

Teaching in Higher Education: Communication

MMC 8985, Fridays, 12:30-3 p.m., Annenberg Hall 1H (Mind Lab)

Instructor

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Course Description

This course provides a foundation for obtaining the professional skills necessary to teach communication/media studies at the university level. The course investigates the philosophy and practice of higher educational communication pedagogy through an examination of relevant literature and through practicing techniques. We will explore basic approaches to teaching and strategies for effective instruction of communication. Students will be asked to apply these approaches and strategies as they develop an identity as teachers. Although the course is designed with communication education in mind, most of the principles examined have broad applicability to other fields.

Course Goals

In this course, students will:

- Identify pedagogical methods/approaches appropriate to teaching in higher education
- Use a variety of research-based teaching methods to address all learners effectively
- Apply the principles of integrated course design to develop objectives, syllabi, and assessments related to communication knowledge and practices
- Explore means to create an open classroom climate that seeks to treat all students fairly and provide equal prospects for student growth
- Develop a reflective and purposeful approach to teaching

Course Texts

Lovett, M., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Ambrose, S. A., & Norman, M. K. (2023). How learning works: 8 research-based principles for smart teaching. [Library link](#)

Fernback, J. (2014). Teaching Communication and Media Studies: Pedagogy and Practice (1st ed.). Routledge. [Library link](#)

Both required texts are available for free online through the university library. Additional readings will be provided on [Canvas](#).

Course Requirements

Teaching philosophy statement

This assignment requires that you articulate your philosophy of teaching. You'll consider what you believe is involved in the learning process, the nature of teaching communication, your teaching goals, etc. You'll be evaluated on clear articulation of pedagogical principles addressed in class. You'll submit a first draft early in the semester and will be graded on a final draft later in the semester.

Syllabus

Students will originate or choose an undergraduate course and devise a sample syllabus for that course. For purposes of this assignment, you should assume a 15-week semester and an enrollment of 20-30. Your grade will be based on clarity, comprehensiveness, applicability, and "goodness of fit" between content and objectives.

Assessment and rubric aligned with learning goals

Students will create an assignment aligned with learning goals as you would in an integrated course design. Then devise a rubric or system to evaluate that assignment. What criteria will be used, and how are they weighted?

Lesson plan

Students will create a lesson plan that reflects at least two of the teaching methods learned in the course. The lesson should be designed to help students meet specific learning goals. Students will reflect in a short paper on the approaches chosen for the lesson plan.

Microteaching

Students will prepare and deliver a 10-minute lesson to the class, and receive formative feedback. The presentation will be recorded and students will provide a self-critique of the performance. You'll be evaluated on comprehensiveness of your critique and your application of the course material.

Professor interview

Select someone who has experience teaching communication (this can be a member of our faculty) and interview this person with respect to the issues we confront in this course. Discuss the insights you gain from this interview.

Case study assignment

In this exercise you will respond to two hypothetical classroom situations using the insights we've gained through the semester and citing class readings. The purpose of this assignment is to help you connect what you're learning to classroom situations in an evaluative context.

Class Participation

This class is a seminar, meaning that a substantial portion of the instruction takes place as class discussion based on assigned readings and activities. Thus, this course requires vigorous participation and is only as good as the students make it. I commit to setting an engaging, respectful tone in the class and I expect students to extend the same courtesy.

Participation in this course requires that students:

- Are on time, prepared and fully present in class
- Complete the readings and reflect on them
- Contribute constructively to class discussions and activities
- Ask questions and provide feedback to classmates and the instructor

Grading

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Requirement	Points possible
Teaching philosophy	100
Assessment	50
Syllabus	100
Lesson plan	100
Microteaching	50
Professor interview	50
Case study	50
Class participation	50
Total points possible	550

Special accommodations

Any student who has a need for accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability or medical condition should contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) in 100 Ritter Annex (drs@temple.edu; 215-204-1280) to request accommodations and learn more about the resources available to you. If you have a DRS accommodation letter to share with me, or you would like to discuss your accommodations, please contact me as soon as practical. I will work with you and with DRS to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities. All discussions related to your accommodations will be confidential.

Course Schedule

(See Canvas for details)

Week 1, Sept. 1 – Introductions, syllabus and more. Why do we teach?

Unit 1: How students learn and develop

Week 2, Sept. 8 – Student identities and development

Week 3, Sept. 15 – Prior knowledge

Week 4, Sept. 22 – Motivation and mastery

Week 5, Sept 29 – Learning styles and course climate
Teaching philosophy draft due

Unit 2: Integrated course design

Week 6, Oct. 6 – Goals and syllabus construction

Week 7, Oct. 13 – Wellness day, no class

Week 8, Oct. 20 – Assignments and exams
Syllabus due

Week 9, Oct. 27 – Assessment and feedback

Unit 3: Effective classroom practices

Week 10, Nov. 3 – Discussions and collaborative learning
Assessment due

Week 11, Nov. 10 – Large classes and challenging situations
Lesson plan due

Unit 4: Being a teacher

Week 12, Nov. 17 – Microteaching

Week 13, Nov. 24 – Fall break, no class

Week 14, Dec. 1 – Microteaching
Case study due

Week 15, Dec. 8 – Microteaching (if necessary) and reflective practice
Professor interview due
Final teaching philosophy due