COMM 634: Communication & Gender
Dr. Cara Wallis
Thursday 6:00-9:00

This iteration of Communication and Gender will focus on feminist approaches to gender, technology, and communication. The course will introduce graduate students to key theories, concepts, and debates within studies of technology from a feminist perspective. In this class we will learn and use the tools of feminist theory to explore the multifaceted interactions between technology, ourselves, and local, national, and international contexts through themes including gender, race, difference, sexuality, the body, labor, place, art, activism, and surveillance. We will approach these topics from a historical perspective as well as a critical, cultural perspective. In the process, we will challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about both gender and technology. The plan is that this class will be part of a DOCC (Distributed Online Collaborative Course) organized by the Feminist Technology Network (FemTechNet) called “Collaborations in Feminism and Technology,” which has been taught since 2013 at more than 15 institutions in the US and abroad. FemTechNet is an activated network of scholars, students, artists, and activists that are located within a range of fields, including STS, media studies, visual culture, queer theory, and race and ethnicity studies. A DOCC is an innovative learning infrastructure and a feminist rethinking of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course). A MOOC is a popular model that takes a top-down, expert, sage-on-the-stage approach to teaching. With a DOCC, participants engage in a networked, learner-centered experience across multiple locations through collaborative teaching and learning. We will read a variety of texts, view video dialogues with preeminent thinkers on the relationship between feminism and technology, and (hopefully) collaborate on an innovative learning project with graduate students in the DOCC at another institution. For more on FemTechNet see http://femtechnet.org/. There are no class prerequisites for this course.

COMM 637: Seminar in ORG: Corporate Social Responsibility
Dr. Sherry Holladay
Tuesday 6:00-9:00

This seminar takes a communication oriented approach to understanding, implementing, and critiquing the concept of corporate social responsibility and related research and practice.

Although CSR is not a new concept, it has generated increasing interest among practitioners and scholars. Research on CSR reflects a continuum from descriptive (What are innovations in CSR programs? How can organizations use CSR to benefit themselves and the public good?) to critical (How can we interrogate the hypocrisy of ethical capitalism and CSR discourse? Could CSR offer transformative potential?). The seminar will address a range of views on and approaches to evaluating CSR. Students will develop a study proposal, conduct original research, and produce a seminar paper that reflects a perspective that fits their needs.

COMM 659: Citizenship and the Public Sphere
Dr. Jennifer Mercieca
Monday 6:00-9:00

We will examine two broad topics over the course of the semester: Citizenship and Public Sphere theory. The course is designed to give graduate students a strong background in theories of the
role of the citizen in the public sphere. The first section of the course will focus on political philosophies of citizenship, including the different ways in which citizenship is construed in democratic, republican, liberal, and neo-liberal political theories. The second section of the course will focus on Jürgen Habermas’ theory of the historical emergence and decline of the bourgeois public sphere and his critics’ responses to his argument. The final section of the course will expand our understanding of citizenship by examining how this concept is imagined within global contexts of war and protest and how media and consumerism affect publics and citizens. By the end of the semester you will be well versed in the theoretical differences in citizenship, contemporary citizenship debates, and the role of the citizen in the public sphere.

COMM 662: Survey in Telecommunication & Media Studies  
Dr. Patrick Burkart  
Wednesday 6:00-9:00

Survey of research and theory in media studies and telecommunication; review of literature on mass communication, media, culture, and society, media audiences, texts, industries and technologies; provides students an overview of the literature and theoretical orientation. Critical media studies, communication law and policy, and international political economy will be areas of particular emphasis.

COMM 663: Seminar in TCMS: Organizational Sociology  
Dr. Randy Sumpter  
Tuesday 6:00-9:00

Media studies can be divided roughly into two categories—effects studies that examine how media messages change the behaviors or attitudes of audiences and communicator studies that examine the factors that affect message creation. This seminar concentrates on the latter category by exploring concepts drawn from organizational and health communication, framing, and media sociology literature. A very hands-on approach is used: Members of the seminar will systematically analyze media stories about the Zika virus to answer these questions:

1. How do media workers as a community of practice frame the Zika virus story?
2. Does this frame change with time? Are there multiple frames? Are there similarities or differences with other “disease” frames?
3. What are the consequences for media professionals, communication researchers, healthcare workers, and politicians?
4. Are there special validity and reliability issues for research using framing methodology?

Framing is a form of latent content analysis. In this seminar, we will learn the basics for performing this sort of analysis: From developing relevant research questions to building a code book. If all goes well, you should have the material you need by the end of the seminar to write a conference paper or (with more work) to write a publishable paper.

COMM 689: The “Dark Side” of Communication  
Dr. Anna Wolfe  
Wednesday 6:00-9:00

Metaphors of “darkness” carry powerfully negative connotations and conjure up images of evil, immorality, and destructiveness. Disciplinary assumptions about the value of visibility are reflected in the sheer volume of research and teaching around topics like public relations, media presence, marketing, branding, public health and political campaigning. In an effort to wrestle with these
biases toward openness and transparency, this course is an invitation to move into shadowy spaces of cults, secret societies, hacker collectives, terrorist cells, hate groups, gangs, informal economies, stigmatized organizations, crowd-based platforms, and anonymous support groups. As we examine organizing practices that have been concealed or removed from public sight, we will consider the ethical and methodological challenges that accompany the study of this “dark side” of communication.

COMM 689: SPTP: Mass Media and Health
Dr. Jennifer Lueck
Thursday 6:00-9:00

The goal of this course is to examine the theories, methods, and research that characterize the strategic use of media messages. Our focus is mass media influence on public health, including the use of mass media to promote health behaviors. We will examine the potential impact of media content on strategic communication goals both as a product of individuals’ everyday interaction with media and as a result of the strategic use of media-based efforts (this includes how people psychologically engage with media messages). This course is intended to complement social and behavioral science approaches to public opinion and media effects as well as to provide another perspective on the study of mass media as social institutions. This means that the course is open to a diverse student population.