

Number of ECTS credits : 3

Course language : Anglais, Français

Course leader : MARTINE Thomas

Speakers : MARTINE Thomas

≡ COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course invites you to explore and discuss the main theoretical perspectives that influence contemporary research in communication and media to sharpen your ability to analyze complex communication situations. You will be asked to illustrate and compare various communication theories such as rhetoric, semiotics, speech acts, or the systemic approach to communication to understand the specific way each of them analyzes communication situations. This course thus helps you getting ready for the task of analyzing situations, which is indispensable to any strategy of communication.

≡ COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Compare the main theoretical approaches in communication and media and develop your own opinion on their respective merits.
2. Analyze the issues at stake in communication situation using the concepts of the course and formulate practical recommendations on the basis of this analysis.
3. Present the concepts of the course in a way that is at once simple, concrete and engaging.

≡ LEARNING OBJECTIVES

C4B learning goal	LG1 - Analysis
C4B learning objective	LO1 - Make use of critical analysis/critical thinking skills
Outcomes	Lev. 0 - Niv. 0 - NC
C4B learning goal	LG2 - Action
C4B learning objective	LO4 - Make proposals, take initiatives
Outcomes	Lev. 0 - NC
C4B learning goal	LG5 - Cooperation
C4B learning objective	LO13 - Communicate and interact
Outcomes	Lev. 0 - NC

≡ TACKLED CONCEPTS

Rhetoric, semiotics, systemic approach to communication, speech acts, mediation, actor-network theory, constitutive view of communication

≡ LEARNING METHODS

General Instructions

The course will take the form of a seminar, which involves students' active participation and regular contribution. The sessions are designed as work sessions. They include exchanges and discussions based on a set of selected readings that you will have to study. Discussions will also be fed by short presentations (yours and mine) providing conceptual landmarks as well as by case studies and other interactive activities in which you will be invited to participate.

Mandatory readings and case studies

Mandatory readings are an essential part of the course and will allow fruitful exchanges in class. You are expected to come in class with your readings and reading notes to be able to refer to them during discussions.

The case studies are essential to master the concepts of the course. They allow you to check that you know how to mobilize the concepts to analyze concrete communication situations. They are indispensable to prepare yourself for the final exam (see below).

Reasonable use of laptops

Several studies show that laptops have negative influence on the quality of students' note taking and their understanding of course content. There are two main reasons for this (summarized in [this New York Times article](#)).

The first and most obvious reason is that laptops allow us to discreetly do things quite different from listening and participating in class activities (e.g. checking your emails, your Twitter thread, or the weather forecast), which prevents not only those doing this from focusing on what is going on in class, but also those seating close to them.

The second reason is that laptops allow us to take notes much faster than writing on paper, which leads us to transcribing *as is* everything that we hear without taking the time to reflect on the content, rephrase it or selecting the most important elements.

Laptops will thus be banned during stages of the class where you are supposed to take notes, i.e. during presentations (yours and mine). However, they will be allowed during practical activities (e.g. case studies, preparation for debates, etc.).

Power Point presentations and note taking

All Power Point presentations of the course will be on Blackboard. These presentations include the logical structure of the course, key definitions, and brief examples. These elements allow you to focus your note taking on the complementary explanations and illustrations that I will give orally.

However, the Power Point presentations are no substitute for studying mandatory readings and careful note taking of the elements discussed in class. These presentations alone are not sufficient to master the concepts of the course and successfully pass the final exam (see below).

≡ ASSIGNMENTS

Group work: "pitch your concepts"

Objectives:

This activity consists in comparing two concepts from different texts and presenting this comparison in the most engaging way possible. It thus contributes to the development of two sets of competences: (1) your *critical thinking skills* by inviting you to develop a reasoned judgment on the relative merits of various concepts and (2) your *sense of communication and interaction* by inviting you to develop examples and staging that are of interest to your audience.

General instructions:

- Each pitch is developed by a team of 4 or 5 students. All the teams are formed before the first class in alphabetical order (see list on Blackboard).
- While all the members of the team must contribute to the development (or design) of the pitch, you are free to decide who will perform the pitch in class.
- Every class starts with two pitches. Every pitch lasts up to 7 minutes (and so possibly less than that).

Instructions for comparing the concepts:

- You must compare two concepts. These concepts are selected from two different texts among the mandatory readings (see the list below). At least one of the concepts must be from the mandatory reading(s) of the week during which you have to present. For instance, if you present during the "speech acts" week, one of the concepts you will present will be from Austin's text.
- The concepts that you present are only a (small) part of the texts from which they are selected. You must not try to present all the theoretical development of the texts, but only the conceptual element that, in each text, is the most striking or interesting to you.
- Your comparison must not only show the differences between the concepts. It must also demonstrate that there exist important common points between them that justify their comparison.
- Based on your comparison, you must develop your own judgment on the merits of each of the concepts. You are entirely free as to the content of your judgment. You are in no way forced to show that one is better than the other or that both are equally interesting. You might very well explain that they are equally obscure, fanciful, or useless. However, you must base your judgment on accurate and precise elements from the texts (you cannot distort the concepts).

Instructions for staging the concepts:

- During your presentation, you must take into account that your audience has a heterogeneous and, sometimes, superficial knowledge of the concepts you are presenting. It is therefore essential to recall the contextual elements that will allow your audience to understand them correctly (for instance, remind your audience of the purposes of the concepts and translate the technical terms). However, be careful to recall only the elements that are necessary for understanding the concepts to avoid boring your audience or running out of time (you have up to 7 minutes).
- Illustrate each concept with an example that is likely to speak to your audience. You are entirely free as to the choice of these examples. However, you must be careful that they perfectly illustrate the concepts (beware of misinterpretations). You can use the same example for both concepts or use different examples.
- Make sure that your examples are staged efficiently. Do not hesitate to use all the stage and multimedia elements that might be useful to you: music, video, singing, theater, mime, and various props. Be careful, however, that your staging actually serves your point.
- Try as much as possible to stage your examples in an interactive way, that is, try not to only provoke reactions in your audience, but also integrate these reactions into your presentation (e.g. if you are staging a quarrel, try to make your audience take a side before offering an analysis of their reaction).

Assessment of the competences: **see table 1 in the syllabus on Blackboard (p.4) .**

Final Exam: Case study

Objective:

This activity consists in analyzing a concrete case using some of the concepts studied in class and developing practical recommendations. It thus contributes to developing your ability to *innovate and take initiatives*.

Instructions:

The final exam is an individual analysis carried out in a maximum of 2 hours. It is based on a work of documentation carried out prior to the exam. The exam takes place in December.

Instructions for the documentation:

In preparation for the exam, you must document a communication situation. You are entirely free as to the choice of this situation. It could be, for instance, an excerpt from a movie, a novel or a documentary, or even a situation that you experienced or invented.

The documentation must include the following two parts:

1. A brief introduction (5 to 10 lines) that situates the situation in its context;
2. A detailed description or transcription of the communication events. This description/transcription must be sufficiently precise to make it possible for your reader to identify what the people involved say or communicate *implicitly* (analyzing the implicit aspects being a key part of the analysis).

The documentation must be presented in the following format:

- A maximum of 1 page (recto), single spaced, Times New Roman, 12 points, margins of 2,5 cm.
- This page must be printed prior to the exam and inserted in your exam sheet.

Instructions for the analysis:

During the exam, you will analyze the documented situation using one of the concepts studied in class. You will be free to choose among three concepts (or sets of concepts). These concepts will be revealed only at the beginning of the exam.

You will have to define and explain the concept that you selected, then show how it can be used to analyze the issues at stake in the communication situation, in particular the implicit issues.

Finally, based on your analysis, you will make practical recommendations to at least one of the persons (or entities) involved in the communication situation.

Your analysis must be written in such a way that your reader does not have to read or refer to the documentation to understand your analysis. This is the *principle of autonomy of the analysis* .

Assessment of the competences: **See table 2 in the syllabus on Blackboard (p.5)**

≡ BIBLIOGRAPHY

Monographies

- Anderson, J. A. (1996). *Communication Theory: Epistemological Foundations*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Berger, C. R. et Chaffee, S. H. (1987). *Handbook of Communication Science*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Chang, B. G. (1996). *Deconstructing Communication: Representation, Subject, and Economies of Exchange*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Copley, P. (1996). *The Communication Theory Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Dance, F. E. X. (1982). *Human Communication Theory: Comparative Essays*. New York: Harper & Row.
- DeFleur, M. L. et Bale-Rokeach, S. (1989). *Theories of Mass Communication*. White Plains: Longman.
- Dodd, C. H. (1989). *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*. Dubuque: William C. Brown.
- Fisher, B.A. (1978). *Perspectives on Human Communication*. New York: MacMillan.
- Fiske, J. (1982). *Introduction to Communication Studies*. Londres: Methuen.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hall, S. (2006). *Encoding/Decoding*. Dans Durham, M.G. et Kellner, D. *Media and Cultural Studies Keywords*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 163-173.
- Hauser, M. D. (1997). *The Evolution of Communication*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Searle, J. R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Severin, W. J. et Tankard, J. W. (1988). *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, Uses*. White Plains: Longman.

Articles

- Banks, S. P. et Riley P. (1993). Structuration Theory as an Ontology for Communication Research. *Communication Yearbook*, 16, 167-195.
- Berger, C. R. (1991). Communication Theories and Other Curios. *Communication Monographs*, 58(1), 101-113.
- Craig, R. T. (1993). Why Are There So Many Communication Theories?. *Journal of Communication*, 43(3), 26-33.
- Craig, R. (1999). Communication Theory as a Field. *Communication Theory*, 2(9), 119-161.
- Deetz, S. (1994). Future of the Discipline: The Challenges, the Research, and the Social Contribution. *Communication Yearbook*, 17, 565-600.
- Katriel, T. et Philipsen, G. (1981). What We Need is Communication: Communication as a Cultural Category in Some American Speech. *Communication Monographs*, 48(4), 301-317.
- Latour, B. (1994). On Technical Mediation. *Common Knowledge*, 3(2), 29-64.
- Taylor, J. R., Cooren, F., Giroux, N. et Robichaud, D. (1996). The Communicational Basis of Organization: Between the Conversation and the Text. *Communication Theory*, 6(1), 1-39.

≡ EVALUATION METHODS

40 % : Course work

60 % : Exam

≡ SESSIONS

1

General Presentation of the Course

LECTURE : 03h00

Structure, content, goals, calendar, readings, activities and assignments, evaluation.

2

Rhetoric

LECTURE & PRACTICAL WORK : 03h00

Classical rhetoric et contemporary perspectives.

Required reading:

Halloran, S. M. (1982). Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or if not His, Someone Else's *Rhetoric Review*, 1(1), 58-63.

Benoit-Barné, C., & Cooren, F. (2009). The Accomplishment of Authority Through Presentification: How Authority Is Distributed Among and Negotiated by Organizational Members. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 23(1), 5-31.

Suggested reading:

Carrilho, M. M. (2008). Les racines de la rhétorique : l'antiquité grecque et romaine. Dans M. Meyer (dir.) *Histoire de la rhétorique des Grecs à nos jours* Paris : Le livre de poche. p. 19-55.

3

Semiotics**LECTURE & PRACTICAL WORK : 03h00**

Saussure's and Peirce's opposing approaches to sign

Required readings:

Chandler, D. (2007). *Semiotics: The basics*. London & New York: Routledge. p. 13-44.

Suggested reading:

Saussure, F. (1959). *Course in General Linguistics*. Eds. Bally, C. & Sechehaye, A. Trans. Baskin, W. NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, p. 65-100.

Peirce, C. S. (1904). *Letters to Lady Welby*. In Wiener (Eds.) (1966). *Charles S. Peirce, Selected writings*, NY: Dover Publications. pp. 380-393.

4

Speech acts**LECTURE & PRACTICAL WORK : 03h00**

The performative dimension of language.

Required reading:

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-11.

Suggested reading:

Searle, J. (1969) *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* UK: Cambridge University Press.

5

The Palo Alto school**LECTURE & PRACTICAL WORK : 03h00**

Systemic approach to communication: Georges Bateson's and Paul Watzlawick's works.

Required reading:

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., Jackson, D. D. (2014) *Pragmatics of Human Communication. A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies and Paradoxes* NY: Norton & Company. pp. 1-52.

Suggested reading:

Picard, D. et Marc, E. (2013) *L'École de Palo Alto*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.

6

Actor-Network Theory**LECTURE & PRACTICAL WORK : 03h00**

The irreducible hybridity of action and knowledge.

Required readings:

Callon, M. (1984) Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay *The Sociological Review*, 32, 196-233.

Suggested readings:

Latour, B. (1995). The 'Topofil' of Boa Vista-A Photo-Philosophical Montage. In *Common Knowledge*, 4(1), 145-187.
