

Department of Communication

Fall 2024 Graduate Course Descriptions

COM 6001: Theories and Histories of Communication

Dr. Keith Berry and Dr. Patrice Buzzanell

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 requires the development of various habits and practices.

COM 6345: Contemporary Cultural Studies

Dr. Aisha Durham

Social class will suture a semesterlong examination of cultural products, processes, performances, and practices. The course will cover canonical concepts and approaches as well as analytic models honed by contemporary cultural studies researchers who highlight the interrelationship among the state, economy, and civil society to describe commodity culture. Students enrolled in the course will become familiar with the critical-cultural language and lens to understand the dynamic ways consumer-citizens make sense of social class today.

COM 7325: Quantitative Methods

Dr. Steven Wilson

This course offers an overview of quantitative methods for communication research, including the process of defining communication research problems, the logic of research design, and techniques for measurement, sampling, and data analysis. Students will learn descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, comparison of means, and correlation/regression, as well as issues to consider when interpreting quantitative findings (e.g., effect size and statistical power). Students will become familiar with SPSS statistical software. No prior background in statistics is necessary. The course should be useful for students who want to improve their ability to read, evaluate, and conduct social science research about communication, as well as for those who may want to gather quantitative data as part of arguments for critical aims.

SPC 6934: Power and Control in Organizations

Dr. Mahuya Pal

This graduate class in organizational communication addresses the question of power and control that has endured since the rise of complex organizations in the late 19th century. The course aims to provide

an understanding of the relationship between communication, power, and control in organizations from different theoretical perspectives. We will take a multi-disciplinary approach to understand organizational contexts and read classic and contemporary works in communication, management, sociology, and other fields. We will examine power and control as a mechanism that arises from the way work is organized, as a sociocultural phenomenon that shapes ideologies and identities, as a discursive practice that delimits alternatives, and as a political process that sustains neocolonial and geopolitical interests. We will conclude the course with discussions of resistance since power is dialectically situated with resistance. We may watch documentaries/movies to learn about the impact of organizational power on the broader society.

SPC 6934: Health Communication and Marginalization

Dr. Ambar Basu

This course will explore the intersections of culture, marginalization and health, paying particular attention to understanding those meaning making processes and outcomes that constitute localized narrations on health at the margins of society. Readings and discussion in this course will seek to elucidate those elements of the local context that are dynamic and contribute to how communities living on the peripheries of modernity articulate how health materializes and is made sense of, often offering a resistive potential to what we, in the dominant discourse, are comfortable with knowing. Ultimately, the course will offer entry points for engaging in critical debates about the role of communication in creating, sustaining and challenging structures of deprivation and inequity in the realm of health and well being.

SPC 6934/ORI 4931: Performance and Video

Dr. Aubrey Huber

ORI 4931/SPC 6934 is workshop-based, collaborative performance course for undergraduate and graduate students. In this course we will study performance as a communicative process and a method through which to study communication. Students will develop their understanding of the communicative function of video performance through generating video performances. This course features adaptation, direction, and performance of literature for video productions. Graduate students will also have the opportunity to engage communication and performance pedagogies and facilitate workshops.