

COMMUNICATION (COMM)

COMM 101 - Public Address (4 Credit Hours)

What role does speaking in public play in a liberal arts education? Is "public address"—the art of understanding, composing, and executing ethical oral communication—still relevant in an era of social media, political polarization, and contentious discourse? This course will teach students, through the framework of rhetorical history and theory, the concepts and skills needed to refine their efficacy as oral communicators in a variety of settings. Communication as a liberal art steeped in the traditions of rhetoric will be emphasized. This course largely covers the same material as the THTR course, Speaking as a Fine Art. Therefore, students may take either COMM 101 or Speaking as a Fine Art, but not both, for credit.

COMM 108 - Introduction to News Writing and Reporting (4 Credit Hours)

This course focuses on the fundamentals of reporting and writing nonfiction for print. Topics include storytelling and narrative, lead writing, point of view, information gathering, interviewing, and more. The class aims to help students develop overall research, writing, and thinking skills; questioning, listening, and interviewing skills; and a more sophisticated understanding of print journalism.

COMM 122 - Argumentation (4 Credit Hours)

In this course students will explore the art of inquiry and advocacy known as argumentation. In order to become better audiences and practitioners of argument, students will consider the nature of argument, the building blocks of argument and the practice of argument in public debate.

COMM 125 - Relating Through Narrating (4 Credit Hours)

Social interactions saturate our everyday lives—from talking with close friends, family members and acquaintances to engaging in broader publics. Narrative threads tie these interactions together, shaping how individuals negotiate their identities, relational boundaries, expectations, and power differences. This course examines narrative's relational qualities, prompting questions such as: How is narrative embodied, conceived and enacted in our everyday interactions and relationships? Furthermore, how do the meanings constructed through narrative create conditions for cultivating meaningful connections with others? Course readings will explore theoretical understandings and practical implications of narrative across an assortment of relational settings. Assignments, involving both creative and critical practices, will entail introspective inquiry, relational analyses, and storied presentations.

COMM 126 - Media Structures (4 Credit Hours)

This course is designed to initiate students into critical and intelligent debates surrounding the issue of communication and its pertinence to mass, modern and postmodern societies. We consider specifically how mass communication has been defined from the 19th through to the beginning of the 21st Century and how this history is relevant to issues of mass society today. Given that almost every person in America is affected by mass culture and media, we will discuss through the lectures, discussions and exercises a number of controversial suggestions, critical paradigms and mainstream assumptions. Throughout the course, students will be expected to understand these approaches and be able to both criticize and recognize the legitimacy of these models.

COMM 130 - Freedom of Speech (4 Credit Hours)

Freedom of Speech introduces students to the dimensions of oral discourse both as practiced in a community of citizens and theoretically viewed through various legal interpretations. We will examine how the first amendment rights have been defended and impinged within academic settings, throughout historical periods of political unrest and war, and in daily exchanges marked by hate, defamation and obscenity.

COMM 140 - The Politics of Popular Culture (4 Credit Hours)

The terrain of popular culture has historically been a site of contentious struggles and debates. For long (as is the case even today) one's cultural "taste" was a significant factor in determining one's standing in the social hierarchy. Debates about "high" vs "low" culture and about what cultural texts and practices must stand in to represent a community have involved some of the most well known intellectuals in history. Analyzing the trajectory of these debates over the years provides us with a lens through which to understand historical social changes. It also allows us to appreciate that several contemporary debates (for instance about the cultural meaning of Hip Hop or Reality TV) have historical precedents that inform and precede them. This introductory course seeks to trace those debates from their origins in middle century Europe to their culmination into contemporary battles over popular culture. In so doing it seeks to politicize popular culture and unravel the competing ideologies and worldviews embedded within it. We begin by reading some of the prominent theorists of "high" culture and then problematize their arguments by studying the challenges to them (most stridently posed by the Birmingham school of scholars). We will then use this historical debate to inform our understanding of the contemporary world of popular culture in America. In the process we will also learn various ways to analyze and critique objects of popular culture around us that we often unthinkingly consume.

COMM 199 - Introductory Topics in Communication (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

COMM 211 - Thinking with Ethics (4 Credit Hours)

This course will help students discover how to better recognize ethical questions when they stumble across them and to explore how, when we do, we lean into them rather than turn away. What makes it possible for us to think, listen and speak with ethics? We will explore a range of public and private ethical questions that arise in the everyday lives of college students such as, for example: privacy & free speech, conformity & dissent, accountability & care, trust & truthfulness, propaganda & censorship, power & privilege, whistleblowing & secrecy, and alterity & responsibility.

COMM 219 - Environmental Communication (4 Credit Hours)

"The "green" and "organic" language that is marking everything from our magazine racks to our grocery shelves, the increasing number of farmers' markets throughout urban and rural areas, and the increasing local discussions of the dangers of "fracking" serve as evidence that the current discourses in and around environmental care are not a fad. Rather, environmental awareness and practices comprise a "central issue of our time" that is laden with cultural concerns of ideological and material differences, power, privilege and marginality. This course will begin with an in-depth exploration of the philosophy that communication is the means through which we construct, participate, and convey the cultures we are a part of and therefore, is central to the creation of the kind of world we want to live in. We will then turn our attention to an analysis of current social, organizational and political discourses on the environment and our responsibility, or not, in its protection."

COMM 221 - Theories of Group Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course studies the communication process in the task oriented discussion group. Topics to be considered include group culture, methods of decision making, verbal and nonverbal elements in the communication process, the role structure of the group, group leadership, and others. Students will seek to apply fundamental principles in a series of small-group projects.

COMM 223 - Rhetoric (4 Credit Hours)

In this course, students examine the enchanted art of influence and advocacy known as persuasion. Students will survey this art from various theoretical, critical, and textual perspectives becoming better practitioners and receivers of persuasive discourse.

COMM 224 - Theories of Interpersonal Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course provides students with an interpretive and critical perspective for investigating the process of our making social worlds. Students will analyze interactional patterns of communication in personal and cultural mythology, in family communication, and in college students' culture.

COMM 227 - New Literacy Lab (4 Credit Hours)

Digital technology is merging traditional communication modalities of voice, text, and image into ever new forms of representation and interaction, changing many aspects of our lives profoundly, not only in terms of personal and business relationships, consumer habits, work environments, and civic engagement, but even in the ways we understand ourselves, relate to each other, and form identities. Students will explore the creative potential of these communication forms in a lab practicum closely tied to the exploration of their existential impact in theory readings and class discussions.

COMM 229 - Mediating Gender and Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)

In this class we will critically examine and evaluate the cultural construction and representation of gender and sexuality from an intersectional, transnational perspective. We will focus on a variety of media texts, platforms, and technologies. Although gender is the primary identity construction examined in this course, we will also pay close attention to how sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and geography interlock. Drawing from a broad range of academic literature, including critical/cultural studies, transnational feminism, and media studies, we will shift our focus from stable categories of identity to how gender and sexuality are produced through and around media.

Crosslisting: QS 229 and WGST 229.

COMM 232 - Theories of Public and Private Performance (4 Credit Hours)

How do we perform our identities in everyday life? What role does everyday performativity play in constituting us as raced, gendered, and classed subjects? How do cultural performances (musical concerts, sporting events, or dance) help us better understand ourselves and our society? In this class we examine a range of theories that see private behaviors and public performances as rehearsed, audience-oriented, and creative acts. Theorists such as Erving Goffman, Judith Butler, Pierre Bourdieu, and Victor Turner will guide our examination of both "everyday" performativity (in regard to bodily stigma and identities of class, race, gender, and sexuality) and cultural performances (such as musical concerts, sporting events, and dance). Students will learn how to analyze their own behavior as a cultural text and to discern the textual, acoustic, and embodied dimensions of cultural performances. They will practice illuminating how performances can reinforce or disrupt the social order, while creating the self in community.

COMM 234 - Media Theory (4 Credit Hours)

In this course, we think critically about the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of media forms (e.g. television programs, viral videos) and practices (e.g. sending text messages, participating in social media networks). In readings, screenings, written assignments, and discussions you develop a working knowledge of different intellectual traditions used to study media. From the very start, the course pushes past simplistic, binary assessments of media consumption as being either "good" or "bad." Instead, we survey the complicated routes through which media forms and practices inform people's understandings of themselves and the world around them. Organized into three units, the course aims to provide you with conceptual frames for 1) understanding the relationship between media and culture, 2) identifying how media make claims to represent truth and authenticity, and 3) comprehending the role of media in ideological conflict. Throughout the term, you are asked to question many ideas and beliefs that people take for granted: that media are "bad" for children, that some television programming is "realistic," or that we could ever exist outside the web of mediated communication that informs our day-to-day lives, even if we wanted to do just that. The overarching aim of the course is nuance – a deeper understanding of media, and a refined critical lens of assessing its role in contemporary life.

COMM 244 - Theories of Intercultural Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines the processes and politics of intercultural communication in both domestic and international contexts. Students will enhance their cross-cultural awareness by exploring differences in value orientations, thought patterns and (non)verbal behaviors, challenges of transition and adaptation across cultures, identity management in intercultural settings, intergroup relationship development and conflict resolution, and intercultural communication competence and ethics. Throughout the course, special considerations will be given to power and privilege issues in bridging differences and embracing diversity.

COMM 255 - Visual Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores how we perceive and interpret the images and visual texts that we encounter. The course introduces perspectives from visual intelligence, media aesthetics, and visual rhetoric, while offering students opportunities to employ these perspectives in analyzing a range of visual mediums.

COMM 280 - Theorizing Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces students to selected theoretical perspectives and vocabularies for understanding human communication. This course is designed to both introduce and provide an overview of the discipline of communication studies. First-Year or sophomore standing or consent. Required of all majors and minors.

COMM 290 - Research in Communication (4 Credit Hours)

The purpose of this course is to expose students to major research methods used in the communication discipline. The course will sensitize students to issues in the field, familiarize students with types of research methods used in the discipline and enable students to formulate research questions, and design appropriate studies to answer those questions. In addition, the course will facilitate students' ability to understand the logic and process of research and to engage in critical analyses of reports and studies published in communication journals. First-year or sophomore standing or consent. Required of majors/minors.

COMM 299 - Intermediate Topics in Communication (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

COMM 306 - Organizational Culture (4 Credit Hours)

This course is informed by the claim that communication is the means through which we construct, participate, and convey the cultures of which we are a part. The constitutive nature of communication is explored by investigating an existing organizational culture through an application of communication concepts and theories, cultural studies theories, and qualitative research methods.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 307 - Media Historiography (4 Credit Hours)

Media Historiography introduces students to the processes of conducting historical research in communication and media studies. Using mediated communication from past eras, the course will provide students with the analytical tools necessary to situate literature, film, television, and popular music in their historical milieus. Students will be encouraged to see media forms from prior eras as sites where meaning is contested, not just simple reflections of a period's prevailing politics. In written work, students will practice the methodologies used by communication and media scholars to interrogate these sorts of questions: archival research, ethnography, and formal analysis. Through these written assignments, as well as readings, screenings, and class discussions, students will consider mediated communication as evidence of the dynamic, disputed political, economic, and cultural forces at work in prior eras.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 313 - Listening, Thinking, Being (4 Credit Hours)

Although we know listening is central to communication, we rarely think about it. In this course we place listening at the center of communication and explore a range of sound environments and listening practices including auditory cultures, acoustic ecology, animal communication, film sound, music, human dialogue, and deaf cultures. Rather than focus on technical questions such as how to be a more effective listener the course asks the basic question of how we listen and explores the indissoluble relationships between listening, speaking, thinking, and being. Along the way, we will also consider the cultural, philosophical and ethical dimensions of listening.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 320 - Language, Culture, and Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This course is based on an understanding that culture is maintained through systems of meaning, and that communication is the sharing of meaning between people. This course explores the many ways in which language, culture, and communication interact with, influence, and manifest each other. It investigates the relationships between these three constructs using the tools of linguistic anthropology, semiotics, and cultural theory to gain a better and deeper understanding of the taken-for-granted influences of language on communication, social functions of language, cultural signs and codes, spoken language, dialects, bilingualism, and multiculturalism. This course is designed to encourage students to synthesize core course concepts and apply them to everyday lives in critical and creative ways.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 324 - The Rhetoric of Citizenship (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the symbolic dimensions of the American public discourse about rights and citizenship. Students will undertake historical and rhetorical examinations of the key texts and issues that give these their tone and tenor.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 326 - Researching Self as a Cultural Participant: Autoethnography (4 Credit Hours)

Autoethnography as a methodology and a form of writing involves turning the "researcher's lens onto self." In this course we will read and discuss numerous autoethnographic examples, intrapersonal/interpersonal communication concepts, cultural studies theories and ethnographic methods so that you can conduct and write an autoethnography about your own social/political location. This course will require you to dig deep and explore your own lived experiences in the interest of developing insight into relevant cultural ideologies and practices.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 328 - Communication Law (4 Credit Hours)

Communication Law examines the constitutional and statutory principles associated with the First Amendment issues of free speech and free press. The course examines legal decisions, governmental regulatory doctrines, and self-regulatory practices which inform First Amendment law. Particular topics discussed include censorship, obscenity and pornography, libel law, privacy, governmental secrecy, free press/fair trial, regulation of telecommunications, advertising and the Internet.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 333 - Digital Technology and Cultural Change (4 Credit Hours)

The world of communication continues to change rapidly, and with it, the cultural landscape. New avenues of social connection, political action, and creative production are clashing with powerful financial, legal, and political forces, and the outcomes of these clashes are far from certain. This class explores the possibilities for cultural change that digital technology presents and the social and economic struggles over the future of our culture.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 335 - Fracturing Fictions of Fear (4 Credit Hours)

Fear pervades personal, relational, cultural and global dimensions of human experience. As such, fear is often framed as an obstacle to overcome in order to progress forward. But could these efforts to surpass fear be neglecting viable truths to persons' underlying experiences? What if fear was regarded as an invitation to look inward in search of some deeply rooted significance? From where does fear stem exactly and how may we render meanings to articulate the ways it (mis)informs and impacts our communal lives? These questions drive the premise of this course, which regards fear as a phenomenological experience and social construction. Through exploring philosophical texts, contemporary discourses, and lived experiences, we will question what dwells in the embodied underworld of fear. In doing so, we will engage in an assortment of critical self-reflections followed by dialogical practices for communicating constructively about fear with others.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 340 - Women Creators Across Borders: Rhetorics of Life Writing (4 Credit Hours)

How do women negotiate the challenge of re-composing lives and cultural identities under conditions of geographical dislocation and cultural estrangement? Such self-fashioning requires a strong sense of voice. Yet, both migration and patriarchy challenge the self's cultural expression: pressures to assimilate rush the stranger into silence, while patriarchal ideologies challenge women's cultural relevance and claim to a public voice. In this course, we read work by women who have become recognized public voices: Hannah Arendt, Masha Gessen, Nora Krug, bell hooks, and Robin Wall Kimmerer, among others. We explore how their life writing (personal essays, memoirs, and graphic memoirs) becomes a rhetorical tool to evoke the experiences of the displaced, render them intelligible, and theorize transnational and anti-colonial feminist identities. By attending to women's life writing as resistive and creative engagement, we consider displacement as not only a wound. Rather, we study it as the engine for rhetorical projects of transnational and cross-cultural belonging that articulate more awake, imaginative, spiritual, and connected living-thinking-being.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or INTL 100 or WGST 101 or consent.

Crosslisting: INTL 255 and WGST 341.

COMM 344 - Exploring Rhetorical Texts (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines the art of rhetorical criticism. In becoming a practicing rhetorical critic, students will learn to situate, interpret, and judge historical and contemporary public persuasive discourse. Topics include the nature of criticism and the role of the critic, the process of contextual reconstruction, key issues in textual reading, and methods of rhetorical analysis.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 345 - Cultural Globalization and Identity (4 Credit Hours)

This course will critically engage with the phenomenon of the global circulation of culture. It will seek to understand the consequences of the process whereby texts, ideas and images that for long remained confined to their locations of origin are today increasingly mobile and de-territorialized. Objects of popular culture such as television, cinema and music, are circulating and being consumed around the world and are helping challenge the traditional markers of human identity such as nation, culture and language. While they are allowing individuals to imagine alternatives to existing realities they are also engendering a backlash against a perceived imposition of new ideas, values and culture. This course will seek to familiarize students with these ongoing changes and the conflicts over cultural and national identity that it has given rise to. We will begin with arguments that present a totalizing view of this process (the Cultural Imperialism thesis) and then over the course of the semester complicate and nuance those arguments by introducing agency and empowerment for the consumers of global culture. We will do this by closely studying actual case studies (from reality TV in Saudi Arabia or McDonalds in Japan) in order to understand the stakes involved in the struggle to define and "protect" national and cultural identity. At the end of this semester long course students should have gained a deep understanding of why the process of global flow of culture is a deeply contentious and political phenomenon. Understanding these conflicts through the lens of identity will help students complicate that term as well as interrogate their views about their own identity.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 349 - The Trouble with Normal: Normalization, Discourse and Power (4 Credit Hours)

One of the primary ways that social power and control are exercised is through the establishment and enforcement of "norms": gender norms, racial norms, sexuality norms, norms of able-bodiedness, norms of beauty and body size, and more. Power is both a product of and a forcefield of social relationships, requiring us to attune to the infinitesimal, banal ways in which bodies, beings, and notions of the human are built. Challenging the "mythical norm," this course delves deeply into the theoretical literature of normalization, especially the work of Michel Foucault, and applies it to a wide range of topics including the intersections between sexuality, disability, gender roles, body size, and more.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290 or QS 101 and QS 227 or WGST 101 or QS 290 or consent.

Crosslisting: QS 349 and WGST 349.

COMM 350 - Advanced Journalism (4 Credit Hours)

This course allows students to explore the planning, reporting, and writing of in-depth news stories. It also explores the ethical considerations of such projects. The organic and collaborative process provides students the opportunity to hone their writing skills by focusing on the importance of story structure and content.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 108 or COMM 280 or COMM 290, or consent.

COMM 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

COMM 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

COMM 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

COMM 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

COMM 399 - Advanced Topics in Communication (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

COMM 401 - Special Topics Seminar (4 Credit Hours)

These seminar courses focus intensively upon a particular aspect of communication. Recent examples include Visual Culture and Media and Cultural Policy.

Prerequisite(s): Majors must take COMM 280, COMM 290, and at least two 300-level COMM courses, or have the consent of the instructor; minors must take COMM 280, COMM 290, and at least one 300-level course, or have the consent of instructor.

COMM 403 - Culture and Communication (4 Credit Hours)

This seminar takes a historical and critical approach to understand the role communication plays in creating various cultural experiences. Topics include: How can we best understand and study the construction of "culture" through a communication lens? What does "American culture" mean within a pluralistic and diverse society? How are different cultural voices created, heard or erased? How is "America" constructed from international scholars' perspectives?

Prerequisite(s): Majors must take COMM 280, COMM 290, and at least two 300-level COMM courses, or have the consent of the instructor; minors must take COMM 280, COMM 290, and at least one 300-level course, or have the consent of the instructor.

COMM 421 - Communication Research Seminar (4 Credit Hours)

This course is a seminar capstone that fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement for seniors. Topics will cover areas related to the Communication discipline and vary by instructor. As a W Communication Senior Seminar, this course requires substantial writing and research.

By the end of the semester students will have written multiple developmental assignments that build upon one another leading to the creation of a coherent original argument based upon careful evidence-based analysis, accurate and succinct theoretical synthesis, and logical, cogently developed sub-arguments.

Prerequisite(s): Majors must take COMM 280, COMM 290, and at least two 300-level COMM courses, or have the consent of the instructor; minors must take COMM 280, COMM 290 and at least one 300-level course, or have the consent of the instructor.

COMM 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Students may enroll in Senior Research in their final year at Denison. Normally, Senior Research requires a major thesis, report, or project in the student's field of concentration and carries eight semester-hours of credit for the year. Typically, a final grade for a year-long Senior Research will not be assigned until the completion of the year-long Senior Research at the end of the second semester. In which case, the first semester Senior Research grade will remain "in progress" (PR) until the completion of the second semester Senior Research. Each semester of Senior Research is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Senior Research may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

COMM 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Students may enroll in Senior Research in their final year at Denison. Normally, Senior Research requires a major thesis, report, or project in the student's field of concentration and carries eight semester-hours of credit for the year. Typically, a final grade for a year-long Senior Research will not be assigned until the completion of the year-long Senior Research at the end of the second semester. In which case, the first semester Senior Research grade will remain "in progress" (PR) until the completion of the second semester Senior Research. Each semester of Senior Research is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Senior Research may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.