Communication and culture do not exist in isolation. In this course we will study communication as culture and culture as communication.

How does our style of communication characterize our way of life? How do we come to understand and characterize other people and cultures?

Throughout this course, we will explore oral, written, and visual communication strategies. We will think about the role of audience, context, and purpose in shaping and influencing the various communications we encounter and interact with in our daily lives.

We then will consider how we can play with these strategies to make our own oral, written, and visual communication more effective, innovative, and personalized.

Keeping in mind that communication, according to John Fiske, is composed of a myriad of human activities, from the ways in which we spread information, what we see on television, our hair style, or even the way we dress and our facial expressions, we will organize our study of communication and culture on the following objectives:

Course Objectives
- Understand the operation of narratives as cultural communication
- Explore how the styles we follow tell a story about who we are as individuals and as a culture
- Appreciate the complexities of culture and communication as seen in the news
- Examine the relations between culture and/ as communication

What you can get out of this course:
- Become more aware of rhetorical strategies to help you make alert choices within certain constraints.
- Increase your understanding of the impact of these choices.
- Introduce a Cultural Studies approach for thinking critically about the various communications you encounter and interact with in your daily life.
Required Texts & Materials


3. Additional course readings on WebCT.

4. A binder (for the portfolio)

What to Expect: Workload & Valuation

Throughout this semester you will complete formal writing assignments including a rhetorical analysis as well as projects that involve visual and oral components. Writing projects will involve research, peer-review, consideration and analysis of rhetorical strategies and persuasion, as well as reflective writing. Below is a list, followed by brief descriptions, of what we will accomplish this semester.

| Reading, Reflective Responses & Pop Quizzes - 15% | The Word! — 10% |
| 3 Written Take-Home Exams — 45% | Social Practices — 10% |
| Collaborative, Multi-Perspective Research Project — 25% | Cover letter — 70% |

Read to learn. Write to know.

Please refer to the weekly schedule for reading assignments. You are responsible to have completed the assigned reading and writing before the class. All readings on the schedule are required. Quizzes, tests, class discussions, and projects will be based on these readings. It is suggested that you take notes on what you read.

What is expected: It is expected that you do all the assigned readings. Work in this class will draw from these readings and it is expected that you have considered the arguments and views presented in the readings and class discussions. To get the most of the readings it is important to contemplate the issue in terms of what is at stake, and how various perspectives are constructed. Reading responses are an opportunity to think further about the readings but to also include your own response and reflection. Remember, there is no ‘right’ answer but it is expected that reading responses show active engagement with the material. (Note: some reading responses will be posted on WebCT).

Grading: Reading responses that meet the expected criteria will receive a positive mark. Reading responses that do not meet the expected criteria will not receive a mark. Likewise, pop quizzes will be graded in similar pass/fail manner. This grade will be determined when the marks are tallied at the end of the semester. (example: if there were 10 responses and 9 of them received a positive mark and 1 did not meet the expected criteria then this grade would be 9/10 or 90%).
There will be three take home exams throughout the semester.

**Grading:** A letter grade will be assigned. Please review the rubric (available on WebCT).

We will rely heavily on the five new concepts this semester: to help incorporate these words into our vernacular groups of 3-4 students will work more in-depth with readings on the concept in order to teach the concept to the class.

**What is expected:** You may research the concept independently or as group (see sign-up sheet). The goal is to introduce the concept to the class using any means necessary in order to help everyone else grasp the concept and to also show how we can use it to analyze popular culture.

**Grading:** Each individual will receive a letter grade. Peer-evaluation will be considered when determining this grade.

Wow. A lot of words. In this course we will begin with how narrative functions in our culture and move forward to see how we can read our culture better by understanding the role of narrative and storytelling. This final project will incorporate written, visual, and oral modes of communication. In a group, you will begin to research a current event, rhetorically analyze what 'stories' have already been told. The goal is to draw out (using research) and understand (using analytical strategies) the multiple perspectives that shape and frame your topic/issue.

**Grading:** Separate letter grades will be assigned to the presentation and the research paper. Feedback from group members will inform the individual presentation grade. The grades will be weighted as follows: Presentation 10%, paper 12%, Title page 3%.

This grade will reflect your contribution to the class dynamic. That is, your role in **class discussions, peer review** activities, and **group work**. This grade also will take into account your commitment to engaging with the course material in a thoughtful, reflective, and positive way. The basis of social practices is **respect** for ideas, opinions, deadlines, course policies, and learning.

If you are not in class, you are not participating, so this grade will also partially reflect your attendance.
The portfolio will include all the work you produced in this course. The portfolio will not be given a grade. [Psst! The portfolio cover letter may be an opportunity for padding grades at the end of the semester!] A completed portfolio is required to receive a final course grade – no portfolio, no credit. Be prepared to hand me your completed portfolio on the Monday of finals week.

Access to Course Materials & Readings
Course materials (weekly schedules, handouts & assignment sheets, syllabus, etc) will be both on WebCT.

Readings and some other course materials will only be available through the web sites above. That is, you are responsible to download and print these materials.

About Plagerism and Cheating
Completing and turning in an assignment is an agreement to abide by the University Integrity Code. Give credit where credit is due.

For more information on citing sources:
- APA style guide: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html
- MLA style guide: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. They are defined by this policy as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation,” and this policy covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes of purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating not only are dishonest but cheat you out of learning, the prime reason you are here. If you ever have questions about this issue, please talk with your instructor or consult a coach in the Writing Center (7-2007).

Please refer to:
http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

Grading & Class Policies
I will give letter grades (A, AB, B, ... ) for all graded assignments in this class. All letter grades and the final grade will be based on the following percentages:

- 92-100 %
- 88-91 %
- 82-87 %
- 78-81 %
- 72-77 %
- 68-71 %
- 60-67 %
- < 60 %

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Being Here & Being Involved
The quality of this course depends on the quality of your involvement.

If you absolutely must miss a class, it will be your responsibility to find out what went on in class from fellow students, and to make up all missed work.

If you are absent...
- More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a letter grade reduction.
- If your absence is unexcused, in-class work may not be made up for credit.

An excused absence is defined by the University Attendance Policy. Please refer to: http://www.sa.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/attendance.html

Plan to attend all classes.

Promptness
This is a general rule for both attendance and assignments.
If something major happens in your life and something will be late → come talk to me.

Late work?
Due dates are important. Late work is not accepted.

However, there are a few exceptions to this policy:
1) If you have an excused absence (from the Dean of Students)
2) If you discussed an extension with me before the due date (e-mails at midnight before an assignment is due does not count).

Communication
This is a communication class. I encourage you to talk to me if you have any questions, concerns, or comments about the class. It would also be great if you get to know better the other people in this room.

Two main rules to remember regarding the revision process:
1) The original draft (with comments) must accompany the revised version. Revised papers without the original draft will not be read.
2) Substantial revision will usually result in a higher grade. However, if a revised version is only a few line-edits the grade will be lowered.

Final Statements

A Contract
This syllabus is essentially a contract – please know and understand course policies.

A note on Freestyle & Flexibility
I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and course schedule to better serve everyone’s needs.