Conversation Module

Concepts and Creativity 1010-200

Fall, 2015, Module B

Lectures: T/Th 2-3:15
Ramaley C250

Plus Lab Section

Prof. Peter Simonson
Department of Communication
College of Media, Communication, and Information (CMCI)

Course Instructors (e-mail/offices—office hours)

Professor Peter Simonson (peter.simonson@colorado.edu)
Hellems 95 – Wed 2:30-3:30, Th 3:45-4:45

Elyse Janish, Lead Teaching Assistant (elsye.janish@colorado.edu) Labs 221R, 222R; Hellems 65 – Wed 4:30-5:30, Th 12:30-1:30

Christopher Barnes (christopher.c.barnes@colorado.edu) Labs 105 & 108
Armory 113 – Wed 3:30-4:30, Th 12:30-1:30

Sophie DeWitt (sophie.dewitt@colorado.edu) Labs 101 & 110
Armory 113– Tues 3:30-4:30, Th 12:30-1:30

Angelica Kalika (angelica.kalika@colorado.edu) Labs 204 & 209
Armory 113 Wed – 2-3, Fri 12-1

Tim Roberts (timothy.roberts@colorado.edu) Labs 201 & 206
Hellems 65– Tues 3:30-4:30, Th 4-5

Course Website: Readings, Assignment, and a Course Twitter Feed (#CMCI1010) are available on the Desire to Learn (D2L) course website: https://learn.colorado.edu/

→ NOTE: the D2L website is shared with the Storytelling module of Concepts and Creativity (which you will be taking in the second half of the semester). Be sure to go to the Conversation Folder for all readings and assignments. Announcements and Gradebook Items for the respective modules will be designated with a ‘C’ (Conversation) or an ‘S’ (Storytelling)

Communicating with the Instructors:

- Please take advantage of office hours, which are a great chance to extend conversations that we have in lectures and labs about course material, assignments, and their applications to everyday life. Your instructors are all here to help you learn.
• E-mail us through the above CU addresses (i.e. not through the D2L website). If you have questions about assignments, check with your lab instructor first. Keep in mind that your graduate instructors have their own classes to take and workload, and so don’t expect immediate responses on e-mail. We’ll all do our best to get back to you within 24 hours during the week, but are likely to be slower on weekends.

Course Overview

Concepts and Creativity is a unique class in the United States and the world. It is a yearlong course taught by four different professors from four different departments in the brand new College of Media, Communication, and Information. It teaches concepts, hands-on communication and media skills, and “critical literacies”—or the ability to read and analyze different kinds of media texts and communicative performances. It is a class that all first-year students in the new college will take, thus offering you the chance to meet people from different majors, collaborate, and learn together. The professors and graduate teaching assistants who are working in it are very excited to be a part of the course and working with you.

Concepts and Creativity (or C&C) is made up of four different modules: Conversation and Storytelling in the fall, Images and Information in the spring. Each module lasts eight weeks (including finals week) and is made up of two 75-minute weekly lectures and one two-hour lab. Labs are capped at 19 students but most will be smaller, offering individualized instruction and lots of participation and active engagement. Half of the incoming class will be assigned to each module during a term, and they will switch at the midpoint of the semester. Students will get one grade for the semester as a whole, with each of the two modules counting half.

This module focuses on Conversation as an idea, a social practice, and an art that can contribute to participatory democracy and social change in a society marked by differences. In terms of skill building and practice, it will particularly emphasize conversation as an embodied, face-to-face activity—exchanging opinions and feelings through talk. But you will also explore ways that conversation is both stimulated and enacted through different kinds of media, and ways that you can engage with it to participate in grassroots democracy and help shape the world around us.

Conversation is a deeply participatory course. In our time together, you will engage in conversation about issues of personal and shared interest through talk, writing, and digital media. Across the module, you will cultivate skills of critical thinking and argumentation as well as consideration of the world from multiple perspectives. You will also examine case studies and real-world examples of public conversations unfolding through different media, focusing in particular on the pressing contemporary issue of campus sexual assault and communication issues related to it. At the broadest, this class is designed to help you see how communication creates the worlds that we live in.
To Succeed in this Class…

Stay on top of the workload. There are things due every week, and the more time you put into them, the more you will learn in the class and the better prepared you will be for the final exam. Give yourself enough time and expect to stay busy. As a general rule, you should plan to spend 2-3 hours outside class each week for each credit hour in a course at CU. Since this is a four credit-hour course, you should plan to spend 8-12 hours on it outside class each week. To help you stay engaged, experience the spoken word fully, and avoid distracting other people around you, students will not be permitted to use laptops, cell phones, or other portable electronic devices during lecture. (Exceptions to the laptop rule will be made if students have registered a learning difference with CU’s Disability Services Office. Please talk with Simonson in the first week of school).

Course Objectives

Through this course, you will be able to:

• Identify and explain key concepts tied to conversation including: publics and counterpublics, arguments, issues, reasons, and other ideas.

• Cultivate critical literacies or ways of analyzing conversation in particular situations, for varying purposes, and across different media.

• Develop practical skills of speaking, listening, reading, critical thinking, argumentation, engaging in classroom discussions, participating in online conversations, and recognizing and investigating different perspectives on an issue.

• Create texts, performances, and media artifacts that reflect and engage with diverse perspectives on topics of personal and social concern through speaking, writing, and digital composition.

Assignments and Grades

The course itself is a conversation, enacted through speaking, writing, and online work. It emphasizes ongoing learning by means of careful reading and preparing for lecture and lab every week. Each of these is explained more after the course schedule below.

- Reading Questions (6 sets) 15%
- Quizzes (5 quizzes in lecture) 5%
- Module-Long Project 35%
- Final Exam 20%
- Lab Attendance and Participation 15%
- Lecture Attendance and Participation 10%

We will be entering your grades on D2L. It is your responsibility to monitor the grades that are recorded there and make sure they accord with the grade you received on the assignment or exam. We are very careful when we grade and enter
scores, but occasionally a mistake occurs. **If you find a discrepancy between your posted grade and the one written on your homework or exam, you need to let your TA know within a week after the assignment is returned.** Grades will not be changed except in cases where there was an error in recording, computation, or application of course grading rubrics.

**Readings and Course Materials**

Instead of asking you to buy a textbook, we are assigning readings that are available through the D2L course website. **Print off hard copies of all assigned readings and bring them to labs and lectures with you.** We will be working from the texts, which we want you to read carefully, mark up, and make notes on. If you don’t have the readings with you, you can’t fully participate in lab and lecture.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to Professor Simonson a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries guidelines under the Quick Links at the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with Simonson.

**Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the student code.

**Discrimination And Harassment**

CU-Boulder is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based
upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be found at the OIEC website. The full policy on discrimination and harassment contains additional information.

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information regarding the Honor Code policy can be found online and at the Honor Code Office.

Class Schedule and Weekly Assignments
(Readings should be completed before the class period they are listed)

Week I (Oct 19-23): Introduction. What is conversation in our digital age?

Tuesday Lecture: Introduction to the Course:

Thursday Lecture: A Flight from Conversation? Concept, Social Practice, and Art
• Reading Questions due at start of lecture
• Course reading: “Introduction to Conversation: Concept, Social Practice, Art.”

Labs: Getting the Conversation Going
• Assignment for Today:
  o Bring questions you have about the syllabus
  o Be prepared to discuss Turkle and Miller: bring in quotes from the reading that intrigue or provoke you
Week II (Oct 26-30): Conversation as Art and Democratic Way of Life: Raising Questions, Listening, and Reflective Self-Awareness in Communication Situations

Tuesday Lecture: The Art of Conversation
- **Reading Questions due at the start of the hour**
- Re-read the section on Art in “Introduction to Conversation: Concept, Social Practice, Art”

Thursday Lecture: Conversation, Democracy, and the Communicative Construction of Society
- **Open-note quiz at the start of the hour**
- Isocrates, excerpts from “Antidosis” (354 BCE)
- John Sarrouf, Guide to Mindfulness

Lab: Practicing the Art of Conversation and Socratic Questioning
- **Assignments for today:**
  - Topics, Questions, Listening
  - Bring in a copy of your Reading Questions from Tuesday’s lecture

Week III (Nov 2-6): Argumentation as Conversation: Contested Issues, Claims, Reasons, and Stasis Theory

Tuesday Lecture: Argumentation, Critical Thinking, and Everyday Deliberative Moments
- **Reading Questions due at the start of the hour**
- “Stasis Theory”: BYU Rhetoricians, entry written by Chelsey Bulloch, Sarah Hafen, and Sarah E. Meyers
- Debate topic from *New York Times* “Room for Debate” blog, TBD
Thursday Lecture: Argumentation, Critical Thinking, and Everyday Deliberative Moments (cont)

- **Open-note quiz at the start of the hour**
- Leah Sprain and Laura Black, selections from “Deliberative Moments: Understanding Deliberation as an Interactional Accomplishment”

**Lab: Arguing and Deliberating Together**

- **Assignments for today:**
  - Bibliography of Sources, Possible Organizations and Voice Assignment 1 (submitted to D2L dropbox before lab)
  - Voice assignment (due in lab)
  - Bring in a copy of Tuesday’s Reading Questions

Week IV (Nov 9-13): Media and Conversation in a Diverse Democracy: Publics and Counterpublics

Tuesday Lecture: Media, Conversation, and Pictures in Our Heads

- **Reading Questions due at the start of the hour**
- Gabriel Tarde, excerpts from “Opinion and Conversation” (1898)
- Walter Lippmann, “The Limits of Public Opinion” (1922)

Thursday Lecture: Publics, Counterpublics, and the Case of Black Twitter after Ferguson

- **Open-note quiz at the start of the hour**
- Michael Warner, excerpts from *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002),

**Lab: Exploring Efforts to Influence Conversations through Media**

- **Assignments for today:**
  - Lab Assn Week 4: Stasis, Revised Bibliography, Voice II, (submitted to D2L dropbox before lab; bring a hard copy to perform in class)
  - Bring in a copy of Tuesday’s Reading Questions


Tuesday Lecture: Arguments about Online Civility and Trolls

- **Reading Questions due at the start of the hour**
- Re-Read Social Practice section of “Introduction to Conversation: Concept, Social Practice, Art”
• Sally Kohn, “Don’t Feed the Trolls? Cultivating Civility Online” https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/sally-kohn/dont-feed-trolls-cultivating-civility-online

Thursday Lecture: Twitter as Conversation and Literacy
• Open-note quiz at the start of the hour
• Brian Croxall, “Twitter, Tumblr, and Microblogging” (2014)
• Leisa Reichelt, “Ambient Intimacy” (2009), http://www.disambiguity.com/ambient-intimacy/
• Christine Greenhow, and Benjamin Gleason. "Twitteracy: Tweeting as a New Literacy Practice” (2012)

Lab: Workshopping and Discussing Draft
• Assignment for today: Submit a good draft of your paper to D2L dropbox before lab begins AND bring in a hard copy to workshop with peers

Week: VI (Nov 30-Dec 4): Case Study: Sexual Consent and Campus Sexual Assault as Public and Face-to-Face Conversations

Important Note: If this week’s topic is one that you cannot address safely in the space of the classroom, please let your lab instructor of Professor Simonson know and we will make other assignments available to you.

Tuesday Lecture: Communicative Dimensions of the Issue
• Reading Questions due at the start of the hour
• Re-watch the film The Hunting Grounds
• Three essays from Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti, eds., Yes Means Yes! Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008): Thomas Macaulay Miller, “Toward a Performance Model of Sex”; Rachel Bussel, “Beyond Yes or No: Consent as Sexual Process”; and Toni Amato, “Shame is the First Betrayer”

Thursday Lecture: The Public Debate, continued
Lab: Conversation about Difficult and Blocked Topics
• **Assignments for this week:**
  o Bring in copies of Tuesday’s Reading Questions
  o Work on your revised essays

**Final Papers and Analysis Due to D2L Dropbox by 11:59 pm on Sunday, Dec 6**

Week VII (Dec 7-11): Wrapping It Up

**Tuesday Lecture:** Wrapping it Up: Revisiting Sherry Turkle
• Sherry Turkle, “Stop Googling, Start Talking” and Jonathan Franzen, review of Turkle’s *Reclaiming Conversation*
• *Tweet Your Advocacy* assignment in class

**Thursday Lecture:** FCQs for the Course and Final Exam Review

**Lab:** Provocations and Conversations
• 3-minute speech and class conversations about your final projects

**Final Exam: Thursday, December 17, 1:30-3:00 pm**
Assignments in Greater Depth

Reading Questions (top 5 scores of six assignments)

Reading Questions (RQs) are a way for you to engage carefully with the readings before you come to class. They help you both to learn and apply ideas and to determine what you don’t yet know. They are intended to prepare you for lectures and for participation in labs. To those ends, here’s how RQs work:

- Questions will be posted on D2L in the folder corresponding to that week. Download the word document and complete your answers on there.
- Print off two copies of the questions: one to hand in at the start of the lecture period they are due, another to have in front of you during lecture and lab that week and to take notes on in order to help you study for the final exam.
- Questions will be graded on a full credit/deducted credit/half credit/no credit basis. We won’t be judging to see if you have the “right” answer (many questions will have no single right answer) but rather whether you made an honest effort to answer each of them. We won’t be reading the answers closely but rather giving them a quick reading. The purpose of the assignments is for you to engage carefully on your own.
  - Full Credit: student made an honest effort on all questions and was present in class to hand them in on time: (recorded as a 100 in the gradebook)
  - Deducted Credit: student would have received full credit but was not present in class to fill out the answers and learn, but handed in them on time or before; OR student handed them in after the beginning of lecture (but still in lecture period): (recorded as a 80)
  - Half Credit: handed in the assignment on time but did not answer all questions or did not display an honest effort throughout in her/his answers (e.g. by being extremely brief): (recorded as a 60)
  - Fail: student did not hand in the RQs (recorded as a 40)
- No RQs will be accepted after the end of the lecture period they were due.
- The student’s lowest score during the semester will be thrown out.

Quizzes (5 over the semester)

Quizzes are announced and will occur at the start of lecture. They are open-note (but copies of the readings themselves are not allowed) and based on the readings for that day. They will address basic questions about the readings and are designed to keep you honest and on top of the readings each class period. You must be in class for the quiz—makeup quizzes are not allowed.
Lab Attendance and Participation

Labs are the sites where you will put theory into practice and actively engage with concepts and critical analysis with your classmates. As such, your participation in them is crucial to your success in the class and your overall learning. Participation takes the form of both constructively talking and actively listening and being engaged. These are themselves basic skills in conversation. Labs are also settings where you get to work closely with your instructor. Take advantage of this by visiting them in office hours at least once during the module.

Grading will work this way: you can see the value of attending lab!

- Half of your lab grade will be based on:
  - Attending lab every week
  - Coming in to one office hour with your lab instructor
- The other half will be based on the quality of your participation in lab as determined by these criteria:
  - Listening carefully to others as evidenced through:
    - Nonverbal displays of interest
    - Responding to the specifics of what others say
  - Speaking in a way that shows:
    - Evidence of having read and prepared carefully
    - Original insight
    - Leadership in helping classmates better understand material
    - Respect for others in the class
    - Consistence and improvement over the course of the module
  - Overall Attentiveness and Engagement as evidenced by:
    - Attendance
    - Not using laptops or phones for purposes unrelated to class

Lecture Attendance and Participation

Lecture attendance/participation is based on 2 things:

- During lecture, you will be working with small, lab-based learning groups. We will distribute worksheets that also function as attendance sheets. During the course of the lecture, Simonson will pose questions that allow your group to talk together and problem-solve. Your overall lecture attendance and participation in these groups is worth up to 90 points (15 points per week for Weeks 2-7)
- In addition, you can contribute to lecture discussion by Tweeting something relevant to the course up to 5 times during the semester, for up to 10 points. (More on Twitter in your lab sections).

Final Exam

A cumulative multiple-choice exam based on key ideas from the class and drawn in part from the Reading Questions throughout the module.
Module-Long Project

The centerpiece of the module, this multi-step project challenges you to consider how you might help change the world. It asks you to think about and investigate an issue of concern, critically analyze and engage in public conversations about it, and try to make a difference in the ways your classmates and others (yourself included) think and act. The project calls on you to creatively develop skills of communication and critical analysis and apply key concepts learned over our eight weeks together. It calls you to survey and represent a diversity of opinions, speak in your own voice, and make a case that might change the hearts, minds, and actions of others.

The project has deliverables across the module that involve reading, writing, speaking, and engaging in online conversation. The four culminating products/performances are:

• A 1,500-2,000 word essay
  o written in your own conversational voice
  o addressed to your classmates and other publics beyond
  o that draws attention to differing perspectives on the issue,
  o helps educate readers and draws attention to an organization that takes action on it,
  o stakes out your own position
  o and potentially shapes the opinions and actions of your target audience.

• A brief Draft Analysis identifying revisions you made on your draft based on feedback from workshop and instructor

• A 500-word Conceptual Analysis of the Essay that makes use of concepts learned in the course

• A 3-minute speech that condenses the key parts of your essay and aims to provoke thought, conversation, and action

• An artful tweet that captures the essence of the essay in 140 characters or less (#CMCI1010 included)

Schedule: the project will unfold across through the following smaller assignments, with the percentage of the overall project grade noted next to each:

• Topics, Questions, Listening (due in lab, Week II) (5%)
• Questions, Research, Voice Assignment I (due in lab and D2L dropbox, Week III) (5%)
• Stasis Analysis, Voice II, Revised and Properly Formatted Bibliography (due in lab and D2L dropbox, Week IV) (10%)
• Draft of the Paper (due in lab and D2L dropbox, Week V) (5%)
• Oral Presentations: Provoking Conversation (performed in lab, Week VII) (10%)
• Artful tweets (sent at the start of lecture, Tuesday December 8) (5%)
• Final Papers and Draft Analysis (together 40%) and Conceptual Analysis (20%) submitted to D2L Dropbox by 11:59 pm, Sunday December 6