Course Description and Activities

This seminar explores the communication processes and practices that can be employed to promote social change and social justice. We will spend the first few weeks of the course clarifying the concepts of social change and social justice and coming to terms with the not-so-radical idea of applying communication theories to promote positive change and justice in the communities we live in. For rest of the term, we will study examples of communication interventions that have yielded positive social change and critique them based on their degree of success in promoting social justice. Along the way, we will go over most of the broad principles for fostering positive social change that have been extracted from past research.

This seminar takes a social-scientific perspective. Knowledge of or an interest in quantitative social science research methods will be helpful, but is not necessary, for participating in the course.

The format for the course will emphasize critical reflection and analysis of the assigned readings. Thus, all meetings will be discussion oriented and will require active student participation (20%). To facilitate this, students are expected to (1) be familiar with the readings prior to class and contribute productively to class discussion; (2) type or wordprocess for each week’s readings a) three major points/ideas that they think are important to bring to the attention of their classmates, and b) two questions that they would like to see answered during the discussion; these should be handed to me at the end of each class session; and (3) give at least one class presentation of a research article from the reading packet and lead the discussion on it.

Students will be asked to produce two pieces of written work: (1) reaction essay responding to the Foundation I and II readings (20%); and (2) final paper (60%). The final paper should be a research prospectus for a communication campaign/intervention which must take the form of a proposal for a research grant. I will provide more details about these assignments as we go along. All written work should closely follow the American Psychological Association, 5th edition, style manual.

Using the class participation and written work, I will make an overall assessment of a student’s performance to determine the final course grade. If necessary, I may re-weight the elements of the course to a student’s advantage. The grades will be on a +/- scale and here is a rough key to their interpretation:

A: excellent       B+: acceptable to good       C+ & below: unacceptable
A-: good to very good       B, B-: marginal to acceptable
COMMUNICATION 7331/8331: COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
Thursday, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, TC 209
Projected Class Schedule

Week 1
Introductions

FOUNDATION I: THE STANDARD VIEW

Week 2
Topic: What is social change?

Readings

Week 3
Topic: Communication campaigns for social change: The standard view

Readings

FOUNDATION II: CRITIQUES

Week 4
Topic: Communication campaigns for social change: Critiques

Readings
Week 5
Topic: What is social justice?
Readings

Week 6
Topic: Communication research, applied and otherwise: A social justice critique of the standard view
Readings

APPLICATIONS & CONTEXTS
Week 7
Foundation I and II reaction essay due
Topic: Health communication campaigns: General issues
Readings
Week 8

Topics for final paper due

**Topic:** Some features of messages

**Readings**


---

Week 9

**Topic:** Using the mass media as the channel

**Readings**


---

Week 10

**Topic:** Some other channels; Formative and summative research

**Readings**


---

Week 11

**Topic:** Some non-traditional target audiences

**Readings**


Week 12

Topic: Knowledge & literacy as goals

Readings

Week 13

Topic: Some insightful theoretical integrations

Readings

Week 14

*Holiday!! enjoy!! eat turkey!! don’t drink & drive!!*

Week 15

Presentations of final papers [plan for a 10 min. presentation, and 5-10 min. for questions]
Please plan for a 6:00pm – 9:30pm class period.

Week 16

No Class
Final papers are due in my mailbox or my office by 6:00 pm.