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 enhancing;
3. Identify and analyze how non-communication can be enhancing of life with reference to case studies and situations.
Attendance requirements (%): 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

3. The Philosophy of Noise

4. The Politics of Noise

5. After Babel

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


8. **Autism and New Media**


9. **Listening and Silence**


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


10. **Stammering and Whispering**


11. **Echoing**

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


12. **Pre-meaning Communication**


13. The Ethics of Interruption


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 Moodle 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)