Proposal for a New Course

NOTE: All gray text boxes must be completed (even if you just put N/A into them), otherwise the committee must consider the form incomplete.

1. Department: Communication

2. Course Number and Title: **COMM 410 Analysis of Communication Practice**
   Number of Credits: 4  Total hrs/week: 4
   Lecture: ☒  Lab:  Recitation: ☐  Seminar: ☐

For Independent study courses:
   Research: ☐  Field experience: ☐
   Clinical Practice: ☐  Internship: ☐
   Practicum: ☐  Independent Course Work: ☐

3. Semester and year when course will first be offered:
   Fall 2011

4. Catalog Description (please limit to 50 words):
   An advanced writing course emphasizing the interrogation of historical and/or contemporary communication practices. Topics vary depending on the course section and instructor. When course topics vary, the course is repeatable for elective credit with the permission of the department chair.

5. Check if appropriate: Humanities: ☐  Social Science: ☐  (meets minimum degree requirements)

6. Check if appropriate: ☐
   This course will be cross listed with: n/a
   Rationale for cross listing: n/a
   Please attach letters of support from the chairs of each department indicating that the department has discussed the proposal and supports it.

7. a) Could another department or program also be a logical originator of this course (i.e. History of American Education could originate in both the Teacher Education and the History departments)? If yes, what department/program? Please contact the department chair/program director and request a note or email that they are aware of the proposed new course and include that note with the proposal.
   no

   b) Please explain overlap with any existing courses.
   none

8. Prerequisites (or other restrictions):
   **COMM 110/111; COMM 214; COMM 215; COMM 301; COMM 310; or permission of**
Proposal for a New Course

the department chair.

9. Rationale/justification for course (consider the following issues):

   a) What are the goals and objectives of the course?

   This course emphasizes writing and interrogating contemporary communication practices. Exposes students to historical and contemporary approaches to communication criticism and analysis. Students will:
   - Demonstrate critical thinking through their analysis of communication artifacts.
   - Produce multiple drafts of written assignments.
   - Engage in peer evaluation and critique
   - Revise written work based on feedback from instructor and peers.
   - Conduct primary research
   - Participate in class discussion and debate

   b) How does the course support the mission statement of the department and the organizing principles of the major?
   At a time of great change in communication professions, our distinctive, integrated curriculum discourages specialization in technologies and professional practices that quickly become obsolete. Instead, communication students are exposed to ideas and develop proficiencies that will sustain them for a lifetime. In our department, students become communication experts who write beautifully, speak eloquently, and research effectively. Our students and faculty understand communication as a liberal art.

   This course serves our mission by building on earlier course work to develop critical thinking and writing competencies.

10. a) For courses in the major, how does the course enhance the beginning, middle, or end of the major?

   This course, situated at the end of our program is designed as the upper level writing course to be taken concurrent with or immediately preceding the Capstone experience.

   b) For courses used by non-majors, how does the course support the liberal arts tradition including linkages with other disciplines:

   n/a

11. Method of teaching:
Proposal for a New Course

lecture, discussion, writing groups.

12. a) Address potential enrollment pattern shifts in the department or college-wide related to the offering of this course:
none

b) Address potential shifts in staffing of the department as it relates to the offering of this course:
none

c) Frequency of offering:
each fall: ☑ each spring: ☑
every two years: ☐ every three years: ☐
other ☐ (Explain):

13. Requirements for additional resources made necessary by this course:

a) Staff:
none

b) Budget:
none

c) Library:
none

14. Is this course to be added to the Degree Requirements of a Major, Minor, Concentration or List of Approved Electives?

a) ☑ yes ☐ no

b) If yes, complete the Change Degree Requirements form(s) and list the name(s) of the major, minor, concentration and/or list of approved electives here:

Major: Communication
Minor: Communication (approved electives)

15. Paste syllabus, reading lists, or any additional documentation that can help the committee evaluate this proposal (a syllabus is mandatory).

Comm 410: Critiquing Mediated Communication

Instructor:
Office:
E-mail:
Phone (o):
Office Hours:
Proposal for a New Course

Class Description
In this course you will have the opportunity to think and write about media and make sense of its role in the production and circulation of cultural meanings. We will investigate the historic and contemporary critical perspectives that have contributed to our understanding of entertainment media, attempting to understand the relationship between media forms, representations, and the dominant systems of power in our society. To that end, we will read, watch, discuss, and write about a variety of media products including ads, sitcoms, music, films, and video games. By exploring, understanding, and effectively applying the dominant critical perspectives that underpin media criticism, students will gain the tools necessary inhabit an increasingly complex media environment. Readings from primary scholarly journal articles and book excerpts dominate the assigned reading (no textbook is assigned). Whereas some are more straightforward, others are more theory-heavy and take more time to read and digest. In addition to reading about and studying media, you will further expand your writing skills by developing your own original critical media analysis. You will build to this final paper by completing multiple drafts which you will develop and revise from my feedback and through peer writing and reading workshops.

Objectives
1. Develop a critical awareness of your media environment.
2. Develop a familiarity with concepts, themes and theoretical approaches of media criticism, and the terms and concepts associated with these approaches.
3. Locate yourself and your historical moment in a broader continuity of thinking about the relationship between media and society.
4. Develop an understanding of how these theoretical frameworks have been used to analyze and understand media texts and culture.
5. Develop an ability to adopt and adapt these frameworks and their central concepts in your own written analyses of media texts and products. You will hone these critical skills through multiple opportunities to revise written work.

Demonstration of Learning and Method of Evaluation
Participation: 20%
You must take responsibility for your own learning and participate as an active learner. Active participation includes listening, building on what others say, asking questions, advancing reasoned arguments, identifying theories that are relevant to the discussion, and working collaboratively with others.

Critical Reading Log: 13%
This course will make active use of the Web CT system, particularly the discussion board section. In advance of each class, you are expected to write a response to the readings and post it to the appropriate thread. This post will consist of at
Proposal for a New Course

least two observations about the reading and at least one question you want to pose to the class about the reading. The observations and questions will serve as our foundation for class discussions. You are also strongly encouraged to think of examples from your everyday media diet that illustrate that class’s readings, and to link to these examples if they’re available online. Posts should be roughly 200-250 words, and are due by 11 AM that morning. Posts made later than this will not be accepted. You are expected to complete 13 entries over the course of the semester.

Media Critic Log: 7%

In order to get you more actively engaged with your everyday media environment, you will be required to document your responses to the media you interact with. Choose a media text (defined very broadly; film, TV show, piece of music, video game, web site, etc.) to discuss in your Media Critic Log on WebCT. As with the Critical Reading Log, I encourage you to link to the media in question. You can complete one log for each week of the semester, and are expected to post 7 logs over the course of the semester, or roughly 1 every 2 weeks. Each entry should be roughly 250 words, and can cover any media-related topic you like, provided it is done in a thoughtful and well-articulated way. You are expected to complete these entries as the semester moves along, and cannot make up missed weeks.

Essays: 30% (15% each)

You will turn in two 7-10 page essays in which you critique media texts through specified theoretical lenses. Your second essay will build upon the first, expanding upon and improving your critical thinking skills, writing and analysis. Due: 2/18 and 3/30

Final Group Presentation and Individual Paper: 30% (Presentation 10% Paper 20%)

Guidelines will be provided; see course schedule for the range of presentation dates. You will turn in drafts to me and to your peer group prior to the final due date. Your final paper (15-20 pages) will be due in my mailbox on 4/26.

Policies

Attendance: As this class entails a good deal of in-class learning, it is crucial that you attend class regularly, (arriving on time and staying for the entire class). I am aware that life is an exercise in navigating chaos and that some circumstances are beyond our control. Students are therefore allowed 3 absences. As a carrot, students will be rewarded with up to 5 bonus points for missing less than 3 classes, as detailed in the chart below. As a stick, all absences beyond the third will result in your final grade being lowered by 4 points for each missed class. How you use these absences is your business, but once you use them, they are gone. If you’re sick, use one. If you have a dentist appointment, use one. If your hangover has made it impossible for you to leave your couch, use one. The bottom line: how you use them is your business, but you only get 3. I do not excuse absences, so save them for the
Proposal for a New Course

unforeseen emergencies that arise over the course of the semester. Any student who misses 7 or more classes will automatically fail the course.

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Written work: All written work must be typed, double spaced, and paginated in 12-point Times New Roman font. Please submit all work in hard copy, digitally, or both as specified at the time of assignment. Digital files should be in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or OpenOffice format, with the student's name and assignment as the file title (for example, Smith-Paper 1). Papers should be titled and all pages should be numbered. Please refer to the MLA, APA, or the Chicago Manuals of Style for proper citation and quotation guidelines.

Help with written work: If you require help with your written work, please visit the Writing Lab, located on the first floor of the Addlestone Library. Work with me individually and with your peer groups throughout the semester to further enhance and develop your writing skills.

Late work: Late work will be assessed a penalty of one letter per day, even on weekends. If your paper will be late, you are required to let me know in advance when I can expect to receive it. An additional penalty will be assessed if the student fails to notify me when to expect the completed assignment.

Cell phones: Because I want to create a focused learning environment, all use of cell phones is prohibited during class. This includes reading and sending text messages.

Computers: Computers are allowed for note-taking purposes only. Do not use your computer for any other activities in class, unless I specifically request it. Surfing the web and checking e-mail not only distracts you but also disrupts those around you.

Potentially objectionable content: I expect that we are all adults in this class, and can therefore handle what may be considered mature and sometimes offensive/objectionable content. You are expected to treat such material in a mature and scholarly manner. If we encounter anything so troubling to you that
Proposal for a New Course

you're unable to critically engage with it, please let me know in private and I'll arrange for you to work with something else.

Food: I understand that your schedules can be hectic, and while I'm sympathetic to this, my class is not a cafeteria, and eating often causes a distraction to the students around you. Do not bring food of any kind to class. Drinks are OK.

Plagiarism: See the policy outlined in the College of Charleston Honor Code. I do not tolerate plagiarism of any kind. A good rule of thumb about citations is: if you're not sure a citation is required, it's better to a) ask, or b) just go ahead and cite.

Readings: Readings will be made available online via .pdf download. You are expected to have done the readings in advance of class, and bring them to class on the appropriate date.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that requires special consideration, please contact the Center for Disability Services (SNAP) at SNAP@cofc.edu or (843) 953-1431 and have them notify me of what accommodations I am required to make. To protect your privacy, do not disclose the disability to me, but rather to the trained professionals at SNAP.

Grading Scale
A = 94-100    A- = 90-93    B+ = 87-89    B = 84-86    B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79    C = 74-76    C- = 70-79    D+ = 67-69    D = 65-66
F = 65 and below

Class Schedule
NOTE: The following is a working schedule and subject to change based on the trajectory of the course. I will notify you of all changes in class and/or via e-mail announcement; it is your responsibility to make sure you're aware of all announcements. All readings should be done in advance of the class for which they are listed.

MODULE 1: Semiotics, Culture, and Power
Week 1
Introduction and Overview
1/12: Syllabus and orientation to the course
“The” Media
1/14: Marshall McLuhan, “Understanding Media” in Essential McLuhan
Todd Gitlin, “Introduction” in Media Unlimited

Week 2
High Culture/Low Culture/Mass Culture/(Participatory Culture?)
Proposal for a New Course

1/19: Herbert Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (selections)
Mirko Tobias Schäfer, "Cultural Critique and Media Technology" (pp.59-91) in Bastard Culture!: User participation and the extension of cultural industries http://mtschaefer.net/media/uploads/docs/Schaefer_Bastard-Culture.pdf
Taste Cultures and Publics
1/21: Pierre Bourdieu, “Introduction” (pp. 1-7) in Distinction
Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article”

Week 3
Semiotics
1/26: Semiotics: Key concepts
Jonathan Bignell, "Signs and Myths"
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, Practices of Looking, Chapter 1 (skim)
1/28: Jonathan Bignell, "Advertisements"
Roland Barthes, selections from Mythologies (“The World of Wrestling”, “Toys.”)
Suggested: Roland Barthes, “Myth Today” (from Mythologies)

Week 4
Production Elements
2/2: Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan "An Analysis of Production Elements"
Ideology & Power
2/4: Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”, “The Materialist Conception of History”
Louis Althusser “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”

Week 5
The Culture Industry?
Sturken and Cartwright, Practices, Chapter 2 (skim)

Consumption and Commodification
2/11: John Fiske, "The Commodities of Culture"
James Lull, “Hegemony”
**FIRST ESSAY DUE TO PEER GROUP**

MODULE 2: Theorizing Representation
Week 6
Narrative & Ideology
2/16: Henry Giroux “Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?”
Representation
2/18: Ella Shohat & Robert Stam, “Stereotype Realism and the Struggle for Representation”
**FIRST ESSAY DUE TO ME**
Proposal for a New Course

Week 7
Feminist Analysis
2/23: Liesbet van Zoonen, "Feminist Perspectives on the Media"
Melissa Click, "'Rabid', 'obsessed', and 'frenzied': Understanding Twilight Fangirls and the Gendered Politics of Fandom"
http://flowtv.org/?p=4638
Representation At Any Cost?: Feminist Analysis

Week 8
Critiquing Representations: Critical Race Analysis
Queer Analysis
3/4: Alex Doty, "Introduction" and "There's Something Queer Here"
Aaron Lecklider "Between Decadence and Denial: Two Studies in Gay Male Politics and 1980s Pop Music"
***SECOND ESSAY DUE TO PEER GROUP***

3/9-3/11: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS!!
Week 9
Critiquing Whiteness and Masculinity
3/16: Richard Dyer "The Matter of Whiteness"
Jackson Katz "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity"

3/18: Guest Speaker, readings TBA

MODULE 3: Postmodernism and Popular Criticism
Week 10
Postmodernism: Overview
Sturken and Cartwright, Chapter 7 (skim)
***SECOND ESSAY DUE TO ME***
Postmodernism and the Culture of Simulation
http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Baudrillard/Baudrillard_Simulacra.html

Week 11
Pop Criticism: Music
3/30: John Storey, “Popular Music”
Simon Firth “What is Bad Music?”

Pop Criticism: Reality TV

This form was approved by FCC on 5/19/2009 and replaces all others.
Proposal for a New Course

4/1: Nick Couldry, “Teaching Us to Fake It: The Ritualized Norms of Television’s ‘Reality’ Games”
PROSPECTUS/LIT REVIEW DUE

Week 12
Pop Criticism: Games
4/6: Steve Johnson, Everything Bad is Good for You (excerpt)
David Parisi, “Game Interfaces as Bodily Techniques”
Pop Criticism: Comics
4/4: Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics (selections) (you will need to download and install CDisplay to view the McCloud file; it can be found here: http://cdisplay.techknight.com/setup.zip )

Week 13
4/13: Presentations
4/15: Presentations
REVISE FINAL PAPERS

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Week 14
4/20: Presentations
4/22: Presentations
REVISE FINAL PAPERS

CLASSES END; FINAL PAPER DUE 4/26!!
Proposal for a New Course

14. Signature of Department Chair or Program Director:

________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

15. Signature of Dean of School:

________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

16. Signature of Provost:

________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

17. Signature of Business Affairs Official

________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

18. Signature of Curriculum Committee Chair

________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

19. Signature of Faculty Senate Secretary:

________________________________________

Date Approved by Senate: ________________________________

Completed form should be sent by the Faculty Senate Secretary to the Registrar. After implementation, information concerning the passed course and program changes will be provided by the Registrar to all faculty and staff on campus.