COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLIC LIFE
Communication 502, Spring 2006
CMU 321, Tues/Thurs 3:30-5:20

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Course Objectives and Description

Communication theory and research can make valuable contributions to public life, and interaction with communities beyond academia can spark new ideas and lines of research. This course helps students understand the potential connections between communication scholarship and the general public, as well as government, markets, civil society, and the media.

The seminar introduces and explores the idea of public scholarship, as well as many specific instances of communication scholars whose work has influenced the larger culture and economic, political, and social institutions. Students will have the opportunity to learn about major instances of public scholarship in communication and related disciplines, and to discuss the issues raised by public scholars and their critics.

Assignments and Evaluation

Grading
Student grades will be based on the following:

- A one-page paper illustrating the significance of an article for public scholarship [April 13] (5%)
- A three-page paper and presentation on your own potential public scholarship [April 27] (20%)
- A 400-500-word op-ed and interview based on an academic article [May 16] (15%)
- A final presentation and paper on your own work or that of another communication researcher in relation to public scholarship. The presentation is Week 10, with the accompanying write-up due June 8 (35%)
- General participation in class discussions and activities, including one-page reaction papers prepared for every class discussion session (25%)

Letter grades will be given for each assignment, and at the end of the quarter, these will be converted to the UW's decimal grade system. The translation is roughly as follows: A = 4.0-3.8 (93-100% of total points possible); A- = 3.5-3.7 (90-92%); B+ = 3.2-3.4 (87-89%); B = 2.8-3.1 (83-86%).

Outside Lectures

While enrolled in COM 502, students are encouraged to attend lectures and other public events on campus and in the greater Seattle area that pertain to communication, as well as other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Though there are no graded assignments pertaining to these events and they may not always enter class discussion, these events will provide students with useful ideas for their papers and highlight ways in which their own scholarship might interface with larger issues and diverse communities.

Readings

All of this course's readings are in a reading packet that is available at Ram's Copy Center at 4144 University Way NE (open M-F, 8 am to 11 pm and weekends 10 am to 7 pm; 632.6630).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: The Concept of Public Scholarship

This introduction to the concept of public scholarship highlights contemporary debates about the meaning, purpose, and value of "public scholars" or "public intellectuals." Key questions to consider include: What does it mean to describe someone as a public scholar or intellectual? What are the implications of taking a stance as a public scholar, and what exactly is its opposite? Is public scholarship different from the conventional notion of public service? Is it different from community engagement?

March 28: Introduction to Course and Concepts

March 30: Contemporary Uses of the Term

Required readings

Ad Hoc Committee on Public Scholarship. (2004, March 4). *Draft statement on public scholarship.* Department of Communication, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Public Scholarship Committee Council on Public Engagement. (2003, April). *Interim progress report.* University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

Wolfe, A. (1997). The promise and the flaws of public scholarship. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 43*(18), B4.

Additional readings

Berube, M. (2002, July 7). How the 'public intellectual' went from a buzzword to a relic, in one short decade. *Washington Post*, T3.

Provost's Committee on University Outreach. (1993). *University outreach at Michigan State University: Extending knowledge to serve society.* Available at http://www.msu.edu/unit/outreach/missioncontents.html.

Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems.* Athens, OH: Swallow Press.

Grafton, A. (2001). The public intellectual and the American University: Robert Morss Lovett revisited. *American Scholar, 70*(4), 41-54.

Heller, S. (1993). In effort to reach broader audience, scholars ask, what is the public? *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 39*(31)*,* A13.

Kadushin, C., Hover, J., and Tichy, M. (1971). How and where to find intellectual elite in the United States. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *35*, 1-18.

Lynton, E.A. (1995). *Making the case for professional service.* Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

Norment, J. (1996). The public scholar who never was. In D. W. Brown (ed.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 45-50). Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Panel discussion. (2001, February 12). The future of the public intellectual. *The Nation, 272*(6)*,* 25.

Polsgrove, C. (2001). *Divided minds: Intellectuals and the civil rights movement.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Scott, J. (1994, August 9). Thinking out loud: The public intellectual is reborn. *The New York Times,* B1.

Wolfe, A. (2001, May 25). The calling of the public intellectual. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, B20.

Week 2: The History of Public Scholars and Intellectuals

This week reviews some of broader academic terrain on which public scholarship has been practiced over the past century. Note that a particular emphasis in the historical literature is the notion of the "public intellectual," which is only sometimes an exact synonym for public scholar. Questions this week include, what is the history of public scholarship, as a vocation? What is the basis for the praise and criticism heaped on public intellectuals? Are they useful to have around, or do they just get in the way of progress?

April 4

Required readings

Goldfarb, J. C. (1998). *Civility and subversion: The intellectual in democratic society*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Posner, R. A. (2001). *Public intellectuals: A study of decline*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 2.

April 6

Required readings

Diggins, J. P. (2003). The changing role of the public intellectual in American history. In Melzer, A. M., Weinberger, J., & Zinman, M. R. (eds.), *The public intellectual: Between philosophy and politics*. pp. 91-108. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Joffe, J. (2003). The decline of the public intellectual and the rise of the pundit. In Melzer, A. M., Weinberger, J., & Zinman, M. R. (eds.), *The public intellectual: Between philosophy and politics*. pp. 109-122. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Week 3: Finding Opportunities for Public Scholarship

A program of research can have obvious or more subtle significance for the larger public. This week's activities and readings encourage you to see opportunities for public engagement in the work we do as scholars.

April 11: Library Research

Spend the class period online and at the library finding examples of published, peer-reviewed communication scholarship that has profound public implications. The April 13 readings serve as examples of rhetorical criticism and content-analytic research that have such implications, but you should feel free to find any manner of original theory or research that could lead to a public intervention.

April 13: Two Examples

Bring to class and present to fellow students the article you found on April 11, along with a one-page explanation of its relevance to public scholarship. (Turn in both a copy of the article and the one-pager.) We'll also discuss two examples of critique—from 1939 and 2004—that we will have all read.

Required readings

Burke, K. (1939). The rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'. *The Southern Review, 5,* 1-21.

Coe, K., Domke, D., Graham, E. S., John, S. L., & Pickard, V. W. (2004). No shades of gray: The binary discourse of George W. Bush and an echoing press. *Journal of Communication, 54*, 234-252.

Week 4: Activism and Having an Agenda

April 18: Activism

Does being a public scholar mean being an activist? What forms of activism, if any, are appropriate for an academic, and what are the professional consequences of activism? What are the hazards of activism in relation to one's occupation as teacher and researcher?

Required readings

Kuypers, J. A. (2001). Must we all be political activists? *American Communication Journal, 4:1.* Available online at http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol4/iss1/index.htm.

Randall, M. (2004). Know your place: The activist scholar in today's political culture. Keynote speech for the January meeting of Sociologists for Women in Society, Albuquerque, NM.

Lilla, M. (2001). *The reckless mind: Intellectuals in politics.* New York: New York Review Books. Chapter 5: Michel Foucault.

Additional readings

Crabtree, R. D. (1998). Mutual empowerment in cross-cultural participatory development and service learning: Lessons in communication and social justice from projects in El Salvador and Nicaragua. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *26*, 182-209.

Isaacman, A. (2003). Legacies of engagement: Scholarship informed by political commitment. *African Studies Review, 46,* 1-41.

April 20: The Communication Research Agenda

What should be the research goals of a communication scholar? This set of readings considers the possibility that the discipline of communication should have research commitments that transcend the particular interests of individual scholars and reach outside of the academy. Is there a cost associated with making such a commitment? Can one carry out reliable and valid research while adhering to a larger agenda?

Required readings

Eadie, W. F. (1994). On having an agenda. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *22*, 81-85.

Pearce, W. B. (1998). On putting social justice in the discipline of communication and putting enriched concepts of communication in social justice research and practice. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *26*, 272-278.

Kreps, G. L., Frey, L. R., & O'Hair, D. (1991). Applied communication research: Scholarship that can make a difference. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 19,* 71-87.

Additional readings

Deetz, S. A. (1997). Communication in the age of negotiation. *Journal of Communication, 47,* 118-35.

Wartella, E. (1994). Challenge to the profession. *Communication Education*, *43*, 54-62.

Week 5: Stepping into the Role of Public Scholar

This week, you will learn about the experiences of one scholar who stepped into the world of government and politics. You will also present and solicit ideas for how your own research might become a project in public scholarship.

April 25: Speaking into the Ear of the President

This day, we will vicariously experience the thrill and frustration of being an academic advisor to President Clinton through the reflections of Benjamin Barber. Being asked to advise the President gave Barber the chance to reflect on the power (and powerlessness) of both elected officials and their academic

counselors. What would you say to the President of the United States if s/he asked for your counsel? To what extent were Barber's experiences shaped by the particular situation facing Clinton, or were his experiences probably like those of other academics advising other presidents?

Required readings

Barber, B. R. (2001). *The truth of power: Intellectual affairs in the Clinton White House.* New York: Norton. (Chapter 1: The Road to Camp David, pp. 19-44; Chapter 2: Don't Stop Thinking about Tomorrow, pp. 45-66; Chapter 3: Arguments at Laurel Lodge, pp. 67-103; Chapter 4: The Art of Speechwriting, pp. 104-131; Chapter 5: A Blizzard in D.C., pp. 132-159)

Additional readings

Baehr, P. R. (1986). Think tanks—Who needs them? Advising a government in a democratic society. *Futures, 17,* 389-400.

Mooney, C. (2002, November 18). Good company: It's time for the CIA and scholars to work together again. *The American Prospect*, 34-36.

Whillock, R. K. (1989). Political empiricism: The role of a communication scholar as a consultant for one mayoral election. *The Southern Communication Journal*, *55,* 55-71.

April 27: Discussion of Our Own Work

You will turn in a three-page single spaced paper exploring two or three ideas for how your own research might develop into a project on public scholarship. The first half of class, we'll have a discuss with fellow graduate student Irina Gendelman about her own public scholarship projects. The second half, we'll discuss some of the ideas you developed in your papers.

Week 6: Collecting and Analyzing Data

Does public scholarship have methodological implications? Is there a kind of theorizing or method that better facilitates public engagement? These and other questions will tie the public scholarship debate into related discussions about epistemology, theory construction, and communication research methods.

May 2: Values, Power, and Data

Required reading

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 5, 10-11.

May 4: Whither Objectivity?

Required reading

Bostrom, R. N. (2002). Theories, data, and communication research. *Communication Monographs, 70*, 275-294.

Additional readings

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1966). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

Jones, S. R. G. (1992). Was there a Hawthorne effect? *American Journal of Sociology, 98,* 451-468.

Weeks 7-8: Academic Discourse

It's a cliché to say that academics talk and write in unnecessary abstractions and impenetrable jargon. There may be more subtle conventions in academic language, and some of those may be unexamined habits more than useful means of communicating. When engaging in discussion with the public, it may be necessary to adjust how one speaks and writes. The readings for May 9-11 consider the impersonal, scientistic, oblique, and adversarial qualities of academic discourse, and the exercise on May 16 gives you the chance to translate academic ideas into language the general public can understand.

May 9: Scientism, Distance, and Nastiness in Academic Writing

Required readings

Ramsey, B. (1997). Towards an ethic of academic discourse, or, why do professors talk the way they do? In Kettering Foundation (ed.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 14-25). Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Fleischman, S. (1998). Gender, the personal, and the voice of scholarship: A viewpoint. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 23,* 976-1015.

Tannen, D. (2002). Agonism in academic discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics, 34,* 1651-1669.

May 11: Language in Critical and Cultural Studies

Required readings

Michael, J. (2000). *Anxious intellectuals: Academic professionals, public intellectuals, and enlightenment values.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Chapter 5: The critic.

Shugart, H. A. (2003). An appropriating aesthetic: Reproducing power in the discourse of critical scholarship. *Communication Theory, 13,* 275-303.

May 16: Translation Exercise

Each student will choose a different article to translate into a 400-500 word op-ed and present to the class in an interview format. (Details will be discussed in class.)

May 18: Paper Outlining (Outside Class)

Spend the class period developing your ideas for how to make your own research project (or that of another communication scholar) understandable to a larger public. What are key terms that may be confusing? Can the research methodology be readily explained in a way that is persuasive? Conversely, how might ongoing interaction with a larger public influence the focus and design of your research? Build an outline for your final paper and presentation.

Week 9: The Academic Career

May 23: The State of the Profession and the University

This day's readings take a very critical look at the university and higher education. They raise questions about the potential to practice public scholarship—or even good scholarship—in the modern academic cultural context. Which of the problems have you experienced? Which do you anticipate encountering in the future? What can be done to mitigate these problems?

Required readings

Snyder, R. C. (1998). The public and its colleges: Reflections on the history of American higher education. In D. W. Brown, D. Witte, & B. Frecker (eds.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 6-15). Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Karabell, Z. (1998). *What's college for? The struggle to define American higher education.* New York: Basic Books. Chapter 6: Professors and society.

Cooper, D. D. (1999). Academic professionalism and the betrayal of the land-grant tradition. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *42*, 776-785.

Additional readings

Jensen, R. (1995). The culture wars, 1965-1995: A historian's map. *Journal of Social History, 29,* 17-37.

King, D. (1998). The politics of social research: Institutionalizing public funding regimes in the United States and Britain. *British Journal of Political Science, 28,* 415-444.

May 25: Practicing Public Scholarship in the Modern University

This day's readings continue the discussion by providing a historical context for the field of communication and additional reflections on the condition of the modern university. These final readings are reflections on what it means to live out one's life as a public scholar. What is the life of such a person like? What are the habits, attitudes, and goals of a public scholar? With the readings serving as background, we'll devote the class to conversation with a visiting scholar (and department alum), Susan Poulsen, Chair of Communication Studies at Portland State University.

Required readings

Cooper, D. D. (2002). Bus rides and forks in the road: The making of a public scholar. In Kettering Foundation (ed.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 24-36). Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Royce, E. (1999). The practice of the public intellectual. In D. W. Brown, D. Witte, & B. Frecker (eds.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 24-33). Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Goldfarb, J. C. (1998). *Civility and subversion: The intellectual in democratic society*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7: The university.

Additional readings on the university and higher education

Battistoni, Richard M. *Civic engagement across the curriculum: A resource book for service-learning faculty in all disciplines*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact. 2002.

Boyte, Harry C. (2002). *Information-age populism: Higher education as a civic learning organization.* Washington, DC: Council on Public Policy Education.

Bringle, Robert G. et. al., eds. *Colleges and universities as citizens*. Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 1999.

Maurrasse, David J. (2001). *Beyond the campus: How colleges and universities form partnerships with their communities*. New York: Routledge.

Simon, L. A., Kenny, M., Brabeck, K., & Lerner, R.M., eds. (2002). *Learning to serve: Promoting civil society Through service-learning*. Norwell. MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Washington, P. A. (2000). From college classroom to community action. *Feminist Teacher, 13,* 12-34.

Additional readings on the field of communication

Dennis, E. E., & Wartella, E. (1996). *American communication research: The remembered history.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Glander, T. (2000). *Origins of mass communications research during the American Cold War: Educational effects and contemporary implications*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hart, R. P. (1993). Why communication? Why education? Toward a politics of teaching. *Communication Education*, *42*, 97-105.

Rogers, E. M. (1994). *A history of communication study: A biographical approach.* New York: The Free Press.

Rogers, E. M. (1999). Anatomy of the two subdisciplines of communication study. *Human Communication Research, 4*, 618-631.

Schramm, W. (1997). *The beginnings of communication study in America*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 8.

Schiller, D. (1996). *Theorizing communication: A history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 10: Final Presentations

The final class week is devoted to presenting students' ideas for how their own research (or that of another communication scholar) could be (or has already been) developed into a project in public scholarship. The papers and other materials that grow out of these presentations may be added (if you so choose) to the dept's public scholarship website [www.com.washington.edu/Program/Grad/public.html], which serves as a resource to others who seek to learn more about the subject.

May 30: Presentations (Group A)

June 1: Presentations (Group B)