



UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PRAGUE

Course: COM 101 Introduction to Communication
(3 US credits/6 ECTS)
Semester: Spring 2024
Prerequisites: None
Instructor:

1. Catalogue description

This course surveys the study of communication including: the classical origins of the discipline; the value and impact of symbols; the role of communication in human behavior.

2. Course purpose

This course will provide students with exposure to basic theories and concepts in the field of communication, and as such is a foundation course for the Communication and Media major. The main thrust of the first half course is theoretical, with more practical applications in the second half. Students should be prepared to examine key concepts in a *critical* manner. They will also be encouraged to relate theory to real world practice, using practical tasks and their own personal experiences of communication.

3. Required readings, Text *=Perlego

*Fiske, J. (3rd ed. 2010) Introduction to Communication Studies (2nd ed) (Chapters 1-4). Taylor & Francis. (available in Perlego)

4. Additional readings

*Aitchison, J. (1998) The Articulate Mammal: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics (4th ed.) London and New York: Routledge (Perlego).

Beck, A., Bennett. P. and Wall, P. (2004) Communication Studies: The Essential Resource. London: Routledge.

Crystal, D. (1997). The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Downing, J., Sreberny, A. and Mohammadi A. (1995) Questioning the Media. London: Sage

*Hartley, J. Key Concepts in Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: Key Concepts. London: Routledge (Perlego).

Hall, S. (ed) (1997) Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices. London: Sage/Open University Press.

*Pinker, S. (2010) The Language Instinct (Chapters 1, 2 and 11). London: Harper Collins (Perlego).

5. Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should, in general, be able to:

1. Differentiate between and evaluate the main forms and levels of communication
2. Trace the development of communication and the evolution of language within a historical context
3. Identify, contextualize and evaluate critically the main theoretical developments in the study of communication
4. Apply theoretical concepts to familiar situations
5. Deploy practical skills for the basic analysis and creation of communicative messages

Specialist knowledge, Students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of key issues, approaches and topics in the study of communication and its role in human behavior
- describe key events and innovations in the historical evolution of human communication and explain their importance
- identify three theoretical areas (behavioral, political economy, semiotic/cultural) and their historical trajectories
- discuss the strengths and weaknesses of theories
- understand basic semiotics terminology (index, icon, symbol, connotation/denotation etc.)

Specialist skills, Students will be able to:

- explain the historical development of communication from prehistory to the present
- discuss the relationship of human development, technology and media as drivers of change
- apply semiotics theory and Rank's intensify/downplay model to analyze commercial and political advertising
- apply semiotics theory to analyze visual, verbal text and non-verbal communication
- develop and express individual opinions informed by theory during analysis

6. Content of the course (topics)

- 1 Defining the field: what is communication study?
- 2 The evolution of human communication
- 3 Approaches to communication 1: behaviorist and other early models
- 4 Approaches to communication 2: sociological (midterm exam)
- 5 Approaches to communication 3: cultural/linguistics
- 6 Semiotics: interpreting meaning
- 7 Researching, presenting and writing a communication project
- 8 Practical text analysis
- 9 Communicating to persuade (commercial and political)
- 10 Non-verbal communication
- 11 Project presentations (final exam)

7. Course requirements and grading

Mid-term examination: questions requiring short answers (based on coursework, readings and Power Point lectures on first 4 topics above).

Mini-project: The project is prepared in the second half of the semester, and there is a choice of topics. Students can work together in small groups and will give a short group presentation on their research at the end of semester.

Final examination: Content will focus on the second half of the course, but students will be expected to draw on skills and material from the whole semester. Some of the questions are given in advance for preparation at home.

Short **quizzes** will also be given on a regular basis, and some non-assessed homework assignments will be checked for completion.

Criteria for determination of grade, including evaluation methods

Engagement*, participation, classwork	20%
Quizzes (3)	15%
Mid term exam	20%
Project assignment	20%
Final examination	25%

CRITERIA for Engagement* (online classes)	5	4	3	2	1
I consistently participated in class activities (e.g. e-learning activities, forums, breakout rooms)					
When I was present, I always had my camera on as per school rules.					
I supported my classmates with their weekly presentation by paying attention & commenting.					
I gave feedback to class presentations in e-learning as required.					
In general, I was an engaged student, and fostered a professional and intellectual environment.					

Grading scale

Letter Grade	Percent (%)	Generally Accepted Meaning	Notes
A	95-100	Outstanding work	x
A-	90-94		x
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above the average	x
B	83-86		x
B-	80-82		x
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work	x
C	73-76		x
C-	70-72		x
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average	Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
D	63-66		Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
D-	60-62		Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course	No credits awarded

8. Key UNYP Policies

Attendance:

It is your responsibility to show up to class on time.

Academic Honesty

The University's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the STUDENT HONOUR CODE or ask your instructor for clarification.

For class-based examinations: copying from your neighbour, speaking to another student, using a phone or anything similar will result in you failing the test or quiz. On written papers properly note your sources with academic citations. Copying and pasting from the internet is considered plagiarism. If you have questions about this, please consult the instructor.

9. General requirements

If you are unable to attend a class or Zoom session, please let me know (by email) if possible in advance, and ensure that all make up work (in particular missed assessed speaking assignments) is done. If you do not engage with all coursework, you cannot qualify for an A or A-. If you miss a class, you are responsible for all the material covered and assignments given in your absence.

10. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

The students that complete the course will receive 6 ECTS credits or 3 American credits. One ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. For comparison, 1 American credit hour equals approximately 2 ECTS credits.

For this course, students are expected to spend time in the following course-related activities:

Class lectures and exams	45 hours
Reading class related material	40 hours
Homework	20 hours
Exam preparations	30 hours
Final project preparation	20 hours
TOTAL	155 hours

11. Technology Expectations

Projects must be word-processed with visuals copied into an appendix.

Students are assumed to be familiar with the use of internet and with the gathering of data, as well as its drawbacks. Internet research is a necessary tool for carrying out some of the course assignments (i.e. long essay or class presentations).

Make sure you regularly check the course site on e-learning for postings and information. You should also make regular use of on-line library resources and read about your subject as much as possible.