

# CMST 4107: Communication as Culture *Communication, Culture, and the Economy*

T/TH 3:00-4:20  
202 Coates Hall

Professor William Saas  
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Office Hours: Thursday, 1:00-2:30  
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## Course Description

In this course, we will explore how communication and culture constitute the modern economy. Our exploration will entail: (1) critical engagement with research from experts across the humanities and social sciences; (2) use of rhetorical methods to analyze contemporary economic discourses and controversies; and (3) translation of our individual and collective research experiences into a comprehensive “argumentative dictionary.”

## Course Objectives

- To understand the complex role of definition in cultural and economic discourses.
- To become more engaged and critical consumers of economic messages.
- To learn how to communicate complex ideas for consumption by non-academic audiences.

## Communication-Intensive Course

This is a certified Communication-Intensive (C-I) course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU’s Communication across the Curriculum program, including

- instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal writing and speaking;
- teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques;
- use of feedback loops for learning;
- 40% of the course grade rooted in communication-based work; and
- practice of ethical and professional work standards.

Students interested in pursuing the LSU Distinguished Communicators certification may use this C-I course for credit. For more information about this student recognition program, visit [www.cxc.lsu.edu](http://www.cxc.lsu.edu).

## Writing Center

I will be very happy to meet with you to help with your writing and presentation preparation processes. E-mail me at least 24-hours in advance to set up an appointment, or just stop by during office hours. I am not your only resource, though. Students who want additional help with writing and presentation projects are encouraged to make appointments with a writing tutor in **Studio 151**, in 151 Coates Hall. Visit <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/cxc/writing/> to read information on how to prepare for and what to expect during a tutorial. There you will also find instructions on how to schedule tutorials on line. Hours are limited, so schedule early.

## Required Texts

Graeber, David. (2014). *Debt: The First 5,000 Years (Updated and Expanded)*. New York: Melville House.

Schiappa, Edward. (2003). *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. **E-book available through LSU library.**

Younge, Gary. (2013). *The Speech: The Story Behind Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Other required readings will be made available through the course Moodle page [M].

## Assignments and Evaluation

Argumentative dictionary entry	50% or 500 pts
Project consultations (x2)	5% or 50 pts
Film Response	10% or 100 pts
Midterm	15% or 150 pts
Content quizzes (x5)	10% or 100 pts
Participation	10% or 100 pts

970-1000 points =	A+
930-969 points =	A
900-929 points =	A-
870-899 points =	B+
830-869 points =	B
800-829 points =	B-
770-799 points =	C+
730-769 points =	C
700-729 points =	C-
670-699 points =	D+
630-669 points =	D
600-629 points =	D-
0 -599 points =	F

### Argumentative Dictionary Entry

This class will collaboratively produce an argumentative dictionary that addresses the course theme. The dictionary will be written for a public audience, with the goal of publishing the dictionary as an e-book when the course concludes. As a student in the course, your responsibility will be to produce one entry, or chapter, for the dictionary. Your entry will be produced over five stages, described below:

1. **Entry Proposal:** Within the first month of class, you will meet with me to discuss ideas for your dictionary entry. Following that meeting, you will write a 2-page proposal for your entry. This proposal will include citation and discussion of no fewer than two research sources. *A more detailed assignment sheet will be posted to Moodle.* (50 pts)
2. **Rough Entry:** After your proposal is approved, you will write a 6 to 8-page rough draft of your entry. *A more detailed assignment sheet will be posted to Moodle.* (100 pts)
3. **Peer Editing:** Your entry will be the subject of a peer-review session. Your entry will be reviewed, and you will review the entries of your peers. You will write one-page reviews for two of your peer's drafts. *A more detailed assignment sheet will be posted to Moodle.* (100 pts)
4. **Oral Presentation of Entry:** Following the peer editing process, you will give an oral presentation of your entry. *A more detailed assignment sheet will be posted to Moodle.* (100 pts)
5. **Final Entry:** Prior to the final exam period, you will submit a final version of your entry. The final entry must contain a 75-word abstract, and a copyright-free image. You may be asked to revise this final draft again prior to inclusion in the e-book. (150 pts)

### Project Consultations

You will meet with me twice during the semester to discuss your argumentative dictionary entry. **The first meeting must occur prior to turning in your entry proposal. The second meeting must occur prior to the first day of entry presentations.** These meetings are intended to help you to identify the subject of your dictionary entry, as well as to ensure your timely completion of that entry. More information on the requirements for this assignment will be shared in class.

### Midterm

At the midpoint of the semester you will take a midterm examination. The purpose of this midterm will be to get a sense for your retention of course content, and also to assess your critical interpretive skills.

### Content Quizzes (x5)

You will be given short reading quizzes at regular intervals in the semester. These quizzes will ask you to summarize and respond to the readings.

### Participation

This upper-division, seminar-style course depends on your active participation in class discussion. Participation includes asking questions, respectfully engaging in classroom discussions, making good use of office hours, and attendance. If you must be absent from class, please notify me in advance of your anticipated absence.

Our subject matter is likely to stimulate much discussion. It is critically important that we approach such discussion with honesty and willingness to engage respectfully with each other.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that impacts your work in this class and for which you may require accommodation, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall). After you receive your accommodations letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

## **TITLE IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (“LSU”) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy establishes a mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, LSU programs and/or an academic environment.

## Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
Jan. 12	Introductions		
Jan. 17	The Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Younge, “Introduction” and “The Moment”</li> <li>▪ King, “Address at the March” (M)</li> </ul>	
Jan. 19	The March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Younge, “The March” and “The Speech”</li> <li>▪ Randolph, “Speech at the March” (M)</li> <li>▪ Lewis, “Speech at the March” (M)</li> </ul>	
Jan. 24	Legacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Younge, “The Legacy”</li> <li>▪ King, “Beyond Vietnam” (M)</li> <li>▪ King, “Showdown” (M)</li> </ul>	
Jan. 26	Violence and Economic Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rustin, “From Protest to Politics” (M)</li> <li>▪ Stein, ““This Nation”” (M)</li> </ul>	
Jan. 31	The Big Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Randolph Institute, <i>A Freedom Budget</i> (M)</li> <li>▪ Coates, “The Case for Reparations” (M)</li> </ul>	
Feb. 2	<i>Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rustin, “Live Speech on the Freedom Budget” (M)</li> </ul>	
Feb. 7	Rhetoric & Reality I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schiappa, Preface; Chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>▪ Steinbaum, “Who’s afraid?” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>**Reminder: meet w/ Saas for entry discussion**</i>
Feb. 9	Rhetoric & Reality II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schiappa, Conclusion</li> <li>▪ Burke, “Definition of Man” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>Film Response</i>
Feb. 14	Culture & Economy I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graeber, “On the Experience of Moral Confusion”</li> <li>▪ Lakoff, “Keeping the Moral Books” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>Entry Proposal</i>
Feb. 16	Culture & Economy II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graeber, “The Myth of Barter”</li> <li>▪ Harvey, “Neoclassical Economics” (M)</li> </ul>	
Feb. 21	Culture & Economy III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graeber, “Primordial Debts”</li> <li>▪ Harvey, “Post Keynesian Economics” (M)</li> </ul>	
Feb. 23	Culture & Economy IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graeber, “Cruelty and Redemption” &amp; “A Brief Treatise”</li> </ul>	
Feb. 28	<b>Mardi Gras Holiday</b>		

Mar. 2	<i>Adam Smith, the Birth of the Free Market</i>		<i>Entry Rough Draft</i>
Mar. 7	Entry workshop / Midterm review	<i>Bring the following to class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Entry rough draft</li> <li>▪ Midterm study guide</li> </ul>	
Mar. 9	Midterm		
Mar. 14	Rhetoric & Economics: Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ McCloskey, “Exordium” and “How to Do” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>Film Response</i>
Mar. 16	Rhetoric & Economics: Materiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aune, “The Rhetoric-Economics Connection” and “Appendix” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>Entry Peer Edits</i>
Mar. 21	Rhetoric & Economics: Neoliberalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greene, “Rhetorical Capital” (M)</li> <li>▪ Harvey, “Neoliberalism” (M)</li> </ul>	<i>**Reminder: meet w/ Saas for entry discussion**</i>
Mar. 23	<b>Entry Presentations</b>		
Mar. 28	<b>Entry Presentations</b>		
Mar. 30	<b>Entry Presentations</b>		
Apr. 4	Rhetorics of Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Saas, “Money Matters” (M)</li> </ul>	
Apr. 6	Entry Revision Day (No class)		
	<b>Spring Break</b>		
Apr. 18	<i>Boom, Bust, Boom</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wray, “Why Minsky Matters” (M)</li> </ul>	
Apr. 20	ST: Fiscal Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Readings TBD</li> </ul>	<i>Final Entry</i>
Apr. 25	ST: Automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Readings TBD</li> </ul>	<i>Film Response</i>
Apr. 27	ST: Universal Basic Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Readings TBD</li> </ul>	
May 2	ST: Job Guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Readings TBD</li> </ul>	
May 3	<b>Final Exam Period: 12:30-2:30</b>	<i>Meet in class to assemble argumentative dictionary!</i>	