Communication 125:
Introduction to Communication Behavior
Summer Session I

Instructors:
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Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 a.m. -- 11:50 a.m., room TBD
Office hours: TBD

Course overview
This course introduces students to the social scientific approaches used to study communication behavior. Topics examined include: audience responses to media content, effects of media violence, children’s media habits, politics and the media, the influence of social media on relationships, health communication, and the role of media in creating and perpetuating gender, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. Students will engage with theories and approaches to studying communication through contemporary examples (such as the 2016 election, the “Facebook experiment,” and #OscarsSoWhite). The course culminates in a capstone project where students explore core issues in the field of communication either through a paper or multimedia format. The aim of the course is to provide students with understanding of theoretical models and research methods used to study communication and behavior, with special emphasis on applying these theories and methods to real-world contexts.

Communication 125 fulfills the “Society” sector requirement (Sector 1). The society sector focuses on the structure and norms of contemporary human society, including their psychological and cultural dimensions.

Required readings
Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview (5th Edition) by Glenn G. Sparks
Other required readings are available through Canvas.

Grading/assessment
Final exam (June 28th): 35%
Reading quizzes: 15% (5 throughout the session)
Capstone: 35% overall
  Send 3 potential topics via email (May 26th) - not graded
  Annotated bibliography (June 7th) - 5%
  Outline (June 14th) - 10%
  Final project (June 20th) - 20%
Attendance/participation: 15%
Examinations. One final examination will be given. It will be a multiple choice test designed to cover the lectures, readings, and our class discussions. The exam will take place on Wednesday, June 28th. You will receive a study guide to assist you in your preparation approximately one week prior to the exam. Make up exams will only be given in cases of unanticipated emergencies. If you need accommodation, please make arrangements with SDS (Student Disabilities Services; http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/) well in advance of the exam.

Class Attendance. We expect you to be a full participant in the class: attendance is thus required. You may miss up to three recitations for any reason (we don’t need an excuse). After 2 absences, we will start to deduct points from your participation grade. Please use your missed days wisely. Just attending all classes will not translate into the highest participation grade. You must engage in class discussions with participation, active listening, and thorough preparation. Students should complete listed readings prior to the class in which they are discussed and be prepared to participate in discussion.

Capstone Project. The capstone project is designed to allow you to choose a class-related topic and explore it more fully on your own. There are 3 options from which to choose: 1) a literature review on a focused topic, 2) a proposal for a research study, or 3) a multimedia project. We will provide you with examples of each type of capstone project. Due June 20th at 11:59 pm or earlier. There will be three benchmark assignments throughout the session to track your progress and give you feedback on your ideas. Additionally, you must meet with either instructor to discuss your topic. Please send us three potential topics for your project via email on May 26th. Although the assignment is not graded, we will provide feedback. An annotated bibliography is due on June 7th and an outline of your project is due on June 14th. More information about these benchmarks will be provided in class.

Reading quizzes. Throughout the session you will complete 5 short quizzes (multiple choice, fill in the blank) on the readings to be completed for that session (e.g. the quiz on Wednesday, May 24th will cover the readings assigned for that day). These quizzes are in the style of the final exam. If you thoughtfully complete the readings, you will do well on quizzes!

Academic integrity. We expect students to follow the University of Pennsylvania’s Code of Academic Integrity. Visit http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html for more information.
Course syllabus

Monday May 22nd
Topic: Introduction / What is Communication?
Reading: none

Wednesday May 24th READING QUIZ
Topic: Media effects & audiences
Reading:
Sparks, Ch. 1: A scientific approach to the study of media effects

Friday May 26th NO CLASS MEETING
Email us with 3 potential Capstone topics
Viewing/reading: War of the Worlds
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/worlds/
Sparks, p. 60-62 “The invasion from Mars”
Pass/fail assignment (participation grade) - more details provided in class

Monday May 29th MEMORIAL DAY, NO CLASS MEETING

Wednesday May 31st READING QUIZ
Topic: Quantitative methods
Reading:
Sparks Ch. 2 “Scientific methods in media effects research”

Friday June 2nd
Topic: Qualitative methods + Workshop: How to search for academic literature
Reading:
TBA

Monday June 5th READING QUIZ
Topic: Research ethics
Reading:
Wednesday June 7th **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**
Topic: Media effects tradition
Reading:
- Sparks Ch. 3 - “A brief history of media effects research” p. 63-75
- Sparks Ch. 4 - “Time spent with mass media: Reasons and consequences”

Friday June 9th
Topic: Audience theories
Reading:

Monday June 12th **READING QUIZ**
Topic: Youth and media
Reading:
- Sparks Ch. 7 - “Media that stir emotions”

Wednesday June 14th **OUTLINE DUE**
Topic: Stereotypes, gender, race, and sexual orientation
Reading:
- Sparks Ch. 10 “The effects of media stereotypes”
- Other reading TBD

Friday June 16th
Topic: Persuasion
Reading:
- Sparks Ch. 8 “Persuasive effects of the media” (p. 189-192; 204-210; 214-220)

Monday June 19th **READING QUIZ**
Topic: Political communication
Reading:
- Sparks Ch. 9 “The effects of news and political content”
- Other reading TBD

Tuesday June 20 by 11:59 p.m. **CAPSTONE DUE**
Wednesday June 21st - STUDY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED
Topic: Health communication
Reading:
  Sparks Ch. 8 “Persuasive effects of the media” (p. 210-214)

Friday June 23rd
Topic: Media activism
Reading:
  (chapter TBA)
  Ferrari (unpublished). “Fake” accounts, real activism: political faking and user-generated satire as activist intervention

Monday June 26th
Topic: New frontiers in Communication / final review session
Reading: TBD

Wednesday June 28th FINAL EXAM (in class) & end-of-session celebration

Enjoy the rest of your summer!