Syllabus

NON-COMMUNICATION - 50976

Last update 25-09-2015

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: communication & journalism

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: amit pinchevski

 Coordinator Email: amitpi@mscc.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tue 16-17

Teaching Staff:
  Dr. Amit Pinchevski

Course/Module description:
Noise, interruptions, silence, misunderstanding, refusal—all these have traditionally been regarded as conflicting with communication. The course will be concerned with issues and phenomena that can be described under the category of non-communication and offer an alternative perspective on their status and significance. What can be learned about communication from its so-called violation? Is it possible not to communicate? Can there be meaningless communication? Is communication failure necessarily a moral failure? What is the relation between communication and alterity? These and other questions will be oriented to show how cases of non-communication might be enhancing of communication and, consequently, of life in general. Non-communication will be presented as a creative possibility, as a generative, rather than detrimental, condition. In this way, the "other side of communication," that is, the class of phenomena typically viewed as dysfunctional or substandard insofar as the performance of communication is concerned, will be revealed as harboring redemptive potentialities, as invitation to rethink communication in non-linear, dialectical manner. That communication can enhance our life is a truism often heard today. Our goal will be to consider that such enhancing could actually be effected dialectically: not in terms of more or better communication, not by increase or expansion, but rather by embracing partiality and imperfection as necessary—and indeed constitutive—conditions of communication. Communication that fully merits the name is such that acknowledges non-communication as integral to its operation. Class discussions will be based on readings from communication studies, critical theory, literature, media studies, psychology and philosophy while incorporating case studies from autism, through stammering and echoing, to new media. Each class will include a discussion on a research object relating to the meeting's topic, with particular emphasis on the ways its non-communicative aspects might be considered as enhancive.

Course/Module aims:
Developing critical thinking with respect to prevalent principles in the theory and practice of communication. Considering incommunicability as a positive possibility, as enhancing, rather than incapacitating, communication and life in general

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
 1.   Critique prevailing communication models towards success and completion;
2. Reevaluate theoretical principles of communication so as to articulate positive and constitutive possibilities of non-communication as enhancive;
3. Identify and analyze how non-communication can be enhancing of life with reference to case studies and situations.

   80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Class discussions

 Required Reading:
1.   Introduction

   William Harben, "In the Year Ten Thousand" *The Arena* Vol. 6, No. 36 (Nov, 1892): 743-
   49.

2.   The Mathematics of Noise

   Warren Weaver, "The Mathematics of Communication," *Scientific American* Vol. 181 No. 1
   (July 1949): 11-15.
   Norbert Wiener, "Cybernetics," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and*
    Vol. 3, No. 7 (April 1950): 2-4.

3.   The Philosophy of Noise

   Michel Serres, *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy* (The Johns Hopkins U Press, 1980),
   pp. 65-70.

   Michel Serres, *The Parasite* (U of Minnesota P, 2007), pp. 66-73.

   Katheryn N Hayles, "Two Voices, One Channel: Equivocation in Michel Serres," *SubStance*
   Issue 57 (1988): 3-12.

4.   The Politics of Noise

   Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (U of Minnesota P, 1985), pp. 3-20.

   Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noise: Futurist Manifesto* (Something Else Press, 1967/1913), pp. 5-
   15.

5.   After Babel

   Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel" in Difference in Translation, ed. Joseph Graham
   (Cornell U Press, 1985).

   Geoffrey Bennington, "Ex-Communication," *Studies in Social and Political Thought*. No. 5,
   2001, pp. 50-55. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cspt/documents/issue5-3.pdf

6.   Pathology and Therapy

   Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human
   Communication* (Norton & Compary, 1967), Ch 2.

   Deborah Cameron, *Good to Talk? Living and Working in a Communication Culture*
   (Sage, 2000), pp. 149-177.

7. <u>Communicative Disability</u>

   Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener": http://www.bartleby.com/129/

   Amit Pinchevski, "Bartleby's Autism: Wandering Along Incommunicability" *Cultural Critique* 78 (2011): 27-59.

8. <u>Autism and New Media</u>

   Amit Pinchevski and John Durham Peters, "Autism and New Media: Disability between Technology and Society" *New Media and Society* (2015).

   Steve Silberman, "The Geek Syndrome," *Wired Magazine* 9:12 (Dec 2001): http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/9.12/aspergers_pr.html

9. <u>Listening and Silence</u>

   Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 1-18.

   Amit Pinchevski, By Way of Interruption: Levinas and the Ethics of Communication (Duquesne U Press, 2005), Ch. 5.

   Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language: A Philosophy of Listening* (Routledge, 1995), pp. 95-112.

10. <u>Stammering and Whispering</u>

   Marc Shell, "Moses' Tongue," *Common Knowledge* 12: 1 (2006): 150-176.

   Xinghua Li, "Whispering: The Murmur of Power in a Lo-Fi World," *Media, Culture and Society* 33:1 (2011): 19-34.

11. <u>Echoing</u>

   Michel De Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," *Representations* No. 56 (Fall 1996): 29-47.

   Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward A Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (Stanford U Press, 2005), pp. 165-172.

   Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Book 3: "Echo Sees Narcissus": http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Metamorph3.htm#Bkthree474

12. <u>Pre-meaning Communication</u>

   Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford U P, 1999), pp. 1-38.

   Bernhard Siegert, "Cacography or Communication? Cultural Techniques in German Media Studies," *Grey Room* No. 29 (Winter 2008): 26-47.

13. The Ethics of Interruption
14.

    Amit Pinchevski, *By Way of Interruption: Levinas and the Ethics of Communication* (Duquesne UP, 2005), pp. Ch. 1.

    Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* (U of Minnesota P, 1993), pp. 66-82.

15. Conclusion

    Students' presentations

Course/Module evaluation:
  End of year written/oral examination 0 %
  Presentation 0 %
  Participation in Tutorials 10 %
  Project work 60 %
  Assignments 0 %
  Reports 10 %
  Research project 20 %
  Quizzes 0 %
  Other 0 %

Additional information:
Course requirements:
1. Attendance and active participation: a minimum of 80 %, every absence beyond approval (10 % of the grade).

2. Read a report from the bibliographical list. Each report should contain a brief summary (outline, no more than 3 pages) of article / chapter and three questions for discussion, which will be used as the starting point for class discussion. The questions may refer to claims or issues raised in the text, examples or other relevant cases. The report should be uploaded to Moodel system one day before class. (10 % grade)

3. Research object: find and present in class an object (event, text, technology, representation, art work) that is relevant to the week's topic. You are expected to demonstrate how the object relates to the assigned readings (at least one item). You should upload a one-page page explanation of the chosen object one day before the meeting. (20 % of the grade)

4. Seminar paper: should include a discussion of a theory, case or object from the course material. Topics will be presented in the last meeting of the course. You should approve the topic with me at least two weeks before the final meeting. (60 % grade)