

Disclaimer: This is an indicative syllabus only and may be subject to changes. The final and official syllabus will be distributed by the instructor during the first day of class.

The American University of Rome
Communication and Digital Media Program

Department or degree program mission statement, student learning objectives, as appropriate

Course Title: Communication and Power in Rome
Course Number: COM 222
Credits & hours: 3 credits – 3 hours
Pre/Co-Requisites: ENG 101

Course description

This interdisciplinary course focuses on communication as an exercise of power in the context of Rome and Italy throughout their history. The course explores the role played by media and communications as tools for political and cultural hegemony throughout two thousand years of Italian History. From the acta diurna and the Aeneid in the age of Imperial Rome to the use of the Internet and social media by populist parties in the last decade, we will explore Italian History the interplay of the development of media technologies with propaganda, control, activism, and information wars. Topics covered include the role of communications during the passage from the Rome of the consuls to the Rome of the emperors; the ascent of the temporal authority of the Catholic Church; the use of newspapers and cinema as instruments of propaganda by Mussolini's fascist regime; the rise and decline of political leader and media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi. Ultimately, the course assesses the influence that the Italian experience had on global dynamics, ranging from modern imperialism to the populisms of the 21st Century.

Required Textbook (subject to change)

Students will be provided with articles and book chapters available either online or on MyAUR

Recommended Readings (subject to change)

A list of readings will be provided early in the course. These include:

- Gundle, S. (2013) *Mussolini's Dream Factory*. New York, NY: Berghahn.
- Heyer, P., and P. Hurquhart (Eds.) *Communication in History – 7th Edition*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Hibberd, M. (2013) *The Media in Italy*. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill.
- Innis, H. (1986) *Empire and Communications*. Victoria, BC: Press Porcépic Ltd.
- Standage, T. (2013) *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- Watson, P. (2008) *Ideas: A History of Thought and Invention, from Fire to Freud*. London, UK: Perfectbound.

Entry Fees

Students must pay their own entrance fees when required.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the relationship between technological development in the media and purposes of political control
2. Identify the intersection of the popular and the political in historical media discourse
3. Appreciate the historical role played by Italy in shaping contemporary political culture
4. Assess risks related to populism, authoritarianism, and propaganda

Course Learning Activities

- **On-Site Classes:** These sessions will include visits to the Roman Forum, Cinecittà, and other historical and cultural sites in Rome. LOs 2, 3.
- **Journal Entries:** Students will produce 8 weekly entries of 300-500 words reflecting on their subjective experience throughout the course and providing written analysis of readings, lectures, and other assigned content. LOs 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- **Final Project - Poster Presentation:** Public poster presentation created via small group (3-4 students') work, critically exploring aspects of the course. (Additional guidelines are available below). LOs 3 and 4.
- **Final Essay:** Students will write a 2,000-word essay where they focus on one salient aspect related to the topic of their poster. LOs 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Assessment tools

Participation	10%
Journal Entries	40%
Research Essay	25%
Final Project	25%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Title	Reading
Week 1	1: Introduction to the Course Contents	Course Syllabus
Week 2	2: A Conceptual Overview	Kovarik, B. (2015) 'Introduction', in (Ed.) <i>Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age</i> . London, UK: Bloomsbury, pp. 10 - 32. Jowett, G. S., and O'Donnell, V. (2012) 'What is Propaganda, and how does it differ from Persuasion?', in (Eds.) <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i> , 5th Edition. London, UK: Sage, pp. 1 – 17.
Week 3	3: Communication and Power in Ancient Rome	Standage, T. (2013) 'Introduction: Cicero's Web', and 'The Roman Media: The First Social Media Ecosystem', in (Ed.) <i>Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years</i> . London, UK: Bloomsbury.
Week 4	4: On-Site Class: From Capitol Hill to Circus Maximus	Innis, H. (1986) 'The Written Tradition and the Roman Empire', in (Ed.) <i>Empire and Communications</i> . Victoria, BC: Press Porcépic Ltd, pp. 83 - 112.
Week 5	5: On-Site Class: Augustus	Beard, M. (2015) 'The Transformations of Augustus', in (Ed.) <i>SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome</i> . London, UK: Profile Books, pp. 337 - 385. Schneider, R. M. (2008) 'Image and Empire: The Shaping of Augustan Rome', in Mutschler, F., and Mittag, A. (Eds.) <i>Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared</i> . Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 269 - 298.
Week 6	6: Communication and Power in Papal Rome	Burke, J., and R. Ornstein (2018) 'Communication and Faith in the Middle Ages', in Heyer, P., and P. Hurquhart (Eds.) <i>Communication in History – 7th Edition</i> . London, UK: Routledge, pp. 132 – 143.
Week 7	7: On-Site Class: St. John and Quattro Coronati	Augias, C. (2007) 'Towers of Fear', in (Ed.) <i>The Secrets of Rome</i> . New York, NY: Rizzoli.
Week 8	8: How Luther went Viral	Standage, T. (2013) 'How Luther went Viral: The Role of Social Media in Revolutions', in (Ed.) <i>Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years</i> . London, UK: Bloomsbury.
Week 9	9: On-Site Class: Sacred Music and Persuasion	Watson, P. (2008) 'The Explosion of Imagination', in (Ed.) <i>Ideas: A History of Thought and Invention, from Fire to Freud</i> . London, UK: Perfectbound, pp. 406 – 423.
Week 10	10: Communication and Power in Fascist Italy	Hibberd, M. (2007) 'The Media in Fascist Italy', in (Ed.) <i>The Media in Italy</i> . Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill, pp. 33 - 42.
Week 11	11: On-Site Class: Cinecittà	Gundle, S. (2013) 'Italian Cinema Under Fascism', in (Ed.) <i>Mussolini's Dream Factory</i> . New York, NY: Berghahn, pp. 19 - 39.
Week 12	12: On-Site Class: RAI Studios	Hibberd, M. (2007) 'The First Italian Republic: Broadcasting and 'Mamma RAI'', and 'Broadcasting and the Wild West Years', in (Ed.) <i>The Media in Italy</i> . Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill, pp. 75 - 100.
Week 13	13: Contemporary Populism: From Berlusconi to Grillo	Hibberd, M. (2007) 'Silvio Berlusconi' in (Ed.) <i>The Media in Italy</i> . Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill, pp. 101 - 122. Natale, S., and Ballatore, A. (2014) 'The web will kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement'.
Week 14	Poster Presentation	

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

1.0. Minimum Attendance Requirement: Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

1.1. Automatically Accepted Absences

Students will not be penalized for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
Students will not be penalized for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
Students will not be penalized for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

1.2. If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the Instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus, and following the institutional parameters given in the Note* below.

1.2.1. If the Instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement, and any penalized absences recorded above the basic 70% attendance requirement for the course will be invalidated.

1.3. During Summer sessions where courses are taught more intensively over a shorter period the following applies:

- Students will not be penalized for two absences from class.

2.0. Tolerated Absences

Certain categories of absence will not be penalized but they will be counted as an absence (for a 3-credit course meeting twice a week). These absences are:

- The Model United Nations (MUN);
- Permit to Stay,
- SG's "Ambassador Program" (Student Government initiative)
- Religious Holidays

The American University of Rome makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate students who must be absent from classes to observe religious holidays. (Please refer to the Provost's Office list of accepted absences for religious holidays)

Not attending a class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally not be counted as an absence.

Students who will need to miss class in order to observe religious holidays must notify their Instructors by the end of the Add/Drop period (first week of classes), and must make prior arrangements with their Instructors to make up any work missed.

2.1. The list does NOT include academic field trips because these (including arrangements for travel) must not overlap with other classes.

3.0. Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

*Note: No Instructor may penalize a student more than half a letter grade for each absence beyond the tolerated limit (e.g. from A- to B+).

Grade Point Average

A student's grade point average (GPA) is computed by multiplying the quality points achieved by the number of credits for each course. The result is then divided by the total number of credit hours taken. The Cumulative or Career Total Grade Point Average (CGPA) is the grade point average for all credit hours taken at the University and at approved study abroad programs. The GPA and CGPA are calculated by truncating after the second digit after the decimal point. Transfer credits have no effect on the CGPA at The American University of Rome.

Grades

Grades are posted on a secure area of the University's official website and are mailed to AUR degree students only upon written request. Grades are mailed to the various study abroad programs. Grades computed in the (GPA) reflect the following grade equivalents:

GRADE		GPA	
A	Excellent	4.00	94 – 100 points
A-		3.70	90 – 93.99 pts
B+	Very Good	3.30	87 – 89.99
B	Good	3.00	83 – 86.99
B-		2.70	80 – 82.99
C+		2.30	77 – 79.99
C	Satisfactory	2.00	73 – 76.99
C-	Less than Satisfactory	1.70	70 – 72.99
D	Poor	1.00	60 – 69.99
F	Failing	0.00	59.99 – 0
WU	Unofficial withdrawal counts as an F	0.00	
P	Applicable to development courses	0.00	
<i>Grades not computed into the grade point average are:</i>			
W	Withdrawal		
AUDIT (AU)	Only possible when the student registers for a course at the beginning of the semester as an audit student		
I	Incomplete work must be completed within the ensuing semester. Failure to do so results in automatically converting the I grade to the default grade, which is then computed into the grade point average		
P	Pass grade is applicable to courses as indicated in the catalog.		
WIP	Work in progress		