

University of Sharjah
College of Communication

Advanced Communication Theory
Graduate Studies
Semester I, 2006-2007.
Dr. Abderrahmane .Azzi
Office Hours: Thurs. 15:00-16:30 [M6]

Course Description:

The course examines the most current theories, scholarship, published research, trends and issues in the field of communication theory. The course provides a firm foundation in the breadth of communication theories. This includes philosophical assumptions, social & cultural contexts and applications. The course also evaluates and critically examines the strengths and weaknesses of theory building as this applies to real communication problems in different cultural & socio-historical contexts

Objectives:

After completing the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge about and ability to describe current issues in communication theory.
- Provide a critical response, including strengths and weaknesses, to given communication theories.
- Explain the underlying philosophical structures or world views of given communication theories.
- Develop critical and analytical skills regarding communication theories.
- Explain what the implications of your socio-cultural and local contexts have on your own use of communication scholarship and theory.
- Conceptualize and undertake a research project addressing a significant communication theory.

Outline:

- **I. Communication Theory (CT) : Introduction**

Readings:

McQuail, 1-60

- **II. CT: The Socio-Historical Context**

Defleur, 25-43, Severin 3-14

- **III. CT: Levels of Analysis: Macro, Middle-Range and Micro**

- **VI. The Media Effects Perspective**

Readings:

McQuail, 327-372 – Severin, 207-280

McQuail, Online Material

- **V. The Critical & Conflict Perspective**

Readings:

McQuail, 74-91.

- **VI. The Mass Society Perspective**

Readings:

McQuail, 61-73

- **VII. The Social Construction of Reality & Meanings Perspective**

Readings:

Defleur, 228-265

- **VIII. The Media Determinism Perspective**

McQuail, 107-117

- **IX. The Semiotics Perspective**

Readings:

McQuail, 235-262

- **X. The Normative Perspective**

Readings:

McQuail, 121-152

- **XI: CT in Non-Western Context**

Online Material

- **XII. Communication & Culture**

Readings:

McQuail, 94-117

- **XIII. Communication, Technology and Globalization**

Readings:

Defleur, 328-352

Grading:

The student is expected to be actively engaged in class activity. For this, the student is required to master the specific knowledge of the field of communication theory including recent trends and controversies. This includes readings, assignments and class discussions. In particular, the student is challenged to critically examine theories, concepts, tools and findings and thus "re-build" the relevant knowledge in the context of current reality and development in the field locally and globally.

The grading system for this course is as follows:

- Midterm: 20%
- Term paper [An in-depth research paper (of about 5000 words -roughly 16-18 double-spaced pages plus title page) on a theory^[1] or an application in the field]: 20%
- Book Review 15% [report on a relevant book (of about 2000 words – 8 -12 pages) – review of main themes and critical evaluation)
- Participation 10%
- Final: 35%

Procedure:

This is an advanced theory class where it is assumed that you are already familiar with many communication theories and that you are ready to discuss the issues related

to the development of theories, the philosophical dimensions and historical development of theories, and the trends in contemporary communication theories. Because of the advanced nature of this class, the role of the professor is as facilitator of your academic development.

Required Texts:

McQuail, Denis, **Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction**, SAGE Publications, London, 1994.

DeFleur, Melvin L. and Ball-Rokeach, Sandra, **Theories of Mass Communication**, Longman, NY, 1989.

Severin, Werner J. and Tankard, Jr., James W., **Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media**, Longman, NY, 1992.

References Available at the University Library:

Perry, David K., **Theory and Research in Mass Communication: Contexts and Consequences**, 2002. P90.P378.

Srivinas R. Melkote, H. Leslie Steeves, **Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice for Empowerment**, 2001. HD76.M45.2001

Denis McQuail, **McQuail's Mass Communication Theory**, 2000. P90.M35.2000.

Gerald Stone, Michael Singletary, Virginal P. Richmond, **Clarifying Communication Theories, A Hands-on-approach**, 1999. P90.S8176.1999.

Armand Mattelart and Michele Mattelard, translated by Susan Gruenheck Taponier and James A., **Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction**, 1998. P90.M371613.1998.

Bryant, Jennings, Dolf Zillmann, **Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research**, 1996. P96.E25.I57.1996.

Pamela J. Shoemaker, Stephen D. Reese, **Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content**, 1996. P91.S46.1996.

Hamid Mowlana, **Global Communication in Transition: the End of Diversity**, P96.15.M67.1996.

Arthur Asa Berger, **Essentials of Mass Communication Theory**, P90.B413.1995.

Nick, Stevenson, **Understanding Media Cultures: Social Theory and Mass Communication**, 1995. HM258,S753,1995.

David Crowley and David Mitchell, **Communication Theory Today**, 1994. P90.C6336.1994.

Jennings Bryant, Dolf Zillmann, **Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research**, 1994. HN90.M3.M415.1994.

Hanno, Hardt, **Critical Communication Studies: Communication, History and Theory in America**, 1992. P91.3.H37.1992.

Melvin L. DeFleur, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, **Theories of Mass Communication**, 5th Edition, 1989. HN258.D35.1989.

Hoveyda, Fereydoun, **The Hidden Meaning of Mass Communication**, 2000. P91.H677.2000.

Other References:

Lowery, S.A., & Defleur, M.L., **Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects** (3rd ed.). NY: Londman, 1998.

Griffin, E., **A First Look at Communication Theory** (3rd ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1997

Infantee, D. A., Rancer, A. S., & Womack, D. F., **Building Communication Theory** (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1997.

Anderson, J., **Communication Theory: Epistemological Foundations**, New York: Guilford Press, 1996.

Littlejohn, S. W., **Theories of Human Communication** (5th ed.).Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996.

Salwen, M. B., & Stacks, D. W., **An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research**, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1996.

Casmir, F., **Building Communication Theories: A Socio-Cultural Approach**, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1994.

Chalmers, A. F., **What Is This Thing Called Science?** (2nd ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1982.

Classical References:

Lasswell, H.D., **Propaganda Technique in the World War**, Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., 1927.

Katz E. and Lazarsfeld P., **Personal Influence: The Part Played By People in the Flow of Communication**, The Fress- Press, N.Y., 1955.

Lerner, D., **The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernization in the Middle East**, The Free Press of Glencoe, N.Y. 1964.

Schramm. W., **Mass Media and National Development**, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1964.

Blumer J.D. and Katz E., **The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspective on Gratifications Research**, SAGE, Beverly-Hills, 1974.

McCombs, M. E. and Shaw, D.L., **The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press**, St. Paul, MN., 1977

Selected Online Resources:

- Mass Communication Theory Site at:
http://physinfo.ulb.ac.be/cit_courseware/research/theories4.htm
- Mass Communication Theory Books at:
<http://www.ablongman.com/catalog/academic/course/0,1143,71742.00.html>
- Mass Communication Theory Courses at:
<http://www.udel.edu/communication/COMM370/eperse/comm370.html>
<http://www.excellent.com.utk.edu/~bates/c641sy98.htm>
- The Frankfurt School at:
<http://home.cwru.edu/~ngb2/Pages/Intro.html>
- Media Effects at:
<http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-eff.htm>
<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html>
- Problems with Media Effects Model at:

<http://www.theory.org.uk/effects.htm>

- Media Effects on Children at:

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/feb03/unraveling.html>

- Semiotic Analysis at:

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/ias/polecon/workingpapers/1jessop.doc>

- Hegemony Theory at:

<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html>

- Audience Research at:

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/feb03/unraveling.html>

- Communication, Cultural and Media Studies at:

<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml>

My HP: <http://www.geocities.com/dr.azzi>

^[1]Select a communication theory and prepare a presentation for the class that explicates the theory, reviews some of the best research out of that theoretic tradition, and reveal the theoretic assumptions in the theory.