

CM831 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Denis Wu, Ph.D.

Time: 2:30 – 5:15 pm Mondays

Meeting room: CGS 113

Course Web site: learn.bu.edu

Office Hours: noon – 2 pm Wednesdays

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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 the key theories, concepts, and 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 beyond national borders, professionals in communication and public affairs simply cannot fulfill their professional responsibilities, advocate the ideas they embrace, and the interests they represent. To all students, a comprehensive knowledge of how global communication works may enhance their appreciation, enrichment, and engagement with different parts of the world.

After taking this class, students will

- 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;
- Obtain a comprehensive knowledge of how practitioners in international communication work and of the problems they face;
- Be able to identify and explain the dynamics of communication ecosystem and vital components in the digitized, transient world;
- Know how to conduct rigorous research, apply solid communication concepts, and assess related programs in international affairs.

Textbook & Readings

Required:

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

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

Recommended:

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

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 address timely topics are available on the course Blackboard site. You are *expected* to be regularly exposed to *one of the three* publications. They can be accessed freely on BU library [site](#).

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

In addition to the Anglo-American news exposure, you are encouraged to select one quality news outlet in the region/culture/language of your choice. It can be an alternative medium you appreciate or from a specific country, of which you would like to become an expert. The class would benefit from your weekly update from this particular news source as well!

Course Requirements

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

In-class discussion & participation	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	73-76.99	C
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90-92.99	A-	70-72.99	C-
87-89.99	B+	67-69.99	D+
83-86.99	B	63-66.99	D
80-82.99	B-	60-62.99	D-
77-79.99	C+	0-59.99	F

Class 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 attendance *will not* necessarily result in a perfect score of class 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 on reading the suggested media outlets, and be ready to participate and share your views with the class whenever opportunity arises.

Abstract and Discussant.

Each student needs to select two sets of chapters or articles (each set is represented in each single line of the readings for the 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 welcomed.

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 needs to be turned in on the scheduled date and should include:

- 1) Your name 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
- 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 web's designated discussion section and present your abstract in class, which should last 10-15 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 course web site *ahead of the class time* for your fellow classmates to prepare for discussion. You can sign up for the dates [here](#).

Country Report.

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

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 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 focus on a limited number of interconnected topics or issues in that country's communication system/state. The end product 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); and the presentation should be about 10 minutes long (you may use multi-media formats to illustrate).

The country report (hard copy) is due on **10/31**.

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. So, please be serious about this endeavor that may pay off. It is important for you to learn about the available databases in the library and literature search skills. Don't be afraid of library visit 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](#) 7th edition is recommended) in the paper. In addition, basic writing requirements – spelling, grammar, word usage, and organization of your paper – will be taken into account. Your final paper must be typed (Times font, size 12, one-inch margin highly recommended), single-spaced, and run *no more than 14 pages* (including everything, reference, 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 **11/14**. 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*.

An electronic copy of your final paper is due on **12/13 noon** via [email](#) submission.

You will also have to formally present your paper on the last day of class **12/12**. 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](#).

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](#) in COM and in other BU units can be helpful if you are not confident or happy with your writing. It is always a good idea to seek editorial guidance before turning in your written work. All communication inside the classroom and online should 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.

Lastly, please do not hesitate to talk to me if you encounter any issues during the semester. I will 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](#). 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 misconduct – including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. Confidential support and academic advocacy resources can be found with the Center for Sexual Assault Response & Prevention (SARP) at <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](#) for more details.

-At your discretion, please alert me to anything related to preferred pronouns, preferred 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 work that gets shown in this class, professional or student-generated, offends you in anyway, please mention it in class or talk to us privately about it so that we can all learn from each other. This is not to say we will ever restrict freedom of speech or water down an aggressive or edgy idea, but we want to discuss anything that someone deems troublesome or offensive.

-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](#) (DAS) at 617-353-3658 to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests. DAS is located at 25 Buick Street, on the third floor.

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. Do the assigned reading and prepare your original thoughts and/or reaction to the readings prior to each class.

9/12

Introduction of the class –international communication as a field
Explanation of the syllabus
Getting acquainted with each other
Choosing abstract topics

[Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 1](#)

[Stevenson, 1992](#)

9/19

Context, history, and key concepts of international communication
Normative, explanatory, and applied theories
Discussion of country/region to be focused: Country report assignment

[Thussu, 2019: chap 1](#)

[Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 4-5](#)

9/26

Journalism practices, ethics, press freedom, and related issues around the world
Key concepts and historical backgrounds of international communication scholarship

[Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 6-7](#)

[Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 1, 5](#)

[Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 7, 8](#)

10/3

News/information flow in the digital age

The impact of information transmission across national borders: Public opinion and foreign policy

International news production/distribution

[Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 2, 15](#)

[Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003; Hess, 1996: chap 4](#)

[McPhail, 2010: chaps 12, 13](#)

10/11

Media, modernization, and national identity and development

[Giddens, 1991: chap 1; Lerner, 1958: chap 2](#)

[Schramm, 1964: chaps 1, 2](#)

Communication concepts for international communication:

agenda-setting, framing, cultivation, knowledge gap, propaganda/persuasion, dependency theory

[Thussu, 2019: chap 2](#)

10/17

Global media systems

Non-Western media (Tentative schedule: International experts to join the class)

[Thussu, 2019: chap 4](#)

[Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 8, 9](#)

[Hallin & Mancini, 2012: chaps 9, 10](#)

10/24

International information control and policy

Communication infrastructure

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

[Thussu, 2019: chap 3](#)

[Choucri & Clark, 2018: chap 5; Lazer et al 2018](#)

10/31

Armchair tour around the world of communication
(Tentative schedule: International experts to join the class)
Communication, war and peace, and clash of civilizations?

Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 10, 11

Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 12, 13

Huntington, 1993; Said, 2001

§ Country report (hard copy) and 10-minute presentation due in class

11/7

Strategic public diplomacy, international crises, country images, and international perception of nations: Concepts and case studies.

Dimitrova, 2021: chaps 16, 17

Manheim, 1994: chaps 2, 3

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

Wike et al, 2022

11/14

Strategic public diplomacy (continued): Issues and remedies.
U.S. public diplomacy history and public diplomacy 2.0
China's practices around the world.

Fullerton & Kenrick, 2017: parts 2-3

Khakimova, 2011. Olins, 2002

Cull, 2019: chaps 2, 3

§ Final paper outline – with a chosen topic, potential sources, and literature collection – due in class (hard copy).

11/21

New media technologies and international communication: News content diversity and plurality, “CNN effect,” and foreign policy
Social media-based communication (social movements, emotion, and post-truth) in international context

Thussu, 2019: chap 7

Gilboa, 2005; Dimitrova, 2021: chap 3

Bentley et al, 2021; Vargo & Hopp, 2020

11/28

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.

Thussu, 2019: chap 6

Lie, 2014: chap 1, interlude

Punathambekar, 2013: chaps 1, 4, 5

12/5

Communication of extremism, fascism, populism, fundamentalism, and racism at international level.

Conclusion of the class.

Bright, 2018; Fielitz & Marcks, 2019

Destradi & Plagemann, 2019; Flew & Iosifidis, 2019

12/12

Final paper presentation and discussion.

§ Final research paper presentation in class. Please prepare it according to the instruction.

§ Final paper due via [email](#) by 12/13 noon.