

## **CCI 605: Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Communication and Information**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Michelle Violanti, Ph.D.

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**OFFICE HOURS:** T/Th 10:00 to 11:00 and By Appointment

**Catalog Description (3 hours):** An overview of the philosophical presuppositions and theoretical frameworks that have informed the fields in communication and information.

### **Goals & Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to accomplish the following:

- Define, understand, and articulate the concepts associated with theory, constructs, models, and paradigms including ontology, axiology, and epistemology
- Introduce the works of major philosophical thinkers who have informed our fields
- Provide background on the process of building, testing and refuting theory
- Examine the various approaches to completing an effective literature review (stand alone or as the rationale for a larger research project)
- Discuss empirical and hermeneutic approaches to developing research problems, questions, and hypotheses
- Introduce what it means to communicate in a scholarly manner

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the assumptions associated with the various paradigmatic perspectives
- Understand how paradigms inform research questions
- Understand how the philosophers covered in class have informed all the fields represented in the college
- Recognize and develop research studies based on the assumptions associated with various paradigms
- Demonstrate an understanding of the process to build, test, and refute theory

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Goffman, I. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science, whose knowledge: Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hardt, H. (1992). *Critical communication studies: Communication, history, and theory in America*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Kuhn, T. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Machi, L., & McEvoy, B. (2012). *The literature review: Six steps to success* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Mead, G. H. (1934/1956/1967). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Popper, K. (2002). *The logic of scientific discovery*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

*Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

### **Optional Texts:**

- Comte, A. (1988). *Introduction to positive philosophy*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Fink, A. (2010). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Jesson, J. K., Matheson, L., & Lacey, F. M. (2011). *Doing your literature review: Traditional and systematic techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**CCI Diversity Statement:** CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

**Disability Accommodation Statement:** Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact with one of your instructors privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **POLICIES**

- This course adheres to the university's Academic Standards of Conduct and Honor Statement, as presented in the student handbook *Hilltopics*.
- Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and participate in class discussion.
- In general, students are not allowed to make up missed work without advance notice. Plans should be made to turn assignments in early if you are traveling to a conference. Exceptions will be rare and at the discretion of the instructor.
- Syllabus is subject to change as instructor deems appropriate and necessary.
- Please turn off all handheld devices, including mobile phones, pagers, PDAs, etc. during class. Mobile devices can be used for course-related reasons only. Other uses (email, IM, Facebook, general browsing) are incredibly disrespectful.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

- Critical reading of the assigned materials and participation in discussions.
- Individual literature review on a topic of interest to you. The purpose of this paper is for you to create an introduction, rationale, and literature synthesis for a set of research questions/hypotheses you may examine in the future. It should serve as the foundation for your methods paper this semester.
- Presentations: During the course of the semester, you will lead two discussions on two different paradigmatic perspectives. Your presentations should be informative and also provide the class with references and summaries they may use to help prepare for comps.
- Reaction Papers: For each assigned book, write a two (2) to three (3) page reaction to the material presented focusing primarily on how you might go about using the content for research in your chosen area.
- Analysis of Published Research: Choose two years of a journal where you aspire to publish your own research. For each article in the issue, compile a table with the complete citations

for each article, the research perspective utilized, any theories presented, and the method used. Write a one-to-two paragraph summary of your findings and any conclusions you would draw about this journal.

- **Research Philosophy:** In this one- to two-page paper, you will lay out your personal perspective on collecting and analyzing data. It will be an evolving, living document that you will update and tweak as your approach to research develops. This document tells us who you are as a researcher today.

**GRADE:** Grading is done on a traditional, graduate-level A through F scale with A representing superior performance, B representing satisfactory performance, and C representing less than satisfactory performance. The final grade is comprised of your performance on Reaction Papers (20%), Journal Analysis (10%), Research Philosophy (10%), Presentations (30%), and Literature Review (30%).

### COURSE SCHEDULE (flexible)

| Date                       | Topic                            | Reading                                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| August 21 <sup>st</sup>    | Introduction                     |   |
| August 28 <sup>th</sup>    | Scientific Revolutions           | Kuhn  |
| September 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Paradigms                        | Blackboard Reading and Presentations        |
| September 11 <sup>th</sup> | Functional Perspectives          | Popper                                      |
| September 18 <sup>th</sup> | Functional Perspectives          | Presentations                               |
| September 25 <sup>th</sup> | Literature Reviews               | Machi and McEvoy                            |
| October 2 <sup>nd</sup>    | Scholarly Writing                | APA Manual<br><b>Journal Analysis Due</b>   |
| October 9 <sup>th</sup>    | Interpretive Perspectives        | Mead  |
| October 16 <sup>th</sup>   | Interpretive Perspectives        | Goffman                                     |
| October 23 <sup>rd</sup>   | Interpretive Perspectives        | Presentations                               |
| October 30 <sup>th</sup>   | Critical Perspectives            | Hardt<br><b>Literature Review Draft Due</b> |
| November 6 <sup>th</sup>   | Feminist Perspectives            | Harding                                     |
| November 13 <sup>th</sup>  | Critical/Feminist Perspectives   | Presentations                               |
| November 20 <sup>th</sup>  | NCA                              | Work on Literature Reviews                  |
| November 27 <sup>th</sup>  | Happy Thanksgiving               | <b>Literature Reviews Due</b>               |
| December 9 <sup>th</sup>   | Final Exam Period (12:30 - 2:30) | <b>Research Philosophy Due</b>              |