COURSE GOALS: This course provides an introduction to the communication arts and humanities. It overviews basic concepts in the field, acquaints students with some of the landmark authors, and investigates the study of communication and rhetoric within the contexts of the public sphere. The course makes no pretense of being comprehensive in scope. It is better understood as the snack tray that is intended to spark your appetite for the feast that will follow in your other seminars. Students enter the ASC doctoral program from a wide array of countries, academic disciplines, intellectual backgrounds, and philosophical traditions. As a result, theories that may be well-known to many of you will be completely new to others. For this reason it is imperative that we are patient and view the seminar as an opportunity to teach each other and learn from each other. I have intentionally set up the syllabus and the course structure in an attempt to achieve this goal. We will begin with some fairly basic material about the nature of theory construction in communication studies and about the history of the discipline of communication. We will then sample from the work of more recent theorists. Later in the term teams of students will lead seminar discussions on those theories and theorists with whom they are most familiar.

FORMAT: The course will involve instructor presentations, spirited (hopefully!) discussions, special events, and student-led seminars. The course meets once a week. All readings should be completed before class with key passages underlined, questions readied, and texts brought to class.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Reaction Papers: Each student will prepare a one page reaction paper for each class. These papers should pose critical questions, offer insights, and spark discussions. You are welcome – even encouraged – to speculate, think out loud, and take risks. These papers should be emailed to the class participants and the instructor by 9:00 PM the night before each class meets. These papers and your contributions to class discussions will count for 10% of final grade. Students who habitually turn in these papers late will lose credit. Sorry to be a stickler, but it is very helpful if we can all read and reflect upon these papers before coming to class. That does not happen when they are emailed in the wee hours of the morning.

Student Taught Seminars: Three seminars, one on globalization and international theories of communication (October 20), one on cybernetics, systems theories, and social-psychological theories (October 27), and one on post-modern theories of communication
(November 3) will be student taught. A group (or two groups) of students will be expected to lead each of these seminars. They should research and assign relevant readings for their classmates (reading must be agreed upon and approved by September 30 to avoid overlap and duplication of effort and to assure access to all participants). A sign-up sheet for these groups will be circulated during the second week of class. 20% of final grade.

Biographical Essay: Each student will prepare a short essay (6 pages or less) sharing insights into their position in the field/discipline/university. I am particularly interested in papers that reflect students’ philosophical, intellectual, ideological, political, and moral perspectives about their chosen discipline and profession. Why are you interested in the ideas and research topics that interest you? How do you see yourself making a contribution to the discipline, society, your culture or political system, humankind? These papers should reflect your knowledge and awareness of the literatures we have read and discussed and of the broader social, political, or intellectual controversies that you see as most important today. DUE: NOVEMBER 24. 20% of final grade.

Final Paper: Each student will present a conference length paper (maximum 25 pages) advancing some aspect of communication theory. Students should be prepared to present an 8 minute report on their final paper on December 1st. At this time they will receive feedback that will help them make revisions before turning in the final draft. The actual completed paper is due: DECEMBER 14th (50% of final grade).

READINGS: Most of the readings will be scanned and can be accessed via the class Blackboard site. We will read the following book in its entirety and thus you should purchase it: Philip N. Howard, *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. We will read substantial portions of the following books and you should consider purchasing them so you have them as part of your library: Robert T. Craig and Heidi L. Muller, *Theorizing Communication: Readings across Traditions*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007. Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*. Columbia: U of South Carolina Press, 1987. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change*. Berkeley: University of California Press. THESE BOOKS ARE NOT AT THE BOOKSTORE BECAUSE AMAZON OR OTHER INTERNET MERCHANTS OFFER SAVINGS. PLEASE ORDER QUICKLY SO YOU HAVE THEM IN TIME. ARTICLES MAY BE FOUND ON USC ELECTRONIC RESOURCES, ESPECIALLY THE EBSCO HOST.

INCOMPLETES: The instructor is limited to giving incompletes only for medical emergencies. Requests for incompletes must include a plan for completion by specified dates.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

August 25    Introductions and Course Precepts

September 1  Theorizing about Communication and the Ancient Origins of the Study of Communication

Craig & Muller, *Theorizing Communication*, chapters 5-7

September 8  Building Theory through Criticism

Brockriede, “Rhetorical Criticism as Argument”
Klumpp & Hollihan, “Rhetorical Criticism as Moral Action”

September 15 A Case for Study: Public and Political Discourse

Nichols, “Lincoln’s First Inaugural,”
Bitzer, *The Rhetorical Situation*, 1-8
Hollihan, “Barack Obama and America’s Journey: Implicit and Explicit Arguments about Race.”

September 22 Dramatism

Burke, *Permanence and Change*, Chapters 1-3
Foss, Foss, & Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, 3rd ed., Chapter 7
Burke, “Definition of Man,” *Language as Symbolic Action*(pp. 3-24)

September 29 Critical and Cultural Studies Theories (Guest Speaker: Prof. Sarah Banet-Weiser)
Raymond Williams, Culture is Ordinary
James Carey "Culture as Communication," and
Doug Kellner's "Overcoming the Divide: Cultural Studies and Communication"

SPECIAL NOTE: This class which would normally meet on October 6 will be re-scheduled to an alternative time! (We will discuss alternatives during the first day of class)

Narrative Theories of Communication

Fisher, Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action, chapters 1, 3, 5.

October 13 Theories of Argumentation


October 20 International Theories of Communication and Globalization (Student Taught Seminar)

October 27 Cybernetics, Socio-psychological, and Systems Theories of Communication (Student Taught Seminar)

November 3 The Post-Modern Turn (Student-Taught Seminar)

November 10 Cultural Memory

November 17  Theories of the Public Sphere

Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, 1993), “Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere” (pp. 1-48)
Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in Calhoun (pp. 109-42)
Randall A. Lake and Barbara Pickering, “The Anti(Abortion) Public Sphere”

November 24  New Media and the Public Sphere


December 1 Student Reports on Final Papers