**Course Syllabus**

**CODE number: CMM 101**

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<th>INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION STUDIES</th>
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**Number of ECTS 7.5**

**Contact Details for Professor**

Tel: 02 614 81 70 (office hours)
02/7348339 (emergency only)
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**Course Prerequisites (if any):**
No course prerequisite

**Course Description**
Students attending the course will become familiar with the fundamental strands of communication science, namely Human and Mass Communication, with a goal to gradually become effective practitioners in the field by studying and comprehending the preliminaries to language as well as verbal and non-verbal communication.

The study and the uses and functions of mass media and its rise in modern society will allow students to learn and appreciate the strategy implemented by various types of mass media – from the traditional to new media and gain a basic understanding of the business models underpinning such industries as advertising, television, music and cinema.

Strong emphasis is placed on public discourse and on the organization and delivery of public speeches and various combinations of group presentations. The steady stream of assignments will offer students the opportunity to both deliver informational presentations as well as defend a point of view persuasively.

Finally, the course will regularly introduce students to fundamental theories in Communication Science and will strongly emphasize theories pertaining to the Mass Media field as well as introduce classic literature pertaining to the domain.

**Learning Objectives**
The Broad Learning Outcomes of the course

1. To acquire knowledge of Communication Studies as a science and understand and compare the academic literature of different fields of Communication studies (human, mass, organisational, intercultural, political and business communication, journalism studies, strategic communication, and media production, research and development).
2. To promote the understanding and critical reflection of occupational, regulatory, ethical, technological, political, economic, and cultural factors in communication and different media industries, and be able to assess their impact.
3. To gain insight into the functioning and be able to critically analyse data and communication processes of media companies, as well as governments, business firms and other organisations and assist problem solving.
4. To be highly skilled in oral and written communication and be able to successfully address diverse audiences.
5. To understand the ethical aspects of the work and the social responsibilities of professional communicators in different contexts such as interpersonal, small group and organisational communication, journalism, new media, public relations and marketing, in a comparative intercultural perspective.
6. To understand the international aspects of the communication industry.
7. To get acquainted with topics that impact and go beyond the Communication industry, such as terrorism, environmental issues, emerging economies, etc. and be able to use perspectives from other social sciences.
8. To be able to work efficiently in multinational environments.

These learning outcomes are in line with the following Discipline Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor in Communications Sciences as ratified by the NVAO: DLO 1, DLO 2, and DLO 8, DLO 9.

The Specific Learning Outcomes of the Course

Acquired Knowledge:

- Students become familiar with the theories, issues and problems related to the function of both informational and persuasive arguments as delivered in speeches and modern media outlets
- Understanding and application of some of the major theoretical issues in the discipline of Mass Communication
- Enhancement of the student ability to access various media operating
on a global scale.
- Understand the use of the media by various actors and stakeholders

**Applying Knowledge**

- information from research sources along with accurate documentation of those sources.
- Undertake analysis and written evaluations and feedback from fellow students
- Undertake a comparative analysis
- Describe the theoretical models covered in class

**Communication:**

- Engage with practitioners and academics in the media field
- Participate in structured debates and engage with fellow students and practitioners

**Attitude**

- Develop trust in one’s abilities to effectively convey information or persuade.
- Be both open about and critical of one’s own perceptions and points of view.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**WEEK 1**  
Introduction to Human Communication – defining the types and functions of CMM. Introduction to the criteria necessary to deliver a solid oral individual informational presentation. Preparation of a feedback sheet.

**WEEK 2**  
Understanding the impact of culture and values on CMM  
Individual presentations  
Introducing Communication Theories  
Personality profile tests

**WEEK 3**  
The nature and power of language  
Individual presentations

**WEEK 4**  
The art of listening: from personal to critical listening  
Individual presentations

**WEEK 5**  
Non-verbal communication  
Individual presentation (last week)  
Small group presentations

**WEEK 6**  
Understanding and improving Interpersonal CMM  
Small group presentations  
Communication Theories: The Five Eras of Media Theories
WEEK 7  **Mid-Term Exam**  
Small group presentations

WEEK 8  The nature and industry of Mass Communication (I)  
Mass Media theories  
Small group presentations  
Preparation in view of final exam collective work

WEEK 9  The nature and industry of Mass Communication (II)  
Mass Media theories: from Lasswell’s Propaganda Theories  
To Lippmann’s Theory of Public Opinion Formation  
Small group presentations (last week)

WEEK 10  Media group presentations: Press/Publishing + Radio  
In-class debates

WEEK 11  Media group presentations: Television + Recoding Industry  
Status report on the final exam project

WEEK 12  Media group presentations: Cinema and Internet  
Mass Communication Theories: Instrumentalist and Hegemonic theories  
Research paper on the social impact of media to be handed in. and discussed

WEEK 13  Media group presentations (last week)  
Analyzing group dynamics through “Twelve Angry Men” by Reginald Rose

WEEK 14  **Final Exam Review**  
Completion of the large group project

WEEK 15  Final Exam: Presentation of the large group project (to be discussed)

**Course Materials**

**Textbook**

*Understanding Human Communication*
by Ronald B. Adler and George Rodman  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
Year: 2012

*Twelve Angry Men*
by Reginald Rose

Relevant articles from general interest sources (newspapers, magazines, online sites) will be distributed in class on a regular basis.
Chapters from Understanding Media by Marshall McLuhan will be distributed and discussed in class.
Chapters selected from Dynamics of Mass Communication (Media in the Digital Age) by Joseph R. Dominick (10th edition) will be distributed in class.

Attendance to a conference at Vesalius, the VUB or IES is mandatory in view of publication (5% of the grade).

**Course Support Site**
Course materials (syllabus, support materials, important messages…) will be uploaded on the Vesalius website: Pointcarré. Students are expected to visit the site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions.

**Course Assessment**
The final grade will be based on the following:
- Individual presentation 5%
- Small group presentation 10%
- Media group presentation 15%
- Published article 5%
- Research Paper 20%
- Test 5%
- Mid-Term Exam 20%
- Final Exam Project 20%

The time allocation is estimated as follows:
- Presentations 40 hours
- Mid-Term Exam 30 hours
- Final Exam 70 hours
- In-Class Participation 42 hours

**Grading Scale of Vesalius College**
Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.9-9.9</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Criteria

A grade of A: Demonstrates outstanding competence. The work reflects a breadth of reading and is based on ample use of sources and displays vigorous analytical capacities; the central idea or ideas are original and distinctive, substantially developed and supported with details and illustrations. The paper is logically organized and displays careful language use: complete, clear and engaging sentences, correct and distinctive diction. There are NO errors in Standard English usage.

A grade of B: Demonstrates good competence. The central idea or ideas are original and clear; the writer shows that there is a point to be made. The central idea or ideas are developed and supported with argumentation. The work demonstrates that the student has covered the basic reading and displays good comprehension. The selection and use of sources is adequate. The research outcomes and arguments are presented in proper academic form.

A grade of C: The work displays a working ability to assemble bibliography and to use resources adequately; reasonable understanding of the core literature and an ability to attempt a scholarly interpretation and analysis of the material read, even if the analysis is incomplete. The work is presented in a proper academic form, even if there are some flaws in the written or oral expression.

A grade of D: The work displays limited reading and incomplete knowledge, flows in the understanding, inadequate interpretation, limited argumentation. It is presented in adequate English, but with considerable flaws in academic expression.

A grade of F: An overall mark below D indicates that not even the minimal standards defined above have been attained.

The Communication Department assesses the outcome of student learning using a variety of indicators. Generally the following principles prevail in evaluating written and oral work.

a) Written work:
   All written work must conform to the academic standards of research and writing (the Writing Centre provides information and guidance on this). The following aspects are taken into consideration when assessing students' written work:
   
   o Correct and relevant knowledge of the field.
   o Understanding of the issues involved (expressed in a vigorous analysis).
   o Academic writing. This includes correct use of terminology.
o Selection of relevant sources.
  o Formulation of thesis statement.
  o The ability to use evidence - to build arguments on the basis of the sources the students have accessed.
  o The ability to discriminate between the significant and the trivial.
  o Ability to develop a consistent argument.
  o Logical organisation of material and a clear structure of the paper.
  o Independent thought: the students' ability to assess critically the material they have used and formulate their own position on the subject of their research.
  o The quality of writing: the ability to express oneself clearly and consistently, and to write fluently.

b) Oral presentations:
  o Correct and relevant knowledge of the field.
  o Understanding of the issues involved.
  o Correct use of terminology.
  o Selection of relevant sources.
  o Formulation of position (thesis statement).
  o The ability to use evidence - to build arguments on the basis of the sources the students have accessed.
  o The ability to discriminate between the significant and the trivial;
  o Ability to develop a consistent argument.
  o Logical organization and clear structure of the argument.
  o Independent thought: the students’ ability to assess critically the material they have used and formulate their own position on the subject of their research.
  o Eloquence: the ability to express oneself clearly, consistently, and fluently.

**Additional Course Policies**

**Teaching and Learning Methods:**
Interactive professor lectures, expert lecture, videos, documentaries and film.

**Participation and Presentations**
Attendance and active participation is vital to the student’s progress. Students are expected to attend classes on time and take notes. Participation means attending class and actively contributing to class discussions. Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class. Because the ability to meet deadlines is a crucial skill for all communications professionals, late assignments will not be accepted
The informational speeches to be delivered as of week 2 at the latest is an individual assignment centered on a world famous political/social/cultural figure which students need to present in a 5 to 8 minute time span without the help of visual aids (for radio or podcast). A one page sheet including the sources accessed needs to be provided to the professor.

The small group presentation (2 to 3 students) is worth 10 percent of the final grade and centers on the history and development of a major international organization such as the Red Cross, WWF, NATO or the EU and should be presented in a Power Point format. Students need to hand in a 3-page summary of the findings.

A second group presentation worth 15% of the final grade and typically presented after midterm will consist of up to 5 students working as a group in view of delivering a 45-minute minimum presentation on the history and development of a particular mass medium to be selected by the students - from the press to internet.

The last final project due on week 15 and worth 20% of the grade, will involve all the students working together as a unit. The various topics to be researched and incorporated in the final collective piece will be discussed in class. The piece should be seen or screened on the final exam day.

Please note that the total for the individual projects amounts to 55% of the final grade while the 3 group projects amount to the remaining 45%.

Research Paper Instructions
Students will write a comprehensive paper worth 20% centered on a topical subject focusing on the social impact of the media. The paper will be handed in by week 12 and represents 20% of the final grade.

Length: The extent of the paper should be minimum 3000 and maximum 3500 words per student, using a minimum of 10 different peer-reviewed references and an approved style citation system.

Research Methods: During this course, students could familiarize themselves specifically with the following research method: in-depth interviews.

Given the heavy reliance of a constant stream of presentations by the students, a schedule will be determined on the first day of class with regards to the individual and small group presentations and all relevant explanations provided.

LATE PAPERS AND MAKE UP EXAMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS THERE ARE SERIOUS LEGITIMATE REASONS; EXCUSES MUST BE GIVEN IN WRITING.

Presentation and Defense of Research Papers
Apart from summarizing the salient points of the argument/research in the
essay, the presenters are required to do additional investigations into the argument/research. They must then present the information to the rest of the class in the clearest possible way. This will generally require at the very least the use of PowerPoint. In addition, the presenter is required to engage the class in discussion of the issues presented in the paper, defend his/her conclusions and provide relevant examples (e.g. footage/recording).

A good presentation demands insight, effort and professionalism. Presentations that lack depth or complexity, or evidence an incomplete grasp of content; and speakers who are careless, unprofessional or have a too-casual attitude will not do well. The timing of the various presentations will be indicated during the course. When applicable, you should turn in (directly after you finish presenting) a folder containing your presentation notes/slides.

**Mid-Term and Final Exams**

The mid-term and the final in-class written assignment will cover the lectures, the guest speaker presentation, the student presentations and the articles or chapters distributed in class. On account of the large group project, please note that final exam will take place on week 14.

**Research Methods**: During the course students will familiarize themselves with the following research methods; Content Analysis, Surveys, Focus Groups and In-Depth interviews.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else’s work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.