

## Communication Studies (COMS)

---

### COMS 200 PRINCIPLES OF MASS COMMUNICATION (4)

An introduction to the history of mass communication, the mechanics of the mass communication industries, and theories of mass communication as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon.

### COMS 201 STORY TELLING VIA VIDEO (4)

Designed for beginning video students. Assignments include creating skits and music videos and conducting interviews using DV camcorders. Students also do a final creative project of their own.

### COMS 202 METHODS OF MEDIA CRITICISM (4)

A survey of ways to analyze mediated texts, with a focus on film, television, magazines, music, news, and advertising. Methods and concepts include semiotics, structuralism, ideology, psychoanalysis, feminism, and postmodernism.

### COMS 210 WRITING FOR THE MEDIA (4)

Introduction to a wide range of writing styles and formats, from hard news and features to press releases. Students learn to write for newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the internet, as well as for public relations.

### COMS 240 INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS (4)

An overview of the history, structure, and organization of public relations. Students also learn the basic public relations tactics of writing, presentation, event organization, and web communication.

### COMS 265 INTRO TO RADIO BROADCASTING (4)

History of broadcasting, evolution of broadcast technology, and introduction to basic theories and techniques of radio broadcasting. Overview of radio station organization, programming, and operation. Experience in radio program development and production techniques.

### COMS 301 MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH (4)

Intermediate-level study of the key research events that contributed to the development of communication theories, government policy, and the emergence of communication as an academic discipline. Crosslisted as SOCI 331. Prerequisites: COMS 200, 202, and Junior-level standing.

### COMS 302 MEDIA ETHICS (4)

Students analyze real-life ethical issues that media professionals face on TV, radio, newspapers, the Internet, in public relations, and in the music and entertainment industries. Classroom exercises involve discussion, debate, critical thinking and reasoning, and practical application of ethical principles. Prerequisites: COMS 200 and 202.

### COMS 315 MEDIA LAW (4)

An intensive exploration of the rules and regulations governing media and communication in the United States. The focus is on the First Amendment. Students take exams, write papers, and participate in moot trials on issues of libel, privacy, copyright, obscenity, and the right to a fair trial. Prerequisites: COMS 200, 202, and Senior-level standing.

### COMS 316 ADVANCED VIDEO PRODUCTION (4)

Intensive production for filmmakers. In fall semester, students work on biography, news, and multi-camera talk shows. In spring, students work on screenplays, scenes with actors, and images for songs. Beginning students use DV camcorders and i-Movie2. Advanced students use 3-chip cameras and edit on Final Cut or Avid. Prerequisite: COMS 201.

### COMS 317 ADVANCED RADIO BROADCASTING (4)

This course encourages students in their individual interests in Radio/Sound Recording. Students will learn more about the application of sound to all aspects of the media world, from the producing or hosting of live radio shows to the use of sound in promotions and DVD production. Prerequisite: COMS 265.

### COMS 318 ADVANCED MEDIA WRITING (4)

Writing for different media, including Blogs, magazines, radio, websites, newspapers, and investigative reporting. Emphasis on development of sources, proposals, pitches, working in teams, writing in-depth features and columns on issues, trends, and complex ongoing stories. Prerequisite: COMS 210, a semester at *The Star*, or equivalent experience writing in the professional world.

### COMS 320 SELECTED TOPICS IN COMS (4)

Intensive study of various topics and trends in the mass media, including advertising, propaganda and persuasion, children and the media, technical and scriptwriting, environmental and international communication, and film. May be repeated for additional credit with new subject matter.

### COMS 321 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION (4)

Course develops a basic understanding of current issues related to the field of international communication. Surveys readings and videos on global media (MTV, CNN, ESPN, theme parks, video games, advertising, media campaigns for social change, computer hackers, Sesame Street, etc.). Overseas job and volunteer opportunities discussed.

### COMS 322 BROADCAST JOURNALISM (4)

Introductory class on the art and craft of Journalism, print, video, and radio, by career professionals. Designed to give students a taste of real world media experience.

### COMS 323 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION (4)

Course will focus on research, and reporting skills to produce magazine articles or video/radio documentaries on health, science, and the environment. Other assignments include press releases, profiles, and memos. Lecture, videos, and field trips help to critique news, public relations, ads, PSAs, campaigns, film, television, music, and the Internet on related issues. Junior standing required.

### COMS 324 SCRIPTWRITING FOR VIDEO (4)

Course focuses on fundamentals of writing professional-level scripts for video, television, and film productions. Assignments include lab work and homework producing scripts and storyboards for Public Service Announcements (PSAs), commercials, news packages, documentaries, corporate and educational training programs, and dramatic screenplays. Junior standing required.

### COMS 326 ADVANCED PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES (4)

Course involves intensive self-evaluation of both verbal and non-verbal elements of presentation. Interviews, group communications, and presenting with multi-media are covered. Theories of communication are discussed as they relate to presentation styles. Junior standing required.

### COMS 327 MEDIA AND CHILDREN (4)

Students learn about the latest research in child development, media design, and marketing. Students then apply these ideas to the creation of a media message for a specific age group. Junior standing required.

### COMS 328 AMERICA AT THE MOVIES (4)

An examination of the sociopolitical meanings and significance of American film from the silent era to the present. To better understand how films can potentially reflect and affect society, students read about American history and analyze dozens of films in their particular historical contexts.

### COMS 329 "REALITY" TV AND FILM (4)

How is "reality" mediated in film and television? In this course students examine the truthfulness, ethics, and sociopolitical implications of such forms and genres as the documentary, neorealism, Dogme 95, tabloid talk shows, voyeurism/confession shows, crime shows, freak shows, and contest/game shows.

**COMS 332 SCREENING VIOLENCE (4)**

Violence in media and popular culture has been the subject of great concern and voluminous research for many years. In this course students examine the history, meaning, and real-world implications and effects of media violence, with a focus on film, television, literature, news, sports, comics toys, and video games.

**COMS 333 COMMUNICATION, POWER AND SOCIAL CHANGE (4)**

How does power operate through communication to delay or to advance social progress? Analyze history, film, documentary, news, corporate PR, government propaganda, and cultural myth. Craft short messages from comic books to posters to radio or video spots. Design and get feedback for messages students create on issues of choice.

**COMS 340 ADVANCED PUBLIC RELATIONS (4)**

A hands-on class for students who are planning to work in the field of public relations. Students work as consultants with clients to develop plans for public relations campaigns. Prerequisite: COMS 240 or an introductory public relations course. Junior standing required.

**COMS 368 NEWSPAPER WRITING/EDITING (STAR) (4)**

The faculty advisor offers a comprehensive oral and written evaluation of the most recent edition of the campus newspaper, the *STAR*. Instruction is provided on a wide variety of journalism topics, from editing and reporting to ethics and law. Students are required to read the *STAR* and the written evaluation by the advisor. May be repeated for up to 12 units.

**COMS 369 SSU-TV (4)**

This is an essential class for students who will work in the broadcasting industry. Students will learn about the history, structure, and operations of local broadcasting. Students will be expected to work in a specific department of SSU-TV during the semester. May be repeated for credit up to 12 units.

**COMS 385 MEDIA LAB: RADIO (KSUN) (4)**

A media lab to develop a range of skills in the production of radio programs. Work focuses on the production of live and prerecorded pieces for KSUN, SSU's Internet radio station ([www.sonoma.edu/ksun](http://www.sonoma.edu/ksun)). The lab also serves as the staff meeting of the radio station. May be repeated for up to 12 units.

**COMS 402 SENIOR SEMINAR (4)**

Students will share at least one critical analysis of a specific media message and complete a senior-level project/portfolio/study, which is the culmination of their major experience. Seniors only. Cannot be repeated for credit.

**COMS 435 SEMINAR IN MASS MEDIA (4)**

Seminar provides an opportunity to gain new insights into social problems through an intensive analysis of the role and impact of mass communication in contemporary society. Emphasis is on exploring, through a major research project, social issues that should be, but are not, fully covered by the mass media. Prerequisite: COMS 301 or SOCI 300 or SOCI 331 or consent of instructor. Crosslisted as SOCI 435.

**COMS 460 TEACHING ASSISTANT IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES (1-4)**

Intended to give students experience assisting instructors. Teaching Assistants help teach, do research, and tutor students in classes. Consent of instructor and department contract required.

**COMS 470 RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES (1-4)**

Intended to give selected students experience in the construction and implementation of a professor's research project. Consent of instructor and department contract required.

**COMS 495 SPECIAL STUDIES (1-4)**

Supervised study of a particular problem or area of interest in the media selected by the student in consultation with a sponsoring faculty member. Meetings will be arranged for discussions and progress evaluations. May be repeated for credit. Consent of instructor and Special Study 495 contract required.

**COMS 499 MEDIA INTERNSHIP (4)**

This class provides students with an opportunity to discover how to make an effective transition from the classroom to the workplace. For a semester, individuals work in a media firm, business, newspaper, radio, or TV station. On the job, students learn networking and negotiating skills. Assignments for class include a resume, workplace lingo, self-evaluation, profile of supervisor, and an album with photos and text that describe the experience. There is also an interview for a job. Seniors only. Consent of instructor, internship agreement form, and department contracts required. Can be taken for up to 12 units only.