

Department of Communication

Fall 2023 Graduate Course Descriptions

COM 6001: Theories and Histories of Communication

Dr. Mahuya Pal & Josh Scacco

This course introduces students to theory and research in communication, with a view to cultivating an appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of communication study. A central aim of the course is to provide conceptual and historical orientation to some of the enduring questions, core research traditions, and significant theoretical perspectives that animate communication study. Students will become conversant with the major epistemological, ontological, and axiological issues that underpin the discipline of communication. Because of its place in the curriculum, the course is designed to provide all students, regardless of area of specialty, with a grounding in the various debates and dialogues that characterize the field. Of importance is that we highlight the diverse ways in which our departmental faculty theorize, research, and engage in the different disciplinary traditions as a model for conversations that enrich scholarship across differences. Other goals of the course are to introduce students to the thinking, reading, and writing required of graduate study in the field, and to the communication program at USF. Through readings, discussions, written work, and presentations students will be exposed to the traditions, concepts, and practices that are necessary to graduate work in this program. We focus on helping you to develop, improve and refine your reading and writing skills, which require the development of various habits and practices.

SPC 6391: Interpersonal Communication

Dr. Steve Wilson

This course surveys classic and contemporary interpersonal communication theory and research. We will cover theories and research focused on language and social interaction, nonverbal communication, identity, disclosure and privacy management, social support, relationship development, conflict, and resiliency. Issues pertaining to social media, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, culture, and lifespan development intersect with these topics, and they unfold within and help create larger institutional contexts (e.g., families, workplaces, health care). The course surveys theories and research grounded in social-scientific, interpretive, and critical traditions.

My belief is that in-depth learning requires active participation by students. During class students will actively discuss course readings; assignments likely will include brief reflection papers, a class presentation, and a research proposal.

Interpersonal communication is a rich field of study, but also a vital part of our personal and professional lives. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on how interpersonal communication theory and research relate to their own experiences in and outside of class.

COM 6025: Health Communication

Dr. Ambar Basu

This course is a survey course on health communication. In this course, we make central the role of communication for health. While other disciplines (e.g., public health, health education, and medical sociology, and anthropology) also are concerned with health, communication is the only one that places an emphasis on messages, and the processes and outcomes related to messaging. We will explore how individuals' health behavior is framed by the levels/contexts in which we exist: individuals, interpersonal, organizational, community, and media. All along, we will also closely map newer directions in the field, and learn to locate erasures, absences, and co-optations in existing scholarship in health communication.

SPC 6934: Health, Illness, Narratives, and Performance

Dr. Patrick McElearney

What does it mean to be healthy? What does it mean to be ill? How does culture and society shape our perspectives, behaviors, and understanding of health and illness? This course draws on performance studies, health communication, and health humanities to critically explore the intersection of health and illness. Using interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches, students will examine the ways in which health is performed and represented in society and culture, and how illness disrupts and reconfigures these performances, particularly in relation to identity. Throughout the course, students will analyze a range of performance practices such as everyday life, ritual, culture, and media as they pertain to health and illness. For instance, students will examine patient narratives, health campaigns, and healthcare practices to identify the various roles performance plays in shaping these practices as well as the potential performance has to reshape those practices. By the end of the course, students will have a nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which health and illness are performed and represented in various contexts, as well as the skills to critically analyze and to engage with these concepts in their own work.

SPC 6934: Critical Ethnography

Dr. Aubrey Huber

In this course, we will examine Critical Ethnography as a method of inquiry. We will discuss how to set up a project, possibilities for engaging in and analyzing fieldwork, and writing strategies. In this course, students will generate examples of ethnographic scholarship, engage in an independent ethnographic project, and share weekly writing assignments. Students should enter the course with a clear research question and establish a research site to complete assignments for this class.

Anticipated Readings:

Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (2021). *Critical autoethnography* (2nd ed). Routledge.

Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Huber, A. A. (2022). *Communicating social justice in teacher education: Insights from a critical classroom ethnography*. Routledge.

Madison, D. S. (2020). *Critical ethnography* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Noblit, G. W. Flores, S. Y., and Murillo, E. G. (2004). *Postcritical ethnography: Reinscribing critique*. New York: Hampton Press.

Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.