

Department of Communication

Fall 2025 Graduate Course Descriptions

COM 6001 – Theories and Histories of Communication

Dr. Sonia Ivancic & Dr. Josh Scacco

This course introduces students to theory and research in communication, with a view to cultivating an appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of communication study. A central aim of the course is to provide conceptual and historical orientation to some of the enduring questions, core research traditions, and significant theoretical perspectives that animate communication study. Students will become conversant with the major epistemological, ontological, and axiological issues that underpin the discipline of communication. Because of its place in the curriculum, the course is designed to provide all students, regardless of area of specialty, with a grounding in the various debates and dialogues that characterize the field. Of importance is that we highlight the diverse ways in which our departmental faculty theorize, research, and engage in the different disciplinary traditions as a model for conversations that enrich scholarship across differences. Other goals of the course are to introduce students to the thinking, reading, and writing required of graduate study in the field, and to the communication program at USF. Through readings, discussions, written work, and presentations students will be exposed to the traditions, concepts, and practices that are necessary to graduate work in this program. We focus on helping you to develop, improve, and refine your reading and writing skills, which requires the development of various habits and practices.

COM 7325 – Qualitative Methods

Dr. Mariaelena Bartesaghi

In this course, you will practice, reflect on, and critically interrogate a set of naturalistic research approaches within the interpretive paradigm. We will pay particular attention to ethnographic approaches (participant/observation and interviews) as well as work with texts and multimodal data. We will weave together the following three strands of inquiry: (1) interpretivism and its claims (2) data collection and analysis, and (3) methodological constructs: “data”, “field,” “themes,” “methods” and so on.

My goal is to teach you how to “go meta.” I will invite you to engage in a closer and sharper awareness of what we do when doing research and more compelling theorizing of and in communication. In workshops and data sessions we will exchange ideas, hone our skills, and learn from each other.

COM 7933 – Performing Resilience

Dr. Patrice Buzzanell

This course surveys current resilience scholarship from different metatheoretical perspectives, focusing on communication theory and research but also incorporating interdisciplinary work. Our aim is to chart the trajectory and differences in resilience research in our discipline and consider emerging trends. Because we intend to collect empirical data to enable class members to write collaborative research papers, all need to be CITI certified. We will examine different kinds of disruptions in varied

communication contexts (e.g., disruptions in work- life boundaries, economic disparities, identity considerations, and communication networks). We will also consider how long-term disparities (e.g., health disparities in particular racial/ethnic and/or age groups) have contributed to group disenfranchisement and structural barriers and potential opportunities for change. We will describe the many paradoxes in resilience communication and interdisciplinary scholarship.

SPC 6934 – Autoethnography

Dr. Keith Berry

This course entails exploring and practicing autoethnography, a systematic and experimental approach to the study of culture which conveys and examines personal stories from researchers' lived experience. Our readings will discuss the history of autoethnography, the different ways of "doing" autoethnography, what it means to live "the ethnographic life," and the challenges and opportunities related to autoethnographic inquiry. Students will work throughout the semester on their own autoethnography, have an opportunity to work with a writing partner, and will be encouraged to develop a project they can later use for a conference and/or publication submission. The course is designed for students in all research areas. No previous experience with the method is required. Looking forward to this course!

SPC 6934 – Communication & Resistance

Dr. Mahuya Pal

This course examines communicative meanings of resistance from a number of critical theoretical traditions. It offers an understanding of colonial modes of extraction in the neoliberal economy through displacement and dispossession of underprivileged communities, accompanied by unbridled growth of transnational corporations. To deconstruct power relations at a macro and micro level, we will closely examine how discursive and material practices of resistance are enacted in the face of structural violence offering entry points for decolonial politics. Our goal is to engage in critical debates about the role of communication in the realms of participation, democracy, civil society, and social and environmental justice.

SPC 6934/ORI 4461 – Listening & 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.