

Introduction to Human Communication and Culture
Fall 2017

This course examines major concepts, theories, and research perspectives within the field of human communication and culture. It will introduce and review key approaches to the study of human interaction, rhetoric, language, persuasion, identity formation and cultural processes across diverse contexts. As a student of this class, you will explore the field's interdisciplinary character, examining the role of language and meaning; how language structures reality; as well as the nonverbal aspects of social interaction. Specifically, the course provides a framework from which you can think seriously about how culture, society and identity are constructed in and by our communicative practices. We will examine the social, cultural, and political impacts of communication as it unfolds in everyday life. By semester's end, you will develop the critical tools to consider the process and role of communication in contemporary society and begin to establish your own perspectives on the study of human communication.

Introduction to Communication & Culture

- T9/5 1. *Introduction*
Discussion of the syllabus, goals, and requirements of the class
- R9/7 2. *What is "Culture"?*
Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System" (73-93)
John Kenneth Galbraith, "The Concept of the Conventional Wisdom" (6-19)
- T9/12 3. *The Concept of "Communication"*
John Durham Peters, "The Problem of Communication" (1-31)

Communication and the Public Sphere

- R9/14 4. *What is the "Public Sphere"?*
Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," (49-55)
- T9/19 5. *The American Public Sphere*
Walter Lippmann, Selections from *Public Opinion*
John Dewey, "Review of Lippmann's *Public Opinion*"
- R9/21 6. *The New Public*
Leon Mayhew, *The New Public* (3-8)
Sarah Igo, "America in Aggregate," from *Averaged American*

Language

- T9/26 7. *Language and the Public Sphere – Rhetoric 1*
Aristotle, "Rhetoric" 1.1-1.4 (19-24, 31-34)

Listen to Frank Luntz Fresh Air Interview
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6761960>

R9/28 8. *Language as Action*
J.L. Austin, selection from *Doing Things With Words* (1-24)
Lakoff & Johnson, selections from *Metaphors We Live By* (3-33)

T10/3 9. Colapinto , “The Interpreter”

Culture, Identity and the Counter-Public

R10/5 10. *Discourse*
Stuart Hall, *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power* (Introduction & Part 3)

T10/10 11. *Self-Presentation*
Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Introduction & Ch. 3)

R10/12 12. *What is Gender?*
Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” (519-531)

Watch in class: “Paris is Burning

T10/17 13. *The Counter-public as Experience*
Erving Goffman, selections from *Stigma* (131-140)

R10/19 14. *Gay identity or Queer politics?*
Michael Warner, selections from *The Trouble with Normal* (vii-17 and 40-80)

T10/24 15. *Race as Ideology*
Richard Dyer, selections from *White* (xiii-xv, 41-81)

R10/26 16. *Race as Social Practice*
bell hooks, “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance” (21-39)

T10/31 17. *Race as Politics*
Ta-Nehisi Coates, “*Trump, the First White President*”
Williams, “*Response to Coates*”

R11/2 18. *MIDTERM IN CLASS*

Non-verbal Communication

T11/7 19. *Design*
Flusser “About the Word *Design* (17-21)
Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” (1-12)

R11/9 20. *Semiotics*

Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image"

Technologically-Mediated Communication

- T11/14 21. *Television*
Raymond Williams, *selections from* "Television: Technology & Cultural Form"
Neil Postman, "Now...This" (99-113)
- R11/16 22. *Public and Political Communication in age of Television*
Huxman & Bruce "Toward a Dynamic Framework of Apologia: A Case Study of Dow Chemical, Vietnam and the Napalm Controversy" (57-72)
- T11/21 23. *Computers*
Langdon Winner, *Mythinformation* (587-598)
Licklider & Taylor, *The Computer as a Communication Device* (21-30, 37-40)
- R11/23 NO CLASS
- T11/28 24. *What is the Internet?*
Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community*, (Intro)
Trottier and Lyon, "Key Features of Social Media Surveillance" (89-103)
- R11/30 25. *Internet Culture – Social Media & Public Sphere*
Billings, "4-Chan"
Nagle, excerpt from *Kill all Normies*
- T12/5 26. *Social Media & Identity*
Cook/Hasmath, "Gender Identity and Social Media"
Dhamoon "Considerations of mainstreaming Intersectionality"
- R12/7 27. *Neoliberalism and New Media*
Bennett: "The Personalization of Politics"
- T12/12 NO CLASS
- R12/14 28. Various readings
1- Age of the algorithm
<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-age-of-the-algorithm/>
2- You are the Product (politics of attention on Facebook and other social networking)
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n16/john-lanchester/you-are-the-product>
3- How Statistics Lost their Power
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/19/crisis-of-statistics-big-data-democracy>
4- How the Left Lost its Mind
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/liberal-fever-swamps/530736/>
5- Effects of Breitbart on media ecosystem
<https://www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbart-media-trump-harvard-study.php>

6- Kramer: Net Neutrality, A Progress Report

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Instructor: Kouross Esmali
Email: ke487@nyu.edu
Class Time: TR 12:30-1:45
Class Location: 509 SLV
Office Hours: TR by appointment
Office: 239 Greene St. Room 742

COURSE FORMAT, GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, & ATTENDANCE

This course examines major concepts, theories, and research perspectives within the field of human communication and culture. It will introduce and review key approaches to the study of human interaction, rhetoric, language, persuasion, identity formation and cultural processes across diverse contexts. As a student of this class, you will explore the field's interdisciplinary character, examining the role of language and meaning; how language structures reality; as well as the nonverbal aspects of social interaction. Specifically, the course provides a framework from which you can think seriously about how culture, society and identity are constructed in and by our communicative practices. We will examine the social, cultural, and political impacts of communication as it unfolds in everyday life. By semester's end, you will develop the critical tools to consider the process and role of communication in contemporary society and begin to establish your own perspectives on the study of human communication.

Course Materials Required Text:

All course material will be posted on NYU Classes, emailed or handed out in class

Course Work and Evaluation:

Attendance - 10%
Participation - 10%
Short Writing Assignments – 10%
Midterm Exam - 25%
Final Exam – 20%
Final Paper – 25%

Attendance & Participation:

Late arrivals are discouraged. Three (3) late arrivals will count as an unexcused absence.
Three unexcused absences will lower your overall course grade by 5%
Four unexcused absences will lower your overall course grade by 10%
Missing more than four classes will result in an F

If you have a legitimate excuse to miss class or be late, you need to share that with me BEFORE class. The only reason for you to miss class without telling me is in the case of an emergency for which you need a note from doctor, dean or advisor.

Your participation in class rests squarely on your preparation. The readings are relatively short because I want you to read them and have an understanding of them before class. This class is a seminar and will be structured primarily as a conversation. Because your active participation in discussion is the cornerstone of the class, you should come prepared to ask questions and to discuss your thoughts. The readings for the class are short which means that you will have time to do a close reading of the texts at home and then bring your insights into class where we will look more closely at the same text. Being prepared for class includes how carefully you have read and thought about the readings, and how often you ask and answer questions and make relevant comments. Since class discussion and activities will call for reference to reading material, you are required to bring printouts or digital copies of all assigned readings to class.

This course is meant to help you become active readers. The reading materials, although relatively short in number of pages, go from moderate to high in difficulty requiring you to do more than just skim the words. **You need to read these texts at least twice:** the first time you should underline/highlight words, sentences, or paragraphs that you think are important. On the second reading, you need to read the text while paying particular attention to the parts that you have underlined as a way of seeing the connection and continuity in your first read and to then begin to understand your own take on the text.

To prepare for class, type up the most significant quotes from the texts and then write one paragraph as to how you think these quotes best express the ideas of the author(s) as related to the theme of that particular class.

Written Assignments:

(short) To aid our discussion and to improve your writing skills, we will do several free writing exercises in class (some announced and some not, some graded and some not).

(long) And you will be required to turn in a final paper assignment of 5-7. The assignment is to be emailed to me on the due date with the subject heading: Final Paper. The text of the document should be saved in both PDF as well as WORD/PAGES/OPENOFFICE formats titled as such: YourLastname_YourFirstname_FinalAssignment. Both versions should be emailed to me on the due date.

Please type and double-space all of your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm exam will be administered in class, and will be a combination of short and long response questions.

The final exam will be held on the final day of class or it will be handed out as a take-home, and will consist of a number of essay questions of which you will choose a few to complete for a total of 10-12 pages.

Please be advised that no late work will be accepted and no exam will be rescheduled without a preceding agreement with me. Delayed due dates will be rare, authorized only under truly justified circumstances (which will be defined as such only by me).

Grade Appeals

Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

Special Circumstances, Considerations, Needs:

If you have any special circumstances, consideration or needs that you feel will either affect your ability to complete assignments or participate in recitation discussions, please let me know as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Providing documentation is critical to processing special requests. I will help facilitate your requests to the best of my abilities. In most cases, special circumstances, considerations and needs should be facilitated through the Moses Center.

Student Resources:

Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 4th Floor. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.

Miscellaneous:

As in all of your courses, good faith, respect and trust are crucial to enabling class discussion. The ideas and concepts we'll be discussing may challenge or conflict with our commonly held beliefs and perspectives. Such challenges should not be construed as value judgments nor should anything discussed in class be construed as a personal offense. Our goal (and that of the university more generally) is to get us thinking critically about the things we often take for granted and to enable us to support our beliefs intelligently and thoughtfully. If you experience any discomfort with material discussed in class, please talk with me directly, and we'll work together to resolve the situation effectively.

Evaluation Rubric:

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 65-69

D = 60-64

F = 0-59

Academic Dishonesty and

Plagiarism: http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens. Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours. You violate the principle of academic integrity when you:

- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:

- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other's oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources. Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty:

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions: When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

Departmental Procedure:

- The Professor will meet with the student to discuss, and present evidence for the particular violation, giving the student opportunity to refute or deny the charge(s).
- If the Professor confirms the violation(s), he/she, in consultation with the Program Director and Department Chair may take any of the following actions:
 - Allow the student to redo the assignment
 - Lower the grade for the work in question
 - Assign a grade of F for the work in question
 - Assign a grade of F for the course
 - Recommend dismissal

Once an action(s) is taken, the Professor will inform the Program Director and Department Chair, and inform the student in writing, instructing the student to schedule an appointment with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, as a final step. Copies of the letter will be sent to the Department Chair for his/her confidential student file and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The student has the right to appeal the action taken in accordance with the School's Student Complaint Procedure as outlined in The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development Student's Guide.

Referral to the Steinhardt Committee on Student Discipline: In cases when dismissal is recommended, and in cases of repeated violations and/or unusual circumstances, faculty may choose to refer the issue to the Committee on Student Discipline for resolution, which they may do through the Office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.