

City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by Department of Media and Communication
with effect from Semester A in 2014 / 2015

Part I

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Course Title: | Communication Fundamentals |
| Course Code: | COM5101 |
| Course Duration: | One semester |
| Credit Units: | 3 |
| Level: | P5 |
| Medium of Instruction: | English |
| Prerequisites: | Nil |
| Precursors: | Nil |
| Equivalent Courses: | Nil |
| Exclusive Courses: | Nil |

Part II

Course Aims

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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

| No. | CILOs | Weighting (if applicable) |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 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% |

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

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

Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

| CILO No. | Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities | Weighting (if applicable) | Remarks |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 1, 2, 3 | Examination (2 hours) | 50% | |
| 2, 3 | In-class or take-home exercises | 20% | |
| 2, 3 | Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices) | 30% | |

Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A-...F). The overall grade is based on student's overall performance in all assessment tasks/activities considered together. The meanings of the overall letter grades will be in line with those listed in the Academic Regulations.

More specific grading criteria for selected assessment tasks/activities are as follows:

Research paper:

- Thorough and critical review of existing theory(ies), focusing on the following:
 - o the central hypothesis;
 - o the research methodology;
 - o the major findings;
 - o the conclusions and implications.
- Appropriate and creative application of theory(ies), focusing on the following:
 - o detailed description of the characteristics of a real life issue;
 - o theoretical analysis of possible causes and consequences of the issue;
 - o theoretically-informed discussion of possible solutions to the issue.

Weighting of the different criteria and other details will be given to the students during the class.

Courses are graded according to the following schedule:

| Letter Grade | Grade Point | Grade Definitions | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A+ A A- | 4.3 4.0 3.7 | Excellent: | Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base; demonstrate creative ideas for discovering and developing knowledge or problem-solving strategies. |
| B+ B B- | 3.3 3.0 2.7 | Good: | Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature, demonstrate some ideas for discovering and developing problem-solving strategies. |
| C+ C C- | 2.3 2.0 1.7 | Adequate: | Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material. |
| D | 1.0 | Marginal: | Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course. |
| F | 0.0 | Failure: | Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature. |
| P | | Pass: | "Pass" in a pass-fail course. Courses to be graded on a pass-fail basis for a programme are specifically identified under the programme in the course catalogue. |

Part III

Keyword Syllabus

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.

Recommended Reading

Text(s)

- Denis McQuail & Sven Windahl (1993). *Communication models for the study of mass communication* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr. (2001). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*. (5th ed.). Longman.

Other references / Online Resources

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