

J395: Proseminar in Journalism and Mass Communication

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Thursday 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., TBA, Unique # 06598

Office hours by appointment

Course Objectives

- To orient students to the field of journalism and its affiliated branch of communication research as a profession and career
- To introduce students to selected practitioners and major areas of research in this field as carried out within the School of Journalism, as well as kindred areas of the College of Communication and University
- To help students cultivate scholarly skills, ethical norms, awareness of funding possibilities, and clarity of written and spoken communication--that is, academic craftsmanship
- To provide a forum for the presentation of research

This course responds to a current reform effort in the School of Journalism, to develop a common “proseminar” experience for our doctoral and academically-oriented master’s students, as well as for other doctoral students in the College. It aims to present a map of the field (as has J384 Theory) but to emphasize the development of individual student’s ability to conduct significant research over time.

At the end of the course you should have a set of writings pertaining to our own career and direction, and a conference paper you have submitted and practiced presenting to the group. To the extent possible, these writings will be posted on our class and/or other web sites. I will try to use Blackboard to facilitate our postings and communication with each other.

Your performance in the course will be based on your attendance and class participation (20%), written minor assignments (30%), and final paper major assignment (50%).

Depending on feasibility I may require that you purchase an outline processor on which to prepare your final paper (e.g., Inspiration, or comparable).

Texts:

Dennis, E. & Wartella, E. (1996). *American communication research: The remembered history*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Becker, H. (1986). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago.

Becker, H. (1997). *Tricks of the trade: how to think about your research while you're doing it*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago.

Reading packet (Longhorn's)

Chaffee, S. (1991). *Communication concepts: Explication*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Delia, Jesse (1987). History of communication research. In C. Berger and S. Chaffee (eds.). *Handbook of communication science*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gitlin, Todd (1978). Media Sociology: The dominant paradigm. *Theory and Society* 6: 205-253.

Mills, C. Wright (1959). "On intellectual craftsmanship," appendix in *Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford.

Reese, Stephen (1999). The progressive potential of journalism education: Recasting the academic versus professional debate. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 4(4): 70-94.

Reese, Stephen and Jeremy Cohen (2000). Educating for journalism: The professionalism of scholarship. *Journalism Studies*, 1(2): 213-227.

Schedule (readings in parentheses)

January 17 introduction and course direction, personal mission

How can a proseminar be made most valuable for doctoral students, in understanding the field's research and the field *as* field? What is your own mission and direction for your professional career?

24 professional issues in journalism and communication
(Reese; Reese & Cohen) **Assignment 1 due at class time**

Questions for discussion: What are the distinctions between research in journalism and communication; How significant are the dichotomies between teaching and research, profession and academy, skills and "studies," and what impact do they exert on the field?

31 academic craftsmanship and technique
(ethics; Mills; Becker, 1997, tricks, images, sampling)

Discuss in class specific examples from communication research that you can connect to Becker's techniques

February 7 craftsmanship and technique, continued
(Becker, 1997, concepts, logic; Chaffee)

Discuss applicable examples from communication research, and develop ideas for group assignment.

14 concepts, **Assignment 2 due**

Present and discuss assignments in class.

21 academic writing
(Becker, 1986)

28 writing

5 page outline-based draft of final paper due. Bring 2 extra copies for your designated reviewer. Return papers you critiqued and 1 page of comments to your 2 authors by Monday March 4th

March 7 Discuss papers in class and your responses to critiques

Spring break

21 Paper development

15 page outline-based draft due in class. Bring 2 extra copies for your designated reviewer. Return papers you critiqued and 1 page of comments to your 2 authors by Monday March 25th

28 Submit final 20 page paper; consult on papers

AEJMC deadline, April 1st (time for last minute revisions before mailing)

April 4 history of the field
(Delia; Dennis & Wartella chapters: Carey, Hovland, Katz)

11 history of the field, **Assignment 3 due**
(Dennis & Wartella chapters: Schramm, Robinson, Wartella; Gitlin)

18 tba

25 programs of research, **Assignment 4 due**

May 2 presentations of final revised conference papers

Minor assignments

Assignment 1: write a 1 page professional biography, a 1 page professional mission statement, prepare a current vita that includes all seminar and conference papers produced to date.

Assignment 2 (groups of 2): Write 3 to 4 page (not counting references) paper explicating a communication concept you've identified, elaborating its definitions, associated usages in the literature, etc. Apply where appropriate any of Becker's "tricks," for its value in generating research ideas.

Assignment 3: write a 2 to 3 page analysis of the proper focus of the field in your judgment; what are the proper distinctions between journalism and communication? Explain how your own research and future research interests fit into the historical direction(s) of the field? What are its strengths and weaknesses in that respect?

Assignment 4: revise your mission statement and expand (to 4 to 5 pages) to include a projected program of research, including but not limited to your dissertation area. Include at least five major research questions with some speculation about appropriate and/or available data relevant to each.

Other work: critiquing classmates' papers as indicated

Major assignment

Prepare paper suitable for submission to AEJMC by the April 1 deadline. This may be a revision of a paper prepared for or started in a previous class, or one developed for this one. It may be either a data or non-data paper. If the latter it can be an outgrowth of the concept paper. The paper should not be co-authored.