

Communication Studies

Faculty

Karen Erlandson, chair and associate professor.

B.A., 1992, M.A., 1995, Michigan State University; Ph.D., 2002, University of California, Santa Barbara. Appointed 2002.

Andy Boyan, visiting instructor.

B.A., 2003, M.A., 2005, Washington State University; ABD, Michigan State University. Appointed 2009.

Jeremy L. Osborn, visiting assistant professor.

B.A., 1998, Capital University; M.A., 2000, The Ohio State University; Ph.D., 2004, University of Arizona. Appointed 2005.

Yuxia Qian, assistant professor.

B.A., 1996, Liocheng University; M.A., 2001, University of Shanghai; Ph.D., 2007, Ohio University. Appointed 2008.

Introduction

Communication is the process that makes us human. It is through our ability to use symbolic expression that we develop our identities, gain personal effectiveness, and establish, maintain and change the societies in which we live. Communication is then a study which is central to the mission of the liberal arts. Students investigate how humans use signs and symbols to communicate in a variety of settings: interpersonal, public, organizational and mass communication contexts. In all of this study, students come to understand the mutually influencing and interdependent nature of all communication. Students majoring in communication studies may be interested in pursuing a mass communication concentration as well. Majors are expected to participate in all assessment objectives as outlined by the department.

[Communication Studies Department Web site](#)

Career Opportunities

Although this department's courses are within the mainstream of the liberal arts tradition, intended to provide important theory and practice for all Albion students, concentration in communication studies is especially valuable for students preparing for professions such as public service, public relations, advertising, business, electronic media, politics, education and the law.

Special Features

Internships are viewed as valuable learning experiences, and the department encourages all interested students to avail themselves of these opportunities if appropriate to the background and preparation of the students. Juniors and seniors have the opportunity to participate in semester internships in communication through the GLCA New York Arts Program. Students also can develop communication-related internships in advertising, public relations and other professions through a number of programs including the Philadelphia Center and the Washington Center. Internships are arranged by the staff of the GLCA programs in these cities and require faculty recommendation. Diverse local internships in the greater Albion community and surrounding area are also available.

The communication studies program offers the Lomas Scholarship to outstanding students and sponsors the annual Kropscott Symposium which provides students the opportunity to attend lectures and

participate in workshops with nationally known scholars and practitioners in specific communication fields such as intercultural communication, communication ethics and environmental communication.

The department offers students the option of completing a general major/minor or to specialize with an emphasis in one of three areas of the field: mass media, organizational communication or interpersonal communication.

Requirements for Communication Studies Major

- The four options for students pursuing a major in communications studies are outlined below and have been designed to meet a variety of career needs and interests.

COMMON CORE

Communication Studies 101: Introduction to Human Communication

Communication Studies 241: Public Speaking

Communication Studies 322: Communication Theory

General Track—A minimum of nine units in communication studies, including: 101, 241, 322; one course from 202, 207, 313; one course from 203, 301, 306, 351; one course from 205, 207, 306, 365; three courses from 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 245, 301, 306, 311, 312, 313, 325, 341, 351, 365.

Interpersonal Communication Track—A minimum of nine units in communication studies, including: 101, 241, 322; two courses from 202, 207, 313; one course from 203, 301, 306, 351; one course from 205, 207, 306, 365; two courses from 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 245, 301, 306, 311, 312, 313, 325, 341, 351, 365.

Organizational Communication Track—A minimum of nine units in communication studies, including: 101, 241, 322; one course from 202, 207, 313; two courses from 203, 301, 306, 351; one course from 205, 207, 306, 365; two courses from 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 245, 301, 306, 311, 312, 313, 325, 341, 351, 365.

Mass Media Track—A minimum of nine units in communication studies, including: 101, 241, 322; one course from 202, 207, 313; one course from 203, 301, 306, 351; two courses from 205, 207, 306, 365; two courses from 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 245, 301, 306, 311, 312, 313, 325, 341, 351, 365.

All 289 courses offered will be accepted as electives toward the major.

Requirements for Communication Studies Minor

- A minimum of six units in communication studies, including: 101, 241, 322; one course from 202, 207, 313; one course from 203, 301, 306, 351; one course from 205, 207, 306, 365.
- All courses for the minor must be taken for a numerical grade.

Note the three elective units are made up of one from each of the following major areas:

Interpersonal Communication (202, 207, 313)

Organizational Communication (203, 301, 306, 351)

Mass Media (205, 207, 306, 365)

Courses

101 Introduction to Human Communication (1)

An introduction to the study of communication. Students investigate communication theory, models, symbols and signs, verbal and nonverbal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, mass communication, communication ethics and new

communication technologies. *Staff*.

201 Verbal and Nonverbal Communication (1)

A study of verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs in human communication. Students investigate how verbal language is used in everyday interaction from a variety of theoretical and empirical perspectives. They also examine how the body, human space, the environment, dress and appearance are used to communicate, reinforce gender roles, establish dominance and facilitate cooperation. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

202 Interpersonal and Family Communication (1)

An investigation of the role communication plays in the formation, maintenance and dissolution of interpersonal and family relationships. Topics include the nature of communicators and communication environments, interaction rules, rituals and intimate dialogue in family systems. *Erlandson*.

203 Small Group and Organizational Communication (1)

An overview of research and theory in small group and organizational communication from a historical and cultural perspective. Particular attention will be paid to communication and decision-making, and communication and organizational culture. *Staff*.

205 Mass Communication (1)

An introduction to the different modes of mass communication--from the printing press to the Internet--from historical and cultural perspectives in order to understand the impact of mass communication on society. Topics include mass communication's production and reproduction of cultural mores and values, and the controversy surrounding media "effects." *Staff*.

206 Rhetoric and Public Communication (1)

A study of the history and theory of rhetoric, combined with application of principles of rhetorical analysis to a variety of communicative texts including political speeches, verbal and nonverbal messages of social movements, advertisements and music. This course is designed to enable students to understand the impact of persuasive or "rhetorical" messages on society. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

207 Communicating Gender (1)

An exploration of the ways in which gender and communication interact. Students are introduced to research in the field and observe and analyze the ways in which our cultural construction of gender impacts on how we communicate and judge the communication of others. *Erlandson, Staff*.

241 Public Speaking (1)

A theoretical and practical study of speaking in public. Students are introduced to classical and contemporary critical standards of excellence in oral style and delivery, while they develop skills in the art of speaking effectively in informational and persuasive situations. *Staff*.

242 Professional Communication (1)

Prerequisite: For students in the Carl A. Gerstacker Liberal Arts Institute for Professional Management, or permission of instructor.

Focuses on individual communication skills that enhance professional and career development, including skills needed in the business world. Develops writing skills, presentation skills, and the ability to communicate and work with others. *Erlandson, Osborn*.

245 Argumentation and Advocacy (1)

An exploration of the most important models of argument. Students investigate the relationship between critical thinking and the techniques of reasoned advocacy and debate. Rules of evidence and valid inference formation are discussed while students participate in practical experiences for developing argumentative skills and critically applying argumentation models. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

288, 289 Selected Topics (1/2, 1)

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

An examination of a special topic not included in the regular curriculum. Offered to meet the evolving needs and interests of students. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

301 Studies in Free Speech (1)

A practical and theoretical investigation of the evolution and impact of the First Amendment on American society through our political system, public discourse and communication technologies. Students participate in free speech discussions in a debate format. *Staff*.

306 Public Relations (1)

A theoretical and practical examination of the public relations field, including internal and external communications as well as media relations. Students occasionally gain practical experience by participating in a major campaign. *Staff*.

311 Environmental Communication (1)

A study of how the natural environment is socially constructed through its representation in word and image. After introducing students to fundamental environmental terminology, the course will consider a number of key environmental communicators, their ideological positions, and how they shape their messages. This will be followed by a discussion of audiences and environmental communication ethics. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

312 Minority Images in American Media (1)

A study of how minorities (racial, ethnic, sexual, etc.) and other categories of the socially marginalized (the poor, the homeless) have been portrayed throughout the twentieth century in American film and TV, from being made "invisible" to being stereotyped, and the impact of these images. Combines theoretical approaches and insights with a historical overview to increase students' awareness of the ideological nature of media images. *Staff*.

313 Intercultural Communication (1)

An exploration of the role communication plays in defining and sustaining culture both globally and locally. By applying current research and theories in intercultural communication, students are introduced to major topics pertaining to communication between cultures. Topics include, but are not limited to: the way a culture's deep meaning structure impacts the way people communicate, culture-specific verbal and nonverbal norms, advice on verbal and nonverbal behavior when doing business internationally, adjusting to culture shock and exploring various subcultures in the United States. *Erlandson*.

314 The Other Side of Interpersonal Communication (1)

Interpersonal communication has numerous outcomes—constructive and destructive, functional and dysfunctional, pleasurable and painful. This course examines several of these “other” aspects of communication. Topics include deception, jealousy, gossip, revenge, relational conflict, infidelity, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse, among others. *Staff*.

322 Communication Theory (1)

Prerequisites: One other course in communication, or permission of instructor.

An overview of contemporary theory and research methods in communication. Students study theoretical communication models, experimental studies and rhetorical research. *Staff*.

325 Visual Communication (1)

A theoretical and critical introduction to the study, this course is divided into three parts: visual manipulation, visual literacy and the role of visual images in society. Students study how film editing works, how images can be juxtaposed for persuasive effect, whether or not images can “lie” and whether or not viewing skills are comparable to language skills. Offered occasionally. *Staff*.

341 Advanced Public Speaking (1)

Prerequisite: Communication Studies 241.

Continuation of Communication Studies 241. Focuses on the adaptation of communication styles and content to diverse co-cultural speakers and audiences. Includes practice in securing the acceptance of ideas through psychological appeals as well as logical reasoning. Advanced work in speech communication research, preparation and delivery is required, as well as some media enhancement. Great speeches from the past will be used as models for analysis and application. Offered occasionally. *Staff.*

351 Persuasion (1)

A theoretical analysis of the process of influencing belief, attitude or behavior through appeals to reason, emotion and ethos. Students investigate experimental and rhetorical theories in the field and the ethical considerations of persuasion. *Staff.*

365 Media Theory (1)

Prerequisite: Communication Studies 205 or permission of instructor.

An investigation of both critical and social scientific theories that examine the mass media's (potential) effects on audiences. Social scientific theory and research and the controversies surrounding them in the area of media "effects" are reviewed and evaluated to determine the efficacy of claims such as causal relationships between images of violence and real-world occurrences. Critical theory and research will also be investigated to determine if media create, perpetuate and sustain certain (sometimes objectionable) ideologies. *Staff.*

388, 389 Selected Topics (1/2, 1)

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

An examination of a special topic not included in the regular curriculum. Offered to meet the evolving needs and interests of students. Offered occasionally. *Staff.*

391, 392 Internship (1/2, 1)

Offered on a credit/no credit basis. *Staff.*

402 Seminar (1)

Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing and permission of instructor.

A detailed study of significant and relevant problems in communication studies. Specific topic for consideration will be determined before registration. *Staff.*

411, 412 Directed Study (1/2, 1)

Staff.