Historical Research in Communication

Communication 5307–Section 001 | Spring 2017

Tues., 6-8:50 p.m. TBA

Instructor: Dr. Erika Pribanic-Smith
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Note: Because of other department and university duties, office hours occasionally will be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on the office door and, when possible, announced in class and/or via email.

Course Description: This course will provide students with an introduction to historical methods. While learning and practicing these methods, each student will develop a deeper understanding of his/her particular field of interest in an historical context.

Learning Goals and Objectives: The following learning goals and objectives have been set for students in this class:

- Students will become familiar with historical philosophies.
- Students will be able to critique existing historical research.
- Students will be able to assess the value of research sources and synthesize this material to interpret what is "truth."
- Students will understand and demonstrate the elements of historical writing.
- Students will discover how their professions' values and standards have developed historically and how they affect today's communication environment.

Required Readings:

- A "starter" list of readings (provided on Blackboard and online) will be distributed.
- As the course goes on, students will begin to seek out their own readings.

NOTE: All required readings will be provided. However, if you consider yourself a budding communication historian, it would benefit you to own the following three books, from which many of the required readings will come:

Barzun, Jacques, and Henry F. Graff. *The Modern Researcher*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004.

Sloan, Wm. David. *Perspectives on Mass Communication History.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1991.

Sloan, Wm. David, and Michael Stamm. *Historical Methods in Mass Communication.* Northport, AL: Vision, 2010.

Course Policies

Course Requirements: Students' grades for this course will be based on participation in class discussion, critiques of existing historical work, a research paper, and a research presentation.

Grade Calculation

Assignment	% of grade
Class participation	25
Historical critiques	25
Research paper	40
Presentation	10

Grading scale
A – 90-100 percent
B – 80-89 percent
C – 70-79 percent
D – 60-69 percent
F – below 60 percent

Class participation. This course will be conducted as a seminar/workshop, requiring active participation from all students. A portion of students' learning will occur through their own processing of reading material and discussion of these materials with their peers. Participation in these discussions will be evaluated based on asking insightful questions and contributing informed, thoughtful comments. Students are expected to keep up with assigned readings BEFORE class in order to participate.

Historical critiques. This portion of the student's grade comes from three components.

1) Students will submit one book report in week 3, analyzing general histories of their chosen fields. More details on this assignment will be provided on the first day of class. (5 percent)

2) In weeks 4-7, students will submit annotated bibliographies of at least three journal articles per week (at least 12 total) relevant to their selected paper topics.

   During that process, students will select one article per week to critique carefully, using criteria to be distributed in class. Students must be prepared to discuss their findings in class each week to receive full credit for each critique. (15 percent)

3) Later in the course, students will apply the same criteria to each others' papers. (5 percent)

Research paper. Students will work in pairs or trios to write a 20-30-page conference-quality original research paper on a topic in communication history beginning prior to 1990. The paper must be fully referenced in Chicago Style. More details will be provided throughout the course.

Presentation. Students will give 15-minute conference-style presentations on their papers at the end of the term. More details will be provided on presentation requirements later in the semester.

Behavior expectations: Students are learning to be communication professionals and are expected to model the following professional behaviors in class:

- Arrive to class on time and ready to participate.
- Turn cell phones to silent/vibrate.
- Respect others; don't speak when someone else is speaking.
- Listen closely and disagree calmly with others opinions.
- Do not text message, check personal e-mail, instant message, surf the Web or study for other classes during lab time.

Attendance Expectations: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required, but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance (see below). While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors also will report when students stopped attending a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

As the instructor of this section, my philosophy is that students are to treat the class like a job; they are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Work completed in class weighs heavily on the student's grade; therefore, failure to come to class will affect students' grades adversely. Students will receive zeros for work completed during the student's absence.

There are no make ups, and no late work is accepted. Consideration will be given for **extreme circumstances** (serious illness, debilitating injury, or death of a loved one) if the student provides documented proof of the circumstances.