a final product that would be suitable for revising with an eye toward submission to an academic conference.

This paper will be turned in over the course of three stages:

- **Stage 1** – The goal of the first part of the paper is to provide an explication of the phenomenon to be examined and a bibliography of research on the phenomenon. “Explication” is more than just a simple definition. It is a careful analysis of the labels attached to a phenomenon; the meaning of the labels; the operationalizations of the phenomenon; and the scope, specificity, and contextual elements that define the phenomenon. Students should make ample use of existing research to clarify how the phenomenon has been conceptualized in the literature. In addition to the resources cited in explicating the phenomenon, Stage 1 should include a separate bibliography of resources to be explored in developing the rest of the paper. Stage 1 is due in class on September 28.

- **Stage 2** – Stage 2 should include a revision of the explication presented in Stage 1 to reflect the feedback received and the student’s increasingly sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, the student should examine the phenomenon from two of the metatheoretical perspectives discussed between October 6 and October 27. In each subsection addressing a perspective on the phenomenon, the student should review the main assumptions of the perspective (based on class readings and other supplemental materials) and identify questions about your phenomenon that might be answered by this metatheoretical perspective. In other words, how might the perspective explain some of the features of your phenomenon, how might it answer existing questions about the phenomenon, and what new questions are raised about the phenomenon in light of the theory’s assumptions? Stage 2 of the paper is due in class on November 9.

- **Final Paper** – The final paper builds on the draft from Stage 2 by reflecting the feedback received and the student’s increasingly sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, the paper should compare and contrast the different perspectives applied to the study of your phenomenon of choice, highlight points of overlap and gaps, and discuss the strengths and limitations of each approach. Thus, this final section contributes to an integrated understanding of the phenomenon. The final paper is due on December 2.

Students should turn in two copies at Stages 1 and 2 – one with author identification and one that is void of such identification for blind review. The copy with identification should be accompanied with a cover letter, formatting according to APA 6th edition (the manuscript can be whatever official style guide you will use for the majority of your writing career). For Stages 2 and 3, your cover letter should include information about the revisions you made, paying attention to how you addressed the feedback. The Moodle course page has examples of cover letters.
Each student will review another student’s paper and provide feedback. The feedback you provide classmates will be written void of identification. Your feedback should be a minimum of 500 words; there is no max, but do not overdo it – you have your own work to do too. This is practice in balancing commitments. You will turn the feedback to me by the Thursday of the week the paper is due, 5:00 PM (over email is fine or in my campus mailbox). I will compile these reactions with my own.

The paper will be worth 30% (Stage 1 = 5%; Stage 2 = 10%; Stage 3 = 15%) and the feedback worth 10% (5% for Stage 1, ditto Stage 2) of the final grade.

**Calculating Course Grades**

I am bound by PS-44, “Student Grading,” to “determine and assign the grade for each student in the course beyond the final date for withdrawing with a W” and to do so “equitably and consistently.”

The grade you EARN for this class is calculated based on a formula that weights the four assignments (listed above) by their respective percentages. **For all assignments, you will earn a letter grade** that corresponds to the “meaning of grades” found below. These letter grades will correspond to a traditional 4.0 scale, where a 4.0 equals grade of “A” as follows:

- A+ = 4.33
- A = 4.0
- A- = 3.67
- B+ = 3.33
- B = 3.0
- B- = 2.67
- C+ = 2.33
- C = 2.0
- C- = 1.67
- D+ = 1.33
- D = 1.0
- D- = .67
- F+ = .33
- F = 0.0

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Reaction Papers (ave)</td>
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<td>Position Paper I</td>
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<td>Position Paper III</td>
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<td>Final Paper (ave)</td>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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Your final grade would be calculated in the following manner:

\[
(4.0)(.20) + (3.67)(.10) + (3.33)(.10) + (4.0)(.10) + (3.67)(.10) + (3.67)(.30) + (4.0)(.10) = 0.8 + 0.367 + 0.333 + 0.4 + 0.367 + 1.101 + 0.4 = 3.76 = \text{A-}
\]

Please note that for your three (3) credits, you are expected to attend class and commit a minimum of an additional 9 hours per week for a total of 12 hours a week for this course. With your other courses, that means a full time student in this Department has a 36 hour “work week” for her coursework. If you are funded, you are expected to spend an additional 20 hours per week on your teaching responsibilities. That is a total of 56 hours a week. Assuming you practice one day of rest, you should work 9-10 hour days for the other 6. And that doesn’t include the good advice of getting on 1-2 research teams! You’re going to be busy!!
THE MEANING OF GRADES

A - **Excellent work.** The student went above and beyond assignment expectations. Furthermore, the student has represented mastery of course material, both conceptually and pragmatically. Although there is room for improvement, the argument was appropriate and well-articulated, the literature cited was appropriate with no germinal pieces missing, and the paper met appropriate style guide criteria. Well done, good and faithful servant.

B - **Acceptable work.** The student completed the assignment at an above average level. B work is good work, but still has room for significant improvement. There may be problems with articulating a central thesis or driving theoretical or practical problem; major grammatical or structure deficits; missing literature that is key to an important argument; etc. You're on your way, baby!

C - **Unacceptable work.** The student completed the assignment as specified by the assignment description. No more than “effort as expected” was achieved. Minimum requirements were met, minimum effort was put forth. Moreover, there are conceptual and/or methodological flaws that suggest the student is either not ready for graduate work or not putting forth the effort that is takes to be a successful graduate student. C work is basically failing work. You may want to reconsider this whole graduate school thing.

D - **Late work.** Late work is acceptable and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. If a student does not make prior arrangements, all late work, regardless of quality (and if granted post-due date), will be given a maximum grade of D. Your receiving a D means nothing more than you need to work on punctuality and prioritization.

F - **Unfulfilled assignment.** Any assignment not turned in by the deadline will be given a grade of F (but see “D” above). This is totally unacceptable for graduate school.
Relevant LSU Policy Statements for Graduate Students

There are 118 policy statements for LSU. Many are applicable to you, and for a list of them all, see http://appl003.ocs.lsu.edu/ups.nsf/ByNumber?OpenView&Start=1. Two that are especially salient are described below.

PS-21 “Graduate Assistantships” defines the “policies governing the appointment and evaluation of graduate assistants (GAs) … [including] setting minimum academic qualifications for holding GA appointments, establishing appointments and renewal procedures, setting average workloads, and reviewing stipend levels and ranges.”

- A particularly salient point for those of you on assistantships is that you are expected to put 20 hours a week toward your TA responsibilities. Resist the temptation to overload your weeks preparing for the classes you teach. You should be able to fulfill your obligation and do so competently if you keep with the 20 hour rule. If you find yourself unable to stay under 20 hours a week, please seek guidance and advice.

PS-22 “Student Absence from Class” defines attendance as “the responsibility of the student” and an expectation that if unfulfilled requires the student to not only contact the professor beforehand (if applicable) but also to “[compensate] for what may have been missed.” The policy also defines “valid reasons for absences” which I will honor if you are honest, upfront, and apologetic (though some things are beyond your control, your attitude should suggest that you realize course work is your primary responsibility). I fundamentally believe in forgiveness and second chances, and I understand that “life happens.” Trust me, my life happens all the time. Be a responsible graduate student and come to class as you are physically and mentally able. Missing class is not excusable because, for instance, you have band practice or your bowling team can only meet after lunch on Mondays. Your first responsibility as a graduate student at this stage of your career is to your coursework.

If you are late to class, please do not say it is because you could not find a parking space or that your alarm did not go off in time to wake you from your afternoon nap. Don’t say that it took you longer than expected to walk. Do not say that other responsibilities took more time than you expected; this is your number one responsibility. Nothing should come before it. If something does (consistently), then you should reconsider taking the course right now or, really, being in graduate school at this point. There are valid reasons for being late, and if not abused, will be forgiven and forgotten.
**Summary of the Course**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>8/24</td>
<td>Who are we, part I: A brief vision of the academic life</td>
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<td>Who are we, part II: What is this class all about?</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>No Class, NCA Convention</td>
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<td><strong>Unit IV: Debating Central Terms</strong></td>
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<td>11/23</td>
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<td>11/25</td>
<td>No Class, Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>What is Theory?</td>
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<td>12/2</td>
<td>What is the Future?</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM PERIOD – DATE AND TIME TO BE DETERMINED</td>
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Detailed Course Outline with Readings

Below, I detail what we will discuss for each class period. Under each sub-unit there are a set of “issues” that should direct your reading and your reflection paper (if you are scheduled to write for that week). Required readings are in bold font. I attempted to limit readings to 50 pages of text (not including reference lists), though I was more successful for some classes than for others. I also included relevant, additional readings for topics in case you have “extra time” or are just “that into it,” but mainly as a resource for when you revisit this syllabus in the years to come.

Week | Date | Topic
--- | --- | ---
1 | 8/24 | **Unit I: Orientation to University Life**
|  | **Part I: A brief vision of the academic life**
| Issues | What can you expect during your life as an academic? What are the general rites of passage for academics? How can you successfully navigate the academic life?
|  | **Part II: What is this class all about?**
| Issues | What are the purposes of CMST 7900? What are the expectations for CMST 7900? As a first rite de passage, how can you be successful in CMST 7900?
| Required Readings | The syllabus

Miller, N., & Brimicombe, A. (2004). Mapping research journeys across complex terrain with heavy baggage. Studies in Continuing Education, 26, 405-417. doi:10.1080/0158037042000265962 (This is one among several articles in a special issue, “The working life of doctoral students,” of this journal.)


2 Relevant Tensions in the Life of an Academic

8/31 Tension 1: The Role of the University

Issues
What are the purposes of the modern university? How has this (if at all) changed over time? How do different stakeholders define the mission of the university? How can the political landscape of a particular state influence this mission? What is at stake when the mission of a particular University is defined in a particular way? Whose interests does it serve to define the mission as, for instance, “the development of a competent workforce” or “the development of engaged citizens” or “the dissemination of powerful research”?

Required Readings – Tension 1


Mission Statements of Exemplar LSU Institutions

Supplemental Readings - Tension 1


**9/2 Tension 2: Fragmentation and the Rise of Disciplinary Territory Wars**

**Issues**
What is a “discipline?” Is there a set of criteria that can help identify when one discipline ends and another begins? How do disciplines emerge? What purposes do they serve? How should a university carve up academic specialties (if at all)? What current model of disciplinary structure is most productive (and for whom)? What stakeholders should have a say (and what kind and to what degree) in the development, maintenance, and termination of disciplines (at least those represented at a particular institution)?

**Required Readings**

Supplemental Readings - Tension 2


**9/7 No Class, “Labor Day”**
Tension 3: The Roles of the Academic

Issues
What are the roles academics are asked to balance? How can this balancing act lead to stress and burnout? How do you know how to balance? Can balance be achieved? Is balance a misnomer? What is balance? Who gets to define the roles of an academic? Who should be able to define the roles of an academic? Are the reasons cited for academic success the same that drew you to the profession? If not, how can this be reconciled? Can one publish and perish? Or is it one or the other? How do you, should you, could you, would you do service? What is service? How is service distinguished from activism? Should academics be activists? Why (not)? What is the role of the academic in the larger society? Should you drink local, think global?

Required Readings – Tension 3


See here for “Why Activism and Academics Don’t Mix: http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/2013/03/31/why-activism-and-academia-dont-mix/

Supplemental Readings - Tension 3


The Center for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE) has a great website and several resources that might be helpful as you think about issues related to what academics do and for what they are incentivized to do: [http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/](http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/)

**Unit II: Defining Communication Studies**

**Issues**

Why study human communication? What are the stories that constitute the history of communication as a field? What roles has communication played and what purposes has the study of communication served for different societies (e.g., Greek)? What role has communication inquiry played economically, politically, and socially? What purposes for communication study are associated with different epochs in the evolution of the field? Is the study of human communication destined to be a field? Can Communication Studies ever become a discipline? Has Communication Studies reached disciplinary status? What do you say when someone asks you what you do for a living? How do you respond with, “Oh, so like Psychology” or “Oh, so you’re kind of like an English major”? How can we describe ourselves without invoking notions of other, more established (and arguably more mainstream) disciplines? Does this even matter? Is the notion of discipline by department antiquated and ultimately harmful?

**9/14  The Place of Communication Studies in the Larger Academic Landscape**

**Required Readings**


**9/16  Establishing a Discipline through an Association**


Supplemental Readings


9/21 *Philosophical Foundations of CS, I: Perspectives on Inquiry*

**Issues:** What kinds of knowledge are there? How can we come to have various types of knowledge about human communication? How can we warrant our knowledge claims about or representations of human communication? Why is such knowledge or representation worthwhile?
**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


Philosophical Foundations of CS, II: Traditions of Scholarship

**Issues:** What are some major approaches to the study of human communication? What assumptions do these approaches share about the processes of inquiry? In what important ways do these approaches differ from each other?

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


Philosophical Foundations of CS, III: Paradigms and “Theory Choice”

**Issues:** What, for Kuhn, is a paradigm? That is, what are the major constituents that compose what Kuhn terms a "scientific paradigm?” Is any particular constituent more important than others in establishing or defining a paradigm? Why and how do paradigms change? Why does Kuhn regard paradigm changes as revolutionary rather than evolutionary (i.e., scientific change occurring through discontinuous rather than continuous development)? Does Kuhn’s analysis of paradigm change seem reasonable to you? Why or why not? Is there any logic or rationality to paradigm changes?

**Reading Kuhn**

**Required Readings**


9/30  **Anticipating and Summarizing Kuhn**

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


**The Kuhnian notion of scientific revolution has been particularly influential on a branch of rhetorical studies that can be called rhetoric of science. Exemplar readings in this area include a special issue of *Southern Communication Journal* (1993, Vol. 58, Issue 4) as well as the following:


Wander, P. C., & Jaehne, D. (2000). Prospects for 'a rhetoric of science.' *Social Epistemology*, 14, 211-233. doi: 10.1080/02691720050199243 (This is part of a larger special issue of this journal on climate change that was motivated by the debate between two climate scientists, James Hansen and Patrick Michaels, at the 1998 American Association for Rhetoric of Science and Technology meeting.)


**Unit III: Ways of Studying Human Communication**

### 10/5 What is Science?

**Issues:** What is science? What are the critical elements of the scientific approach to the world? What are the limits of a scientific understanding of the world?

**Required Readings**


Science of Human Communication

Issues: Is a science of humans possible? How can a creature that *interprets* and *acts* be studied scientifically? Is it possible to predict, control, and generalize about meaningful human conduct? Can scientific explanations of such conduct be developed and tested? In what sense would such explanations be “scientific?”


“Three Ways” to Conceptualize Science: Naturalism, Perspectivism, and Realism


Supplemental Readings


*Supplemental Readings – Exemplars*


### Interpretive Approaches

**Issues**

What are the philosophical foundations of interpretive theory? Are these foundations different for different “types” of interpretive approaches (e.g., social construction, phenomenology)? What counts as interpretive theory? What does not count? How is “interpretive” theory different from “scientific” theory? How does interpretive theory shape methodological choices? What is the relationship between interpretive theory and interpretive research? What are the key characteristics of interpretive research? Are there certain interpretive methodologies that could only be used for the purposes of interpretive theory? How would you position the relationship between interpretive research and post-positivistic research? What contributions can interpretive research make to knowledge? How might we develop a set of criteria to evaluate interpretive research?

#### 10/12 Interpretive Theory – Overview

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


10/14 Social Constructionism

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


10/19 Hermeneutics

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


10/21 Symbolic Interactionism

Required Readings

- Also in *Philosophy of literary form*. 1973, University of California Press. “Definition of Man” (pp. 3-24). *Note: The first several editions of this book were published by LSU Press.*


**Supplemental Readings**


10/26  **Rhetorical Criticism Approaches**

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Interpretive Research—Overview**


Phenomenology


- Also see:


“Social” Approaches (Post-modernism, autoethnography)


Other Viewpoints


Critical Approaches

Issues

To what extent does the study of human behavior “contain the essence of criticism?” How does knowledge inform politics and vice versa? Is there such a thing as apolitical research? What is the relationship between communication and structure? Is the primary function of theory to critique? To what extent is critique a mode of social action? What is the role of “power” in explaining human communication?
Critical Approaches: Overview

Required Readings


Critical Approaches: Foundations

Required Readings


Critical Approaches: Exemplars

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


12 11/9 The Paradigm Dialogues

**Issues:** What are the purposes of communication scholarship? On what types of problems should scholars of human communication work? Are there various ways to answer these questions? Or only one? In other words, is Communication Studies is marked by monomania and exclusivism or excessive fragmentation and diversity? Does fragmentation lead to stagnation or to better scholarship? What are the positive and negative consequences of fragmentation? Of uniformity? What mode of science is claimed to be the “dominant paradigm” for Communication Studies scholarship? Can Communication Studies really be said to have a “dominant paradigm?” Has the “dominant paradigm” finally been toppled?

**Required Readings**
Craig, R. T. The speech tradition. 310–314. doi:10.1080/03637759009376205


11/11  Making Sense of our Disciplinary Identity

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**
1983 Special Issue of Journal of Communication (also a book), “Ferment in the Field”

1993, two-issue sequel in JoC, “The Future of the Field’

Selections from JoC from 2005 on “state of the art” in Communication research

There are other excellent response essays in the Dervin et al “Rethinking Vol. I” book, and there is a full second volume that provides paradigm exemplars.

Burgoon, J. B. (Ed.). (1990). Are rhetoric and science incompatible? [Special section] *Communication Monographs, 57*, 309–332. In addition to the Craig article we read, this special section of CM contains the following articles:


Cushman, D. P. A window of opportunity argument. 328–332. doi:10.1080/03637759009376208

Prelli, L. J. Rhetorical logic and the integration of rhetoric and science. 315–322. 10.1080/03637759009376206

13  11/25  No Class, Thanksgiving Break

14  11/23  What is Communication?

**Issues**
What is communication? What isn’t communication? What makes human communication possible? Is communication different from behavior? Action? Meaning? What are popular myths about communication? To what extent are these myths accurate?

**Readings**


*Supplemental Readings*


*Debate over Axiom 1 (one cannot (not) communicate)*


11/25 No Class, NCA Convention

11/30 What is Theory?

**Issues:**
What makes a theoretical contribution a theory of communication? What does not count as a communication theory? Are communication theories flourishing or withering away? Is Communication Studies too rich or too poor in theoretical frameworks? Is it necessary (or advised) to have a “touchstone theory around which communication researchers might organize their efforts” (Berger)? What are the perspectives from which you can judge whether something counts as a communication theory? What should communication theory accomplish? Is the purpose of research to build theory? To create knowledge? To help the public? To … ?

**Required Readings**


*Supplemental Readings*


The complete “Has Communication Research Made a Difference” Forum


12/2  What is the Future?

Issues: What is the future of Communication Studies? Can you point to a turning point, catalyst, or crucial time in the past 2, 5, 10, 15 years that seems to point the way? Is the future of Communication Studies similar to other academic tribes? What power will the larger discipline have given other societal and administrative pressures? Is the future of the discipline similar to the future of this Department? Your career? What is your place in the larger field? Are disciplines dead? If not, do they need to be abolished so that we can get onto the work that is necessary to create theory and improve lives? Does it really make sense to divide people by department? By discipline? Or will these structures live long past our discussion in CMST 7900?

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


16  **Final Exam Period – Paper Presentations**