

CM831: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

FALL 2015

Instructor: Denis Wu, Ph.D.

Time: 1 p.m. -- 4 p.m. on Wednesdays

Meeting place: COM 215

Course Web site: <http://learn.bu.edu/>

Office Hours: 12:30–3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays or by appointment

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Objectives of the class

As one of the core courses in the International Relations/International Communication (IRIC) joint program, this class is intended to introduce you to the key theories, concepts, and practices in the broadly defined international communication. This course is also an important, useful elective class for graduate students in various communication fields -- as the world has become immensely internationalized and intricately connected, a good understanding of the world's communication system and knowledge proves pivotal to success. Without the knowledge beyond national borders communication professionals simply cannot fulfill their fundamental responsibilities and advance the ideas they represent. To both groups of students, a comprehensive knowledge of how global communication works bestows on you an edge over other competitors.

After taking this class, you will

- grasp the context, history, and essential ideas behind international communication;
- have a good understanding of how communication across national borders actually takes place;
- be familiar with the key issues that face international communication today;
- have a better sense of how practitioners in international communication work and of the problems they face;
- be able to identify and explain the dynamics of communication environment and components in the transient world; and
- know how to conduct research and apply communication concepts in international arenas.

Textbook & Readings

Required text:

Thussu, D. K. (Ed.). (2010). *International communication: A reader*. New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-0415444569

Melissen, J. (Ed.). (2007). *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-0230535541

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (Eds) (2012). *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-978-1-107-69954-0

Punathambekar, A. (2013). *From Bombay to Bollywood*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN-978-0-8147-2949-6

Supplemental Readings: Various articles that address different topics will be available on Boston University's Blackboard.

All other articles and readings are included in the course Blackboard site. You can access them via the Content folder.

Last, but not least, you are expected to be regularly exposed to the two publications:

- The *New York Times* <www.nytimes.com>
- The *Economist* <www.economist.com>

They are all freely accessible via the Web and on smart phones. If you prefer the dead-tree edition, that would be a wise investment of your money. Constant exposure to these two news outlets may lead to a better – and updated – understanding of topics and issues related to this class. You are encouraged to develop a habit of consuming *at least one of them* on a regular basis and to share your thoughts about current events with the class.

In addition to this Anglo-American news exposure, you are encouraged to select one quality news outlet in the region/culture/language of your choice. It can be an alternative medium you appreciate or from a country where you would like to become an expert of. The class would benefit from your weekly update of this news source/perspective as well.

Course Requirements

Grades. Your final grade will be based on the following components:

Class discussion & participation	5%
Abstracts & lead discussant	30%
Country report & presentation	30%
Final paper & presentation	35%

Every assignment will be evaluated on a 100-point scale. Your final score will be calculated based on the above percentages. And your final letter grade will be given based on the following formula:

93-100	A	73-76.99	C
90-92.99	A-	70-72.99	C-
87-89.99	B+	67-69.99	D+
83-86.99	B	63-66.99	D
80-82.99	B-	60-62.99	D-
77-79.99	C+	0-59.99	F

Abstract and Discussant.

Your abstract/lead discussant assignment can be either a joint or individual project, depending on the number of students in the class. Each one of you will select two dates of your choice and write a synthesis of the assigned readings. Because all the sessions need to be covered, you may not necessarily end up covering the topics that appeal to you. Those who select the same dates will form a group and lead the discussion for the day's readings. If you would like to include other relevant or supplement articles in your abstract/presentation, that would be most welcome.

A typical abstract should include the most important information about the required readings (and extra article, if you choose to) and run *less than 5 pages long* (single-spaced). Each group only needs to turn in *one* hard copy, on which I expect to see:

- 1) Names of your group members and date
- 2) Complete citations of the assigned readings and the extra article of your choice your abstract covers
- 3) A synthesis of the main concepts and ideas covered in the readings
- 4) *Your own* comments, thoughts
- 5) or questions for discussion about the topics of the week

The abstract format is available on the course's Blackboard site. Your group must also post your abstract on Blackboard's designated discussion section and present your abstract in class, which should last only 30 minutes. In your presentation, not only should you summarize the readings' most important highlights, you must initiate and facilitate discussion about the key concepts with the class. It is instrumental to circulate your discussion points or questions *ahead of the class time* for your fellow classmates to prepare for discussion. The abstract evaluation form that will be used is also posted on Blackboard, which lists all of the main criteria upon which evaluation will be based.

Country Report.

This assignment is designed in the hope of making each and every student of this class an expert of a country or a region.

You need to pick a country (or a region) to concentrate on for this assignment. You should immerse yourself into the communication issues of this given country/region and write a comprehensive report based on your research findings. The issues or orientation of your country report hinges on the amount/kind of information you can gather. Your language skill (other than English, for non-English-speaking nations), therefore, could/should come handy when you pursue this nation-centered project. Despite no components required, successful country reports should focus on a limited number of topics or issues and the end result of the research should be well organized, synthesized and analyzed. The report/presentation can solely or jointly pursued (by 2 people). The written part should not exceed 16 pages (25 pages for 2-person joint project); and the presentation should be about 15 minutes long (you may use as many multi-media aids as you want). The country report is due on **10/17**. You may want to discuss your choice with me in advance.

Final Research Paper.

The primary task of this class is to produce a quality research paper that addresses a key issue of international communication, examines a pivotal communication concept/theory in the real world, or presents findings of a case study that deals with a given aspect of communication in the class's context. This paper may become your master's thesis or a convention paper that will get you a degree and/or make you famous. So, be serious about this endeavor. It is important for you to learn about the available databases in the BU library and literature search skills. Don't be afraid of library visit and don't limit your reference to digitized sources in the databases. After all, not all literature has been digitized, yet. The references in the texts and class reading would be a good starting point.

You should systematically follow a specific style (APA is recommended) in the paper. In addition, basic writing requirements – spelling, grammar, word usage, and organization of your paper – will be taken into account. Your final paper must be stapled, typed (Times font, size 12 highly recommended), double-spaced, (double-sided, if possible), and run *no more than 25 pages* (including everything, reference, charts, photos, and tables). Clear sections and helpful subheads are recommended. Do not inflate your paper by including such fillers as lengthy quotes or redundant examples – *succinct but insightful papers are superior to long but disconnected counterparts*.

You are required to submit an outline on **11/7**, which should include your research topic, detailed description of your inquiry, and a list of substantial relevant literature or sources of information that could be used for your final paper. The more you are able to provide in the outline, the more help you may get from me.

A hard copy of your final paper is due 12/9 noon. You will also have to formally present your paper (15 minutes) on 12/5.

For those who are serious about academic career, I would encourage you to revise and polish your final paper and submit it to AEJMC annual convention (international communication division). Its submission deadline is always 4/1 each year. If interested, please let me know.

Class Discussion & Participation.

You are required to attend each and every class. Because we only meet once a week, missing any three-hour class would result in serious consequences. Given this, starting at 2nd absence, each single absence will lead to 3% class grade reduction.

But perfect attendance does not guarantee a perfect score in this part – you must actively participate in discussion and voice educated/informed opinion. You are advised to complete all reading assignments PRIOR TO classes, stay tuned with the suggested media, and be prepared when invited to speak on an issue or answer impromptu questions. Once again, it is imperative that you read the assigned material before each class.

Important Policy

These policies are extremely important to you. Please read carefully and remember that these policies will be upheld throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to keep these policies in mind.

First and foremost, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Any kind of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the filing of academic misconduct charges. Any suspicious act/material/ etc. will be investigated to the fullest extent possible and those found guilty will be punished accordingly. Be sure to read and comply with Boston University's universal academic conduct code. It is available at: bu.edu/academics. In addition, it is imperative to understand plagiarism in detail:

“Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those words, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or sources, other than those created in a work of fiction is

also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.”

If you cannot take an exam or submit an assignment on the scheduled time, you have the full responsibility to report to the instructor (via email or phone) *in advance* with legitimate evidence. You will be penalized if you turn in your assignment late (Note: It is deemed late even if you turn in your assignment *after* I collect at the beginning of the class that exact day). *Your grade on that given assignment will be subtracted 20 points for every day late.* You should also keep in mind *where* exactly the assignment is due; assignments turned in to other venues will not be graded. If you miss an exam or deadline without an *acceptable* evidence or excuse prior to the deadline, you will not be allowed to make up – your grade of that assignment/exam will be zero.

Other than the above assignments and exams, you do not have the option to submit extra work or project to gain bonus credit. Bonus credit can only be initiated by the instructor.

Any class you miss will not be offered or summarized afterwards at a one-on-one basis – you are entirely responsible for any class you miss. The instructor will assume that you fully understand the material covered on the day(s) you miss and that you can grasp the content and skills *on your own*. Therefore, you are strongly advised to follow the schedule in the syllabus and participate in each class session to ensure you comprehend the subject and obtain the full benefit of this class.

For those of you who are working full time, having various part-time jobs, or participating in extra-curricular activities while taking this class at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that this class may be time-consuming and challenging to some students. If your job or other commitments demand a lot of time and energy, you should be aware of the risk of getting bad grades. Jobs or activities related excuses are not acceptable.

Foreseeable, controllable accidents or incidents (like dogs eating homework, trips, or computer/printer crashes the night right before due date) will not be accepted as excuses for delayed work or a change in exam time. You should take all necessary and sufficient precaution to protect your precious work from being destroyed by humans, non-human creature, and low- and high-tech malfunctions.

Last, but not least, emotional distresses, relationship crises, or other family-oriented issues are not acceptable excuses either (unless the result of which leads to your medical visit). This class strives to be as fair as possible; that is, each and every student will be evaluated in precisely the same fashion in the end of the semester.

If you had any question about the grade you receive of any assignment or exam, you need to put your inquiry *in writing* so that the instructor can have sufficient time to review the assignment and your answer(s), respond to your question, or change your grade if your request proved justified. I will not take

individual inquiry about grades during class time, which would likely waste other students' time.

The instructor will take grammar and style of all of your assignments and exams into consideration when grading. You are advised to consult style book and other resources for guidance.

Please note that classroom proceedings for this course can be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor's permission. The instructor's PowerPoint files will not be distributed to the class but can be made available upon individual requests.

In this class, you are not allowed to use any communication device, including cellular phones, smart phones, iPad, pagers, or personal computers in this class. You are advised to turn your communication devices and computers *completely off* and put them in your backpack or bag when you enter the class -- any visible presence of communication device or personal computer will be deemed as usage. *Any violation will be interpreted as a serious offense to the instructor and treated as absence.* Under unusual circumstances when you must use personal computers to take notes and presentations, you will need to *email* me and *pledge* that your use will be exclusively related to the specific stated function and nothing else.

If you are still registered in this class after reading these policies on the first day, I will assume that *you agree completely and entirely with these class policies and that you will uphold them throughout the semester.* I suggest that you keep this syllabus in a safe place and revisit these policies often. These policies will not be reviewed again during the class.

Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Please follow the class and/or email for updates. Do the assigned reading and prepare your original thoughts and/or reaction to the readings prior to each class.

9/2 Introduction of the class – What is international communication and why we need to know about it?

Explanation of the syllabus

Getting acquainted with each other

9/9

Context, history, and theories of international communication

Normative, explanatory, and applied theories

[Stevenson, 1992. Thussu: chaps 5, 6, &7.](#)

Discussion of country/region to be focused in your Country Report

9/16

Journalism practices around the world
Key concepts and historical backgrounds of international communication scholarship

[Hallin & Mancini \(2012\): chaps 1, 5 – 8.](#)

9/23

News flow phenomenon
The impact of information transmission across national borders
International news production/distribution

[Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003; Hess, 1996: chap 4; McPhail, 2010: chaps 12-13.](#)

9/30

Media, modernization, and national development

[Selected pages from Giddens, 1991; Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964.](#)

Communication concepts for international communication:
agenda-setting, framing, cultivation, knowledge gap, propaganda/persuasion,
dependency theory

[Thussu: chaps 3, 8, 19.](#)

10/7

Global media systems
Non-Western media systems

[Thussu: chaps 9, 11, 13.](#)

[Hallin & Mancini: chaps 9, 10.](#)

10/14

Armchair tour around the world on communication

§ Country Report (hard copy) and presentation due in class

(Tentative schedule: International communication scholars from Europe to join us via Skype)

10/21

International information control and policy
Cyber issues: mercantile system and cyber warfare

[Thussu: chaps 14-17, 21; Faris & Villeneuve, 2008.](#)

10/28

Strategic public diplomacy

[Manheim, 1994: chaps 2-3; Melissen, 2007: chaps 1-7.](#)

11/4

Strategic public diplomacy (*continued*)

[Melissen, 2007: chaps 8-11; Thussu: chap 20; Khakimova, 2011.](#)

§ Final paper outline, potential sources, and literature collection due in class.

11/11

New media technologies and international communication: news content diversity, CNN effect, and social media-based movements

Gilboa, 2005; Russell & Echchaibi, 2009: chaps 1, 3, 4.

11/18

Entertainment content flow and impact

Culture industries: Bollywood (India), Telenovelas (Brazil & Mexico), and Korean Wave (Korea)

Global and diaspora cultures

Thussu: chaps 24, 25.

Punathambekar: chaps 1, 4, 5.

11/25

No class. Thanksgiving recess.

12/2

Communication and clash of civilizations

Communication of extremisms in 21st century

Huttington, 1993; Imai, 2006; Said, 2001; Lwin, Stanaland, & Williams, 2010.

Conclusion of the class

12/9

§ Final research paper presentation

§ Final research paper “final electronic” copy due 12/10 at noon