

Department of Communication

Spring 2024 Graduate Course Descriptions

COM 7325: Qualitative Methods

Dr. Mariaelena Bartesaghi

In this course, you will experience, reflect on, and critically interrogate a set of naturalistic research approaches within the interpretive paradigm. We will spend particular attention to ethnographic inquiry (participant/observation and interviews). Our time in class will be spent weaving the following three strands of inquiry: (1) practical and analytic issues in the doing of naturalistic research, (2) ongoing data collection and analysis, and (3) the ontologies of “data”, “field,” “themes,” “methods” and so on. We will also pay careful attention to writing as social praxis, from field notes, to transcription, to analysis and elaboration of theoretical claims.

My goal for this course is to challenge you to a closer and sharper awareness of what we do by doing research and more compelling theorizing of and in communication. In workshops we will exchange ideas, hone our skills, and learn from each other.

SPC 6934: Communication and Identity

Dr. Keith Berry

This course explores the communicative nature of “identities.” The symbolic ways in which identities shape how people communicate, and, in turn, the ways people creatively co-constitute, or make and remake, identities within communication, will be of particular interest. We’ll primarily assume a qualitative and interpretive orientation to this area of study, one that will also allow (call) us to circumspectly explore how this orientation is actually related, and often has served as a response to, other orientations. Also, we’ll assume that questions on culture and cultural identities dwell at the heart of our focus and await answers. In these ways, “Communication and Identity” will provide us with a way to better understand the omnipresent, crucial, life-shaping and endlessly-curious nature of identity and identity research. In terms of assignments, students will complete a few shorter, individual papers, several team discussion facilitation assignments, and a larger course paper on identity as it is situated within their particular area/s of study. Students from all areas within Communication as well as those from related fields are welcome. No previous experience with researching identities, and in these particular ways, is necessary to do well in (and enjoy) the course.

SPC 6934: Applied Communication Research

Dr. Marleah Dean Kruzel

This course explores how communication theory and research can address practical concerns and problems with the goal of providing implications for practice. Specifically, we will explore the history and current status of applied communication scholarship—including the controversies and dilemmas that applied communication scholars face, the common issues that confront them, the methods they employ, and the communication contexts they examine.

Throughout the semester, we will be joined by prominent guest speakers in this field and integrate timely, socially relevant examples. Students will be assessed through a variety of assignments including a full scholarly research paper (e.g., proposal, data collection, analysis, write-up), a co-written, translational paper (e.g., white paper, blog, op-ed, etc.), a learning choices assignment (tailored to the student’s interest area), reading reflections, and class participation.

SPC 6934: Latinx and Popular Culture

Dr. Diana Leon-Boys

Through a Feminist Media Studies lens, Latinxs and Popular Culture pursues an intersectional and transnational study of the history, production, representation, audience, and interpretation of Latinx popular culture. This interdisciplinary course sets out to answer some of the following questions: How do Latinxs construct identity (and have their identities constructed for them) via popular culture? How can we best understand the complex relationship between producer, consumer, and media text? How are Latinx stereotypes constructed, circulated, and contested in popular culture? In what ways does popular culture impact our understanding of ethnoracial identity, gender, sexuality, class, language, citizenship, and nation? To answer these questions, we will analyze contemporary material and view contemporary media.

SPC 6934: Communication, Technology, and Society**Dr. Jianing Li**

This course examines the roles of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in communication. We will learn about theories and methodology used to study the usage, message content, communication networks, effects, and policy of ICTs. Topics will include digital platforms (e.g., social media, search engines, websites), “big data,” algorithm fairness, computer-mediated communication, mobile communication, applied across contexts such as information credibility, news, politics, health, identity, social relationships, collective action and social movements.

SPC 6934: Listening, Sound, and Performance**Dr. Chris McRae**

This course emphasizes listening as a generative and embodied act of communication. In other words, listening constitutes our ways of knowing and being in the world; and is a phenomenon that emerges from and is shaped by bodies. In this class, we will consider the phenomenological, performative, and cultural implications of listening, sound, and voice. This course takes listening as a pedagogical imperative, and invites listening as a mode of learning, interpretation, and creation.

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.