On its most basic level, this foundational Communication course introduces students to the basic skills of public speaking. By taking this class, you will be able to analyze and explain differing rhetorical situations and create speeches that are appropriate to each situation. But you will also ground your study of speechmaking in fundamental questions about the habits and skills of civic participation, so that you are able to speak on issues important in your community. This course carries a Justice Thematic Encounter (J1) designation which means we will discuss the role of public speaking in bringing about historical and contemporary social change, as well as how advocates can use public speaking to advance human dignity and inclusion in society. While the assignments and readings between sections vary, students typically deliver three or more speeches in the class, including a ceremonial speech, an informative speech, and a persuasive speech.
Learn how the media we access through our digital devices, one of the most powerful influences in our everyday lives, shapes what we believe to be the ‘truth,’ and affects our relationships. Due to the sheer amount of time we spend with media, Media and Society is relevant to anyone growing up in the digital age. In this class, you’ll learn how to critically analyze media messages and to understand the larger context behind why and how they are created, and what it means for us as consumers.
COMM 105: INTRO TO HUMAN COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL WORLD, TRUTH ENCOUNTER

Humans crave connection with other humans and so it’s no surprise that we work hard to establish and maintain good relationships with others. Still, some interactions might be a mystery that you haven’t been able to unravel. This course covers a wide variety of communication theories, each of which aims to help you solve those interaction mysteries. Becoming familiar with theories related to interpersonal, gender, group, organizational, and intercultural contexts will sharpen your communication skills and help you better understand your everyday interactions.
COMM 240: DIGITAL VIDEO

Point, shoot, edit, post does not guarantee effective digital video message-making any more than scribbling thoughts or talking “off the cuff” means you’ve created effectively written or spoken messages. This course is designed to introduce students to basic principles of media aesthetics: light, space, time, motion, and sound. In this class, students will learn the language of digital video communication a) to identify aesthetic concepts in existing messages, b) to competently analyze and critique the effectiveness of those messages, and c) to plan, pitch, and create (shoot and edit) their own well-crafted messages. By the end of the semester, students will learn to visualize, conceptualize, pitch, and create not only your own messages, but also learn to create a message to meet a client’s needs.

Note: This course satisfies the “message design” requirement. The course meets over two class periods on MWF to allow time for hands on experience with video production.
COMM 245: INTRO TO MEDIA WRITING

An email to your boss or clients. A blog that explains what's behind supply chain delays. A feature story about someone in your community doing something cool. These are all forms of media writing, a cornerstone skill in fields like journalism, public relations, marketing communications, advertising and business in general. This course is designed to teach you how to construct clear, accurate and creative messages tailored to a specific purpose, context, audience, and media platform. You will learn to write across media—blogs, websites, email, social media, print, broadcast—and get a good introduction to writing in a variety of media-related professions.
Listening is our personal power. We listen to connect with others and to understand. This course teaches students to listen better in friendships and romantic relationships, family relationships, and professional relationships. The course also focuses on the role listening plays in Social Justice transformation. We learn to respond rather than simply react. As we learn to monitor and improve our listening in one-on-one situations, we can better see how to take action and improve our community as leaders in communication. This course also counts toward the GBUS Marketing concentration.
Public Relations Branding is a deep dive into public relations content creation and its intersection with brand. This course will introduce students to the overarching objectives of public relations: building and maintaining relationships, including creating awareness, instilling positive perceptions, generating support for organizational goals and overcoming negative perceptions. In addition, it will educate students about brand, brand adjective and key messages and their roles in guiding public relations messaging and content development. Students will gain experience planning and executing core public relations tactics such as generating earned media through press releases and social media, engaging audiences on social media, creating strategic email and developing content for effective web homepages and landing pages. Instruction and editing will focus on helping students develop the key skill of writing clear, concise, active and compelling messages that are appropriate for the organization/client, audience, objective and specific media platforms. This is a message creation class.
COMM 283: ADVERTISING BRANDING

CD MOD, 2 CREDITS

Advertising Branding focuses on advertising strategy and message development in a digital environment. This course will introduce students to the overarching objectives of advertising: to promote products and services, differentiate them from other, similar products and services and convey consistent, benefit-oriented brand messaging, largely through paid communications. It will teach students the basics of advertising content creation such as the creative strategy and brief and then delve into the inner workings of the creative process and the critical skills of copywriting and multimedia content development for advertising across media platforms. Students also will develop an understanding of the importance of a strong, tightly curated brand that defines and differentiates a company and informs every aspect of advertising strategy and tactics, with a focus on the emotion and authentic truth at the heart of the brand. This is a message creation class.
COMM 336: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS THEORY

SOCIAL WORLD, TRUTH ENCOUNTER

Interested in a career in marketing, public relations, advertising, health campaigns, sports’ promotions, or any other kind of strategic communication? Then this is the class for you! In this course, students will be given the tools to analyze and create effective and ethical strategic communication campaigns. Course material will improve your skills as a message creator and as a message consumer. Completion of this course is required to complete Communication 346: Strategic Communication Campaigns Capstone.
COMM 338: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Learn while gaining experience in social media marketing by launching the Communication Department's Instagram profile! You'll learn branding, audience analysis, creating a brand profile around measurable outcomes, and planning content around brand goals, among other useful insights into launching a brand on social media. You will apply your analytical skills to design a profile and Instagram account that is destined for success.
Keeping up with online communication keeps us from being able to recognize the changes it's creating in us as individuals, in our relationships, and in our understanding of ‘the big questions’ in life. In Communicating in an Online Era, you’ll take that time. Time to analyze and reflect on digital media's effects on us and on the changing nature of communicating our identity personally and professionally, negotiating relationships, and understanding of privacy.
COMM 347: MEDIA EFFECTS CAPSTONE

SOCIAL WORLD, QUANTITATIVE REASONING

As a college student, media have permeated your life in a way that makes them essentially invisible. Yet you are routinely exposed to inaccurate hype about media effects in popular culture content. This course will build on your knowledge of the media effects by examining some of the classic studies in the field of communication, as well as exploring contemporary cultural, social, and psychological effects. The research consulted in this class will help set the record straight, as you learn statistical reasoning and thinking, while also applying those skills to a professional podcast production. This course is beneficial for anyone (because we all use media) and will empower you to be a critical thinker and maker, and active citizen.
COMM 351: GENDER AND COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL WORLD

If you think gender is an interesting area of study, wait until you combine it with topics like culture, diverse identities, intersectionality, socialization, gender as performance, social institutions, conformity vs. gender bending and, of course, communication! This course explores both how our gender identities, communication, and culture have been shaped, as well as our agency in shaping them. Also satisfies requirements for the GEND major/minor.
COMM 353A: INTERCULTURAL HEALTH COMMUNICATION

CAPSTONE OPTIONAL, JUSTICE THEME FOCUS

Why does the U.S. have such poor health outcomes for what is still arguably one of the richest nations in the world? Why do so many co-cultural groups experience health disparities? In this course will explore the health communication about cultural health beliefs and practices within the U.S. and how many co-cultures practice health beliefs that are ignored by the U.S. biomedical system. We will study how communication contributes to, but also may help alleviate, some health disparities and how biomedical providers could become more culturally agile in their care. Some topics include: traditional health beliefs among Latinx, Asian, African, and Native American cultures; and relationship between health disparities and race/ethnicity, socioeconomic class, obesity, and differing abilities. Communication majors taking the course for capstone credit will complete an original research project, which typically focuses on health disparities in our local communities. This course also counts toward the Global Health minor.
COMM 361: FAT STUDIES

CULTURE AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

Is there REALLY an obesity epidemic going on? Do you know the data on which this claim is made? CAN fat people be healthy? In this course we will study how fatness has come to be socially constructed as a means for discrimination and oppression in American culture. This INCLUDES that the so-called “obesity epidemic” is really not an epidemic at all based on data and the definition of an epidemic. We will explore fat stigma within a variety of contexts including employment, education, interpersonal relationships, fatshion, and health, as well as how that stigma intersects with gender, race, class, age, ability, and sexual orientation. We will also study fat activism enacted to counter systemic weight bias. Be part of the change in our world to stop fat discrimination! This course also counts toward the Gender Studies major/minor.
COMM 378A: ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC

HUMAN EXPERIENCE, MOVEMENT FOCUS, BENEDICTINE RAVEN

The course looks at the way people use communication to articulate viewpoints about the natural environment in the public sphere. In this class, you will study an array of environmental messages, including speeches, advocacy campaigns, advertisements, image events, environmental reporting and news, film and media, to see how they convey meaning and shape audience attitudes and behavior about the environment. One area of focus this semester will be climate change communication. In addition to the designations in the Integrations Curriculum, this course counts as an elective for the Environmental Studies major.
COMM 379B: RHETORIC OF ADVERTISING

HUMAN EXPERIENCE, TRUTH FOCUS

This course analyzes the rhetorical features of advertisements and examines how commercial messages generate social meaning. You will learn how to use rhetorical theory to render deep readings of product advertisements as ideological messages, discuss the ethical and social consequences of advertising in society, and examine how ads shape civic attitudes and perceptions of the “good life.” You'll write two papers for the class: One of them will examine the persuasive appeals in a recent Super Bowl commercial. In the second paper, you'll look at how a recent advertising campaign “constitutes” (or creates) an audience and uncover some of the hidden assumptions in the ad’s message (about ideas related to gender, race, sexuality, economic class, and more). Throughout the semester, we'll examine classic advertisements to illustrate theoretical concepts. This course also counts as an elective for the GBUS Marketing concentration.