

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Media and Communication
with effect from Semester A 2024/25**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Communication Fundamentals

Course Code: COM5101

Course Duration: One semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: P5

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course provides an overview of major theories, key concepts, application strategies and research methods of communication theories and the interplay among the mass media, society and individuals. It covers: 1) both classic communication theories (e.g., diffusion of innovations) and new approaches as related to conventional and online communication; 2) the operation, process, and effects of the media and related communication industries; 3) various research methods in mass, interpersonal, organizational and intercultural communication to facilitate the discovery and confirmation of scientific knowledge; and 4) the interrelationship among communication, media and society.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Describe and discover the underlying assumptions, key concepts, central hypotheses, empirical basis, and historical evolution of major theories of communication and media, with an emphasis on new media.	30%	✓	✓	
2.	Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of each major theory based on the established criteria and comparisons among the theories.	30%		✓	✓
3.	Apply relevant theories to selected real world issues, by developing effective and innovative communication strategies and tactics to solve the identified problems.	40%	✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.			Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	
Lectures	Lectures discussing the major concepts and theories	✓	✓	✓	2 (for 12 weeks)
In-class discussions	In-class discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of selected theories and concepts		✓		1 (for 6 weeks)
Case studies	Case studies about the application of theories to selected real world cases			✓	1 (for 6 weeks)

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.			Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3		
Continuous Assessment: 100%					
Class Attendance and Participation		✓	✓	30%	
Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices)		✓	✓	30%	
Quizzes	✓	✓	✓	35%	
Presentation (of the Research Paper)	✓	✓	✓	5%	
				100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Class Attendance and Participation	Good grasp of the assigned readings and lectures. Clear understanding of key concepts and theories. Ability to compare different theoretical traditions and to creatively apply theories to real life cases and issues.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
2. Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices)	Thorough and critical review of existing theories, focusing on central hypothesis, research methodology, major findings, conclusions and implications. Appropriate and creative application of theory(ies) to real life issues/events using either empirical causal analysis or cultural analysis.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
3. Quizzes	Comprehensive understanding of the basic theories of communication under both the cognitive and cultural tradition. Ability to explain the key concepts, theories and compare different theoretical traditions. Ability to creatively apply theories to real life experience and provide theoretically-informed analysis or interpretation or key issues/events in life.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
4. Presentation	Excellent command of mass communication theory, with an extensive knowledge base – technical execution of the presentation and group coordination	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Class Attendance and Participation	Good grasp of the assigned readings and lectures. Clear understanding of key concepts and theories. Ability to compare different theoretical traditions and to creatively apply theories to real life cases and issues.	Highly active, constructive, and meaningful participation in and contribution to in-class activities.	Adequate participation in and contribution to in-class activities.	Moderate participation in and contribution to in-class activities.	Minimal or no participation and contribution to in-class activities.
2. Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices)	Thorough and critical review of existing theories, focusing on central hypothesis, research methodology, major findings, conclusions and implications. Appropriate and creative application of theory(ies) to real life issues/events using either empirical causal analysis or cultural analysis.	Strong evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions	Adequate evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions	Some evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions	Fail to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions
3. Quizzes	Comprehensive understanding of the basic theories of communication under both the cognitive and cultural tradition. Ability to explain the key concepts, theories and compare different theoretical traditions. Ability to creatively apply theories to real life experience and provide theoretically-informed analysis or interpretation or key issues/events in life.	Comprehensive understandings of the course materials	Adequate understandings of the course materials	Moderate understandings of the course materials	Fail to demonstrate basic understandings of the course materials
4. Presentation	Excellent command of mass communication theory, with an extensive knowledge base – technical execution of the presentation and group coordination	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Communication processes, research methods for communication, structure and operation of the media, content production and delivery, diffusion and use of new media technology, media effects on individuals and the society.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Denis McQuail & Sven Windahl (1993). <i>Communication models for the study of mass communication</i> (2 nd ed.). Longman.
2.	Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr. (2001). <i>Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media</i> . (5 th ed.). Longman.
3.	Douglas M. Kellner and Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2012) <i>Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks</i> . Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	http://newmedia.cityu.edu.hk/com5101 (a specifically designed and constantly updated gateway for all relevant online resources)
2.	Everett M. Rogers (2003). <i>Diffusion of innovations</i> , 5th edition. New York: The Free Press.
3.	Denis McQuail (2002) (Ed.). <i>McQuail's reader in mass communication theory</i> . Sage.
4.	Roger Filder (1997). <i>Mediamorphosis: Understanding new media</i> . Pine Forge Press.