

CMN106

# Contemporary Communication Theory and Trends

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

 UniSC Sunshine Coast  
 UniSC Moreton Bay

 BLENDED  
 LEARNING

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to [usc.edu.au](http://usc.edu.au) for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

## 1. What is this course about?

### 1.1. Description

The successful completion of this course will provide you with an understanding of the contemporary landscape and employment opportunities in the communication sector, and the theories that help us to understand the relationship between media and society. Examining critical theories will help you to understand power and voice in mediated communication. You will also evaluate the skills and values needed to be successful in the communication sector. Finally, the course will introduce you to the discipline areas within the Communications Program at USC to help you clarify your study choices.

### 1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
<b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – Self-directed online pre-workshop learning materials.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – Scheduled face-to-face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
<b>ONLINE</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – Asynchronous online delivery of learning material.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – Synchronous online workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times

### 1.3. Course Topics

- Introduction to Communication
- Text and Audience
- Mass Communication Theories
- Written, visual and oral communication
- Semiotic analysis
- Representation, power, ethics
- New media and communication
- Health communication
- Intercultural communication

## 2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

## 3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

## 4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Identify your individual skills, qualities and connections that will help you to become successful in the communication sector.	Empowered
2 Employ critical theories to inform your understanding of the cultural power of media forms.	Knowledgeable
3 Locate, evaluate, and utilise relevant academic research.	Knowledgeable
4 Employ appropriate and ethical conventions of communication to convey meaning in written, oral and non-verbal formats.	Ethical

## 5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

### 5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Nil

## 6. How am I going to be assessed?

### 6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

### 6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Informal formative assessment is regularly provided within tutorial activities, via face to face consultations and email.

### 6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Oral and Written Piece	Group	20%	Discussion Group (6 mins presentation and 2 min discussion) and summary and reference list to be submitted.	Refer to Format	In Class
All	2	Essay	Individual	40%	1,000 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Oral and Written Piece	Group	40%	10 minutes + 250 word self-reflection.	Week 12	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check and in class

#### All - Assessment Task 1: Discussion Group

<b>GOAL:</b>	<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>Oral Presentation. Groups of 3-4 students will present a brief summary of the week's learning materials and provoke class discussion through the presentation of related materials and questions.</p>																
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Oral and Written Piece																
<b>FORMAT:</b>	<p>Oral presentation.</p> <p>Groups will present a summary of their assigned week's learning materials in the workshop.</p> <p>Assessed on ONE in-class presentation allocated between Week 2-6. Reference list/accompanying materials submitted online.</p> <p>Presentations should be designed to provoke class discussion. Reference list and summary/overview of presentation to be submitted to Canvas.</p>																
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<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Collaboration, Organisation																

## All - Assessment Task 2: Written Essay

<b>GOAL:</b>	In this task students will demonstrate an ability to apply a relevant theoretical approach in the analysis of current cultural trends and/or issues in communication.	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Essay	
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Academic Format  In 1000 words, students will construct an essay outlining a critical analysis of a current cultural trend or issue in communication. The analysis will be focused by the selection of one core theory through which the chosen trend or issue will be analysed. Essays should include a reference list and references within the text to support arguments of a minimum 6 scholarly sources and 2 media/non-academic sources.	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Apply chosen theory and supporting arguments to produce a critical analysis <b>2</b>
	2	Synthesise and evaluate ideas to produce a convincing piece of written communication <b>2 3</b>
	3	Apply principles of academic writing, including essay form, academic language, grammar, spelling, and punctuation <b>4</b>
	4	Produce correctly formatted reference list (APA or Harvard) evidencing relevance and credibility of supporting sources <b>3</b>
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Information literacy	

### All - Assessment Task 3: Oral presentation

<b>GOAL:</b>	<p>The goal of this task is to present a critical take on a 20th Century communication theory, by discussing an application of the theory in 21st Century contexts. The presentation should occur in a paired or panel interview style in which participants will interrogate concepts for their relevance and application to communication in current contexts.</p> <p>Students will also submit a short written statement reflecting on their individual skills and qualities in the preparation and execution of this task.</p>																		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Oral and Written Piece																		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	<p>Academic Format</p> <p>In seven minutes, each group will introduce ONE theoretical concept and critique it with reference to literature and relevant examples. Groups of 2-4 may choose variations on presentation style to accommodate the pair or panel interview format. The tone of the presentation should remain professional, with rationalised arguments throughout. This task provides the opportunity to work on verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The goal is not to arrive at a conclusion that a theory is right or wrong, but to produce a stimulating and engaging discussion.</p> <p>Presentations will be delivered and assessed in tutorials for on-campus students. Online students will negotiate submission requirements with the coordinator. Students must submit their self-reflection and a reference list of at least 6 scholarly sources and 2 media or non-scholarly sources supporting your presentation, online.</p> <p>All group members must contribute equally in preparation, contribution and speaking time.</p>																		
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<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Collaboration, Organisation, Applying technologies																		

## 7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

## 8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

### 8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

### 8.2. Specific requirements

Students must have access to a computer and the internet to undertake this course.

## 9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

## 10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

### 10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

### 10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

#### Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

### 10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

### 10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email [safe@usc.edu.au](mailto:safe@usc.edu.au).

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au).

### 10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au).

### 10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 1226.

### 10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [AccessAbility@usc.edu.au](mailto:AccessAbility@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 2890.

## 10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

## 10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

## 10.10. General Enquiries

### In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

**Tel:** +61 7 5430 2890

**Email:** [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au)