Ph.D. Program in Communication, Information and Library Studies

Doctoral Courses – Fall 2013

Our interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program attracts students from fields such as cultural studies, sociology, history, film and cinema, as well as linguistics, computer science, public health, psychology, and business/management—in courses shared with students with backgrounds in information science, communication, media studies, journalism, and library studies. We offer multiple seminars every semester, almost all of which welcome doctoral students from other programs at Rutgers as well as students at other schools participating in the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium, which allows taking Rutgers courses for credit across the consortium. See more at: http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/consortium.php3.

For more information contact Ph.D. Program Director Marija Dalbello at dalbello@rutgers.edu or Ph.D. Program Administrator Joan Chabrak at joan.chabrak@rutgers.edu.

www.comminfo.rutgers.edu/phd/getIN

Rev. 7/25/13
Ph.D. Colloquium (16:194:600)
Fridays 1:30 - 3:30 (and some Wednesdays, as announced)
Marija Dalbello
dalbello@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Ph.D. Colloquium is a forum for the presentation of research and professional activities by guest speakers, faculty, and students taken during each semester of course work.

List of Ph.D. Colloquia (The Dissertation Series) and other relevant events including the schedule for the Ph.D. Mini Seminars (on selected Fridays) is at:
http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/ph-d-program/interaction-meetings/colloquia.html#.UH9z6hi27QM

Communication, Information and Media Theory (16:194:601)
Wednesdays 3:10 – 5:50
Marija Dalbello, Susan Keith, Jennifer Theiss
dalbello@rutgers.edu, jtheiss@rutgers.edu, SUSANK@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Course Objectives
Students completing this course should be able to do the following:

• Describe the relevance of and linkages among communication, information and media scholarship to critical issues within contemporary social practice/thought and enduring issues in the social and human sciences
• Discuss theoretical, meta-theoretical, and other conceptual understandings of communication, information and media
• Articulate, in written and oral forms, ways in which their own research interests link to communication, information and media theories
• Identify and discuss tensions in key issues cutting across these topics based on discussions with faculty in each area of the Ph.D. program.

We aim to offer students an introduction to communication, information and media processes that will encourage reflection and identification of problems and areas of concentration students seek to address in their doctoral preparation. We additionally aim to address throughout concerns with the relationships among theory and research in the study of communication, information and media.

Organization of the Course
The course is organized into five multi-week sections. The first section is devoted to an introduction to the course and a three-week OVERVIEW that attempts to introduce relevant theories and meta-theory that help frame communication, information and media concerns within the context of broader issues in the social and human sciences and to explore the linkages among the three areas of the program through discussion of interdisciplinarity.

The next three sections are each devoted to one of the three areas of the Ph.D. Program. The goal in these sessions is to introduce formative theoretical conceptualizations and issues in each of these areas. Dalbello will lead the section on LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE. Keith will lead the section on MEDIA STUDIES, and Theiss will lead the section on COMMUNICATION. Each class meeting will include an overview of the week’s topic, followed by class discussion of readings.

The final section of the course will be devoted to synthesizing our work to date as we integrate across areas and look for common threads and challenging differences. This SYNTHESIS section will also include two weeks of student presentations. The goal of the final project is for students to apply what they have learned in the course of the semester in order to link work from across areas to their own research.
In addition, three class meetings during the semester will be devoted to colloquia that will allow you to meet other faculty and hear them discuss topics that cut across program areas such as on: 1) Interdisciplinarity, 2) Creative tensions within the fields; and, 3) The life of an academic.

Assignments
Students will be asked to prepare and share a general statement of a research interest, complete three area papers (one for each of the three area-focused sections), write a final paper and make a presentation for the course as a whole. You are also expected to participate in class.

Area papers: These assignments will require you to synthesize and discuss the readings in each section, allowing you to become familiar with a range of theoretical approaches, giving you practice in extracting and summarizing key ideas, finding connections across readings, and comparing and contrasting a variety of theories. Additional details will be provided in class. Each of these papers will count for 15% of the final grade; thus all three will count for 45% of the final grade.

Final paper: The final paper will be a research proposal in which you will explore a topic of interest to you, situating it within appropriate theoretical frameworks, and design a study related to that topic. Students will also address (at least six) course readings and their impact upon the development of your research interest. We will ask you to prepare a statement of research intent and preliminary bibliography, on which you will get feedback, early on in the semester. More details will be available in class. The paper will count for 40% of the final grade. The research statement will be assessed at 5% of the final grade.

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Research Foundations (16:194:602)
Wednesdays 6:20 – 9:00
Ross Todd
rtodd@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
The course explores the foundations and nature of inquiry in social scientific scholarship as relevant to research of communication, information, and media as conducted at SC&I. Reference to social science scholarship as the focus of inquiry considered in this course should not be read in a narrow sense but rather as shorthand. That is to say, science is here to be understood as the application of systematic, evidence based methods for the development of knowledge claims, including historical, interpretive, critical, and hermeneutic approaches to inquiry, commonly associated with scholarship in the humanities. Throughout, attention will be paid to the context in which traditions of inquiry have been shaped and “turned” within and across relevant constituent disciplines and fields of study within the modern research university. Disciplines and fields of study will be viewed as activities, what researchers do, as method, by what abstract means they carry out their activities to make and refute claims about communication, information and media, and as theory, what assumptions underlie the general statements researchers within a given field strive to make about the phenomena of interest to the field. The course also examines the hallmarks of scholarly conventions and professional conduct. The focus here is on responsibilities, expectations and standards of accountability that apply to the profession of knowledge and practice of inquiry.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES
1. Introduce students to foundational developments and aspects of scholarly research in the social sciences, including considerations of:
   • traditions of inquiry and underpinning assumptions;
   • subject matter and research problems;
   • modes of explanation;
   • methodological and analytic practices and approaches, including evidence-based methods;
   • basic debates; and
   • key turning points or paradigm shifts of general relevance.
2. Link discussion and readings of research foundations to SC&I research of communication, information, and media problems, processes, and institutions.
3. Expose students to faculty and their research across at least two areas of study in the SC&I doctoral program.
4. Familiarize students with:
   • Conventions of scholarly practice,
   • Standards of academic integrity, and
   • Responsible, ethical conduct of research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Understanding and ability to critically evaluate scholarly literature from across a range of fields within the social sciences and humanities as demonstrated through written assignments, in-class discussion, and midterm essay examination;
2. Ability to compare and contrast the differing phenomena, modes of explanation, approaches to research, and key debates covered in readings as demonstrated through written assignments, in-class discussions, and midterm essay examination;
3. Familiarity with the scope of research problems investigation and approaches to inquiry employed by SC&I doctoral faculty and students based in-class discussion, and focused familiarity with the research of three members of the SC&I doctoral faculty through independent readings, meetings with these faculty, as demonstrated through poster presentation at the end of term;
4. Familiarity with differing stylistic conventions of scholarship and competence in the use of APA stylistic conventions as demonstrated through accurate application in written work;
5. Clear understanding of the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy (and its relevance to scholarly conduct generally) through actions that are consistent with this policy;
6. Knowledge of responsible and ethical research conduct as demonstrated through the successful completion of the Human Subjects Certification.

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Quantitative Research Methods (16:194:604)
Wednesdays 3:10 – 5: 50 pm
Itzhak Yanovitzky
itzhak@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
The course is intended to provide students solid grounding in the logic and practice of quantitative methodology in social scientific research. It assumes basic knowledge of research methodology and focuses almost exclusively on data analytical skills that are frequently employed by social scientists. Class meetings encourage critical thinking about the proper use (as well as the misuse) of common statistical tools. Students complete independently a series of structured exercises that provide hands-on experience with quantitative data analysis using SPSS.

The course has two primary goals:
(1) provide solid grounding in the logic and practice of quantitative methodology in social scientific research,
(2) teach quantitative data analytic skills.

At the end of this course, students will:
(a) possess basic and advanced understanding of the logic underlying quantitative research methods,
(b) acquire the tools and insights needed to critically evaluate existing quantitative research studies and to design future studies that rely on quantitative methodology (e.g., survey, experiments, content analysis),
(c) be proficient in the use of SPSS to conduct multivariate statistical analysis,
(d) adequately interpret and draw inference from quantitative research findings, and
(e) prepare a manuscript for publication and/or conference presentation that uses quantitative data analysis.
Seminar in Information Studies (16:194:610)
Thursdays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Nina Wacholder
ninwac@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Critical examination of the evolution of library and information science. Problems addressed over time. Approaches, methods and trends in research. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships. Seminal authors and works.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES
The goals are to provide the students with:
• an understanding of the evolution, structure, nature and environment of library and information science;
• an ability for critical analysis of works and trends in library and information science; and a basis for choosing and/or evaluating their own research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:
• identify and discuss and the social, political and technological factors and critical events that affected the evolution of library and information science;
• provide a perspective on the phenomena and processes of interest to library and information science;
• outline the problems and issues addressed over time and contemporarily in research, stressing the approaches, theoretical frameworks and models, and methods used;
• discern the contemporary structures, and identify disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships of library and information science;
• identify and analyze seminal works and authors within library and information science and related fields that had a significant impact on research and professional practice; and,
• critically analyze the current state-of-the-art of research in some specific area of library and information science.

Information Retrieval Theory (16:194:614)
Tuesdays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Nicholas Belkin
belkin@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
This course examines the basic problems associated with information retrieval, primarily from a theoretical, user-centered perspective. It then discusses how these problems have been addressed in information retrieval research, and how information retrieval systems have been evaluated. Problems with the traditional approaches to information retrieval and information retrieval evaluation are raised, and particular attention is paid to new models, methods, and evaluation techniques for interactive information retrieval. The course goal is for students to be able to develop design principles for information retrieval systems.

PRIMARY READINGS
Readings from the research literature in information retrieval are assigned for each week of the course.

ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS
Papers discussing the weekly readings are required, as is an independent, empirical research project in some aspect of information retrieval.
OTHER INFORMATION FOR INTERESTED STUDENTS
This course is of value for students interested in research in any area of information retrieval, including search engines, social search, personalization of interactions with information.

Organizational Communication Research (16:194:620)
Tuesdays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Kathryn Greene
klgreene@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Course Objectives: This class focuses on the foundational and contemporary research that makes up the study of interpersonal communication. Its primary goal is to give students an understanding of the origins and the current directions of much of the scholarship on interpersonal communication. It is not exhaustive, but it is meant to expose students to this part of our discipline, with the belief that knowing where we began is essential to making informed decisions about the direction of one’s own research.

Organizational Communication Research (16:194:621)
Mondays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Mark Aakhus
aakhus@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Survey of major principles and research and analytic techniques related to organizational communication. This course is focused on the diverse array of topics studies in organizational communication research. We will examine the role of communication in issues of socialization and identification; power, conflict and control; decision making and leadership; ethics, performance, and feedback; turnover, burnout, and exit; culture; structure and networks; as well as image and reputation. It is based on theory and research, but will also address application. 
The purpose of this course is to provide students a thorough grounding in organizational communication research.
The readings are organized historically and integrate a survey of organizational communication research within a survey of organizational theory. This will enable students to understand the intellectual development of the interdisciplinary area of organizational theory and the evolution of organizational communication research. The pattern of readings will reveal shifts in emphasis such as from workers to managers, from processes to outputs, from the single organization to the organization and its environment to studies of populations of organizations and world systems. The readings provide some historical context for theoretical developments about organizations.
The pattern of readings enables students to traces shifting orientations toward communication, information, and media as matters to be explained but also as starting points for explaining organization at different scales. Throughout, the readings enable students to examine central concepts that frame organizational studies (e.g., bureaucracy/hierarchy, human relations, economics, institutions, environments, technology, networks, and power) while exploring the communicational basis for explaining organization.

Media Theory and Research (16:194:631)
Mondays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Deepa Kumar
dekumar@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
The study of the media as a scholarly endeavor begins in the 20th century with the rise of several new forms of mass communication. Since then scholars have tried to grasp and theorize the nature of the mass media and
their role in society. They have taken various approaches, based on different starting points, and developed several theoretical paradigms. Often the differences between theoretical models have led to debate and discussion within the field. This course introduces you to some of the most influential approaches to the study of the media and the key debates.

The course takes an historical approach beginning with the first dominant school of thought—Social Scientific Research. We will then move on to the next theory (the Frankfurt School) paying specific attention to the ways in which this theory poses challenges—theoretical, practical, philosophical, political and epistemological—to the previous theory. We then take up the next theory and so on.

We will focus on seven theories—Social Scientific Research, the Frankfurt School, Cultural Studies, Political Economy, Postmodernism and Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism and Feminism—locating them within an historical context so as to understand the social, political and economic conditions from which they emerge. We will also look at the three key areas of research in media studies—production (specifically media and globalization), texts, and reception.

Course Goals and Outcome
By the end of this course you should have a broad overview of the field of media studies with a grasp not only of the key media theories but also various research methods that will enable you to begin the process of conducting independent research on the media.

Required Texts
There are also readings on e-reserve at the Alexander Library.

Recommended Text

Requirements
The following are the assignments upon which your grade will be determined.

1. Class participation and attendance—15%
This class is a seminar and therefore your participation in class discussion is vital. My role will be to explain complex theories and concepts, bring in extra materials to help you contextualize the readings, and raise discussion questions. I will lecture for only a part of the class period and the rest will be open for discussion. I will make every effort to enable you to participate in class discussion but you should come prepared by bringing comments or questions about the days readings to class.

2. Class Presentation and debate—25%
You will be responsible for one debate, and for leading the discussion for one or two essays in the latter part of the semester. Details will be provided in class.

3. Short papers—25%
You will be required to hand in two typed, double spaced 2-3 paged response papers. The first response paper needs be on an article from one of the seven major theoretical approaches, the second on production, texts or audiences. Papers are due no later than one week after a particular article was discussed in class. Details will be provided in class.

3. Term Paper Proposal—35%
A 15-20 page typed, double spaced paper on any topic of your choosing. You will need to discuss the topic with me and hand in a proposal with your preliminary ideas. Once we discuss the scope of your project, you
are then ready to conduct the research necessary to prepare a detailed research proposal. This entails writing a proposal (or "pre-proposal") for a major piece of research, using one or more of the theoretical approach(es) and data collection/analysis techniques you have encountered in this class. If you wish, this can be a preliminary version of your dissertation proposal. The paper should have an introduction (introducing the research area/issue/theme, setting the stage for what you will do, and perhaps making clear why you are the person to do it); a review of relevant literature (both methodological and content/problem-specific); a detailed explanation of what you intend to do and how you will do it, and a discussion of why this is a worthwhile area of study. Finally, if you are able to conduct some preliminary research you may include the results of this in your paper as well.

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Media History (16:194:663)

Wednesdays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
David Greenberg
davidgr@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
The full name of the course is “History of Journalism and the News Media in the United States, 1870-2001”—or “Media History” for short. It looks at the news media not as freestanding institutions but as constitutive parts and expressions of American politics and culture in the 20th century. It explores periods of major change, including the Progressive era, the Depression, the Red Scare, the civil rights movement, and the War on Terrorism. At these times, journalists and news institutions interacted in complex ways with political actors; they both expressed and shaped attitudes about events, policies, and social developments. The class examines these interactions in order to understand better the underlying ideological and cultural currents of American life.

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Relationships and Identities in Interaction (16:194:670)

Mondays 3:10 – 5:50 pm
Jenny Mandelbaum
j.mandelbaum@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
Relationships and identities are key to human endeavors, whether social or professional. While we know a great deal about factors that affect communication in relationships and identities, and how communication in relationships and identities affects various outcomes such as satisfaction, etc., we know less about the particular ways communication is deployed to construct relationships and identities, and the impact on their construction of different ways of communicating. In this course we examine how relationships and identities are constructed in and through verbal and nonverbal communication. We focus on the basic building blocks of verbal and nonverbal communication to discover how communicators build actions in everyday personal and professional situations, and in various ways thereby, their relationships and identities. We use existing research as a starting point for making our own discoveries. We will work extensively with tape-recorded naturally occurring interaction. You will have the option to collect and analyze your own videotaped data. We will begin by developing an understanding of how communicators produce a wide variety of actions in everyday and institutional social life. This will expose us to the basic organization of interaction (how sequences of action are built, turns taken, troubles repaired, words selected, etc.). Each of these aspects of the organization of interaction will give us insight into how, when, and if relationships and identities are built and managed in and through interaction.

Relationships and identities to be considered in the course of the semester include: acquaintances, friends, families (including grandparent/grandchild, and families with teenagers), female friends, teenage friends, male acquaintances; male-female “just” friends; gay and lesbian friends; couples; flirting couples; professionals, including doctors & patients.
You will learn:
(1) How to characterize the actions communicators are engaging in, and the specific methods they use to implement these actions
(2) How to engage in close observation of naturally occurring, taped interaction
(3) How to transcribe and analyze tape-recorded naturally occurring interaction
(4) How to recognize basic features of interaction (such as action sequence organization, action formation, turn-taking, repair organization, reference practices, etc.)
(5) How storytelling is organized, and what interactants can accomplish in and through storytelling
(6) When and how relationships and identities become salient for, and/or come to be managed and/or produced by interactants
(7) How relationships and identities are constructed and managed through communication in professional settings.

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Topics in Communication Process II: Social Media (16:194:671)
Tuesdays 6:20 – 9:00 pm
Jennifer Gibbs
jgibbs@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
This course will provide a theoretical orientation to communication processes in social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, and virtual worlds such as Second Life). Readings will be selected from a variety of disciplines, with a major emphasis on mediated communication theory and phenomena. Topics discussed include issues of self-presentation, identity, privacy, youth and social media, political participation, social networks, social capital, virtual worlds, collective action, uses of social media in the workplace. Methodological and ethical approaches to studying social media data will also be discussed.

The goals of this course are to:
• Understand and engage with communication theory and empirical research relevant to understanding the emerging field of social media
• Analyze the implications of social media for interpersonal relationships, organizations, and society more broadly, by drawing on theory, case studies, and real-world examples
• Contribute to our knowledge of social media through your own original research
• Learn to use online tools to more effectively manage your own online self-presentation and social network.

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Topics in Communication Process II: Organizational Networks (16:194:672)
Thursdays 6:20 – 9:00 pm
Marya Doerfel
mdoerfel@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
This course is an introduction to the theory, concepts, procedures, methods, and analysis of social networks with an emphasis on theory and its applications in organizational communication. Despite the organizational emphasis, many of the assumptions and analyses can be applied and extended beyond organizational relationships. The goal of the course is to provide you foundational knowledge about communication networks and their implications for organizations. While the primary focus is theoretical, students will simultaneously develop a working knowledge of relevant social networks concepts and methods used to describe and understand relationships in and among organizations. The objective of this course is to help students understand and articulate network theory, its applications, and implications for audiences including researchers and practicing professionals.
Course Objectives
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
- use networks as a theoretical framework for their own research,
- use network analysis as a research technique (e.g., how to gather the data, identify relevant concepts, how to analyze and represent the data),
- explain how network concepts apply to theories or topics of interest to the student,
- analyze relationships in terms of social networks and organization theory,
- synthesize organizational and networks theories and concepts, and
- use computer software to manage raw network data and then conduct various network analyses on it.

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Special Topics: Cyberethnography (16:194:696)
Mondays 6:20 – 9:00 pm
Joe Sanchez/Todd Wolfson
sanchezj@rutgers.edu / twolfson@rci.rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION:
The goal of this course is to provide students with training and experience in conducting cyber ethnographic fieldwork (participant observation methods, interviewing, research design, sampling, coding, data analysis and ethics) in a practical context. The course combines classroom study with an actual cyber ethnographic research practicum. Throughout the semester students will immerse themselves in virtual environments, attend classes, and undertake a complex research project of their choosing. Students will spend some time participating in class lectures, but most of the time will be spent doing your research projects and writing fieldnotes, journal notes and reports.

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