DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Why Communication Studies?
Are you interested in public advocacy and how individuals and groups craft and respond to messages?
Do you have an interest in how identity and culture shapes our communication interactions?
Do you want to better understand how organizations and groups manage communication?

If so, Communication Studies (https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/communication-studies) may be a great fit for you!

The department seeks to contribute to a broad, liberal education for majors and non-majors by raising students’ level of oral, visual, and written communication literacy, as well as their critical thinking abilities. Students develop an understanding and appreciation of human message exchanges and recognize how communication influences social, political, artistic and cultural existence. In addition to the Communication Studies’ programs, the department participates in an interdisciplinary approach to the discipline and thus offers cross-listed courses with Theatre, Cultural Studies, African American Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies and IDFA.

Alumni work in areas including public affairs, corporate relations, law, religion, sales, lobbying, entertainment, human resources, conference and meeting management, training, health communication, teaching and consulting. The major also prepares students well for graduate or law school.

The faculty members of the department are committed to scholarly research and creative production in the department’s areas of expertise: identity and culture, public discourse and advocacy, and leadership and organizational communication. The department provides service to TU and the larger community in a variety of ways, including through service-learning courses, community engagement initiatives and with the department’s affiliation with Pi Kappa Delta, the communication studies honorary society.

Internship Program Guidelines
The department has a successful and robust internship program. Students who meet the requirements for participation are encouraged to consider selecting an internship for course credit.

In order to be eligible for an internship, students must be a major, have junior/senior status and have met the following requirements: completion of COMM 300; a minimum GPA of 2.5 overall and 2.75 in the major. Visit the department website for information on the internship application and approval process. All internship worksites must be approved by the internship coordinator.

Departmental Scholarships
The Communication Studies department is fortunate in being able to offer its majors a number of scholarship opportunities, including the Brian Billick Sports Communication Scholarship, the Jamie Parker Memorial Scholarship, and the Louis Adam Dollenger ’75 Memorial Scholarship. Typically, scholarship applications are due in early February for the next academic year.

Departmental Activities
The Communication Studies Department supports the Public Communication Center, a center to help students improve their public speaking and class presentation skills, and Pi Kappa Delta, the national honorary for speech and debate. The department sponsors a Communication Studies Welcome Back event in the fall and co-sponsors a Media and Culture Lecture Series with Electronic Media and Film and Mass Communication and two major events in the spring—a campus-wide public speaking contest and the Communication Studies Symposium. The department also provides workshops, lectures, and alumni events.

Courses

COMM 100 USING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY IN PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE (3)
Basic skills in gathering, processing and using information to critically evaluate and debate questions of public policy. Emphasizing research using print, human, and electronic sources and presentation of argument through written briefs and oral advocacy. GenEd I.B.

COMM 131 PUBLIC SPEAKING (3)
Perspectives of rhetoric and public speaking, investigating contemporary American experiences, delivering and critiquing speeches. GenEd II.B.3 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

COMM 132 HONORS PUBLIC SPEAKING (3)
Instruction in various kinds of public speaking (e.g., informative, persuasive, introductory, and impromptu); doing research, developing ideas with evidence, preparing outlines, delivering and critiquing speeches with emphasis on rhetorical criticism and ethical issues in speech communication. GenEd II.B.3 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

COMM 201 INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION STUDIES (3)
Foundation for communication studies major that focuses on theory and application of the role that communication plays in public discourse and advocacy, identity and culture, and leadership and organizational contexts. Students who have successfully completed COMM 101 will not receive additional credit for COMM 201. Prerequisite: ENGL 102 or ENGL 190.

COMM 215 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION (3)
Examination and application of core concepts, advanced theories, and current research. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 or ENGL 190; COMM 131.
COMM 231 NONVERBAL COMM (3)
Examination of the elements of nonverbal communication: environment, personal space, physical appearance, body movement, gestures, touching behavior, facial expression, and vocal cues. Course will investigate the effects of these on interpersonal and public communication. Students who have successfully completed COMM 301 will not receive additional credit for COMM 231. Prerequisite: COMM 201 [COMM 101] or consent of instructor.

COMM 249 SPEECH AND DEBATE I (1.5)
Practical skill development and participation within Towson's Speech and Debate Program: preparation, practice and competition in debate and/or individual speaking events; researching controversial issues, preparing and delivering speeches, participating in on-campus and intercollegiate events. Course is repeatable for a maximum of 3.0 units. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

COMM 250 SPEECH AND DEBATE II (1.5)
Practical skill development and participation within Towson's Speech and Debate Program: preparation, practice and competition in debate and/or individual speaking events; researching controversial issues, preparing and delivering speeches, participating in on-campus and intercollegiate events. Course is repeatable for a maximum of 3.0 units. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

COMM 300 RESEARCH METHODS (3)
Survey of methods and uses of research in communication studies fields. Students who have successfully completed COMM 480 will not receive additional credit for COMM 300. Prerequisites: COMM 101 or COMM 201, and ENGL 102; majors and minors only. Core: Advanced Writing Seminar.

COMM 303 ADV PUBL SPEAKING (3)
Principles and application of evidence, composition, organization, analysis, and criticism. Manuscript, persuasive, and impromptu speaking. Prerequisite: COMM 131 or COMM 132.

COMM 304 PERSUASION (3)
Theory and practice of linguistic and symbolic persuasion; applications of rhetorical principles in social sciences and formal and informal communication; analysis of rhetoric through discussion. Prerequisite: junior/senior standing or consent of instructor.

COMM 311 RHETORICAL THEORY & CRITICISM (3)
Foundation in the theories and practice of rhetorical studies with emphasis on the historical development of rhetorical theories and ideas, from Antiquity to the contemporary period, the application of theories to contemporary issues, and the scholarly process of studying rhetoric. Students who have successfully completed COMM 211 will not receive additional credit for this course. Prerequisite: COMM 300 or COMM 480.

COMM 315 BUSIN & PROF COMM (3)
Professional interview and other dyadic encounters, curriculum vitae preparation, and exploration of communication in business structures: agendas, briefings, meetings, conferences, and strategies of attributional and communicative techniques. Prerequisite: COMM 131/COMM 132.

COMM 331 ADVOCACY & ARGUMENT (3)
Essentials of argumentation; research, analysis, evidence, reasoning, case construction, and refutation. Applications in fact, value, and public policy settings. Prerequisites: COMM 131; majors/minors only.

COMM 333 INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMANCE STUDIES (3)
Will examine a broad range of performances on and off the stage, live and recorded, including performance art, storytelling, celebrations, political speeches, concerts, protests, street happenings, and everyday encounters. Students will observe and participate in various modes of performances and sites based on readings of key texts. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on the relationship between theory and practice through (auto)ethnographic writing and performance. Prerequisite: COMM 300.

COMM 345 SEXUAL COMMUNICATION (3)
Examines the communicative dimensions of sex, sexuality, and sexual expression. Surveying popular culture (magazines, pop science, TV/film) and everyday life (campus politics, hookup culture, dating rituals) students will critically analyze how sex is communicated in various public spheres. The course emphasizes the theoretical, political, relational, and ethical implications of sexual communication. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 349 PRACTICUM I (1.5)
Practical skill development and participation in competitive speech and debate, the public communication center, or in other on- or off-campus opportunities. Course is repeatable for a maximum of 3.0 units. Prerequisites: COMM 303 and consent of instructor.

COMM 350 PRACTICUM II (1.5)
Practical skill development and participation in competitive speech and debate, the public communication center, or in other on- or off-campus opportunities. Course is repeatable for a maximum of 3.0 units. Prerequisites: COMM 303 and consent of instructor.

COMM 351 SPEC TOPC/SPCH DEB (3)
In-depth study of selected areas dependent on student and faculty interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: COMM 249.

COMM 360 COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL PROTEST (3)
Principles, research and applications of social protest as a communicative practice. Prerequisite: COMM 300.

COMM 365 VISUAL COMMUNICATION (3)
Explores the rhetorical power of images and visual artifacts including bodies, photographs, memorials, and image events. It introduces students to the theoretical concepts and methods used to interpret and analyze visual messages that stand alone or appear alongside verbal messages. Encourages students to engage visual artifacts critically in an investigation of the role visual media play in the creation and negotiation of American culture. Prerequisite: COMM 300.

COMM 368 COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE (3)
Communicative elements of popular culture, including the production and consumption of critical analyses and power relations in popular culture. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 380 LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION (3)
Students explore leadership from a communication perspective and investigate trends in leadership and communication. Through community partnership, the service learner will recognize him/herself as a leader by participating in civic engagement and developing leadership communication to facilitate civic change. Prerequisites: COMM 131 and COMM 201.

COMM 382 AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNICATION (3)
Examines how members of the African American community have used and continue to use symbols rhetorically to construct and reconstruct images of themselves and their communities. Prerequisite: COMM 300.
COMM 390 COMMUNICATION AND POLITICS (3)
Designed to introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of political communication. It will examine the various ways that communicative messages, methods, and strategies relate to Politics (elections and policymaking) and politics (social movements and public advocacy) and inform our civic life. We will introduce this course with a theoretical foundation before exploring the following topics: presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency, public policy deliberation, political campaigns, citizenship, public activism, political media, and political satire. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 418 COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (3)
Instructional strategies for implementing objectives, specifying and evaluating results. Prerequisite: COMM 300 [COMM 480].

COMM 419 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION (3)
Theories and processes of decision making in organizations including classical, human resources, culture, systems, and critical approaches. Emphasis is on the role communication plays in assimilation, conflict, diversification, and crisis management. Prerequisites: COMM 300 or COMM 480 or MCOM 390 or MCOM 490.

COMM 420 COMMUNICATION LAW (3)
Focus on communication questions and skills by lawyers, judges, litigants, and jurors in criminal and civil justice. Survey of research related to verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication as they apply to the legal concerns of interview, negotiation, and litigation. Special attention to first amendment rights and hate speech. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 422 CONFERENCE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (3)
Communicative details in preparing for and implementing conference events. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 440 COMMUNICATION AND GENDER (3)
The creation of gender images through communication and the development of lines of argument regarding masculinity and femininity. Emphasizing both historical and contemporary theories of gender arguments in public discourse. Prerequisite: COMM 201.

COMM 450 CAPSTONE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES (3)
The capstone course is designed to help students apply all the knowledge gained throughout the communication studies major. Students will use previous knowledge to create an individual research project of their choosing, from start to finish, with a culminating public research presentation. Prerequisites: COMM 300; majors only; senior standing.

COMM 470 TOPICS IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND ADVOCACY (3)
In-depth study of a selected area in public discourse and advocacy dependent on student and faculty interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: COMM 201 [COMM 101].

COMM 471 TOPICS IN IDENTITY AND CULTURE (3)
In-depth study of a selected area in identity and culture dependent on student and faculty interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: COMM 201 [COMM 101].

COMM 472 TOPICS IN LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION (3)
In-depth study of a selected area in leadership and organizational communication dependent on student and faculty interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: COMM 201 [COMM 101].

COMM 477 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION (3)
Principles, research and applications of cross-cultural discourse. Students who have successfully completed COMM 377, COMM 378 or COMM 379 will not receive additional credit for COMM 477. Prerequisite: COMM 300 [COMM 480].

COMM 490 INTERN COMM STUDY (1-6)
Practical field experiences. Under faculty supervision, the student works as an intern with a working professional in some field of communication. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units. Graded S/U. Prerequisites: junior/senior standing; minimum overall GPA of 2.5 and 2.75 in the major; consent of the instructor; completion of appropriate courses determined by the department.

COMM 494 STUDY ABROAD (3)
Provides students the opportunity to study communication outside of the United States. Prerequisites: COMM 131 and COMM 201.

COMM 495 INDEPENDENT STUDY IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES (1-6)
Directed study through readings, projects, papers, or seminars. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units. Prerequisite: COMM 300 or COMM 480; minimum GPA 3.25 in the major or consent of the instructor.