

## **Communications 125**

### **Introduction to Communication Behavior**

Professor Amy Jordan

Lectures: Wednesday, Friday, 11:00-11:50 am, Room 110 Annenberg

Recitation Sections: Monday, 11:00 am – 11:50am or 12:00 pm to 12:50 pm (see assigned section/TF)

Fall, 2016

#### **Course Overview**

This course introduces students to the theoretical models and research methods used to study communication and behavior, with a focus on mass media processes and effects. Topics examined include: the social construction of meaning through communication, effects of media violence, children's responses to educational television, the political impact of the news, and the influence of social media on social relationships. The aim of the course is to provide students with (1) a general understanding of research on attitudinal and behavioral aspects of mediated and interpersonal communication, and (2) the basic conceptual tools needed to critically evaluate the assumptions, theories, and empirical evidence supporting conclusions about communication behavior and media effects. Toward this end, though the paradigms of critical and cultural studies will be reviewed briefly, the class will focus on social scientific approaches to understanding communication behavior.

#### **Required readings**

There are two textbooks for the class and they are available through the Penn Bookstore.

- Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Glenn G. Sparks
- Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future (7<sup>th</sup> edition) by Stanley Baran and Dennis Davis.

Other required readings are available through links on the syllabus and on Canvas.

## **Professor and Teaching Fellows**

Dr. Jordan's office hours are Wednesday, 4-5 pm and Friday, 10-11am

Dr. Jordan's office is located in room 327 of the Annenberg School for Communication

Phone: 215-898-1553; email: [ajordan@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:ajordan@asc.upenn.edu)

Teaching fellows:

Allyson Volinsky ([allyson.volinsky@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:allyson.volinsky@asc.upenn.edu))

Office 127 in the Annenberg Graduate Student Wing

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2-3 pm and Thursday, 1-2 pm

Elisabetta Ferrari ([elisabetta.ferrari@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:elisabetta.ferrari@asc.upenn.edu))

Office 122 in the Annenberg Graduate Student Wing

Office Hours: Monday, 2-3 pm and Wednesday, 4-5 pm

Kristin Shumaker ([kristin.shumaker@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:kristin.shumaker@asc.upenn.edu))

Office 142 in ASC Graduate Student Wing

Office Hours: Monday, 4-5pm and Wednesday, 10-11am

Rosemary Clark ([rosemary.clark@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:rosemary.clark@asc.upenn.edu))

Office 130 in the Annenberg Graduate Student Wing

Office Hours: Tuesday, 5-6 pm and Thursday, 2-3 pm

## **GRADING/ASSESSMENT**

Exam One (October 19<sup>th</sup>) 20%; Exam Two (December 9<sup>th</sup>): 20%

Recitation Attendance: 10%; Student Led Discussion: 15%

Capstone Project: (December 16<sup>th</sup>) 35% (includes three benchmark assignments and the final project)

**Examinations.** Two examinations will be given. They will be multiple choice tests designed to cover the lectures, readings and discussion topics. Examination dates are October 19 and December 9th. You will receive a study guide to assist you in your preparation approximately one week prior to each exam. Make up exams will only be given in cases of unanticipated emergency. If you find you have a conflict with one of the scheduled exams (e.g., with an athletic event or a family celebration), you should take this course another semester. If you need accommodation, please make arrangements with SDS well in advance of the exam.

**Recitation Attendance:** We expect you to be a full participant in recitation section discussions: thus, attendance at recitation is required. You may miss up to three recitations for any reason (we don't need an excuse). After 3 absences, we will start to deduct points from your recitation grade. The 3 absence policy applies to everyone – even those who need to leave campus on a regular basis for university-related events like sports or those who miss class due to a religious holiday observance. Please use your missed days wisely. If you anticipate missing more than 3 Mondays, and you are concerned about your grade, take this class another semester or work especially hard for your SLD, exams, and capstone assignments/project.

**Student Led Discussion:** The student-led discussion (SLD) aims to encourage students to engage with class material by working in small groups to investigate a topic and present to peers. The SLDs will be assigned after the drop/add period. Each member of the group will receive the same grade. The SLD groups will each submit an outline and a resource list to their teaching fellows in the week prior to the discussion.

**Capstone Project.** The capstone project is designed to allow you to choose a class-related topic and explore it more fully on your own. There are 3 options from which to choose: 1) A synthesis of the literature on a focused topic, 2) A proposal for a research study, or 3) an exploration of a medium/genre using the platform of said medium/genre. We will provide you with examples of each type of capstone project. Due December 16<sup>th</sup> or earlier.

Your recitation leader will be your capstone project advisor, and we will use recitation sections to more fully explain the project to you. She will be tracking your progress through 3 benchmark assignments (an annotated bibliography and an outline) and will give you feedback on your ideas. You may also meet with Dr. Jordan at any time. Benchmark assignments are due September 28<sup>th</sup>, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and December 5<sup>th</sup>. Final project is due no later than midnight December 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Course readings.** Students should complete listed readings prior to the class in which they are discussed and be prepared to participate in discussion.

## **Comm. 125**

### **Course Syllabus**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **Week 1**

August 31<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Introduction to Comm. 125

September 2<sup>nd</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Communication as an academic field of study

Reading: Zelizer (2016), "The Fan of Disciplines", *Communication Theory* (on Canvas)

##### **Week 2**

September 5<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Labor Day (no class)

September 7<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Communication in the Digital Age

Readings:

Litt, E. (2012). Knock, knock. Who's there? The imagined audience. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* (On Canvas);

Natale (2016) There are no old media. *Journal of Communication* (On Canvas)

#### **METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

September 9<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Topic: The Study of Media Effects as a Communication Behavior

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 1

### **Week 3**

September 12<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

TF Led Discussion

Topic: What do we communicate when we are communicating?

Listening (to be done in advance): Fresh Air podcast - From Upspeak to Vocal Fry: Are We 'Policing' Young Women's Voices?

September 14<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Communication Behavior Research Methods (Content Analysis and Surveys)

Readings: Sparks, Chapter 2 pp. 25-37 content analysis and survey research

September 16<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Communication Behavior Research Methods: Quantitative Approaches (Experimental Design)

Readings: Sparks, Chapter 2, pp. 41-52; experimental design study

### **Week 4**

September 19<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

TF Led Discussion

Topic: A quantitative approach to understanding media and learning

Readings: Mueller & Oppenheimer, "The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard" (On Canvas)

Reading: Sana, Weston, Cepeda "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers" (On Canvas)

Recommended to review: Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, Reading and Understanding Research (Second Edition), Chapter 4 "How to select and read research reports" (available on Canvas) (Note: this resource will come up again in a few weeks)

September 21<sup>st</sup> (Wednesday)

Teaching Fellow Lecture: Betty Ferrari

Topic: Communication Behavior Research Methods: Qualitative Approaches

Readings: Lindlof "Qualitative Research" (On Canvas) and Jordan "Make Yourself at Home" (on Canvas)

## **THEORETICAL STREAMS**

September 23<sup>rd</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Early Mass Communication Theories

Readings: Reading: Baran and Davis, Chapter 1 (Understanding and Evaluating Mass Communication Theory); Baran and Davis, Chapter 2 (Establishing the Terms of the Debate)

## **Week 5**

September 26<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

TF Led Recitation

Topic: Capstone Project discussion (examples shown)

September 28<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Guest Lecturer: Desiree Peterkin Bell

Topic: Strategic Communication in the City

\*\*\* Note, you have your first "benchmark assignment" due on September 28<sup>th</sup> by midnight\*\*\*\*

Benchmark Assignment #1: Five ideas for capstone project

September 30<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Topic: The Study of Media Effects (Part 1)

Readings: Baran and Davis, Chapter 4 (The Media Effects Trend, pp. 91-113)

## **Week 6:**

October 3<sup>rd</sup> (Monday)

TF Led Recitation

Topic: Searching and synthesizing the literature

Resource: Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, Reading and Understanding Research (Second Edition), Chapter 4 “How to select and read research reports” (available on Canvas) and Chapter 5, “Staying Organized: Studying and Recording What You Read”

October 5<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Media Effects Theories

Reading: Baran & Davis, Chapter 4 (The Media Effects Trend, pp. 113-128)

October 7<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

No Class –Fall Break

## **Week 7**

October 10<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

TF Led Discussion

Topic: Research Ethics – How early social science research informed the way we think about the study of communication behavior today.

CITI Training

Reading: Sparks, pp. 166-169, “Experimenting with the Incredible Hulk”

October 12<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Yom Kippur – No Class

Study Guide for Exam 1 posted to Canvas

October 14<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Critical and Cultural Studies

Reading: Baran and Davis, Chapter 5 (The Emergence of the Critical Cultural Trend in North America)

## **Week 8**

October 17<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Exam 1 review (voluntary – absences will not be counted)

(Note: Kristin's students should attend other TF recitations as Kristin will be out of the country.)

October 19<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Exam 1

October 21<sup>st</sup> (Friday)

Teaching Fellow Lecture: Kristin Shumaker

Topic: Social Influence and Communication – The Neuroscience Perspective

Reading:

Falk, E.B., Berkman, E.T., Mann, T., Harrison, B. & Lieberman, M.D. (2010). Predicting Persuasion-Induced Behavior Change from the Brain. *Journal of Neuroscience* 30(25), 8421-8424.

## **Week 9**

October 24<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion 1

Topic: *Did researchers violate research ethics when they conducted the "Facebook experiment"?*

Reading: Kramer et al. Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks

October 26<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)



Topic: Active Audience Theories

Reading: Baran & Davis, Chapter 7 (Audience Theories: Uses & Reception)

October 28<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Media and Youth Development Theories

Reading: Jordan "Growing up online" (on Canvas) and Jordan "Digital Media and the Experience(s) of Childhood" (on Canvas)

## **MEDIA EFFECTS**

### **Week 10**

October 31<sup>st</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion 2

*Topic:* Was there really a panic after the War of the Worlds radio broadcast of 1938?

Screening: (to be done in advance) "War of the Worlds" on The American Experience

Reading: Sparks, pp. 60-62.

November 2<sup>nd</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Media Violence

Reading: Baran & Davis, Chapter 6 (Theories of Media and Human Development, pp. 167-185)

Sparks, Chapter 5, Effects of Media Violence

Benchmark Assignment #2 Due: Annotated bibliography

November 4<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Teaching Fellow Lecture: Allyson Volinsky

Topic: Social Marketing, Health Communication, and Media Interventions

Reading: Hornik, R., Jacobsohn, L., Orwin, R., Piesse, A., & Kalton, G. (2008). Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths. *American Journal of Public Health, 98*(12), 2229-2236.

## **Week 11**

November 7<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion #3

Topic: *Why do people enjoy being frightened by media?*

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 7, Media that Stir Emotions (pp. 163-179)

November 9<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

**You may be interested in the below topic for reasons of your capstone (so I am not taking it off the list) but you will not be tested in it in Exam Two. See November 16<sup>th</sup> for readings and topics touched on in this day's discussion.**

Topic: Media and Sexuality (not on Exam)

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 6, Sexual Content in the Media (not on Exam)

November 11<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Teaching Fellow Lecture: Rosemary Clark

Topic: The Feminist Response to Gender Role Stereotyping in the Media

Reading: Clark, R. (2016). "Hope in a hashtag": The Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(5), 788-804.

## **Week 12**

November 14<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion #4

Topic: *Do media stereotypes promote a "culture of (effortless) perfection"?*

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 10, The Effects of Media Stereotypes

November 16<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Media and Persuasion

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 8, Persuasive Effects of the Media

November 18<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Guest Lecturer: Kenneth Winneg (instructor for the Spring course, New Media and Politics - Comm 397); Managing Director of Survey Research, Annenberg Public Policy Center

Topic: News and Politics

Reading: Sparks, Chapter 9, The Effects of News and Political Content; Baran & Davis, Chapter 9 (Theories of Effect of Media on Society, pp. 260-270)

### **Week 13**

November 21<sup>st</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion #5

Topic: *Under what conditions do health-related messages promote healthier behaviors?*

Reading: Baran and Davis, Chapter 9, Theories of the Effect of Media (pp. 279-282); Sparks, pp. 210-214 (The Health Campaign)

November 23<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday)

No Class – Enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday

November 25<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

No Class – Enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday

### **Week 14**

November 28<sup>rd</sup> (Monday)

Student Led Discussion #6

Topic: *How are social media affecting social relationships?*

Reading: Ellison Cultivating Social Resources on Social Network Sites: Facebook Relationship Maintenance Behaviors and their Role in Social Capital Processes <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcc4.12078/pdf> (Links to an external site.)[Links to an external site.](#)

November 30<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Guest Lecture: Michael Kleinman

Documentary Filmmaker

Founder & Executive Director, MediaTank Productions

Screening to be done in advance of the lecture: WEB – a documentary

December 2<sup>nd</sup> (Friday)

Topic: Theories of internet “effects”

Reading: Baran & Davis, Chapter 11, pp. 342-354

Guernsey, “Garbled in Translation” (on Canvas)

## **Week 15**

December 5<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Exam Two Review

Benchmark Assignment #3: Capstone project outlines due

December 7<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

Topic: Do Media Define a Generation?

Screening: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2016-08-15/virtual-human-interaction-lab-charlie-rose> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

December 9<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Exam 2

## **Week 16**

December 12<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Individual Capstone Project Meetings with Recitation Leaders

December 16<sup>th</sup> (or earlier!)

Capstone Projects due by 11:59pm

*Comm 125 fulfills the "Society" sector requirement (Sector 1). The society sector focuses on the structure and norms of contemporary human society, including their psychological and cultural dimensions.*

*Courses in this sector use many analytical techniques that have been developed to study contemporary society, with its complex relations between individuals and larger forms of mass participation. Some Society courses are largely devoted to the analysis of aggregate forms of human behavior (encounters, markets, civil society, nations, supranational organizations, and so on), while others may focus on the relations between individuals and their various societies. While historical materials may be studied, the primary objective of Society courses is to enable students to develop concepts and principles, test theories, and perfect tools that can be used to interpret, explain and evaluate the behavior of human beings in contemporary societies. This objective will be realized through the specific content of the various courses, but the emphasis in each course should be on developing in students a general capacity for social analysis and understanding.*

*Students may receive up to two extra credit points to apply to their final grade if they write a two page reflection on how they feel this course meets (or not) their expectations for Sector 1. The extra credit essay must be received no later than December 19<sup>th</sup>, by midnight.*