COMMUNICATION TOPICS COURSES
(from Fall 1998 to present)

COM 240H/PHI 240H Topic: Evolution and the Law. This interdisciplinary course examines the current evolution debates, asking how/why legal change happens and if it confirms an inevitable evolution of social policy reflecting shifts in U.S. social norms.

COM 315 Topic: Rhetoric from the Pulpit. Helps students to speak publicly with conviction, persuasiveness, and inspiration. Basic principles of how to deliver an effective sermon and review of the greatest sermons of all time, starting with the classical sermons from the Bible and continuing to contemporary, acclaimed pulpit masters. The class will have an opportunity to hear some of the best preachers in the area and critique their delivery. Finally, students will have the opportunity to write and deliver their own sermons.

COM 315A Topic: Professional Presentations. Utilizes classical roots to adapt to contemporary public situations such as presentations, briefings, symposiums, and group facilitation as students prepare for graduate school, careers, and community outreach opportunities. In addition to a text and other readings, students will learn from guest speakers, as they prepare, present, and critique diverse projects. Prerequisite: COM 110.

COM 315A Topic: Public Speaking II. Expectations for professional and personal achievement include the ability to speak effectively in varied situations. Explores and practices various styles and types of public speaking, ranging from impromptu messages to extemporaneous presentations with question/answer periods, to formal speeches incorporating the use of technology. Through analysis, observation, reading, and guest speakers, considers options and hones rhetorical skills in preparation for a wide variety of situations. Prerequisite: COM 110 or equivalent.

COM 315B Topic: Performance Studies. Examines performance as a unique mode of communication in which we repeatedly engage in our daily lives. Examines special codes by which communicators inform audiences that their behavior is a performance. Also examines ways in which everyday behaviors involve performance, such as performance of social roles associated with gender, organizational identification, and cultural identity. Most crucially, will explore how performances shape identity and can be engaged more consciously and more critically. Students will demonstrate their grasp of course concepts through written essays, examinations, and staged performances. With advisor approval, this course may count toward a Critical Media and Cultural Studies major concentration area requirement.

COM 315L Topic: Critical Media Studies. Examines the history, structure, and function of various print and electronic media. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of communication and mass communications, this course elucidates how media help construct, reinforce, and transform personal identity, the meanings of romance and interpersonal relationships, and conceptions of gender, race, socio-economic class, and sexual orientation. Film Studies and Women’s Studies elective course.

COM 315L Topic: Listening. The study of the art of listening and its importance in our personal and professional lives. Students learn to analyze, assess, and improve their own listening abilities.

COM 315Q Topic: Health Communication. Explores theory and techniques for communicating about health challenges from interpersonal, family, small group, cultural, and medical perspectives.
COM 315S Topic: Lawyers in Film and Literature. There is something in the American psyche that is fascinated with lawyers, and, not surprisingly, that fascination has frequently found its way onto film and in literature, from the classics to modern-day fiction. This course will examine how film and literature have changed the public perceptions of lawyers from (for example) the once applauded Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird to the greedy, foolish and arrogant Mitch McDeere as he passes for a hero in The Firm. The course will also examine why lawyers have long been a fit subject for film and literature, and the influence these media have had not only on the profession of law, but also on the politics, civil liberties, and social discourse of both earlier societies and current times.

COM 315T Topic: Performance Ethnography. Involves participating in and analysis of performances to understand specific cultures. Topics include the ethics of speaking with and for members of another culture; ways in which culture must be embodied and performed in order to be made real; and the value of creative and more personalized expressions of what one learns through ethnographic research. Communication minor elective.

COM 315U Topic: Rhetoric of Religion. Explores various world religions as symbol systems designed to make sense of lived experience. Most religions are by nature rhetorical, because most religions aim to persuade others to adopt a specific world view and belief system. Explores the persuasive symbolic means by which diverse religions communicate their understanding of reality.

COM 440A Topic: Interviewing. Study of interviewing as a procedure applied in various ways by professionals in work situations. Business, research, and journalist/broadcasting contexts will be explored. Specific types of interviews include: selection interview, performance appraisal, counseling, discipline, exit, negotiating, telephone survey, focus group, organizational audit, investigative/broadcast reporting, and press conference. Examines interviewing from both interviewer and interviewee perspectives.

COM 440B Topic: Preachers and Preaching. Students will read and analyze some of the more celebrated sermons ever given, and learn techniques for public speaking. Students will give a variety of sermons, both the sermons of someone else and those they compose themselves, familiarizing them with not only with the history of preaching, but also with the experience of personally communicating a sacred message.

COM 440C Topic: Great Trials of the Centuries. Studies classic cases that affected, and were affected by, the culture of the times including the trials of Jesus, Socrates, Sir Thomas More, Joan of Arc, Oscar Wilde, and Lizzie Borden. Includes other cases that have significantly changed the course of American history, culture, and jurisprudence.

COM 440E Topic: Rhetoric of Religion. Explores various world religions as symbol systems designed to make sense of lived experience. Most religions are by nature rhetorical, because most religions aim to persuade others to adopt a specific world view and belief system. Investigates the persuasive symbolic means by which diverse religions communicate their understanding of reality.