COMM Graduate Courses  
Spring 2019

COMM 610: Social Science Methods in Communication Research  
Dr. Hart Blanton  
Wednesday evening

This course provides instruction in a range of introductory methodological and design issues relevant to behavioral research. Topics include philosophy of science and the scientific method, theory construction, design (e.g., experimental, naturalistic, correlational, quasi-experimental, archival), statistical-test consideration, measurement and data collection (quantitative, qualitative), reliability and validity taxonomies and their associated threats, scientific writing, and research ethics.

COMM 626: Communication Law & Policy  
Dr. Sandra Braman  
TR: 3:55-5:10

All communication, whether off-line or on, takes place within the context of law and policy. In this seminar students master constitutional principles, laws and regulations, practices, and current issues in areas of enduring importance, such as privacy, intellectual property rights, libel law, political speech, extreme (hate) speech, and access to information, as well as those of particular contemporary interest, such as network neutrality, sedition, treason, whistleblowing, and leaking.

Each student will write an in-depth research paper on an issue of particular interest. Examples of possible topics currently in the news include: free speech, immigration, and the border; fake news and the law; corporate campaign spending, foreign intervention in American elections, and other election law issues; cybersecurity and cyberwarfare; the redirection of public diplomacy efforts from foreign nationals to the US population; loss of access to scientific information; corporate surveillance and the right to privacy; due process and political speech; the line between whistleblowing and treason; interactions between privacy law, copyright law, and other big data issues; and the legal rights and responsibilities of robots.

Meets International Communication & Public Diplomacy Certificate Requirement

COMM 630: Interpersonal Communication  
Dr. Emily Rauscher  
Monday evening

This course is an introduction to the contemporary research, topics, theories, and methodologies of interpersonal communication. Students will explore interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts including, but not limited to: (a) marital communication and relational satisfaction, (b) workplace relationships, (c) family communication systems, (d) health care systems, (e) and intercultural contexts. This course will focus on current research trends in the area, paradigmatic shifts in the field of personal relationships over the past decade, and how interpersonal communication scholarship lends itself to improving social interactions and communication competence in a number of venues.
COMM 634: Communication and Gender  
Dr. Tasha Dubriwny  
Tuesday evening

Drawing from the literature of the many different subfields of communication—including media studies, rhetoric, organizational communication, health communication, and political communication—this course asks how gender is shaped through communicative practices. The course is organized around thematic modules on work, family, representation, politics, bodies, health, and identity. We will approach the study of gender and communication from a feminist perspective; a background in feminist theory (particularly poststructuralist/performative accounts of gender) is useful although not required.

Meets WGST Certificate requirement

COMM 637: Narrative and Collective Organizing  
Dr. Anna Wolfe

This seminar will focus on the role of narrative in communication studies of collective organizing. Stories construct webs of relationships, which provide bases for social action with or against other entities. In this process of relational web-building, narration constitutes collectivities—in-groups and out-groups, “us” and “them”, victims and villains. Beyond character development, stories organize a sense of shared reality by selecting certain details from ongoing streams of experience and suggesting a causal order in the midst of ambiguity and change. For these reasons, narrative is a powerful tool for constructing identities, mobilizing coordinated action, and organizing social worlds. Over the course of the semester, we will consider various perspectives on narrative as theoretical framework, object of inquiry, method of analysis, and equipment for living. The culminating product of the course will be a seminar paper worthy of conference presentation and/or publication.

COMM 663: Media Framing  
Dr. Randy Sumpter  
Monday evening

Mass 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 how mass messages are created. This seminar concentrates on the latter category by exploring concepts drawn from organizational and health communication, media sociology, and framing literature. A very hands-on approach is used: Members of the seminar will systematically analyze how the media frame stories about a health issue. A likely candidate will be this year’s influenza outbreak. In the course of our analysis, you will learn how to draw a qualitative sample, how to develop a coding protocol for the sample, and how to use frames to interpret the results.
COMM 664: Media Processes and Effects  
Dr. Jennifer Lueck  
Tuesday evening

This seminar takes a social-scientific approach and builds on knowledge about seminal mass media concepts. It extends this knowledge by systematically exploring cognitive and affective processes that form the explanatory mechanisms underlying media effects.

Mass media have been alternately feared, bemoaned, used, and dismissed as tools to change beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. These rival views are informed in part by findings that media appear to affect some people but not others. To understand how and why media might have attitudinal and behavioral effects it is useful and necessary to explore how people psychologically engage with media information. This seminar takes a social-scientific approach and focuses on psychological concepts and theories concerning individual cognitive and affective processing of the content of both traditional and new electronic media. In this connection, the focus is on how individuals respond to media content. Inevitably, however, the discussion will place individual behavior in the social context of groups (literal and virtual), organizations, and the larger milieu of society and changing technologies.