

Spring '24 Communication Department Course Offerings

Courses are organized below by whether they are foundation courses, message design, analysis, or communication and community to help you more easily find a course you may need in a particular area. Each 'goal area' begins on a new page.

After each course title are the Integrations Curriculum designations on each of the courses, as well. Please do reach out to faculty teaching the courses if you want to know more about the course.

Foundation Courses

Comm 102: Public Speaking and the Public Sphere (HE, J1)

- Students will explore how public speech has been used for social justice advocacy historically and in contemporary society through a variety of different rhetorical situations. Students will feel empowered civically and research a contemporary issue to advocate for a social justice issue.
- Key Skills: speaking, research, ethics

Comm 103: Media and Society (HE, T1)

- Learn how the media we access through our digital devices influences our everyday lives, shapes knowledge, and affects our relationships. Due to the sheer amount of time we spend with media, Media and Society is relevant to anyone growing up in the digital age. In this class, you'll learn how to critically analyze media messages and to understand the larger context behind why and how they are created and what it means for us as consumers.
- Key Skills: critical thinking, media literacy, message analysis

Message Design

Comm 245: Introduction to Media Writing (Write 2)

- An email to your boss or clients. A blog that explains what's behind supply chain delays. A feature story about someone in your community doing something cool. These are all forms of media writing, a cornerstone skill in fields like journalism, public relations, marketing communications, advertising and business in general. This course is designed to teach you how to construct clear, accurate and creative messages tailored to a specific purpose, context, audience, and media platform. You will learn to write across media—blogs, websites, email, social media, print, broadcast— and get a good introduction to writing in a variety of media-related professions.
- Key skills: effective message design, portfolio-building

283A Public Relations Branding (2 credits, AB Mod)

- Public Relations Branding is a deep dive into public relations content creation and its intersection with brand. The course introduces students to the overarching objectives of public relations: building and maintaining relationships, including creating awareness, instilling positive perceptions, generating support for organizational goals and overcoming negative perceptions. Students will plan and execute public relations tactics from earned media and press release through strategic email and development of web home pages and landing pages.
- Key skills: message design for audience, context and brand, public relations

283B Advertising Branding (2 credits, CD Mod)

- Advertising branding focuses on advertising strategy and message development in a digital environment for brands. Students will learn the overarching objectives of advertising and gain experience writing creative strategies and briefs, copywriting and content development across media platforms.
- Key skills: message design, advertising marketing and branding

347 Media Effects (Optional Capstone OR Message Design) (SW, QR)

- As a college student, media have permeated your life in a way that makes them essentially invisible. Yet you are routinely exposed to inaccurate hype about media effects in popular culture content. This course builds on your knowledge of media effects by examining some classic studies in the field of communication and exploring contemporary cultural, social, and psychological effects. Students will learn statistical reasoning and thinking and apply those skills to a professional podcast production.
- Key skills: quantitative analysis, critical thinking

Analysis

205 Interpersonal Communication (SW, T1, BN)

- Humans communicate. Period. As we all know, this can be challenging in the best of times, but even more difficult in our current world. To assist you in gaining interpersonal communication competence, this class will explain what happens in one-on-one communication and at the same time you will be given the opportunity to apply these theories to real-life situations. By the end of the course, you will be better prepared to “communicate effectively,” a skill nearly every employer is looking for.
- Key skills: communicate effectively, listening, collaboration, understanding how research creates theories

Comm 277A: Listening for Justice (HE, JF, BN)

- What role does Listening play in Social Justice transformation? In this class, students will analyze, examine, and redefine political systems, interpersonal relationships and connection to the local and global community. In addition, readings, discussion, and exercises focus on understanding listening and conflict resolution theory. Further, students study and practice an awareness of self-listening to be mindful of outward actions in all areas of listening as Listening Leaders. Finally, students practice the discipline of spiritual listening in order to live out the Benedictine Mission of “Listening with the Ear of the Heart”. Major projects: Two analysis papers and one “Radical Empathy” Digital Video.
- Key Skills: mindfulness, storytelling, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution

278A Rhetoric of Social Change (HE, MF)

- Social movements and social protest have played a pivotal role in challenging power and shaping culture, society, and politics. This course examines the role of language, music, images, and other symbolic actions in bringing about social change. The course also teaches students the art of rhetorical criticism – the intentional, methodical study of how rhetoric works and impacts communities from the local to the global. The course is writing intensive and students will develop research in the course that can be developed and shared in other venues.
- Key skills: writing, research, critical thinking, analysis

312 Rhetorical Dimensions of Sport (CSDS)

- This course will explore the ways in which sports are used as a part of public discourse and debate. The course will use rhetorical theories and concepts to examine how athletes, games, competitions and controversies are incorporated into larger social discussions about gender, race and national identity.
- Key skills: writing, critical thinking, analysis

342 Communicating in an Online Era (M3)

- Keeping up with online communication keeps us from being able to recognize the changes it's creating in us as individuals, in our relationships and in our understanding of 'the big questions' in life. In this course, you'll take that time. Time to analyze and reflect on digital media's effects on us and on the changing nature of communicating our identity personally and professionally, negotiating relationships and our understanding of privacy.
- Key skills: analysis, creation of online professional identity, understanding changing communication theory and research, personal reflection and growth

Communication and Community

305 Gender, Voice and Power (CSDS)

- This course is meant to challenge your assumptions, engage you in thought-provoking debate, inspire you with the stories of trailblazing voices, and empower you to use your own. We will analyze the role that communication plays in reinforcing and dismantling power structures, engage in critical discussions about intersectionality, trace the historical evolution of gender norms, identity, and societal expectations, explore contemporary issues related to gender and race/ethnicity, including #MeToo, gender pay gaps, LGBTQ+ rights, workplace and political bias, rape culture, strategies in gender activism, and more. This course centers around conversations of justice, equality, and access.
- Key skills: analysis, collaboration, presentation skills, cultural competence, media literacy

314 Public Health Marketing (SW, EX)

- Public health marketing requires being familiar with social marketing, an effective approach to solving a range of social problems in the areas of health, safety, and community involvement. This course provides students with an introduction to theories of health communication and social marketing. Students will also learn how to apply traditional marketing principles and techniques to the challenges and rewards of influencing positive public health behavior. By working directly with a non-profit client, students will be given the opportunity to learn how social marketing can be used to effectively change health behavior. The first part of the course is foundational, covering social marketing basics. and the second part provides hands-on experience creating a social marketing plan for a not-for-profit organization.
- Key skills: social marketing campaign design and evaluation, collaboration

341 News and Democracy (HE, T3)

- Learn the practices and processes that distinguish quality journalism from other types of information posing as “news” in our current political, economic, and social environment. You will learn, too, about specific challenges eroding that quality. What are the consequences for the content of news (and our democracy) when the news ecosystem is under significant pressure in an increasingly significant number of ways. In this class, we will examine the changing news ecosystem and the consequences of that ecosystem on the coverage of race/ethnicity, national, and international issues and events. By the end of the semester, you should be confidently “news literate.”
- Key skills: Critical thinking, news literacy

378A Environmental Rhetoric (HE, BN, MF)

- The past year has seen some dramatic environmental events. The summer of 2023 was the hottest on record. Wildfires caused air quality alerts throughout much of the nation. Water temperatures off the Florida coast hit 101 degrees. Despite the gloomy statistics, there were also historic responses. Minnesota state lawmakers passed groundbreaking legislation on energy and the environment, including a ban on “forever chemicals.” In August, a group of 16 young people in Montana won a lawsuit arguing that the state violated their constitutional rights by permitting fossil fuel development. In September, over a million people marched in climate protests in 50 countries. This course looks at the way advocates communicate about the environment. We’ll study environmental appeals in speeches, advertisements, news, image events, films, and advocacy campaigns. This course counts as an elective for the Environmental Studies major and Climate Studies minor, but no previous knowledge of these issues is expected.
- Key skills: analysis, advocacy, information literacy, collaboration