

Course unit title: HISTORY AND THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

Course unit code: 1-1-04

Type of course unit: compulsory

Level of course unit: first cycle

Year of study: 1st

Semester: 1st

Number of ECTS credits allocated: 3 ECTS

Name of lecturer: Carlos Magno

Objectives

History and Theory of Communication is a transversal discipline of initiation to critical reflection on languages, the media and social changes. It is a first platform for a philosophical approach to the present times, permanently open to other theoretical and practical disciplines of information sciences.

The intention is to give students a critical mind when interpreting the world, and in the consumption and production of messages. Help them understand the classicism of modern mythologies and help them deconstruct the prevailing paradigms in the search for alternative analytical grids. If we consider that what we nowadays call New Technologies are, for this first Global Generation, older than their own biological age, we get the clear idea that the students are simultaneously observers and objects of observation. This double condition of active subjects and learning subjects of their own activity allows them to consider the web as a virtual space of what can already be considered a type of sixth continent and simultaneously study communication in the geography of humanity as a true history motor. If the discovery of fire served to transmit smoke signs, if the discovery of the wheel shorten distances and if the placing of satellites in orbit made the globe flat, this means that almost all scientific discoveries were put at the service of communication with the ancient objective of reaching further and faster.

In this real world in which virtual is part of reality, nomadism and sedentarism are practices that cross each other, inverting ancient concepts and creating new paradoxes. Philosophy as a practice and the history of mentalities as a dynamic background allow for a multidisciplinary approach to present times, both in relation to collective imaginary and to mental planning of each person. In fact, the idea is to make this discipline a class case study and extract from that study the possible lessons to be applied in other course disciplines.

Learning outcomes of the course unit

Starting with the famous scene in which the philosopher Hegel declared that he had felt History when he saw Napoleon ride in front of his window on horseback, we feel a sort of anticipated television desire. We will observe the Contemporary World as a space where the virtual, the real and the environmental dissolve in the ephemeral present. But we will not only start in that far away year of 1806 when Napoleon passed through the city of Jena and Hegel felt what he called the World's Soul. The story of communication starts in the Bible's Genesis, crosses the Tower of Babel myth and the universal deluge but does not end with the Picture Tsunami in which each surviving tourist in Southeast Asia took pictures and images with their mobile phones that immediately flooded all the televisions of the world. From the Middle East where the holy war continues to fight over sacred lands and is still today a biblical saga that crosses from Mesopotamia to Iraq but does not end with the Apocalypse of the Twin Towers.

Jerusalem, New York of September 11, Madrid of March, or London of the underground, are all small history points which philosophize terror and survival. From the «grammar of gunpowder» invented by Napoleon to the war of images, which as Seguella says, will be the oil of the 21st century, there are many words that are lost bullets of history's philosophy and vice-versa. There are many languages that communicate War and Peace. Some are more diplomatic and codified and others are more in line with Arab street demonstrations or the slogan which in Gaelic means a scream of war. Ludwig Wittgenstein, as a philosopher who questioned the existence of philosophy itself, recognized that language was the only really existing philosophy. But in this discipline we will be studying silent forms of communication such as silence and intelligence that communicate emotionally.

We will study seduction and persuasion. Habermas, Gianni Vattimo and Umberto Eco will be authors that we will follow in what they achieved and in what they are still producing about the present time. As Ignacio Ramonet who invented the PPII (Permanent, Planetary, Immediate and Immaterial) paradigm in the Geopolitics of Chaos and António Damásio who concluded in Descartes' Error: «I communicate therefore I am». We will not study History and Philosophy separately but Man as an element that communicates with both and is cause and consequence of the two, precisely for being a communicating Being.

Mode of delivery: face-to-face

Prerequisites and co-requisites: none

Recommended optional programme components: none

Course contents

What's Communication? The concept and polysemous dimension. How to transmit messages and how to produce and exchange meanings. Research problematic: contexts and paradigms. Communicative theories. Different models and its interpretation and application. The mass communication and the reality construction. Television pressing. The television as social link and the relations between culture and society.

Recommended Reading

- O que é o Virtual - Levy, Pierre - Edições Quarteto
- Elogio do Silêncio - De Smedt, Marc - Edição Jornal Público
- Aulas e Conversas - Wittgenstein, Ludwig - Edições Cotovia
- Psicologia do Vestir - Eco, Umberto / Alberoni, Francesco - Assirio & Alvim
- A sociedade Transparente - Vattimo, Gianni
- Sobre os Espelhos - Eco, Umberto - Difel
- O Especialista Instantâneo em Filosofia - Hakinson, Jim - Publico/Gradiva
- La seducción de las palabras - Grijelmo, Alex - Taurus (esp)
- O Atiçador de Wittgenstein - Edmonds, David e Eidinow, John-Temas & Debates
- Cinco Escritos Morais - Eco, Umberto - Difel
- Seis Passeios nos Bosques da Ficção - Eco, Umberto - Difel
- O Mundo é Plano - Friedman, Thomas L - Actual Editora
- Media: O 2º Deus - Schwart, Tony - Brasil

Planned learning activities and teaching methods: Theoretical-practical lessons

Assessment methods and criteria

- There is no register for presences in classroom;
- Each discipline will have the following assessment:
 - 1 Test in the classroom (20% weighted)
 - 1 or more group or individual work (30% weighted)
 - Participation /attendance (**10%** weighted)
 - 1 Assessment at end of Semester to be fixed in Calendar (**40%** weighted)

Should the student have a grade inferior to 8 (7.5) in the Assessment, he will immediately be given an EXAM.

Language of instruction: portuguese