

**Department of Communication**  
**Spring 2020 Graduate Course Descriptions**

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**ORI 6506 Performance Criticism**

Dr. Chris McRae

In this course we will engage the possibilities of performance criticism as a scholarly and embodied mode of research and inquiry. The overarching goal of this course is to consider the ways culture is embodied, enacted, and can be critiqued and transformed by performance.

We will engage the following questions:

- How is performance an act of criticism?
- How might we engage in criticism of performance?
- How is criticism a kind of performance?

**Note:** This is a reading and performance intensive class. Please note that while creating and giving performances constitutes the majority of your work for the course, you do not have to be a trained or experienced performer to participate. You must, however, be committed to exploring how performance allows you to develop, refine, and create debate around the questions you are asking in your work.

**COM 6121 Organizational Communication**

Dr. Jane Jorgenson

This course offers an opportunity to explore some of the influential frameworks and issues that define the field of organizational communication. A starting point for the course is the idea that all thinking and theorizing about organizations is shaped metaphorically. Initially we will make use of Gareth Morgan's classic work, *Images of Organization*, to explore and compare different metaphorical perspectives (for example, organization as "machine," as "brain," as "prison" to name a few). A theme throughout the course is the idea that communication and organization are interdependent (to be concerned about one necessarily invokes the other) and we will use this as an entry point for exploring particular topics in organizational communication including socialization and organizational culture, identity and identification, gender and feminist theory and networks and technology.

**COM 7933 Career Theory**

Dr. Patrice Buzzanell

This PhD seminar is designed to explicate the meanings of work and career in mediated and face-to-face contexts, in diverse cultures nationally and globally, with special considerations of mentoring, work-life issues, work acceleration, structural opportunities and constraints, and understandings of career in academe.

## **COM 7933 Communication and Design Thinking**

Dr. Frederick Steier

A feature article in the Chronicle of Higher Education asks: “Can Design Thinking Transform Higher Ed.” The article notes that, “design thinking inspires a prototyping mind-set, an experimental mind-set,” which “is ultimately a learning mind-set.” We might also ask: How does design of a future inform ways of being in the present?

What does it mean to design an online learning space? a new “app”? a sustainable community? a smart city? a workplace that features an ecological design? an exhibit at a science center? a university campus? Or, a collaborative and dialogic communication process for designing any of these?

This course will explore and develop key ideas of design thinking, a framework that fosters creativity and innovation through attention to context, collaboration, and human values in co-creating future worlds. We will focus on design in a very broad sense, as a transdisciplinary approach to problem setting and problem solving, whether situations are seen as social, technical, or rooted in the arts and humanities. Most importantly, we will feature communication approaches to creativity and innovation in local and global contexts, recognizing the importance of communication in needfinding in understanding human (and non-human) experiences. We will explore communication processes involved in coming up with new ideas (ideation) in imaginative ways while fostering a creative confidence and appreciating diverse contexts and human values.

We will also explore the ways that design thinking might be applied to our own lives, enabling our own creativity in ways that fit with whole systems design. Our transdisciplinary course will allow for project based learning in many senses, and will involve some serious play!

## **SPC 6934: Critical Approaches to Media Studies (Counts as Methods Tool requirement for PhD students)**

Dr. Rachel E. Dubrofsky

We will take a critical cultural studies approach to the analysis of media. Critical scholarship is political and active, foregrounding theory as a means of meaningful intervention. This type of scholarship also requires a critical interrogation of the methods and theories we use for our research and an engagement with the ways in which these create knowledge. Broadly speaking, critical scholarship investigates questions of power, challenging that which is seen to produce objectionable power relations. This work is, at the same time, about resistance, dissidence and negotiation. We will pay particular attention to questioning how things function, how things come to make sense in a particular context at a given time—our work will be situated and contextual.

Rather than determine specific methods and theories for analyzing media, we will develop questions that provide insight into media sites, forefronting an agenda that challenges and problematizes critical issues. To help us with this project, the course will highlight the rich tradition of critical feminist and race scholarship relevant to the study of media.

**COM 6025 Health Communication**

Dr. Ambar Basu

This course is a survey course of 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. Specifically, we will explore how individuals' health behavior is framed by the levels/contexts in which we exist: individuals, interpersonal, organizational, community, media, and public policy.

**COM 7325 Quantitative Methods**

Dr. Joshua Scacco

This course is an introduction to the logic of quantitative social science. The class will focus on the process of defining research problems, the logic of research design, and techniques for measurement, design and sampling, and data analysis. Students will be introduced to descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, comparison of means, and correlation. Students also will become familiar with SPSS statistical programming. No prior background in statistics is necessary.