

# Special Topics Communication Courses

**160AA-ZZ. Special Topics in Communication** Investigation of current theory and research in a selected area of communication. Variable topics in media, interpersonal or organizational communication, depending on the instructor.

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## Fall 2019

**Comm 160PF. Political Communication and the Feature Film (M. Stohl)** Most of us look upon films as entertainment but film may also be a powerful way to convey political messages and a revealing portrait of the political culture. Films thus function as both an art form and, as with all media, as a means of political communication by transmitting cultural values, assumptions and questions. Through their narrative and action, films explore the myths, perceptions, and reality of the relationships between individuals and the most powerful social institutions, governments and corporations, and the media which present them to the public. Films, like political books, show "real" people responding to problems or pursuing a course of action. They address political dilemmas and often help set the public agenda and frame the discussion of "answers" about social and political issues and the responsibilities of those institutions and people who communicate those answers to the public.

This course will examine the ways that journalism and journalists are portrayed in popular fiction and film and the role of the press in a democratic society. We will do this by viewing a series of full-length feature films that depict major issues spanning the period from the 1920s to the present. Following each film showing, we will analyze and discuss not only the issues that these films raise but how (and how well) the filmmaker uses the medium to portray the role of journalism and journalists and how they perform their role and the implications for politics and democratic society.

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## Winter 2020

No Special Topics courses offered

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## Spring 2020

**Comm 160DS. Data Science in Communication (Z. Matni)**

“Data Science” is a term that gets a lot of mention these days as massive amounts of data continue to be generated by us in our daily “electronic lives”. The ability to understand data, process it, extract value from it, visualize it, and communicate it is being recognized more and more as a very important and useful skill. While the term often conjures up images of computers and algorithms (as well as Facebook scandals and the ubiquitous power of tech companies), it is not just about the “nuts and bolts” of technology and engineering. Researchers in Communication, and other areas in the Social Sciences, have been adopting Data Science techniques for some time now because, in certain cases, these techniques allow us to make sense of people’s behavior in many contexts, like when they communicate online, or when they engage in shopping and commerce, or when they vote in elections.

In this class, we will look at Data Science in Communication (and other related Social Sciences) and delve into issues of not just computational methodologies and processes (and related concepts such as “Big Data”, “Machine Learning”, and “Artificial Intelligence”), but also important aspects of ethics, social impact of technology, and data visualization. We will also come to understand different aspects and nuances of this topic by examining multiple case studies of the use of Data Science techniques in Communication research.

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**175AA-ZZ. Senior Capstone in Communication** A project-based course in a specific topic area of communication designed to give students a chance to apply the skills and knowledge learned in the major and the opportunity to work intensively in groups on a real-world project.

No Senior Capstones offered in 2019-2020 Academic Year.