



COMM (311): Communication and Publics **4 Units**

Summer 2022 | MWF 1:00-3:50pm

Section: 20496R

Location: ANN404

Instructor: Junyi Lv

Office: ASC G6 or Zoom

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-1:00pm and by appointment

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I. Course Description

This course provides a foundation for the humanistic study of communication by focusing on publics and public spheres. We live in a world with precarity, uncertainty, and possibility. Global communities share problems such as the pandemic and climate change with varying local specificities. Understanding the publics' agencies and constraints enable us to facilitate meaningful and effective deliberation and action. Thus, this course introduces publics theorists and practices in the U.S. and internationally. Drawing from and inspired by rhetoric and communication studies, the course opens to interdisciplinary studies. Three modules for our studies' core, with permeable boundaries: understand publics, deliberation, and participation. The first module introduces major theorists and concepts of publics and rhetoric. The second module prompts students to regard publics and public spheres as contested ideas with vernacularity across cultures, communities, and political regimes. The third module invites students to contextualize publics and rhetoric in relation with major contemporary issues.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify prominent theories and scholars in rhetoric and publics studies
2. Explain concepts of publics and public spheres in relation with contemporary events and issues
3. Compare public/professional/private distinctions and permeabilities
4. Apply methods of rhetorical criticism to multimodal examples
5. Practice community-based civic engagement activity in public life
6. Interpret and critique contemporary events and issues using theories of rhetoric and publics studies

III. Course Notes

The course is standard letter grade. Classes will be held in person and online remote live via Zoom. Sessions will be recorded and saved on Blackboard for access. Course materials and lecture slides will be uploaded to Blackboard.

IV. Policies and Procedures

a. Additional Policies

This class is expected to have multiple energetic discussions. To form a learning environment with respect, constructiveness, and inclusiveness, please:

- Listen actively, attentively, and respectfully, without interrupting
- Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups
- Ask for clarification if you are confused
- Speak from your own experience, without generalizing
- Do not remain silent. Make sure to contribute to the discussion

As students, you are expected to attend class regularly and participate actively. You may occasionally have to miss class for illness or other reasons. If you miss class, you should watch class recording and go over the posted slides.

You can also ask your classmates for their notes. If you miss a class activity, alternative format will be made available and required to be finished to earn the points. If you have to be absent, please let me know in advance so I can help arrange attendance and participation via alternative format (e.g., Zoom).

b. Communication

Please be sure to read your USC emails and Blackboard announcements daily on weekdays.

I reply to my emails within 48 hours. If you don't hear back from me promptly, feel free to send me a follow-up email.

c. Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Technology policy:

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. During class time, it is expected that students will use their devices only to participate in activities guided by the instructor. Use of devices for other purposes is not permitted during class time. If you require an internet-enabled device, the USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program - USC Information Technology Services provides loaner laptops at the general-use computing centers in King Hall, Ahmanson Information Commons at Leavey Library, and Waite Phillips Hall. This service is only available to currently enrolled USC students with a valid USCard. To check out a laptop, go to the service desk at an USC computing center and log into the laptop checkout webpage.

Students are encouraged to use their personal devices for academic purposes during class. Academic purposes include looking up terms, doing research, and completing in-class work for this class. Please make sure devices are silenced so as not to disturb classmates.

Please take notes so you can refer to finish class activities and final project. Although I will upload lecture slides on Blackboard, taking notes is a good complement since I will not write everything down on the slides.

d. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All required readings will be made available on Blackboard. There are no texts that you must purchase. In each class meeting, we will devote some time to discussing readings. It is expected that you will thoroughly read the assigned readings, post journal entries on Blackboard, make notes, and provide comments and questions to class discussions.

V. Description and Assessment of Assignments

a. Participation and Class Discussion (15%)

This class requires high-level of participation and attention. To participate well takes preparation, i.e. to read and watch the various materials assigned, before class. Participation can take different forms: asking a question, offering a comment, responding to a discussion, etc. You also need to listen to others thoughtfully and respond in a respectful way. Respect especially extends when we have guest speakers. We want to focus our attention on their talks and prepare questions in advance.

b. Weekly Journal Entries (20%)

By Sunday evening at 11:00pm, student must upload 400-600 words journal about the upcoming week's readings to Blackboard→Weekly Journal Entries. These journal entries should include

- 1) Summarize the main points
- 2) Engage in comments, agree or disagree with the authors?
- 3) Raise questions if you have any
- 4) Connect with any real-world cases if you like
- 5) Read others' posts and respond if you want

You can complete the weekly readings on your own pace, please refresh your memory before each class to be prepared for class discussion.

There will be 5 Sundays (excluding final week since you will need to focus on final paper), so there should be 5 journal entries. However, you only need to do 4 in total since each of you will get a “Life Gets Complicated Coupon.” Summer class will be intense. If there is a particularly overwhelming week for you, you can use the coupon and be exempted from the journal entry for that week. You may only use the coupon once. For the week you are exempted, you still need to do the readings to participate actively in class discussion. Feel free to do all 5. *Since we do not have class on Monday 05/30 (university holiday), that week’s journal is due Tuesday 05/31.

c. Class Activities (20%)

Argumentation Activity (10%)

This is an in-class activity applying argumentation spheres to real-world scenarios. Based on real-life experience or multimodal media content, come up with examples for personal, technical, and public spheres respectively. Differentiate the language and norms in personal, professional, and public spheres. Detailed information about the activity will be made available in class. Alternative format will be made available and required to finish if you cannot participate in class.

Participatory Design Activity (10%)

This is an in-class activity. Work in pairs, choose one museum (you can come up with your own and I will also provide some choices). Identify the advantages and disadvantages of the museum. Use participatory design method to imagine a better museum based on its current version. Present your idea to the whole class. Detailed information about the activity will be made available in class. Alternative format will be made available and required to finish if you cannot participate in class.

d. Final Project (45% in total)

Final Paper (25%)

This 5-7 page paper (double space, excluding references) is an opportunity to apply the theories and concepts you’ve learned about communication and publics to examples you observe. Specifically, you choose real-world example(s) (event, phenomenon, case, organization, etc.) and engage in the theories and concepts learned in this class to explain the example(s). Detailed information about the assignment will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class. Please notice the final paper is due only **three days** after our final class. **Plan ahead and start early.** The paper should follow university standards for plagiarism and academic conduct (see below) and will be turned in via the Turnitin tool on Blackboard.

Presentation (20%)

Present your design for the final paper in class before you have a fully written draft. Use multimodal materials to illustrate your idea. Detailed information about the assignment will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

VI. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation and Class Discussion	15	15%
Weekly Reading Journal Entries (4 in total)	20 (5 for each)	20%
Argumentation Activity (in class)	10	10%
Participatory Design Activity (in class)	10	10%
Presentation	20	20%
Final Paper	25	25%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
TOTAL	100	100%

b. Grading Scale

94% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 93%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

d. Grading Timeline

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments and exams. Therefore, every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams and post grades within two weeks. Because this is a fast-paced summer course, I will make every effort to grade and return your work to you within one week of submission. Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Blackboard. You are responsible for notifying the instructor **within one (1) week** of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate. Moreover, you only have this period of time to contest a score on an assignment/exam. If you fail to inquire/notify us of any discrepancy, missing score, or contest a score within one week of the date the score is posted, no further changes will be made.

VII. Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics will be provided as appropriate to the assignments. More details will be uploaded on Blackboard and shared in class.

VIII. Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement from the instructor, late assignments will automatically be dropped **one grade** for each day they are late (e.g., an A- becomes a B+).
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Wednesday 05/18	Welcome & course introduction Go over syllabus	Be ready to introduce yourself	
Module I Understand Publics			
Friday 05/20	Introducing major scholars studying publics Rhetoric as civic action	Palczewski et al., 2022 pp.3-21	
Monday 05/23	Language, narrative, & deliberation Vernacular voices	Fisher, 1984 Hauser, 2001	Journal due by 05/22 at 11:00pm
Wednesday 05/25	Argumentation & multimodal arguments	Palczewski et al., 2022 pp.122-131	
Friday 05/27	Argument spheres Argumentation activity	Goodnight, 1982	
Monday 05/30	No class University Holiday		
Module II Deliberation			
Wednesday 06/01	Counterpublics Black public spheres	Palczewski et al., 2022 pp.291-299 Turner, 2019 Recommended: Squires, 2002	Journal due by 05/31 at 11:00pm
Friday 06/03	Networked publics Enclaved public spheres Guest speaker: Lichen Zhen	Palczewski et al., 2022 pp.307-312 Zhen, 2021	
Monday 06/06	Transnational public spheres Public spheres in Asia	Kang, 2021 Yang, G. 2003	Journal due by 06/05 at 11:00pm
Module III Participation			
Wednesday 06/08	Health communication & professional publics Guest speaker: Yue Yang	Yang, Y. 2020	
Friday 06/10	Public memories Power, ideology & hegemony Visual rhetoric	Blair et. al. 2010 (focus on pp.6-11) Palczewski et al., 2022 pp.34-40	
Monday 06/13	Visual rhetoric continues Museums & public spheres	Palczewski et al., 2022 p.81-109	Journal due by 06/12 at 11:00pm
Wednesday 06/15	Publics & pop culture Civic imagination Participatory design activity	Baumann et al., 2017 The Civic Imagination Project website	Forming ideas for final project
Friday 06/17	Publics in the Anthropocene Sustainability & resilience	Cox & Pezzullo, 2018 pp.11-25	
Monday 06/20	Green publics	Brunner, 2017	Journal due by 06/19 at 11:00pm

		Liu & Goodnight, 2016 Recommended: Yang & Calhoun, 2007	
Wednesday 06/22	Energy publics	Boyer, 2014 Fahy, 2020	
Friday 06/24	Class presentation		
Monday 06/27	Presentation feedbacks Final paper discussions Course evaluation		Final paper due by 5pm, Wednesday, June 30

X. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.