### CM831 A1 **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

Instructor: Denis Wu, Ph.D.   
Time: 2:30 – 5:15 pm Mondays  
Meeting room: CGS 121

Course Web site: learn.bu.edu

Office Hours: noon – 2 pm Wednesdays, or by appointment  
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## Objectives of the class

As one of the fields that straddle communication and international relations, the seminar of International Communication is intended to introduce key theories, relevant concepts, and real-world practices. This course is an important dimension of higher education for all students aiming to specialize in a host of communication and socio-political areas. As the world has become immensely internationalized and intricately interconnected, a good grasp of the world’s communication systems, their underlying concepts, and potential impacts may prove pivotal to one’s edge in building successful academic and/or professional careers in a variety of fields. Without the needed knowledge and understanding beyond national borders, professionals in communication and public affairs simply cannot fulfill their professional responsibilities, advocate the ideals they embrace, and the interests they represent. To all students, the knowledge of how global communication works indisputably can enhance their appreciation, enrichment, and engagement with different parts of the world.

After taking this class, students will be able to

* Grasp the context, history, and essential ideas behind international communication;
* Develop a good sense of how communication across national borders and at the global level takes place and will project in the future;
* Be familiar with the key issues that have existed and will evolve in international communication and public affairs;
* Obtain a comprehensive knowledge of how practitioners in international communication work and of the problems they face;
* Identify and explain the dynamics of communication ecosystem and vital components in the digitized, transient world;
* Know how to conduct impactful and methodologically rigorous research, apply solid communication concepts, and assess related programs in international affairs.

**Textbook & Readings**

Required:

Thussu, D. K. (2019). *International communication: Continuity and change (3rd ed)*. London: Bloomsbury.

Dimitrova, D. (Ed.). (2021). *Global journalism: Understanding world media systems*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Fullerton, J. A., & Kendrick, A. (Eds) (2017). *Shaping international public opinion: A model for nation branding and public diplomacy*. New York: Peter Lang.

# Recommended:

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (Eds) (2012). *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lie, J. (2014). *K-Pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Punathambekar, A. (2013). *From Bombay to Bollywood*. New York: NYU Press.

Supplemental Readings:

Various articles that are assigned for each date or address timely topics are available on the course Blackboard site.

You are *expected* to follow *one of the three* following newspapers. They can be accessed freely on the BU library [site](http://bu.edu/library).

* *The New York Times*
* *The Washington Post*
* *The Economist*

In addition to these three Anglo-American newspapers, you are encouraged to select *one other* quality news outlet in the region/culture/language of your choice. It can be an alternative medium you appreciate or an influential news media from a specific country of which you would like to become an expert. The class would also benefit from your weekly update from this particular news source. You are expected to post on the Discussions space of Blackboard regarding the supplemental readings or news outlet you follow, which can be part of your participation evaluation.

**Course Requirements**

*Grades.* Your final grade will be based on the following components:

Participation (including Blackboard posting) 10%  
Abstracts & lead discussant 20%

Country report & presentation 30%  
Final paper & presentation 40%

Every assignment will be evaluated on a 100-point scale. Your final score will be calculated based on the above percentages. And your final letter grade will be given based on the following formula:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 93-100 A  90-92.99 A-  87-89.99 B+  83-86.99 B  80-82.99 B-  77-79.99 C+ | 73-76.99 C  70-72.99 C-  67-69.99 D+  63-66.99 D  60-62.99 D-  0-59.99 F |

**Participation.**

You are required to attend each and every class. Because we only meet once a week, missing any class would result in potential disconnect with the class. Given this, starting at 2nd absence, each single absence without acceptable excuse will lead to 2% class grade reduction.

It is worth noting that perfect class attendance *will not* necessarily result in a perfect score of participation. In addition to attendance, you must actively participate and voice informed opinion in class and/or on Blackboard discussion space to earn your participation credits. You are strongly advised to complete all reading assignments prior to each class, keep abreast of the suggested media outlets, and be ready to participate and share your views whenever opportunity arises.

**Abstract and lead discussant.**

Each student needs to select two sets of readings (each set is represented in a number that appears before the readings for each week) and write a synthesis for each set. Because all the subjects in this course need to be covered, you may not necessarily get the topics that appeal most to you. If you would like to include another relevant or supplement article in your abstract/presentation (in addition to the required pieces), that would be acceptable.

A typical abstract should include the most important information about the required article (and the extra article, if you choose to) and run *less than 2 pages long* (single-spaced). Each abstract must be turned in on the scheduled date and include:

1. Your name, course number, and date
2. Complete citation of the chapter/article and the extra article of your choice your abstract covers
3. A synthesis of the main concepts and key ideas covered in the article(s)
4. *Your own* comment, critique, and thought about the reading
5. A few questions for the class to discuss.

You must post your abstract on the Blackboard designated folder and present your abstract in class, which should last about 7 minutes. In the presentation, you should not only summarize the reading’s most important points, but also initiate and facilitate discussion. It is instrumental to post your abstract on the Blackboard site *ahead of the class time* for your fellow classmates to prepare for discussion. You can decide on the dates and sign up [here](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0945AFAB2CA1F85-cm831).

**Country Report.**

This assignment is designed in the hope of making each and every student in this class an expert of communication-related topics in a specific country.

You need to pick a country (or region) to concentrate for this assignment. You should immerse yourself into the communication issues of this given country/region and write a comprehensive report based on your research findings. The issue or orientation of your country report hinges on the communication attributes of the country, the salient issues the country faces, and the amount/kind of information you can gather. Your background knowledge and language skill, therefore, can/should come handy when you pursue this country-centered project.

It is important to keep in mind that your paper should deal with issues that pertain to *communication*, which is broadly defined and can include such areas as print media, broadcasters, social media, media professionals, media celebrities, movies, television, music, media laws and policies, communication infrastructure and services, freedom of expression, public diplomacy, and so forth. You may want to discuss your choice of country and focused topic with me in advance.

Despite no components required, successful country reports were found to focus coherently on interconnected topics or issues in that country’s communication system/state. The report of the research should be well organized, synthesized, and analyzed. The report/presentation can be solely or jointly pursued (by 2 people).

The written part should not exceed 12 pages (20 pages for 2-person joint project), single-spaced, Times font, size 12, and 1-inch paper margin; and each presentation should be about 7 minutes long (multi-media aid is welcome). The country report (hard copy) is due on 10/30 in class.

**Final Paper.**

The primary task of students in this class is to produce a quality research paper that addresses a key issue of international communication, examines a pivotal communication concept/theory in the real world, or presents findings of a case study that deals with a given aspect of communication in the class’s context. This paper may eventually become your thesis or a convention paper that contributes to scholarship. Therefore, please be serious about this endeavor because it may very well pay off. It is important for you to learn about the available databases in the library and literature search skills. Do not be afraid of paying library visits and don’t limit your reference to digitized sources in the databases. After all, not all literature has been digitized, yet. The references in the textbooks and class readings would be a good starting point. As always, you are more than welcome to discuss your topic choice with me.

You should systematically follow a specific style (the [APA](https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) 7th edition is highly recommended) in the paper. In addition, basic writing requirements – spelling, grammar, word usage, and organization of your paper – will be considered. Your final paper must be typed (Times font, size 12, one-inch margin highly recommended), *single-spaced*, and run *no more than 13 pages* (including everything, references, charts, photos, and tables). Clear sections and helpful subheads are recommended. Do not inflate your paper by including such fillers as lengthy quotes or redundant examples – *succinct but insightful papers are superior to long but disconnected counterparts*.

You are required to submit an outline or brief of your final paper (hard copy) on 11/13 in class. Your outline should include your research topic, detailed description of your inquiry, and a list of highly relevant literature or sources of information that could be used for your final paper. You can also include any questions you have. The more you are able to provide in the outline, the more help you may get from me. Remember to gather relevant information for your final paper *whenever you can*, i.e., not limited to the Internet, artificial intelligence, or digital outlets. Most importantly, you should always verify every piece of information used in the paper for accuracy and validity.

An electronic copy of your final paper is due 12/13 noon via a Turnitin folder on Blackboard. You will also have to formally present your paper (in 10 minutes) on the last day of class. For those who are serious about academic careers, I would encourage you to polish your final paper and submit it to an academic conference and/or [journal](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192512120982498?journalCode=ipsa).

**Course Policies**

These policies are extremely important to you. Please read carefully and remember that these policies will be upheld throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to keep these policies in mind. First and foremost, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Any kind of academic misconduct will result in the filing of academic misconduct charge. Particularly, it is imperative to understand plagiarism in detail:

“Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else’s creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those words, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or sources, other than those created in a work of fiction is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.”

Your written reports *will be examined with Turnitin* on Blackboard, an online software to identify and locate suspicious plagiarized copy. You are encouraged to run Turnitin yourself to ensure your personal writing or co-authored copy for any assignment is not plagiarized. It is very important to note that you are entirely responsible for any turned-in report that bears your name.

If you cannot take an assessment or submit an assignment on the scheduled date, you have the full responsibility to report to me via email *in advance* with legitimate evidence. You will be penalized if you turn in your assignment late: Your grade on that given assignment will be subtracted 20 points for every day late. You should also heed to *where* the assignment is due; assignments turned in to other venues will not be graded. Moreover, you do not have the option to submit extra work or project to gain bonus credit. Bonus credit can only be initiated by the instructor.

Any class you miss will not be offered or summarized afterwards at a one-on-one basis – you are entirely responsible for any class you miss. The instructor will assume that you can fully understand the material covered on the day(s) you miss and that you can grasp the content and skills *on your own*. Therefore, you are strongly advised to follow the schedule in the syllabus and participate in each class session to ensure you comprehend the subject and obtain the full benefit of this class.

For those of you who are working full time, having various part-time jobs, or participating in extra-curricular activities while taking this class at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that this class may be time-consuming and challenging to some students. If your job or other commitments demand a lot of time and energy, you should be aware of the risk. Jobs or activities related excuses are not acceptable.

Foreseeable events (trip or vacation) or incidents (computer/printer crashes) will not be accepted as excuses for delayed work or a change in assessment time. You should take all necessary and sufficient precaution to protect your precious work from being destroyed by any entity, equipment malfunction, and interruption. Also, you are strongly advised to plan your itinerary wisely to avoid any potential conflict with the class schedule.

If you had any question about the grade you receive of any assignment or assessment, you must put your inquiry and explanation *in writing* (i.e., email) so that I can have sufficient time to review the assignment and your answer(s), respond to your question(s), or change your grade if your request proved justified. I will not take individual verbal inquiry about grade during class time, which would likely compromise other students’ interests.

The instructor will take grammar and style of your assignments and assessments into consideration when grading. You are advised to consult stylebook and other resources for guidance. The [Writing Center](https://www.bu.edu/com/for-current-students/the-com-writing-center/) in COM and counterparts in other BU units can be helpful if you are not confident in or happy with your writing. It is always a good idea to seek editorial guidance or to have an erudite person look before turning in writing works.

All communication in the classroom and online will be conducted in English. It is a courtesy to use the commonly shared language throughout the class to prevent the sentiment of being excluded from arising among your class members. Whenever you present content written in another language, please try to translate it for the class.

Lastly, please do not hesitate to talk to me if you encounter any issues during the semester. I will try to find a way to help you.

There are other university-wide policies that you may find useful:

-All BU students are bound by the [Academic Conduct Code](https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/). Please review to ensure you are acting responsibly and ethically in regard to your academics.

-Boston University is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconducts. Confidential support and academic advocacy resources can be found with the Center for Sexual Assault Response & Prevention ([SARP](http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/)).

-BU has strict guidelines on classroom behavior and practices when it comes to treatment of students and guests on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability, genetic information, military service, national origin, or due to marital, parental, or veteran status. Discrimination for any of these reasons is prohibited. Please refer to the [Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy](http://www.bu.edu/policies/ethics-governance/non-handbook-version-equal-opp-affirm-action/).

-At your discretion, please alert me to anything related to preferred pronouns, name or nickname, or any extenuating circumstances or trigger warnings (personal, medical, etc.) that might impact your classroom experience. I want to make sure you have the most positive experience in the classroom as possible.

-If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the [Office of Disability and Access Services](https://www.bu.edu/disability/) (DAS) to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests.

As long as you are still registered in this class, I will assume that *you agree completely and entirely with these class policies and that you will uphold them throughout the semester*. You should keep this syllabus in mind and revisit these policies when needed. These policies will not be reviewed again during the class.

**Schedule**

This schedule is subject to change. Please follow the class and/or my email for updates. You are required to do the assigned reading and prepare your original thoughts and/or comments to the readings prior to each class.

9/11

Introduction of the class – international communication as a field

Explanation of the syllabus

Getting acquainted with each other

Choosing your abstract topics

Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 1

Stevenson, 1992

9/18

Context, history, and key concepts of international communication

Normative, explanatory, and applied theories in the field

Discussion of country/region to be focused: Country report assignment

#1 Thussu, 2019: chap 1

#2 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 4-5

9/25

Context, history, and key concepts of international communication (continued)

Journalism practices, ethics, press freedom

Political parallelism and related media issues around the world

#3 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 6-7

#4 Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 1, 5

#5 Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 7, 8

10/2

News flow factors

The impact of information transmission across national borders: Perception of foreign countries, public opinion, and foreign policy

International news production/distribution and market forces

#6 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 2, 15

#7 Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003; Hess, 1996: chap 4

#8 McPhail, 2014: chaps 12, 13

10/10

Media system, modernization, and national identity and development

#9 Giddens, 1991: chap 1; Lerner, 1958: chap 2

#10 Schramm, 1964: chaps 1, 2

Communication concepts and theories for international communication

- agenda-setting and agenda-building, framing, priming, cultivation, knowledge gap, propaganda/persuasion, dependency theory, world system theory

#11 Thussu, 2019: chap 2

10/16

Global media systems

Non-Western media systems

(tentative schedule: international experts to join the class)

#12 Thussu, 2019: chap 4

#13 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 8, 9

#14 Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 9, 10

10/23

International information control and policy

Communication infrastructure

Cyber issues: information control and flow, disinformation and misinformation, mercantile system, privacy issues

#15 Thussu, 2019: chap 3

#16 Choucri & Clark, 2018: chap 5; Lazer et al, 2018

10/30

Armchair tour around the world of communication

Communication malady, war and peace, and clash of civilizations

#17 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 10, 11

#18 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 12, 13

#19 Huntington, 1993; Said, 2001

§ Country report due (hard copy) and 7-minute presentation due in class

11/6

Strategic public diplomacy, country brand/ images, and international perception of nations: Concepts and case studies

International crises and communication

#20 Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 16, 17

#21 Buhmann, 2016; Wike et al, 2022

#22 Fullerton & Kenrick, 2017: chaps 1, 2, part 1

11/13

Strategic public diplomacy (continued): Issues and remedies

U.S. public diplomacy history; China’s recent practices and effect assessments

Public diplomacy 2.0, post-truth public diplomacy

#23 Fullerton & Kenrick, 2017: parts 2-3

#24 Khakimova, 2011; Olins, 2002

#25 Cull, 2019: chaps 2, 3

#26 Wu, 2023

§ Final paper outline – with a chosen topic, rationale, potential resources, and collection of relevant references – due in class (hard copy).

11/20

New media technologies and international communication

- News content diversity and plurality, “CNN effect,” and foreign policy-making

Social media-based communication (social movement, emotion, and disinformation) in international context

#27 Thussu, 2019: chap 7

#28 Gilboa, 2005; Dimitrova, 2021: chap 3

#29 Bentley et al, 2021; Vargo & Hopp, 2020

11/27

Entertainment content in all forms: Cross-national flow and impact

Hollywood and beyond

- Bollywood (India), Nollywood (Nigeria), Telenovelas (Brazil & Mexico), Korean Wave (South Korea)

Global and diaspora cultures

#30 Thussu, 2019: chap 6

#31 Lie, 2014: chap 1, interlude

#32 Punathambekar, 2013: chaps 1, 4

12/4

Communication of alarming ideas at international level

- Extremism, fascism, populism, fundamentalism, sexism, and racism

#33 Bright, 2018; Fielitz & Marcks, 2019

#34 Destradi & Plagemann, 2019; Flew & Iosifidis, 2019

12/11

Final paper presentation and discussion

Conclusion of the class

§ Final paper 10-minute presentation in class.

§ Final paper is due at the Turnitin folder on Blackboardby 12/13 noon.