

COMM 175-203: Introduction to Communication Fall 2020

Tu/Th, 3:00-4:15 p.m. (CST*), Online

Instructor: Chad Van De Wiele

Zoom Office Hours: Weds, 12-2 p.m. or by appt.

Contact: cvandewiele@luc.edu

Zoom Info: TBD

Course Description:

This course provides a broad, historical and theoretical introduction to communication studies, which begins by asking the question: *what is communication?* In our contemporary digital era, such questions are often taken for granted, but the history and practices of human communication have evolved from oral and written traditions over the course of thousands of years. By looking at human communication through a variety of lenses—historical, critical, cultural, political, and so on—students will acquire an intellectual framework for continued study and practice within the discipline of communication.

Course Objectives:

The primary objectives for this course are to familiarize you with how communication practices emerge and change over time (e.g., through the introduction of new technologies), to convey various frameworks for investigating these practices, and to familiarize you with key terms and concepts within the communication discipline. By the end of this course, students should:

- Understand and effectively articulate what communication *is* and why it is an important area of academic inquiry.
- Recognize how different social/cultural contexts impact communicative practices, including how messages are produced, exchanged, and interpreted.
- Distinguish and evaluate how ideology and power are produced, sustained, and transformed through communication.

Course Format:

Rather than the standard lecture-based format, this course will be largely discussion-based and require you to work independently/keep pace with the course schedule. And because this course is online, we will rely upon Sakai and other digital tools/platforms this semester (Zoom, YouTube, Kanopy, etc.).

Basically, each week will go something like this: (1) you will post responses/QTPs (see below) based on the readings; (2) we will hold an online discussion session via Zoom on Tuesdays during our regular class period, during which I will briefly summarize the readings and pose some questions for discussion; and (3) you will complete activities and/or assignments on Thursday via Sakai during our regular class period—these will vary, but will include case studies, exams/quizzes, and the submission of written assignments.

**If you are based outside of Chicago/CST, please double-check your time zone and adjust your schedule accordingly. If time zone changes pose any issues, please contact your instructor immediately.*

Required Texts:

Given the unique circumstances we find ourselves in this semester, I decided to forego assigning a textbook and have compiled a variety of readings (articles, book chapters, etc.) and other materials instead. All course readings/materials will be available electronically via the 'Resources' tab on Sakai. Please see the course schedule below for weekly readings/assignments.

Assignment & Grade Breakdown:

Weekly Responses/QTPs (<i>x10 @ 20 points each</i>)	200 points
Critical Application Memos (<i>x 2 @ 50 points each</i>)	100 points
Online Activities/Assignments (<i>varies</i>)	100 points
Exams (<i>x2 @ 100 points each</i>)	200 points
Final Paper	200 points

Total Possible: *800 points*

Final Grade Scale:

940+: A	880-890: B+	780-799: C+	680-699: D+
900-939: A-	830-879: B	730-779: C	640-679: D
	800-829: B-	700-729: C-	600-639: D-
			< 600: F

QTPs (Weeks 2-12 only): For weeks 2 through 12 only, you will post a response for that week's readings on Sakai. This should consist of three parts: (1) **Questions**, that is, questions that you'd like clarified or were unsure about in the readings; (2) **Thoughts**, that is, what connections you see between the readings, developments taking place outside the course, and just generally what thoughts you had about the readings; and (3) **Provocations**, that is, challenging statements or provocative questions the material raises for you. *QTPs should not be a review of the readings, but rather deeper engagement with them.* See example document on Sakai for more details.

QTPs are due Mondays by 11:59 p.m. and should be posted to the corresponding 'Forum' thread on Sakai for others to read/respond to before that week's discussion session(s). To encourage/ facilitate deeper discussion, you must also respond to *at least* one other post before the end of the week—this will be part of your QTP grade for that week.

Online Activities/Assignments: Over the course of the semester, students will complete various online activities and assignments that engage with weekly readings/subject matter. These will vary in form from written responses to media content/case studies, mini research activities and analyses, and so on. *These activities will be graded for completion.* All online activities/assignments will take place on Thursdays during our regular class time, though submission deadlines may vary (see 'Assignments' tab on Sakai for details on each activity as it becomes available).

Critical Application Memos: Over the course of the semester, you will write two (2), 2-3-page memos that critically engage with readings from any given week—you are free to choose when you complete these, from weeks 2-13. You will submit these memos via the ‘Assignments’ tab on Sakai.

So, what does ‘critical application’ mean? Essentially, you are free to do any number of things here: connect main arguments/premises from one reading to other readings from the course; explore the strengths and/or weaknesses of the selected reading(s) and justify your reasoning; introduce outside thoughts/ideas that align with (or depart) from those of the selected reading(s); connect components of what you read to current social/political developments; explore/test out an idea the reading(s) inspired, and so on. *You are free to approach this in any way that makes sense to you, but you should justify and support your line of thinking.*

To guide you further, here are some things that do not qualify as critical: summarizing the reading(s); stating what you liked or did not like about the reading(s) without justification; relying upon and/or using large, block quotes to eat space, etc.

Exams: There will be two exams, a mid-semester and a final (non-cumulative), which you will complete on Sakai. Each exam will cover material from course readings/discussions and will consist of three (3) short-response questions, from which you will select/respond to two (2). Exams are open-note and you will have the entire class session to complete them. There is no length requirement, but your responses should adequately demonstrate your understanding of the materials and ability to draw connections between them. *There are no make-up exams unless permission is given well in advance (i.e., do not email me an hour before the exam asking to reschedule).*

Final Paper: For your final paper, you will apply any of the communication theories/concepts/contexts covered in this course to a contemporary social or political issue of your choosing. For example, you could write about the recent dialogue surrounding systemic racism using an intersectional lens, disinformation surrounding the 2020 presidential election through a critical-cultural lens, or some aspect of digital culture that you find intriguing.

Regardless of the topic, final papers should achieve the following: (1) provide ample background of the contemporary issue you have selected (e.g., terms, context, etc.), including *why it matters* and *how it pertains to communication*; (2) introduce and effectively summarize your chosen theory, lens, or framework, and clearly justify why you chose it/how applies to your chosen topic; and (3) without overstating any conclusions or generalizations, utilize that lens or framework to provide some plausible assumptions and/or recommendations for understanding the contemporary issue you selected.

Final papers should be 6-8 pages in length—including references—double-spaced, 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or the like), 1-inch margins, and so on. Please format as either a Word document or PDF (no Google documents, please). You will submit your final paper online via the ‘Assignments’ tab on Sakai during our final exam period (see schedule below).

University Software and Privacy Policies:

In this class, software will be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class when the Sakai course is unpublished (i.e. shortly after the course ends, per the [Sakai administrative schedule](#)). Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

The use of all video recordings will be in keeping with the University Privacy Statement shown below:

Privacy Statement:

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

Course Policies:

Email Policy: Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails; I will respond as quickly as I can within this window. During particularly busy times of the semester, however, my response may take up to 48 hours.

Virtual Office Hours & Appointments: As we move rather quickly through a range of topics, I am available to answer questions, help you with the class materials, and so on. Virtual office hours will take place via Zoom on Wednesdays from 12-2 p.m., or by appointment.

Online Attendance & Participation: Although we are operating online this semester, this is a discussion-based, communication course, which means *student involvement is essential*. Rather than maintaining attendance and participation in the traditional, graded sense, your discussions and assignments are designed to ensure your engagement with course materials. Assignments, exams, or other activities missed due to non-response may NOT be made up unless you have clear, dated, and specific documentation.

If you have a chronic medical condition that you think may interfere with your performance in class, please contact the Student Accessibility Center early in the semester or with the first onset

of symptoms. If you are experiencing a personal dilemma, such as a family crisis or emergency, contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: Students who commit an act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, whether deliberately or accidentally, will still be held responsible. Ignorance of academic rules, or failure to fact check work, sources and citations, is not an acceptable defense against the charge of plagiarism. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

For more information on standards for academic integrity at Loyola, visit:
https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

Student Accommodations: Any student that requires special accommodations or accessibility for this course—including for online exams and assignments—should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course format and content; however, it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and course expectations.

Managing Life Crises: If you are experiencing a crisis pertaining to your personal, physical or mental well-being, you have access to the Loyola University Wellness Center, which includes emergency and crisis care for mental health, group counseling, and self-assessment tools. For more information, visit: <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/mentalhealth/emergencycrisiscare/> or call 773-508-8883. Similarly, I encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support.

If you are experiencing mental or emotional distress beyond your ability to manage safely right now: The Wellness Center has a service for students who are in crisis and need immediate assistance to speak to counselors and to receive crisis consultation, information on emergency resources, or even be directed to the Emergency Department, if appropriate. This service is available by calling **773-508-2530, Option 3** after hours, which includes weekends and holidays.

Diversity Statement: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

Important note: *It is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in this course.* I will attempt to foster an environment in which each student is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each student show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful

of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in this course, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention is not to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

Land Acknowledgement(s):

I acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Očeti Šakówin (Sioux), Miami, Bodéwadmikiwen (Potawatomi), and Peoria peoples.

A land acknowledgment is a "formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories" (<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>). As such, it the first step to a reflection process that will help you be more intentional as you move through spaces. You are encouraged to continue to learn about and build relationships with the communities and the land you are occupying in an effort to continually support and work with those communities.

Course Schedule:

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the course schedule will be communicated to you in advance.

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Week 1: Course Intro		
Tu, 8/25	Introductions, syllabus, and course overview	Syllabus
Th, 8/27	What is communication?	Read: <i>Barnhurst; Berger et al., 2010; Calhoun, 2011</i> *Post to 'Introductions' forum on Sakai by 8/28

Week 2: Histories and Contexts of Communication (QTP)		
Tu, 9/1	Orality, writing, and early developments in communication	Read: <i>Ong, 2012; Innis, 2008</i>
Th, 9/3	The importance of writing	Activity: Watch and respond to What is writing?
Week 3: Communication and/as Culture (QTP)		
Tu, 9/8	Culture and/as communication	Read: <i>Carey, 2009; Park, 1938</i>
Th, 9/10	Examining cultural objects	Activity: Examining cultural objects
Week 4: Power and Ideology (QTP)		
Tu, 9/15	Hegemony, ideology, and power	Read: <i>Marx & Engels, 1976; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1981; Lull, 1995</i>
Th, 9/17	Hegemony and communication	Activity: Listen and respond to Philosophize This: Gramsci-Cultural Hegemony
Week 5: Communication Technology (Part 1; QTP)		
Tu, 9/22	Historical transformations in communication technology	Read: <i>Marvin, 1999; McLuhan, 1964</i>
Th, 9/24	Sending messages over time	Activity: Watch and respond to We Learn About the Telephone
Week 6: Communication Technology (Part 2; QTP)		
Tu, 9/29	The Internet revolution	Read: The Internet, explained; Hall, 2011 Watch: How Does the Internet Work?
Th, 10/1	Exam 1 review/check-in—Zoom	n/a
Week 7: Communication and Democracy (QTP)		
Tu, 10/6	Information, communication, and democracy	Read: <i>Lippmann, 1922; Vox: Lippmann's famous critique of democracy revisited</i> Watch: Digital Disconnect
Th, 10/8	Exam 1: 3:00-4:15 p.m. (CST)	
Week 8: Mass Media and Communication (QTP)		
Tu, 10/13	Economics/ownership of mass media and foundations of media culture	Read: <i>Kellner, 2015; Croteau et al., 2011</i> Watch: The Agenda Setting Function Theory Watch: Media Representation
Th, 10/15	Cultural criticism and transformation	Activity: Watch and respond to bell hooks-Cultural Criticism & Transformation

Week 9: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality (QTP)		
Tu, 10/20	The social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality	Read: <i>Haney Lopez, 1994; Weber, 1998; West & Zimmerman, 1987</i> Watch: The Myth of Race
Th, 10/22	Coming to terms with race in America	Activity: Watch and respond to I Am Not Your Negro
Week 10: Intersectionality and Black Feminist Perspectives (QTP)		
Tu, 10/27	Intersectionality and Black feminist thought	Read: <i>Collins, 2000; Gray, 2015</i> Watch: The Urgency of Intersectionality
Th, 10/29	Black cyberfeminism	Guest lecture: Kishonna Gray
Week 11: Race and/as/after Technology (QTP)		
Tu, 11/3	Election Day	No Class
Th, 11/5	Race and/as/after technology (<i>Synchronous class session on Zoom</i>)	Read: <i>Coleman, 2009; Chun, 2011</i> Watch: Ruha Benjamin-Race After Technology
Week 12: Digital Culture and Identity (QTP)		
Tu, 11/10	Social media, identity, and ‘the self’	Read: <i>Hall, 2000; Marwick, 2013; Papacharissi, 2010</i>
Th, 11/12	Social media culture	Activity: Watch and respond to Social Animals
Week 13: Resistance, Solidarity, and Transformation		
Tu, 11/17	Envisioning change in a digital world	Read: <i>Papacharissi, 2015; Garza, 2016; Dean, 2005; Lorde, 1984</i>
Th, 11/19	TBD	TBD
Week 14: Holiday Break		
Tu, 11/24	Holiday Break	No Class
Th, 11/26	Holiday Break	No Class
Week 15: Course Wrap-Up		
Tu, 12/1	Exam 2 review/check-in—Zoom	n/a
Th, 12/3	Exam 2: 3:00-4:15 p.m. (CST)	
Final Exam		
Sat, 12/12	Submit final papers via Sakai between 5:30-7:30 p.m. (CST*)	