COMMUNICATION 4000 (section 002)
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR: COMMUNICATION AND POWER
FALL 1986

Professor George Cheney
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Phone:
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Office Hours: T Th, 9:30-11:45, 3:30-4:00
W, 10:00-12:00
(and by appointment)

Required Texts (available at the bookstore):


*Note: Three of these books are short essays.

Supplementary Articles (available in a course packet):
1. Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetorical Situation."
3. James Curran, "Communications, Power and Social Order."
6. Phillip K. Tompkins and George Cheney, "Communication and Unobtrusive Control in Contemporary Organizations."

Course Description

This course is designed to treat issues of power and communication across contexts ranging from interpersonal to societal. Power and related concepts (e.g., authority, control, force, domination, persuasion, compliance, influence) will be considered as "essentially contested" (in terms of meaning) though central to human communication process and its understanding.

Course Philosophy

This course works on the assumption that power has received insufficient attention in communication research (although this is true of other domains of social inquiry as well). In addressing power and communication, this course draws on a range of disciplines, while considering what the literature of the communication field has to offer in particular. We will entertain a variety of theoretical perspectives in an attempt to gain insight into the workings of power in social relations. Hopefully, we will together come to a richer understanding of power as a critical concept in lay and theoretical vocabularies.
Course Format

The course will be conducted in a mixed format, consisting of lectures, class discussions, and student presentations. Students will be expected to participate actively in discussions and required to (1) take a one hour mid-term exam; (2) make a presentation of 10-15 minutes, consisting of a review and critique of a non-required book; and (3) complete a 10-15 page term paper which integrates material around a topic of personal interest.

Grading

Students will be graded based on the book-review presentation (100 points), the mid-term exam (200 points), and the term paper (200 points).

The point system outlined below will be used to determine grades for the course.

450-500 points--------A
400-449 points--------B
350-399 points--------C
300-349 points--------D
299 points---------F

Course Policies

Active student participation (in the form of contribution to discussions and involvement in classroom exercises is instrumental to the success of the course; therefore consistent attendance is strongly encouraged. Students are allowed two unexcused absences; after that, five points will be lost for each day missed. Late assignments are strongly discouraged; 10 points will be lost for each day past the deadline (for all assignments). Students are expected to submit only their own work and to ascribe credit to known sources of words and ideas through an accepted method of footnoting or reference. Plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for an assignment.

Assignments

1. Book - Review Presentation. This presentation will be a review of a book related to the topic of power (something not required as class reading). This review should both summarize and criticize, making explicit connections to communication and relevant course materials. A brief handout will be distributed at the time of the talk.

2. Mid-term Exam. This exam will consist primarily of essay questions and will require students to integrate and apply concepts from the course.

3. Term Paper. This paper should develop a clear and sustained argument, building on some thesis about power and communication. The paper should specify a context or contexts (e.g., interpersonal, group, organizational, political).

Books for Reviews

These will include, but not necessarily be limited to:


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day and Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td>Th, Sept. 4</td>
<td>Orientation; history of concept of power (lecture on Lukes*).</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<td>Two</td>
<td>T, Sept. 9</td>
<td>Overview of relevant research in communication (lecture on Leff and Procario*; Miller, Burgoon, and Burgoon; Seibold, Canterll, and Meyers*, and discussion).</td>
<td>Develop personal definition of power.</td>
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<td>Th, Sept. 11</td>
<td>Definitions and domains of power (lecture on Wrong* and discussion).</td>
<td>Read Cavanaugh; French and Raven; and Kelman (in packet).</td>
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<td>Three</td>
<td>T, Sept. 16</td>
<td>Continued from above (discussion and student presentations).</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<td>Th, Sept. 18</td>
<td>Power and the individual-collective connection (lecture and discussion).</td>
<td>Read Coleman.</td>
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<td>Four</td>
<td>T, Sept. 23</td>
<td>Continued from above (discussion and student presentations).</td>
<td>Read Burke (in packet).</td>
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<td>Th, Sept. 25</td>
<td>Power and modern organizations (lecture and discussion).</td>
<td>Read Tompkins and Cheney (in packet).</td>
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<td>Five</td>
<td>T, Sept. 30</td>
<td>Continued from above (discussion and student presentations).</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<td>Th, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Power and socio-economic systems (lecture and discussion).</td>
<td>Read Galbraith (part).</td>
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Six
T, Oct. 7 Continued from above (discussion and student presentations); review.
Read Galbraith (part).

Th, Oct. 9 Mid-term exam.
Prepare study questions.

Seven
T, Oct. 14 Power and the elite (lecture on Mills* and discussion).
Read Curran (in packet).

Th, Oct. 16 Continued from above (discussion and student presentations).
None.

Eight
T, Oct. 21 Power, authority, and various types of social bonds (lecture and discussion).
Read Sennett (part).

Th, Oct. 23 Continued from above (discussion).
Read Sennett (part).

Nine
T, Oct. 28 Continued from above (student presentations).
None.

Th, Oct. 30 The hidden dimensions of power (lecture and discussion).
Read Lukes.

Ten
T, Nov. 4 Continued from above (lecture on Foucault* and discussion).
Reread Lukes.

Th, Nov. 6 Continued from above (student presentations).
None.

Eleven
T, Nov. 11 Continued from above (film).
None.

Th, Nov. 13 Class Cancelled.
Library day.

Twelve
T, Nov. 18 Power, powerlessness, and empowerment (lecture and discussion).
Read Berger and Neuhaus.

Th, Nov. 20 Continued from above (lecture, discussion, and student presentations).
None.
Thirteen

T, Nov. 25 Continued from above (discussion).

Th, Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Fourteen

T, Dec. 2 Communication and power: a synthesis (lecture on Luhmann* and discussion).

Th, Dec. 4 Continued from above. None.

Fifteen

T, Dec. 9 Oral outlines of student papers.

Th, Dec. 11 Same as above; plus wrap-up; and course evaluations; papers due.

Turn in paper.

Optional Readings

These readings are not required of students, though they will be lectured on extensively by the instructor.

Other Sources


