

COM 497: Senior Seminar in Communication and Media Studies

Department of Communication and Media Studies

Spring 2019

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Satomi Sugiyama, Ph.D.

Instructor's Email: ssugiyama@fus.edu

Office Hours: M/TH 15.45 – 17.00 (LAC office 9)

Class location: LAC 7

Class meeting times: M/TH 17:30 – 18:45

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar provides students with a capstone experience in synthesizing their theoretical and methodological knowledge in the form of a high-quality research paper. Some of the major areas of research and theories in the field of communication and media studies will be reviewed and discussed in class as students work on their own research project. At the end of the semester, students will present their final research paper to an audience of students and professors. Students will also be encouraged to submit their paper to an appropriate conference venue around the world. The course serves as a writing-intensive course and aims to offer an opportunity for students to refine their academic writing skills in communication and media studies.

RATIONALE AND COURSE GOALS

This course offers a senior capstone experience for majors and combined majors of communication and media studies. Advanced readings of key issues in the field as well as the course assignments are designed to allow seniors to synthesize previous course materials and find a way to apply them to their potential future career.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To gain in-depth understanding of essential theories/perspectives in the field of communication and media studies
2. To review and synthesize your theoretical/methodological knowledge from previous classes
3. To undertake a significant research project applying the conceptual/methodological tools that you learned
4. To develop/refine further your skills for academic writing in the field of communication and media studies
5. To identify potential connections between your discipline-specific knowledge/skills and your future career

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Course Readings (Available on Moodle) – to be finalized by the beginning of second week

Berger, C. R. (2014) Interpersonal communication: Historical foundations and emerging directions. In C. R. Berger (Ed.), *Interpersonal communication. (Handbooks of Communication Science, vol. 6, pp. 3-26)*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter Mouton.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social construction of reality*. New York: Anchor. (excerpt)

Carey, J. W. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman. (excerpt)

Floridi, L. (2014). *The 4th revolution: How the infosphere is reshaping human reality*. New York: Oxford University Press. (excerpt)

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (excerpt)

Lazarsfeld, P. F., & Merton, R. K. (1948/1996) Mass communication, popular taste and organized social action. In P. Marris & S. Thornham (eds.), *Media studies: A reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 18-30), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

McLuhan, M. (1964/2002). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (excerpt)

Rainie, L., & Wellman, B. (2012). *Networked: The new social operating system*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (excerpt)

Walther, J. B., & Lee, E.-J. (2014). Computer-mediated communication. In C. R. Berger (Ed.), *Interpersonal communication. (Handbooks of Communication Science, vol. 6, pp. 541-564)*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter Mouton.

Note: It is your responsibility that you are able to refer to some specifics of the readings in class in order to engage in class discussions and activities.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participation – 20%

Participation grade will have the following two components:

Reading Notes (15%)

Many of the readings for this seminar present quite complex ideas, so please take notes as you read them. You can make bullet points or you can summarize key ideas/arguments in several paragraphs per reading. Feel free to add any questions/reactions you have if you would like. Once you complete your reading notes, please post it on Moodle (due at 17:30 on the day the readings are due). Late postings will not be accepted. If you post your reading notes for all readings before each deadline (of course, demonstrating your understanding of the readings), you will receive 100 points for this assignment. Each reading you fail to include in your reading notes, 25 points will be subtracted.

Attendance (5%)

You are expected to attend all class meetings. Although we will spend a lot of our class time working on our individual project, it is important that you come to class and are able to give an update of your research progress on a regular basis. Your attendance will be graded based on the attendance policy stated below. Any conduct that interferes with our productive and enjoyable learning experience will not be tolerated, and will result in poor participation grade or removal from our class.

Discussion Leader (15%)

This assignment involves two components: 1) preparatory paper, and 2) discussion leader in class.

1. *Preparatory paper*

Once you sign up for a reading, please first look up some background information about the author(s) (e.g., What are their credentials? What scholarly contributions have they made?). Read the assigned reading and summarize key points. Then, generate several questions that you would like to discuss in class. In order to facilitate discussions, it is highly recommended that you speculate various responses that might emerge in class. Plan how you can conclude your discussion (e.g., re-emphasize major arguments, significance of the ideas within the academic field as well as in some applied contexts). Once you complete your preparatory paper, please email it to me for approval at least one day before the day you lead the discussion.

2. *Discussion leader*

Based on the approved preparatory paper, please lead a class discussion. You will have approximately 30 minutes to present and moderate a discussion.

Research Project - 65%

For your senior research project, you can choose to undertake 1) an individual project, or 2) a pair/group project.

You will first choose a topic of your own interest. You will conduct a library research in order to find literature relevant to your topic and develop your research question(s)/hypothesis (hypotheses) you would like to examine. You will collect data that will allow you to answer your question(s)/test hypothesis (hypotheses), and analyze the data. Data could come from a survey, interviews, observations, media content, and so on. The final paper should be about 15-18 pages plus references.

Since this is a project you need to work on throughout the semester, I have broken down the project into five steps: 1) proposal of the project topic and preliminary bibliography, 2) literature review and method, 3) data collection and analysis, 4) final paper, and 5) class presentation.

1) *Proposal of the project topic and preliminary bibliography*

At the beginning of the semester, you will decide a topic of your interest. You will, then, need to conduct a preliminary library research and identify 10-15 scholarly sources that might be relevant to your project (Please use the database, *Communication and Mass Media Complete*, available through the Franklin library website as a starting point. Make sure to click “scholarly only” to filter out non-scholarly materials). Once you have identified some relevant sources and decided your topic, write a 1- 2 page proposal responding to the following questions:

1. What topic are you interested in?
2. Why are you interested in the topic?
3. What do you think is the significance of the topic within the field of communication and media studies?
4. What connection do you see between your topic and what you learned in previous classes? (This can be combined with question 3)
5. How do you think that the project helps you prepare for your future career?

Please submit your topic proposal, along with your preliminary bibliography (APA style).

2) Literature review (10%)

Once your initial topic proposal/bibliography is approved, please start reading the sources to develop our literature review. Please remember that your literature review is a rationale of your study and you seek to identify a research gap in the past research. Please also remember that you organize your literature review thematically rather than article-by-article. The literature review should be about 5-6 pages, and include at least 8 scholarly sources. Please use the APA citation style.

3) Research proposal (Literature review and method) (20%)

Please revise your literature review, formulate research questions/hypotheses, and describe the method of your study. The method section should be as detailed as possible with a draft of survey questionnaire, interview questions, sampling method, and so on. This assignment should be about 6-8 pages with an appropriate in-text citation and references (APA style).

4) Data collection and analysis

Once you receive my feedback and approval for your research proposal, start collecting data and analyzing them. In writing up your findings, focus on the following questions:

1. What did you find from your data analysis in response to your research question(s)?
2. How can you connect what you found in your data analysis with what other scholars said in the past (your literature review)?

This write-up will not be collected as a separate assignment, but will become part of your final paper.

5) Final paper (30%)

Once you have done the analysis, synthesize all of your work in the form of a final paper. Make sure to have the following sections in your final paper:

1. *Introduction*
2. *Literature review, research question, and method (This section should be a revised version of your literature review/ method assignment).*
3. *Results (In this section, please report your data.)*
4. *Discussion (In this section, please discuss your data in relation to your literature review.)*
5. *Conclusion*

If you are conducting a qualitative study, the structure of your paper might be slightly different as we discussed in COM 203. We can clarify this case by case as your research progresses. The final paper should be 15-18 pages plus references and appendix (when appropriate).

6) Final project presentation (5%)

The format of your presentation will be announced later.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Up to two unexplained absences are allowed without affecting your final grade. After two absences, 5 points will be subtracted for each absence from the total of 100 points for attendance grade. If you come to class after attendance has been taken, it will be counted as one-half of an unexplained absence. That is, two incidents of tardiness will be counted as one unexplained absence. Please be aware that missing classes also mean that you

will not be contributing to our class discussion/activities. If you are absent from illness and turn in a medical note indicating the exact dates under medical care, we will discuss appropriate arrangements regarding how you can make up for the missed classes. Please also note that you will not be able to pass the course if you miss more than 8 class meetings regardless of the reasons of absence and your performance in other assignments.

POLICY ON USING PERSONAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (E.G., MOBILES, LAPTOPS) IN CLASS

As a student who studies communication and media studies, I would like each of you to think about what would be an effective way of using communication technologies in classroom in order to create a productive learning environment for you as well as your classmates. I expect each of you to be responsible for making your own choice as to when/how to use them and when/how not to use them.

PAPER/WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Unless otherwise instructed, all papers/written assignments need to be typed (Times New Roman, 12 font), printed out, and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. That is, turning in the papers/assignments right after class means a day late. Late paper/written assignment will receive a grade of one letter down for each day (NOT for each class session). For example, an “A” paper will receive “A-” grade if you turn it in one day late (including the case of turning in an assignment after our class session), and will receive “B+” grade if you turn it in two days late. **Also, please pay a very close attention to the assignment guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns about the assignment guidelines, please clarify them before the assignment is due. I will grade your assignment only once and it will not be possible to redo the assignment after you have submitted your assignment. That said, I’d be very happy to meet with you to discuss your assignments before the assignment is due.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: STATEMENT ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

A student whose actions are deemed by the University to be out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives or the spirit of good conduct as fostered by the University and Swiss community, may be placed on Disciplinary Probation or become subject to dismissal from the University. Cheating is a dishonest action out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives and spirit of the University. Furthermore, cheating reflects negatively on one’s personal integrity and is unjust to those students who have studied.

Behaviors such as copying the work of others, using third-party services, or any other circumvention of doing your own work are also considered dishonest and not acceptable in this class or at this institution.

- For papers and presentations, copying text without the use of quotations or paraphrasing the ideas of others without proper citations are both examples of plagiarism and thus unacceptable.
- **To obtain some assistance with writing papers, please use our campus WLC. If you would like to work with a person other than the WLC staffs, please come talk to me in advance (This is very important!)**
- For testing situations, this includes the use of notes, cell phones, talking to others, or copying off of the exam of others.

The first case of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic grade of a zero on the assignment and a report to the Dean. The second case will result in expulsion from the university.

See the Academic Catalog for full statement (page 199):

https://www.fus.edu/images/pdf/FUS_ACADEMIC_CATALOG_2018_2020_web.pdf

COURSE SCHEDULE (AS OF JANUARY 21, 2019)

Date	Topics and Readings	Assignments
1/21 (M)	Welcome and introduction to the course Review of previous classes Review of research methods	
1/24 (TH)	In-class consultation of your research idea Explore relevant past research (bring your laptop!)	Bring your research topic idea
1/28 (M)	Communication (Carey)	
1/31 (TH)	In-class feedback session on research topic/bib	Research topic/preliminary bib due
2/4 (M)	Social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann)	
2/7 (TH)	Review of research methods 1	
2/11 (M)	Self and modernity (Giddens)	
2/14 (TH)	In-class paper working/consultation	Literature review due
2/18 (M)	Emerging technologies (Floridi)	
2/21 (TH)	Review of research methods 2	
2/25 (M)	Research proposal presentations 1	
2/28 (TH)	Research proposal presentations 2	
3/4 (M)	Finalize your proposal/data collection begins	Research proposal due
3/7 (TH)	Consultation/data collection	
3/11 – 3/22 Academic Travel		
3/25 (M)	Consultation/data collection	
3/28 (TH)	Data collection ends (target date)	
4/1 (M)	Data analysis/consultation	
4/4 (TH)	Data analysis/consultation	
4/8 (M)	Data analysis/consultation	
4/11 (TH)	Data analysis/consultation	
4/15 (M)	Final research paper draft peer review	Final paper draft due
4/18 (TH)	In-class paper revision	
4/22 (M)	<i>Easter Break</i>	
4/25 (TH)	Finalize your senior project/abstract due	Final senior research project due
4/29 (M)	Presentation rehearsal 1	
5/2 (TH)	Presentation rehearsal 2	
5/6 or 7	Senior research paper presentation	