Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Social and Behavioral Sciences. Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

At the heart of the human experience, is navigating interdependency, interconnectivity, and proximity with other humans. JOUR 365-International Communication examines these human experiences from a social science perspective. International communication focuses on communication patterns and practices between nations and of individuals acting on behalf of a nation. International communication is the study of the flow of mediated communication between and among countries and of comparative mass communication systems among national governments. JOUR 365 pursues an historical and theoretical approach to International Communication, including international information flows, global media systems, and the role of culture and communication in globalization. The course uses in-depth consideration and critical analysis of case studies of international communication issues to better understand the way in which global media and international communication shape global politics.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

A critical key to the study of international communication is the ability to examine systematically the similarities and differences among people communicating as individuals vs. communicating on behalf of a nation. As social science deals with the institutions and functioning of human society, and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society (dictionary,) this duality coupled with the ubiquity of media, both traditional and new, provides a context rich for critical thinking from a social science perspective. Therefore, students must analyze and evaluate instances and systems of international communication to identify issues of reliance, linkages, and immediacy. Through evaluation and synthesis, these issues must be coupled, aggregated, decoupled or de-aggregated through examination of the integrated influences of each factor on communication in a mediated context. Students must interrogate each of these elements and then synthesize the individual and collective impact of each. Creative thinking and innovation come into play as students work to create a construct that accounts for the multiplicity of influences. Examples of critical inquiry could include "What effect does being U.S.-educated have on an international leader's perception of statements by the U.S.?" or "How is geopolitical discord in Egypt mediated on Twitter?" The mastery of critical thinking in the realm of international communication is assessed by response to standard examination items.
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Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

International communication is studied in written formats, especially international documents, social media feeds (Twitter, Facebook,) newspapers, blogs and the like. International communication is studied in oral formats, especially international newscasts and international speeches. International communication is studied in visual formats, especially in non-verbals of speakers, photojournalism, films, and the like. Using the Broadcast Monitoring System, and other more traditional internet searches, students examine the development of messages, how messages are interpreted variously in multiple international contexts, and the strategic expression of messages as each relates to content and format. Communication in the realm of international communication is assessed by student response to standard examination items.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions):

In International communication, empirical skills are employed to manipulate and analyze observable facts from an international communication perspective. Students analyze and critique international media messages employing the tools and methods of collected data introduced in the course. The method generally involves content analysis. This course engages students with actual texts, images, broadcasts, etc, from global media using, among other sources, the Broadcast Media System, and requires them to sort through the data presented to draw informed conclusions about global journalistic coverage of major world events. An example is content analysis of messages from Arab Spring. The ability to manipulate and analyze observable facts is assessed by student response to standard examination items.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

JOUR 365-International communication develops social responsibility by building international understanding and intercultural competence, to help students better understand the interaction of media and politics, particularly in the international realm, and to better understand how local, national, and global media outlets shape perceptions of events, trends, and communities. Students learn how to better appreciate, describe and react to various perspectives on global issues by learning about global media and its interaction with political, economic, and social factors. Bolstered with this knowledge and skill, communicators will be prepared to engage in, as well as respond to, international communication in communities both similar to and diverse from their own. The ability to exhibit social responsibility in international communication is assessed by student response to standard examination items.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.