COMM-4380_001 Senior Seminar in Communication Studies
Summer II 2014
MW 6-9:45pm
Room TBA

Professor David Gurney
Office: Bay Hall Rm. 326
Office Hours: TWR 10:30am-12:15pm & by appointment

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Course Description:
The capstone course for Communication majors in the Media Studies and Comm Studies tracks offers students opportunities to synthesize information learned in other Communication and Media courses through in-depth study of a particular topic. Students will demonstrate their abilities to think and write critically, and to conduct independent research or produce media projects at an advanced level. Topics vary by instructor.

Course Topic:
This semester students will be surveying the communication and media landscape as it exists today with content and brands regularly traversing and converging across multiple platforms. This will provide a deeper understanding of how both media industries and audiences are adapting to and using emerging media technologies.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
● Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities;
● Create individual and collaborative projects that demonstrate effective use of communication strategies;
● Identify and analyze issues in media ethics
● Understand and apply critical theories, research methods, and/or production skills

Recommended Materials:

Course Policies:
» Attendance is required – both physically and mentally. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your final grade for this course, with each one equaling a 100-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points). Attendance will be taken starting exactly at 6:00 p.m. and completed within the first five minutes of class. Arrivals after that time will be considered late. Late arrivals and departures prior to the finish of the class period will count as half-absences, meaning that two of either type will be counted as a full absence.
» You are allowed one fully excused absence throughout the semester. This is to be employed at your discretion, but it should be used to cover illness, religious holiday observances, or most any other events or circumstances that cause you to miss class. Only extreme hardship with back-up documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) will allow for consideration of any additional absences being excused. Classes missed due to university-approved activities (athletic teams, student government, etc.) will also be considered excused. For those absences, I will need official TAMUCC documentation. If appropriate, you may arrange to make up quizzes or exams missed due to excused absences, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from a missed class lecture or discussion from one of your classmates.
» All absences not fitting into the excused categories described immediately above, will be considered unexcused. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
» Late work will be penalized by a reduction of ten percent of its total possible points for each day it is late.
» A note on competing media: Laptops are permitted for note taking purposes during lecture only, but please do not abuse this privilege. While you may personally feel capable of multitasking during class while still paying attention to lecture and discussion, your surrounding classmates will more likely find your in-class extracurricular activities
distracting, so please, for the sake of your peers, respect this restriction. No laptop use will be permitted during screenings.

» Please remember to check your Islander email account regularly during the week and monitor the course Blackboard site for any course updates.

» If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during my office hours. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.

» All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, double spacing, and standard 1” margins.

**Academic Integrity:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment, at the very least, or a report to the Chair of the Department of Communication and Media, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and the Office of Student Affairs.

» For the purposes of citation, please follow American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guide. For reference, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

**Dropping a Class:**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the class be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. July 25, 2014, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/Professional Behavior:**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 361.825.3466.
Notice to Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in 116 Corpus Christi Hall) at 361.825.5816.

Grade Appeal Process:
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Grade Scale:
A  90-100
B  80-89
C  70-79
D  60-69
F  59 and below

Grade Distribution:
- Attention and Participation (100 points): Each student is expected to be attentive to her/his Peer Review Partner’s work and willing to participate in class discussion when appropriate. This grade will reflect how well you accomplish these goals.
- Reminder: Attendance is required. It is assumed that you will be present for all class meetings and screenings unless you have a valid excuse. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your FINAL GRADE (not only the Attention & Participation component) for this course, with each one equaling a 100-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points).
- Preliminary Research Proposal (25 points): You will create a document in which you will establish: (1) your research topic and its importance, (2) your proposed method(s) of studying the topic, and (3) what theories will most likely be utilized in analyzing your findings. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 500-750 words.
- Revised Research Proposal (50 points): An expanded version of the Preliminary Research Proposal with improvements based on Peer Review Partner and Instructor recommendations. Length: 750-1000 words.
- Preliminary Bibliography (25 points): An APA-formatted list of 15-20 sources (scholarly articles or books) that are relevant to your research topic, methods, and/or prospective theoretical framework.
- Literature Review (75 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be a section of your Research Report, in which you provide an overview of: (1) what scholarly work has already been done on your topic, (2) what methods that work has relied upon, and (3) what the conclusions of that body of work are. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 750-1250 words.
- Sample Section of Data Analysis (125 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be a section of your Research Report, in which you share and analyze some of your research findings. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 1000-1500 words (more if appropriate).
- Rough Draft of Research Report (200 points): A complete version of your final report that will include the following sections: (1) Title Page, (2) Abstract, (3) Introduction, (4) Literature Review, (5) Methodology, (6) Data Analysis, (7) Conclusions, (8) Reference Page. Peer review will be a component of the points earned.
- Research Presentation (100 points): A summary presentation of your research project and its findings.
Course Schedule:
Required readings and homework screenings are to be completed prior to the first class meeting in the week under which they are listed. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Day 1 (July 7) – Introduction and Research Tutorial
Introductions and Preliminary Discussion
Peer Review Partners will be assigned.
Project Presentation schedule will be established.

Day 2 (July 9) – Preliminary Research Proposals
Submit your preliminary Research Proposal via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 3 (July 14) – Revised Research Proposals and Preliminary Bibliographies
Submit Revised Research Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography via Blackboard before class. Class time will be spent as an open workshop.

Day 4 (July 16) – Literature Reviews
Submit Literature Review via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 5 (July 21) – Research Day
No Class Meeting. Extra time should be used for data collection and analysis. Dr. Gurney will be available for one-on-one consultations.

Day 6 (July 23) – Sharing of Initial Data Analysis
Submit Sample Section of Data Analysis via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 7 (July 28) – Exchange of Rough Drafts

Day 8 (July 30) – Report Workshop
Meeting with Peer Review Partners to share feedback on Rough Drafts.

Day 9 (August 4) – Research Presentations
Project Presentations will take place based on schedule determined on first day of class.

Day 10 (August 6) – Research Presentations
Project Presentations will take place based on schedule determined on first day of class.

Final Research Reports due via Blackboard by midnight on August 7.