

**COMMUNICATION 175-208**  
**INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION (Fall 2018)**  
**Wednesdays, 4:15-6:45 SOC 013**

**Instructor:** Brett Ommen  
**Email:** [bommen@luc.edu](mailto:bommen@luc.edu)  
**Office:** 900 Lewis Tower  
**Office Hours:** By appointment or virtually

**Required Texts:** All readings are available on Sakai.

**Course Description:** An introduction to the fundamentals and theories that inform human communication practices. The course covers how humans produce meaningful symbols, how the exchange of those meaningful symbols is impacted by a range of variables like context and mediation, and how the entire process shapes and is shaped by different scales of community like groups, organizations, and publics.

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop a vocabulary for analyzing the variables and contexts of human communication
- Understand the evolving histories of communication theory, practice, and technology
- Appreciate how communication shapes and is shaped by culture
- Analyze and critique communication processes in a variety of contexts

**Course Structure:** Each week will consist of a discussion of the weekly readings. Please have the readings completed prior to class and prepare responses to the week's exercises. The second half of each weekly session will consist of a critical analysis using the week's concepts. Occasionally, those critical activities will require additional reading, which will be announced in class and posted to Sakai.

**Attendance:** This course depends on students, both as participants in discussions but also as members of a diverse group of communication practitioners and media users. Being absent from class not only hurts your education, it also degrades the quality of education for your peers. To encourage this collaborative environment, one-third of your participation score is earned by attending class in a timely fashion. Outside of university-sanctioned activities, the course does not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences.

**Grading:** This course has assignments totaling 1000 points. A: 1000-920, A-: 919-900, B+: 899- 880, B: 880-820, B-: 819-800, C+: 799-780, C: 779-720, C-: 719-700, D699-600, F, 600- 0

**Office Hours:** As an adjunct faculty member, my on-campus schedule is varied and office space limited. As such, I am unable to hold conventional regular office hours, but I will be available prior to and following class to discuss anything you need to succeed in this course. Additionally, I can answer questions via email relatively quickly if you have questions or concerns (though I can't promise the swiftest of replies between 9pm and 9am).

## **Assignments:**

### In-Class Performance: 150 units

So much of making sense of communication in our world depends on applying theoretical and critical insights to actual communication environments in our everyday lives. This course depends on students bringing their own communication contexts to the class so we can all appreciate the diversity of communication frameworks in our world.

Not only is it important for you to bring your experiences to class discussion, it is also crucial that you be actively present in class to foster an intellectually curious and professional environment. One-third of this score is based on your consistent presence in the classroom (2 units for every class attended). The remaining two-thirds of the score are based on your preparation for the class session, your contribution to class discussions, and your willingness to engage respectfully with your classmates.

### Quizzes: 250 units

There will be five quizzes administered through Sakai. Quizzes will be posted following the designated week of the course and must be completed by the end of that week (Saturday at noon). These quizzes will be simple format questions on keywords from the readings. Each quiz is worth 50 units.

### Mid-Term Exam: 200 units

Following the Mid-Semester break, there will be a mid-term examination covering everything from the first half of the course. The exam will be made up of short-form questions on keywords (similar to the quizzes) and short answer / short essay questions that ask you to apply those keywords in the analysis of human communication.

### Essay: 100 units

The essay is due—printed and in-class—prior to Thanksgiving break. You are asked to use the critical vocabulary of the course to that point to analyze the relationship between communication and your own identity. Essays should be between 500 and 600 words (please include a word-count on your submission), so you may have to focus on a particular aspect of your identity rather than trying to catalogue the whole self.

You will have the opportunity to revise this essay (revisions due, printed and in class at the final session) for extra credit by adding the critical vocabulary from after the Thanksgiving break and improving the writing.

### Final Exam: 300 units

The Final exam will be comprehensive and have the same format of the mid-term examination (keyword questions and analytic questions). The exam will be administered online during the scheduled examination window.

## Other Policies:

COMMUNICATION: The instructor has made every effort to keep course materials as accessible as possible. To that end, all of your texts will be available on the course management system and the student is responsible for accessing, reading, and abiding by all assignments, schedules, and policies contained in those documents. The Instructor will make every effort to keep grades updated. Students with concerns about their standing in the course or their understanding of course content and policies should communicate these concerns with the instructor as necessary. Email is an acceptable form of communication for all **non-grade related** matters.

SAKAI (<https://sakai.luc.edu>) is an online learning tool that allow us to communicate and collaborate with each other during the semester. On it, you will find the course syllabus, e-mail addresses of all course participants, announcements, online assignments, online grade-book, etc.

MAKE UP WORK: Make up work will not be allowed (on any assignment or exam) except for cases of extreme emergency. In the event of such an emergency, it is your responsibility to ensure the instructor is notified **prior to** the missed assignment, and that you work with the instructor and Student Services to ensure the absence is documented appropriately. Work will be completed in as timely a fashion as possible.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES Any student that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. ***Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment.*** The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naive is not an acceptable excuse. It is dishonest to:

- turn in the same work for two classes;
- turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

### August 29: Arrival, *Arrival*, and Pre-Test

### September 6: Communication Models

- The Break Up
- The One Where Ross and Rachel Take a Break

### September 12: Media Variables

- Three Shinings
- Sepinwall:  
<https://uproxx.com/sepinwall/in-defense-of-the-episode-again/>
- Who's Talking on Twitter
- Curate a class activity

### QUIZ 1 DUE 9/14

### September 19: Semiotics

- One Fish, Two Fish
- Logorama
- From Cave Drawings to Emojis

### September 26: Language Games & Speech Acts

- Language as a Window
- Advanced Dungeons and Dragons

### Quiz 2 DUE 9/28

### 10/3 Groups and Organizations

- Practices & Processes
- Networks
- The Merger

### 10/10: Midterm (online)

### 10/17: Public Communication

- Spheres, Phantoms, Feudalism
- Nobody Speak

### Quiz 3 DUE 10/19

### 10/22: Communication and Identity

- Outside Man, South Africa

### 10/31: No Class

### 11/7: Symbolic Interaction

- Symbolic Resources
- Critical Film Studies

### Quiz 4 DUE 11/9

### 11/12: Ideology

- Seeing Ideology in Public
- On the Front Lines

### 11/21: Thanksgiving Break

### 11/28: Communication & Culture

- Marlon Brando, Pocahontas, and Me
- Ms. Male Character
- Diversity v. Inclusion

### 12/5: Political Economy

- Can the Black Panther get married?

### Essay Rewrites Due 12/5

### Quiz 5 DUE 12/7

### FINAL EXAM 12/12 4:15 (online)