

**COMM 498-003: Seminar (Communication & Urban Life)**

Boise State University  
Department of Communication

Instructor: erin d mccllellan

Office: Communication Building, C-104

E-mail: erinmccllellan@boisestate.edu

Office Hrs: **M:** 11:00 am-1:00 pm **W:** 10:30-11:30 am

Course Website: <http://commstudy.com/498-CommUrbanLife.html>

**F:** By appointment

**Course Description:** Students will demonstrate their ability to theorize, discover, analyze, evaluate, report, and defend a research project about human communication. This particular section of Seminar will focus on how communication research can contribute to larger intersections between various aspects of communication and urban life.

**Course Objectives:** (1) Participate in regular and informed discussion of communication phenomena, theories, methodological approaches, and conclusions formed in scholarship of communication and urban life; (2) Successfully propose and develop a research project focused on one particular aspect or phenomenon of communication that utilizes related communication theory, demonstrates a clear methodological approach to research, and is grounded in appropriate communication scholarship; (3) Articulate how your interests in studying communication can advance your personal, professional, and/or political interests beyond the classroom; (4) Appropriately cite sources in both written and oral presentation forms.

**Foundational Studies Program Statement:** Boise State University's Foundational Studies Program provides undergraduate students with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience. *COMM 498: Seminar* satisfies three credits of the Foundational Studies Program's Finishing Foundations (FF) requirement. Along with course-specific objectives, this course supports the following University Learning Outcomes:

- ULO 1: Write effectively in multiple contexts, for a variety of audiences
- ULO 3: Engage in effective critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering and evaluating evidence, and determining the adequacy of argumentative discourse
- ULO 4: Think creatively about complex problems in order to produce, evaluate, and implement innovative possible solutions, often as one member of a team.

*COMM 498: Seminar* provides an opportunity for students to critically explore theory and research related to advanced topics in studies of rhetoric and communication. This course helps to achieve the goals of the Foundational Studies Program by focusing on the following course learning outcomes. After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Participate in class discussions about readings and related material as both a contributor and an active listener
- Complete incremental activities and writing assignments that provide an opportunity to get feedback on explaining course material, articulating perspectives about that material, and writing in a way that differentiates between synthesizing information, critically reflecting on that information, and advancing/supporting your own position about the material.
- Complete an independent research project. This assignment will entail the following parts:
  - *A Reflection-Connection Paper:* This is intended to help you connect your own interests with the general topic area of our seminar and guide the development of your research project proposal
  - *Annotated Bibliography & Research Inquiry Statement:* This is intended to help you articulate what you want to explore in your research project and help you develop your own position in relation to the scholarship already written about your topic area of interest
  - *Literature Review & Contribution Statement:* This is intended to help you understand the difference between an annotated bibliography and a literature review as well as how you intend to "join" the larger conversation related to your research inquiry
  - *Research Project Proposal:* This will be a fully developed research project proposal that explains and supports the position and area of exploration you intend to engage. It is intended to provide specific and focused feedback about your particular project before you turn it in
  - *Peer Review:* This is intended to help you practice the art of providing good feedback as well as provide an opportunity for you to fine-tune your writing before turning in the final Research Project.
  - *Research Project:* This is the final version of your incrementally developed research writing
  - *Research Project Discussion:* This is intended to help you both articulate the focus and purpose of your research project as well as prepare you to engage with others about its significance

*All readings for this class will be either accessible via hyperlinks on the course website that link to the appropriate document via Albertson's library databases \*or\* posted on Blackboard in pdf format under Course Documents in a folder titled "Course Readings."*

**Reading Citations [Either Excerpts posted on Blackboard or available through BSU library databases]:**

- Bennett, Andy & Ian Rogers (2014). Street Music, Technology, and the Urban Soundscape. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 28(4): 454-464.
- Borden, Iain (2004). 'A Performative Critique of the City: The Urban Practice of Skateboarding, 1958-98' *Everything* (2003) [Excerpt] in Malcom Miles and Tim Hall, with Iain Borden (Editors), *The City Cultures Reader, 2nd edition* (pp. 291-297). New York: Routledge.
- Cheney, George, Morgan Wilhelmsson, & Theodore E. Zorn, Jr. (2002). 10 Strategies for Engaged Scholarship. *Management Communication Quarterly: MCQ* 16(1), 92-100.
- Dempsey, Sarah, Mohan Dutta, Lawrence R. Frey, H.L. Goodall, D. Soyini Madison, Jennifer Mercieca, Thomas Nakayama, with Katherine Miller (2011). What is the Role of the Communication Discipline in Social Justice, Community Engagement, and Public Scholarship? A Visit to the *CM Café*. *Communication Monographs* 78(2), 256-271. [Excerpt = pp. 256-265]
- Drzewiecka, Jolanta A. & Thomas K. Nakayama (1998). City Sites: Postmodern Urban Space and the Communication of Identity. *Southern Communication Journal* 64(1): 20-31.
- Ellis, Carolyn (1998). What Counts as Scholarship in Communication? An Autoethnographic Response. *American Communication Journal: ACJ* 1(2).
- Frey, Lawrence R. (2009). What a Difference More Difference-Making Communication Scholarship Might Make: Making a Difference From and Through Communication Research. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 37(2), 205-214.
- Gumpert, Gary and Susan J. Drucker (2008). Communicative Cities. *The International Communication Gazette* 70(3-4): 195-208.
- Hess, Aaron and Art Herbig (2013). Recalling the Ghosts of 9/11: Convergent Memorializing at the Opening of the National 9/11 Memorial. *International Journal of Communication* 7, 2207-2230.
- Jacobs, Jane (1992/1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books. [Excerpt = Chapter 19: Visual Order: Its Limitations and Possibilities, pp. 372-391]
- Lemke, Jeslyn (2016). From the Alleys to City Hall: An Examination of Participatory Communication and Empowerment among Homeless Activists in Oregon. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 40(3): 267-286.
- Mancino, Susan (2015). A Communicative Review of Museums. *Review of Communication* 25(3), 258-273.
- Massey, Doreen (2004). 'Space, Place, and Gender' from *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994) [Excerpt] in Malcom Miles and Tim Hall, with Iain Borden (Editors), *The City Cultures Reader, 2nd edition* (pp. 307-310). New York: Routledge.
- Miles, Malcolm (2006/1997). *Art, Space, and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*. New York: Routledge. [Excerpt = Chapter 2: Space, Representation and Gender, pp. 39-57]
- Miles, Malcolm, Tim Hall, with Iain Borden (2004). Introduction to Part 2 in Malcom Miles and Tim Hall, with Iain Borden (Editors), *The City Cultures Reader, 2nd edition* (pp. 51-57). New York: Routledge.
- Mumford, Lewis (2004). 'What is a City?' *Architectural Record* (1937) [Excerpt] in Malcom Miles and Tim Hall, with Iain Borden (Editors), *The City Cultures Reader, 2nd edition* (pp. 28-32). New York: Routledge.
- Tracy, Sarah J. (2002). Altered Practice-Altered Stories-Altered Lives: Three Considerations for Translating Organizational Communication Scholarship Into Practice. *Management Communication Quarterly: MCQ* 16(1): 85-91.
- Zukin, Sharon (1995). *The Cultures of Cities*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. [Excerpt = Chapter 1: Whose Culture? Whose City?, pp. 1-48]

All assigned readings are to be completed **BEFORE** class each week. Be sure to bring the text and all relevant readings to class on the day they are discussed.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is important and expected as a vital part of understanding material through class discussion and participation in class activities. If you know you will be missing class in advance, a discussion prior to the absence is strongly suggested. For illness, an e-mail no later than the end of class is required to be considered for any make-up work.

At the beginning of some class periods, I will pass around a sheet with your names on it. Be sure to sign next to your name to receive credit for that day. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to sign up with me *after* class. This sheet will be the official attendance document for the course and determine whether or not you receive participation points for that day. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and any additional information presented on that day *before* you come to office hours. Your participation grade is highly correlated with your attendance – if you are not in class, you cannot participate.

**Cell Phones/Wireless Devices:** Due to the large number of cell phones in our daily lives, I unfortunately must now include consequences of failing to respect this class as a “cell-phone free zone.” You are *always* expected to turn your phone OFF when you are in this classroom (this does not mean it is on vibrate, making noise against your notebook in your bag when someone next to you is trying to concentrate). It also means that you may not read or type text messages during class at any time. All cell phone use is *prohibited* during class. If there is a pressing reason for your phone to be on vibrate or to text during class time, please be sure you do so as discreetly as possible *outside the classroom*.

When other students are presenting, this is of utmost importance (just like in the “real world,” there is a time and a place to make sure your phone is off!). If another student is presenting in front of the class and your phone becomes a distraction in any way, you will lose your attendance for the day. If your phone goes off during YOUR presentation, you will lose your attendance for the day and lose points from your presentation grade.

**Assignments:** All assignments are due during the class period listed on the syllabus. **Late work is not accepted**, nor are make-up or extra-credit assignments allowed. Make-up work can be arranged for legitimate absences (e.g., verified health condition, participation in university-sponsored activities, serious family emergencies, and religious observances). If the absence is known ahead of time, you *must* make arrangements before the date the assignment is due. This class will include group work, homework, and participation in activities; you are expected to participate in all of these with your highest level of integrity, preparation, and effort.

**Grades:** In this course, you will be required to complete and turn in all activities and homework related to the course by the deadlines provided on the course website. Your success will also be connected to your participation in all discussions and activities held in-class. This class will be focused on incrementally developing a final Research Project that will require turning in various parts by their scheduled due dates throughout the semester in order to secure focused and specific feedback about your project’s development. You will be provided with a detailed assignment sheet about each part of this process and due dates in Week 5. Please ask at *any* time if you have questions about an assignment or otherwise need clarification. Proactive conversations are *always* encouraged!

**Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:**

In-Class Participation (ex. Impromptu writing; Group activities; Discussion Contribution)	100 pts.
Reflection-Connection Paper	100 pts.
Annotated Bibliography & Research Inquiry Statement	100 pts
Literature Review & Contribution Statement	100 pts.
Research Project Proposal	100 pts
Peer Review	50 pts
Research Project	100 pts
Research Project Discussion	100 pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>750 pts.</b>

The letter grade for the course will be assigned as follows:

A	705-750	B-	600-629	D+	495-524
A-	675-704	C+	570-599	D	480-494
B+	645-674	C	555-569	D-	450-479
B	630-644	C-	525-554	F	0-449

Your work is expected to be of high quality, demonstrating a genuine understanding of the subject matter. The following offers insight into how I grade.

**A is outstanding.** Such work presents sophisticated, complex, and intellectually challenging argument. Resources are adroitly used to explore the thesis. Papers and presentations are structured and delivered in a way that successfully employs standard form. It takes intellectual risks and succeeds in them, exploring topics thoroughly and within the prescribed time or page limit. The A paper or presentation concludes by exploring the assumptions and implications of the thesis and argumentation (rather than merely summarizing previous points), drawing significant and insightful conclusions out of the analysis that has been presented.

**B is commendable.** Often similar to A work, it may offer slightly less complex or intellectually engaging argument. It is fairly successful in its use of analysis. The B paper or presentation does more than fulfill the assignment by going beyond a routine response and shows evidence of thought and planning; it takes risks and succeeds fairly well, showing originality and intellectual enthusiasm. Oftentimes, the B paper or presentation lacks the polish or sophistication of the A paper or presentation or does not have the same success in organization or argumentation.

**C is acceptable.** This work adequately fulfills the assignment in a routine way. Although it engages the topic and offers a thesis argument, it may not offer a fresh or challenging approach. It needs to delve deeper with analytical questions and approach the topic more imaginatively. The delivery and organization are acceptable but not thoughtfully or carefully constructed. The C paper or presentation often tries to prove rather than explore an argument or interpretation. The supporting materials become merely a means for substantiating a thesis instead of serving as a tool for further exploration of the issues raised in the thesis. Often, supporting materials are not convincingly used in support of the thesis. In addition, the conclusion does not move much beyond the initial thesis.

**D is deficient.** The D paper or presentation may be similar to the C paper or presentation but not as completely argued. The thesis is often bland or does not present a clear argument. Supporting materials are often poorly used or left unexplained. There are often serious organizational flaws or problems with the logic of the arguments and conclusions. In spite of these flaws, however, the D paper or presentation does address the topic and attempts to construct an argument with support.

**F is failing.** Although there can be many reasons for not receiving credit, the most common are: (a) summary without an argument or interpretation of the supporting materials, (b) absence of a thesis argument, (c) serious misreading of the text or absence of supporting materials, and (d) plagiarism of outside materials. Plagiarism, as will be discussed later, will minimally result in an F in the course, and also possible expulsion or formal academic reprimand.

I am always happy to discuss the evaluation of your work. If you believe that I have made an error in grading your paper or presentation, please bring your concerns to my attention. **I will not discuss grades during or after class or via e-mail.** To discuss a grade change I expect you to (a) bring your paper or presentation comments to your meeting with me and (b) have reviewed your feedback and prepared a coherent dissent to the comments provided. I will reevaluate the paper or presentation on the condition that I also may find errors that I did not catch in the initial grading process. Your grade, therefore, is subject to gain and/or lose points in this process. Please be aware that any discussion of an assignment that is not contesting a grade is ALWAYS welcome and very much encouraged to allow for future improvement.

**Academic Misconduct:** All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Boise State University Student Code of Conduct, available on the following webpage: <https://www.boisestate.edu/deanofstudents/student-conduct/>

It specifically reads: “The Student Code of Conduct exists to assist in providing the best possible learning and living environment for all students. The University upholds the shared values of academic excellence, caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness as the foundation for a successful academic environment. As a tool, the Student Code of Conduct helps promote growth and learning as students interact with their environment and accept responsibility for decision-making...”

**Academic Misconduct** is prohibited at Boise State University. Academic Misconduct can be intentional or unintentional and includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of information, inappropriate or unauthorized collaboration, and research misconduct...

**Cheating** involves the unauthorized possession, use, or attempt to possess or use information, materials, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise (including but not limited to an assignment or examination), or any unauthorized communication with another person during such an academic exercise, that would result in an unfair advantage over fellow students...

**Plagiarism** is the unacknowledged use or incorporation, without specific or proper acknowledgment or citation, of ideas, data, or language of another person’s work in, or as the basis for, one’s own work that is offered for academic consideration, credit, or public presentation... Lack of knowledge of proper citation is not a valid excuse for plagiarism. It is the responsibility of the student writing the material to know the proper methods for appropriate citation and/or to seek guidance/help when attempting to learn the proper methods for citation or use another’s work so that proper attribution is given to the other person. Plagiarism can be committed in any type of academic exercise by representing as one’s own, without proper attribution, another individual’s words, phrases, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode, or content of expression...”

**Educational Access Statement:** Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Educational Access Center (EAC). All accommodations must be approved through the EAC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the EAC’s website at <https://eac.boisestate.edu/new-eac-students/>.

**Boise State University Firearm Policy:** Idaho law permits concealed carry of firearms on the Boise State University campus by some students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Other than qualified law enforcement officers, only persons who have been issued and are in possession of an Idaho enhanced concealed carry license are permitted to do so. Firearms must remain concealed at all times. If a firearm becomes visible it is a violation of university policy and the person may be removed from campus. Please notify Boise State Campus Security (call 208.426.6911) or the Boise Police Department (call 911) for any reports of firearms on campus. Use of firearms is prohibited on campus.

**Course Schedule:** The following is a *tentative* course schedule for the next 16 weeks. Each day, we cover a new topic through a combination of lecture and discussion. The items in bold text are readings to be completed before the class period that are assigned (see website for specific daily assignments). *The readings are short and pointed, and imperative for effective class discussion and processing. Please make sure that you have all reading completed prior to the start of class.* Please check the class website for the weekly detailed assignments and due dates: <http://commstudy.com/498-CommUrbanLife.html>. **Be sure to visit the website before each week to find out the daily reading assignments as well as check for any announcements, notes from your professor, or changes to the general schedule below.**

<u>Week 1</u>		
<i>What is Seminar?</i>	Jan 15-17	Discuss purpose and expectations of course; Introduce discussion of what counts as communication scholarship <b>Frey (2009); Cheney, Wilhelmsson, Zorn, Jr. (2002); Ellis (1998)</b> COMMUNICATION RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP “MATTERS”
<u>Week 2</u>		
<i>Communication Research/Scholarship</i>	Jan 22-24	<b>Dempsey, Dutta, Frey, Goodall, Madison, Mercieca, Nakayama &amp; Miller (2011) [Excerpt]; Tracy (2002); Mancino (2015)</b> COMMUNICATION RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP “MATTERS”
<u>Week 3</u>		
<i>Communication &amp; Urban Life</i>	Jan 29-31	<b>Jacobs (1992/1961); Mumford (2004); Gumpert &amp; Drucker (2008)</b> HOW DOES COMMUNICATION IN URBAN LIFE MATTER?
<u>Week 4</u>		
<i>Reflecting on Personal Interests &amp; Motivations</i>	Feb 5-7	In-Class and Individual Connection Work; Research Project Survey WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY? HOW COME? <b>REFLECTION-CONNECTION PAPER DUE</b>
<u>Week 5</u>		
<i>Urban Communication &amp; Culture</i>	Feb 12-14	<b>Zukin (1995); M, M, &amp; B: Intro to Part 2 (2004); Hess &amp; Herbig (2013)</b>
<u>Week 6</u>		
<i>Urban Communication &amp; Performance</i>	Feb 19-21	<b>Borden (2004); Bennett &amp; Rogers (2014);</b> FRI. CLASS WORKDAY Share Reflection-Connection Papers; Assignment Q&A
<u>Week 7</u>		
<i>Urban Communication &amp; Research Ideas</i>	Feb 26-28	IN-CLASS RESEARCH DAYS; 1:1 MEETINGS <b>ANNOTATED BIB &amp; RESEARCH INQUIRY DUE</b>

<u>Week 8</u>		
<i>Urban Communication &amp; Identity</i>	Mar 4-6	<b>Massey (2004); Lemke (2016); Drzewiecka &amp; Nakayama (1998)</b> IN-CLASS WORKDAY
<u>Week 9</u>		
<i>Urban Communication &amp; Methods</i>	Mar 11-13	<b>Readings TBD</b>
<u>Week 10</u>		
<i>Project Development</i>	Mar 18-20	IN-CLASS WORKDAYS <b>LIT REVIEW &amp; CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT DUE</b>
<u>Week 11</u>	Mar 25-27	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
<u>Week 12</u>		
<i>Project Q&amp;A</i>	Apr 1-3	<b>Project Discussion/In-Class Workshop Days</b> <b>RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE</b>
<u>Week 13</u>		
<i>Project Development</i>	Apr 8-10	<b>One-on-One Meetings (Required)</b>
<u>Week 14</u>		
<i>Topics TBD</i>	Apr 15-17	<b>Facilitated Discussions/Individual &amp; Group Work</b> Topics, Readings, & Assignments TBD based on needs
<u>Week 15</u>	Apr 22-24	<b>Peer Review Activity; Research Project Discussion Day #1</b>
<u>Week 16</u>	Apr 29-May 1	<b>Research Project Discussion Days #2 &amp; #3</b> <b>RESEARCH PROJECT DUE IN CLASS 5/1*</b>
<u>Week 17</u>	Wednesday May 6	<b>Research Project Discussion Day #4 (9:30-11:30 am = exam period)</b>

\*Your Research Project can be turned in **anytime** before this. It cannot be turned in any later than 9:00 am on 5/1 in class\*

**Assignments:** There are two major components to this class beyond weekly readings, participation, and homework:

1. **Reflection-Connection Paper:** This assignment will be discussed in detail in Weeks 3 & 4. After engaging in facilitated reflection about the content of our discussions in Weeks 1 & 2, this assignment will ask you to further reflect on the collection of courses you have taken thus far as a major to identify the three most influential. This process can help develop a focus for the semester-long seminar project. We will focus on how these aspects connect to the central ideas in our readings and consider ideas for your final Research Project during in-class discussion/activities.
2. **Research Project:** Your Research Project will be incrementally developed throughout the semester. Feedback will be provided at each of the following stages of development: Annotated Bibliography & Research Inquiry Statement; Literature Review & Contribution Statement; Research Project Proposal; Final Research Project; and Formal Research Project Discussion. **You will receive a detailed assignment for the Research Project and all its parts in Week 5.**

**Remember—explore your interests. Challenge your understandings. Learn new things. Most importantly, have fun making new discoveries as you think about the world around you in new ways!**