

Program Report
Communication
March 14, 2011

GOAL I: Read, understand, and analyze texts

Analyze and communicate understanding of foundational concepts and communication theories

Quizzes and exams served as the tools used to assess how well students in Com 265 (Intro to Mass Com) are learning about foundational concepts and theories. For example, in Com 265 one of the exam questions is “This theory argues that people are so addicted to mass produced media that they have lost not only the will to challenge social inequities but also their taste for more sophisticated media products.” (Exam can be found in Appendix B.) Students are asked to write the answer to this question (identify the theory) in the blank space provided.

Another exam question, a multiple choice question, asks students to identify the five historical stages through which all media pass:

According to the textbook, the mass media have passed through which of the following five historical stages:

- a. oral, written, print, electronic, digital
- b. ancient, medieval, renaissance, modern, postmodern
- c. speech, manuscript, book, image, information
- d. face-to-face, local, regional, national, global
- e. voice, pen, press, telegraph, computer

Among the True/False questions asked in exams is the following:

The skyscraper model of culture argues that all forms of cultural expression are equally valuable.

GOAL IV: Locate, evaluate, and synthesize information in the construction of knowledge

Demonstrate knowledge of multidisciplinary approaches to social inquiry of institutions, organizations and human behavior relevant to communication activities.

The textbook used in Com 265 (Campbell, R., Martin, C. R., and Fabos, B. 2010, Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins) and some of my lectures focus on the role of media institutions in the production and distribution of media messages. One section of the textbook is titled The Business of Mass Media.

Taking a cultural approach to the study of mass media, the authors of the textbook use theories from the fields of sociology, psychology, economics and cultural studies to study and explain the role of media in society.

Among the questions in quizzes and exams that speak to a multidisciplinary approach to social inquiry are:

In economic terms the recording industry is best described as

- a. a monopoly
- b. a big, friendly family business
- c. an oligopoly
- d. alternative music haven

Which of the following is not an element of vertical integration in the movie industry?

- a. production
- b. syndication
- c. distribution
- d. exhibition

Postmodern values include which of the following:

- a. a belief in a rational order
- b. working efficiently
- c. diversifying and recycling culture
- d. rejecting tradition

Essay questions:

- A. What do we mean by the term “media convergence” and why is it important?
- B. Why is the study of “culture” important in a class on mass communication?

GOAL VI: Apply diverse modes of inquiry to the study of human societies and the natural world

Identify and discuss the interplay of institutional dynamics (social /political and economic) and their consequences for communication, media institutions and organizations and societal outcomes.

In Com 265 students learn about different approaches to the study of the mass media, from social science models to cultural studies. There are also chapters of the book that include the topic of politics and the media (“Political broadcasts and Equal Opportunity”, p. 518) and the mass media as well as media economics (Chapter 11, 12, 13). Students are introduced to media studies and also to the sociological, economic, and psychological theories that influence how scholars think about media.

3. Data: Briefly note the data collected. The section’s appendices include the information that the program has collected.

The goal is to measure student learning. To do this I reviewed the goals of the program (see above) and designed quiz and exam questions and assignments that would provide an indication of whether or not students were learning the information taught in the classroom and, most important, how this learning reflected the CAS goals and objectives. Data were (and are) being collected from exams and quizzes, and writing assignments. Unfortunately, the number of students enrolled in Com 265 last fall was low: five students signed up for the course. Out of the five students one received an F and the rest received As. Again, this is a very small sample from which no statistically significant results could be extracted.

A cursory look at the grades for that semester reveals that students may be having trouble taking pencil-and-paper exams. Writing skills might also be interfering with a student's potential to express ideas and concepts learned in class. Methods for examining between what a student learns and what a student can express in writing need to be explored.

4. Analysis: discuss what the data suggest and indicate specific steps taken in response to that data (e.g., addition of subject material, further resources, shift in goals, etc.)

The limited data collected to date suggest that a majority of Communication students are learning material that is in line with the CAS goals and objectives, however there is room for improvement. In response to the data collected to date I need to continue examining quiz and test results to find evidence of student learning. Moodle, especially the testing tool, should be helpful in this effort. Keeping track of several years of grading can produce a rich data set. Using Moodle will provide longitudinal and quantitative data that can be examined periodically. Based on the findings culled from such a data set changes to Com 265 can be made. Changes will be based on information gathered over a period of time and not on snapshots taken at a specific date. Moodle allows the department to track quiz and exam grades, written essays and reports, as well as writing entered in on-line academic journals.

5. Conclusion: summarize the program's status (in this case, as of Spring 2011) and indicate anticipated next steps in light of data and analysis. It is imperative that the conclusion reflect the (assessment, analysis, and responses already undertaken in response to the data. Conclusions need to be: "here are the questions we asked; here are the responses we've made in light of those answers."

At this time it is recommended that Com 265 adapt more of the tools offered by Moodle. Such tools will allow me to track student learning. As more information is collected I will adjust my teaching so that student learning can be maximized.

I should continue to collect data on student learning and refine the methods for doing so. Better measuring instruments will lead to more valid and reliable data. With such data I will be in a better position to evaluate and make proposals for changes in how Communication classes are taught.

With respect to Com 110, Matthew Bates provided the following information.

2) **Instruments:** I use weekly quizzes, written assignments, a mid-semester exam and group projects to evaluate success in meeting the course and departmental goals. The only course I teach is COM 110 (Communication for Academic Success) and, since this is only my second semester teaching the course, I have fairly limited experience in what works and what does not.

I noticed last semester that quite a number of students were not taking notes in class – a communication method that is essential for academic success. So this spring I instituted weekly quizzes – one per chapter – and allowed students to use their handwritten notes from the lectures and readings when taking the quizzes.

I also changed the nature of the written assignments this spring to require students to apply the terms and concepts of the course to communication scenarios (real-life and fictitious) and to point to examples from the scenarios to demonstrate that they understood what these terms and concepts meant and how they worked. Last fall, the written assignments mainly involved producing chapter summaries, which I felt did not adequately test their grasp of the course material. Rather than require many chapter summaries, I opted to assign fewer but more demanding analytical essays.

At this point in the spring semester, I have only given the quizzes and written assignments. Since I am not in a position to compare results from the mid-semester exams or group projects, I will not address those here. I will also omit four written assignments from this analysis—a movie review and three “electronic journals. We have not yet done the spring semester movie review, and have done only one of the three journals.

3) **Results:** In the fall of 2010, I administered a total 168 quizzes. Sixty-three of the quizzes (37.5%) received failing scores, defined as 59% or below. “Zero” scores accounted for 20.6% of the failed quiz grades. In every case I can recall, a student received a zero because she failed to attend class the day of the quiz. Put another way, 79.4% of the failing quiz scores last fall represented an inadequate grasp the course material.

So far this semester, I have administered a total of 340 quizzes. A total 122 of the quizzes (35.8%) received a failing grade. Of that number, 45 (or 36.9% of all “F” grades) were zeros. Again, in every instance the zeros have resulted from a student being absent the day of the quiz. Put another way, 63.1% of all failed quiz grades this spring represented an inadequate grasp of the course material.

For both semesters, the zero scores were concentrated among a small number of students. The content of the quizzes was quite similar both semesters. The difference was in the number and frequency of quizzes and in the students’ ability to use notes.

Last fall, I collected 420 written assignments. Forty-two of the assignments (one percent) received a grade of “F.” All but one of the failing grades (97.6%) were zeros, representing work not handed in.

So far this spring, I have collected 255 written assignments. Fifty of the assignments (19.6% of the total) received an “F.” Thirty-eight of the failing grades (76%) were zeros, again representing work not handed in.

It is difficult to compare the written assignments last fall and this spring. Unlike the essays assigned this spring, the written assignments in the fall (the chapter summaries) did not require students to engage in analytical thinking or to apply the terms and concepts from the course.

4) **Assessment:** The failure rate on quizzes was virtually unchanged from fall to spring: 37.5% and 35.8%, respectively. However, the cause of the failures is markedly different. Inadequate grasp of the course material accounted for 79.4% of the failures in the fall compared to 63.1% of the failures in the spring. I feel that by allowing students to use their notes and by scheduling more frequent quizzes, I am helping students develop better study habits and getting a better picture of how well my students are absorbing the course material.

There is huge difference in failure rates on the written work (one percent last fall compared to 19.6% this semester) and in the proportion of zero grades (98% of all failures in the fall versus 76% of all failures in the spring). Failures last fall simply told me that students did not hand in their work. Although many of the failures this spring still represent work not handed in, I feel I am getting a much clearer idea through the written assignments of what my students are actually learning.

5) Changes/Modifications: Next year, I will continue the practice of scheduling weekly quizzes and permitting students to use handwritten notes when taking the quizzes. I will also continue assigning written work that requires students to analyze communications by applying course terms and concepts to real-life situations. It is simply too early to say what changes, if any, I will make regarding the electronic journals, mid-semester exams or group projects.

Appendix A

Aligning CAS Goals with Communication Program Goals with Student Learning Outcomes (Program Objectives) and with Courses

GOAL I: Read, understand, and analyze texts *	
Analyze and communicate understanding of foundational concepts and communication theories.	Com 110; Com 201; Com 224; Com 225; Com 250; Com 265; Com 290; Com 315; Com 335; Com 383; Com 388; Com 392
GOAL II: Communicate effectively in speech and in writing	
Develop critical thinking and communication skills (oral/ written) to support analysis of complex communication and behavioral models at both the macro and micro level.	Com 110; Com 290; Com 250; Com 201; Com 224; Com 225; Com 265; Com 305; Com 312; Com 380; Com 383; Com 385; Com 395; Com 400
GOAL III: Understand and use quantitative reasoning to solve problems	
Integrate analytical and empirical skills necessary to formally represent communication concepts and theories.	Com 265; Com 290; Com 380; Com 305
GOAL IV: Locate, evaluate, and synthesize information in the construction of knowledge	
Demonstrate knowledge of multidisciplinary approaches to social inquiry of institutions, organizations and human behavior relevant to communication activities.	Com 265; Com 312; Com 305; Com 380
GOAL V: Explore and connect fields of knowledge in the liberal arts	
Describe, discuss and analyze the implications of four core thematic issues for communication (and mass media) organizations including globalization, whole systems thinking, socially responsible behavior, and diversity.	Com 110; Com 201; Com 224; Com 225; Com 250; Com 265; Com 305; Com 306; Com 312; Com 315; Com 335; Com 360; Com 365; Com 370; Com 380; Com 388; Com 395
GOAL VI: Apply diverse modes of inquiry to the study of human societies and the natural world	
Identify and discuss the interplay of	

institutional dynamics (social /political and economic) and their consequences for communication, media institutions and organizations and societal outcomes.	
Demonstrate knowledge of multidisciplinary approaches to social inquiry of institutions, organizations and human behavior relevant to communication.	
GOAL VII: Develop facility for moral reasoning and examine the moral and religious dimensions of human experience;	
Demonstrate knowledge of multi-cultural contexts and competing ethical frameworks to analyze and evaluate management behavior in different communication settings.	Com 265; Com 380; Com 110; Com 335; Com 385; Com 420; Com 450; Com 488
Define the role of communication organizations and the responsibility/ accountability to support values of social justice.	
GOAL VIII: Develop capacities for responsible citizenship and leadership in diverse communities	
Discuss and evaluate responsible communication as the central proposition in the field of communication studies.	
Demonstrate knowledge of multi-cultural contexts and competing ethical frameworks to analyze and evaluate communication in the global context.	Com 290; com 395; com 383; com 370; com 201; com 110; com 305; com 365; com 385; com 388; com 415; com 482
Define the role of communication organizations and the responsibility/ accountability in support of values of social justice.	Com 224; Com 250; Com 265; Com 305; Com 312; Com 335; Com 360; Com 380; Com 383; Com 395; Com 388; Com 420; Com 450; Com 482; Com 488
Describe and discuss historical development of leadership models/ theories.	
Enable students to develop self-reflection capabilities to assess their own preparedness for active leadership roles.	

Appendix B
Com 265 Intro to Mass Communication
Exam #2

Name: _____

Multiple Choice (2 pts. each): Select the *best* answer. There is only one answer per question.

1. Social critic _____ believes that the mountains of data in modern life add to our problems instead of engendering thoughtful discussion among citizens.
 - a. Jon Katz
 - b. Neil Postman
 - c. Herbert Gans
 - d. Richard Jewell

2. Favoring the small over the large and the rural over the urban is also known as _____.
 - a. small-town pastoralism
 - b. individualism
 - c. ethnocentrism
 - d. responsible capitalism

3. The ethical principle "the greatest good for the greatest number" was derived from the work of _____.
 - a. Bentham and Mill
 - b. Kant
 - c. Locke
 - d. Chiquita

4. Which of the following is NOT a function of public journalism?
 - a. Going beyond "telling the news" to try to help public life go well
 - b. Going beyond only describing what is "going wrong" to imagining what "going right" would be like
 - c. Going from being a fair-minded participant in public life to detachment and neutrality
 - d. Going from seeing people as consumers to seeing them as participants in a democratic public

5. Early silent films appealed especially to _____.
 - a. children
 - b. immigrants and the lower classes
 - c. the wealthy
 - d. none of the above

6. What are the three basic divisions of the film industry?
 - a. Production, promotion, distribution
 - b. Production, distribution, exhibition
 - c. Production, sales, exhibition
 - d. Promotion, sales, distribution
7. In 1948, studios lost the right to _____.
 - a. control distribution
 - b. produce anti-American films
 - c. own theaters
 - d. sign actors to contracts
8. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) did which of the following?
 - a. Made what is known as the "Paramount decision"
 - b. Banned films with African American actors
 - c. Jailed the Hollywood Ten
 - d. None of the above
9. Microsoft was accused of being a(n) _____ for controlling more than 80 percent of computer operating systems worldwide.
 - a. monopoly
 - b. oligopoly
 - c. limited competition
 - d. unlimited competition
10. Who said in 1937, "He who attacks the fundamentals of the American system" of commercial broadcasting "attacks democracy itself"?
 - a. William Paley
 - b. Ben Bagdikian
 - c. Walt Disney
 - d. Walter Cronkite
11. The US has been accused of cultural imperialism because
 - a. U.S. corporations own most of the world's mass media
 - b. the Pentagon dictates foreign policy in most foreign countries
 - c. U.S. styles in fashion, food, and entertainment dominate the global market.
 - d. all of the above
12. Disney's practice of _____ allows it to promote its feature-length movies across many media platforms
 - a. oligopoly
 - b. cultural imperialism
 - c. synergy
 - d. consumer control

13. About _____ of the world's population cannot afford most of the products advertised on American, Japanese, and European television.
- one-half
 - two-thirds
 - one-third
 - 100 percent
14. The contemporary, flexible economy relies on _____.
- rapid product development and efficient market research
 - cheap labor
 - quick, high-volume sales
 - all of the above
15. Which of the following is associated with increasing production in order to reduce the cost per unit?
- economies of scale
 - economic regulation
 - flexible markets
 - conglomeration
16. Which of the following is said to have started the "Penny Press"
- Benjamin Franklin
 - John Pete Zenger
 - Elizabeth Timothy
 - Benjamin Day
17. The commercial sound recording and motion picture industries are both examples of
- monopolies
 - oligopolies
 - O & Os
 - limited competition
18. What are two primary ways in which the media collect revenues?
- economic and monopolistic
 - marketing strategies and regulatory practices
 - advertising and marketing
 - direct payment and indirect payment
19. *Areopagitica*, by John Milton, argued for:
- freedom of the press
 - the right to advertise
 - free books

- d. all of the above
- 20. Which of the following is an example of media products that are paid for directly?
 - a. books
 - b. CDs
 - c. movies
 - d. all of the above
- 21. The contemporary, flexible economy relies on
 - a. rapid product development and efficient market research
 - b. cheap labor
 - c. quick, high-volume sales
 - d. all of the above
- 22. Designed to protect reporters from government interference
 - a. Qualified privilege
 - b. Shield laws
 - c. Right to privacy
 - d. Absolute privilege
- 23. Which theory of the press is most often associated with today's mainstream U.S. news media?
 - a. Authoritarian
 - b. Communist
 - c. Libertarian
 - d. Social responsibility
- 24. This is a written or broadcast expression that defames someone's character
 - a. Copyright
 - b. Fair Use
 - c. Libel
 - d. Absolute Privilege
- 25. In an important censorship case in the early 1970s, the Nixon administration tried to restrain publication of
 - a. the Pentagon Papers
 - b. The H-Bomb Secret
 - c. the Progressive magazine
 - d. none of the above

True/False (1 pt. each). Circle either T or F.

1. T F	A copyright legally protects the rights of authors and producers to their published works.
2. T F	Spurred by Jack Johnson's victory, in 1912 the government outlawed the transportation of pornographic movies across state lines.
3. T F	Newspapers are not required by law to give individuals an opportunity to reply to an editorial.
4. T F	Print and broadcast media are not treated equally under the First Amendment.
5. T F	The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that 2 Live Crew's parody of the song "Pretty Woman" is not protected by the First Amendment because it violated the original work's copyright.
6. T F	Students who quote and cite a copyrighted source in a term paper for class are technically violating the law.
7. T F	A monopoly exists when a small number of firms control an industry, either nationally or locally.
8. T F	The global economy has reduced prices to the point where most low-paid workers in third world factories can afford the stereos and TV sets they help manufacture.
9. T F	.
10. T F	Gutenberg invented movable type in the fifteenth century.

Matching (1 pt. each). Match the term or name on the left with its description on the right.

1. Acta Diurna _____	A. Did her in-class presentation on women anchors.
2. Fairness Doctrine _____	B. The Supreme Court finally granted film the same speech protection as print and other forms of media after the New York Licensing Board banned this film
3. Il Miracolo _____	C. First newspaper produced in North America.
4. Stephanie Collado _____	D. The symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their values.
5. Danielle Cooley _____	E. Earliest known news sheets.
6. Kiersten Gregory _____	F. Did her class presentation on the evolution of Rhythm and Blues.
7. Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick _____	G. Did her presentation on the hidden dangers related to children and the

	Internet.
8. Culture_____	H. Provided for the airing of opposing views.
9 Synergy _____	I. Did her presentation on the rise of Motown.
10. Ilan Najee_____	J. Promotional tie-ins within a corporation's own companies.

Short Answer (2 pts. each). Write a brief answer, one or two sentences, for the following questions.

1. What is the difference between "slander" and "libel"?
2. What is meant by the term "Prior Restraint"?
3. Name one woman pioneer in the newspaper business during colonial America.
4. What were the Film Review Boards?
5. What was *Freedom's Journal*?