

COM5101: COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Communication Fundamentals

Subject Code

COM - Media and Communication

Course Number

5101

Academic Unit

Media and Communication (COM)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
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	x	x	
2	Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of each major theory based on the established criteria and comparisons among the theories.	30		x	x
3	Apply relevant theories to selected real world issues, by developing effective and innovative communication strategies and tactics to solve the identified problems.	40	x	x	x

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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)	
1	Lectures	Students will engage in lectures and describe the major concepts and theories	1, 2, 3	2 (for 12 weeks)
2	In-class discussions	Students will discuss, clarify, and debate the strengths and weaknesses of selected theories and concepts	2	1 (for 6 weeks)
3	Case studies	Students will carry out reflective writing on issues and cases about the application of theories to selected real world cases	3	1 (for 6 weeks)

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	Class Attendance and Participation, including in-class discussions held on digital platforms	2, 3	30	-	Yes
2	Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices)	2, 3	30	-	No
3	Quizzes	1, 2, 3	35	-	No
4	Presentation (of the Research Paper)	1, 2, 3	5	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Attendance and Participation, including in-class discussions held on digital platforms (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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, as demonstrated in in-class discussions held on digital teaching platforms.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Quizzes (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Presentation (of the Research Paper) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Excellent command of mass communication theory, with an extensive knowledge base – technical execution of the presentation and group coordination

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Class Attendance and Participation, including in-class discussions held on digital platforms (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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, as demonstrated in in-class discussions held on digital teaching platforms.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Highly active, constructive, and meaningful participation in and contribution to in-class activities.

Good

(B+, B) Adequate participation in and contribution to in-class activities.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate participation in and contribution to in-class activities.

Failure

(F) Minimal or no participation and contribution to in-class activities.

Assessment Task

Research paper (3,000-5,000 words exclusive of references, tables, figures, and all other appendices) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions

Good

(B+, B) Adequate evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Some evidence of ability to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions

Failure

(F) Fail to identify and evaluate the topic/problem by utilizing appropriate theories and ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and providing suitable solutions

Assessment Task

Quizzes (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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 of key issues/events in life.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Comprehensive understandings of the course materials

Good

(B+, B) Adequate understandings of the course materials

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate understandings of the course materials

Failure

(F) Fail to demonstrate basic understandings of the course materials

Assessment Task

Presentation (of the Research Paper) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Excellent command of mass communication theory, with an extensive knowledge base – technical execution of the presentation and group coordination

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

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.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

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

Additional Readings

	Title
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.