

## Sociology of Communication

Code: 101137  
ECTS Credits: 6

**2025/2026**

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OT	4

### Contact

Name: Dafne Muntanyola Saura  
Email: dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat

### Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

### Prerequisites

There is no prerequisites

### Objectives and Contextualisation

The Sociology of Communication course combines various objectives, within the general aim of guiding students toward a critical and informed reflection on their everyday communicative reality.

On a theoretical level, a primary specific objective is to introduce students to the main communication theories, the origins of the discipline, and the schools of thought that have developed within sociology, from the classics to contemporary approaches. On the level of empirical analysis of communicative reality, the course examines the role and social logic of major media outlets and social networks, delving into how the digitalization process has transformed the way we work, consume, learn, and entertain ourselves. Thirdly, it explores the social construction of the institutions that shape the Catalan communication landscape. As a course with a significant applied component, a final specific objective is the development of a group-based intervention project linked to the local context, in the form of a Communication Plan for a real institution.

Ultimately, the introduction to communication theories is geared toward a subsequent empirical reflection on the social importance of both face-to-face and mediated communication, with particular emphasis on the role of informational algorithms, the monopolies of informational and cultural platforms, and the dominance of audiovisual content. All the knowledge acquired is applied in a practical communication management project.

### Competences

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- Applying the concepts and approaches of the sociological theory, specially the explanations of social inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups, to the implementation of public policies and to the resolution of conflict situations.
- Assessing the contributions of sociological approaches to the study of culture, education, interaction between society and environment, social policy, and work.

- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.
- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Effectively communicating the basic analysis of social phenomena in an elementary level of English.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
- Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Comparing the different theoretical approaches about culture.
2. Comparing the reading of cultural phenomena from several ideologies of the social reality of Spain and Catalonia.
3. Defining the sociological concepts that interpret the cultural phenomena.
4. Defining the underlying social phenomena of cultural policies and conflicts.
5. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
6. Developing self-learning strategies.
7. Distinguishing the explanations of cultural inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups that these actors take for granted.
8. Distinguishing the sociological concepts about culture adopted by the actors involved in these policies and conflicts.
9. Distinguishing the sociological concepts, as well as the methods and techniques of social investigation commonly used to analyse culture.
10. Effectively communicating the basic analysis of social phenomena in an elementary level of English.
11. Explaining the social interpretations of culture according to these approaches.
12. Expressing the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to culture.
13. Relating the concepts, methods and techniques used to analyse culture with general theoretical and methodological debates.
14. Relating the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to culture, with the historical context in which they emerged.
15. Relating the explanations of cultural inequalities with general theoretical and methodological debates.
16. Relating the theoretical approaches with debates about social order and action.
17. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
18. Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
19. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
20. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Content

The course follows three main axes of critical analysis of communicative interactions:

- 1) Foundations and classical debates in communication,
- 2) Historical perspectives on communication as a sociological issue,
- 3) Contemporary approaches to digitalization in various fields of cultural, artistic, and academic production.

The first section shows the importance of everyday communication. A fundamental debate between McLuhan and Mumford is introduced regarding the role of the media, serving as a gateway to critical reflection on

communication technologies. European and North American antecedents of communication theories are analyzed, focusing on concepts such as crowds, public opinion, and the social question. Classical schools such as the Chicago School and Mass Communication Research are reviewed and connected to current research on digital media, platforms, and social networks.

The second section includes approaches from Critical Theory and the commodification of communication within cultural materialism, as well as the communication of art. The review of Structuralism and semiotics provides tools to understand cultural communication. The Palo Alto School and its view of communication as a total phenomenon are also explored, including communicative multimodality. Cultural Studies and the social phenomenology of communicative events are addressed, along with communicative pragmatics, drawing from symbolic interactionism, labeling theory, and ethnomethodology.

The third section delves into network society and the digital community. Ethical and epistemological dilemmas related to generative artificial intelligence are addressed, opening the door to a contemporary and critical perspective on digital tools. Radical critiques of attention are also explored, alongside reflections on privacy, bias, and control in networks, with examples such as media manipulation and climate change narratives. Additional examples include the social construction of Sant Jordi and critical observation of the media in Catalonia. The section concludes with reflections on the fabrication of public opinion and an introduction to visual sociology.

## Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
<b>Type: Directed</b>			
Presentation sessions on the subjects of the course	26	1.04	
<b>Type: Supervised</b>			
Group work derived from seminars	13	0.52	
Individualized review of the work portfolio carried out	8	0.32	
Seminary sessions	13	0.52	
<b>Type: Autonomous</b>			
Formulation of critical questions	12	0.48	
Study and reading texts of course topics	58	2.32	

The course is developed through theoretical classes, with the support of some reference texts that are in the compulsory bibliography of the teaching guide. The theoretical classes will include discussions in the classroom, favoring a participatory dynamic from the start, but also with the aim of learning to use the conceptual system that will be derived from it. These classes will be complemented by a weekly seminar in which exercises and debates will be carried out of an applied nature to the student's most immediate reality. There will be short written exercises and oral presentations. Formal communicative correction will be highly valued.

**Annotation:** Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

## Assessment

### Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Oral presentation of the Communication Protocols	10	2	0.08	18, 6, 5, 20, 15
1. Carrying out a Communication Plan of an organization	30	12	0.48	19, 18, 2, 10, 6, 5, 7, 9, 8, 20, 13, 17
2. Critical questions about the readings	20%	4	0.16	19, 18, 4, 6, 11, 12, 20, 14, 16, 17
3. Written exam on the theories of communication	40%	2	0.08	19, 1, 3, 4, 6, 5, 11, 12, 20, 13, 14, 16, 15

The continuous assessment of the course is based on active participation in seminars and the formulation of critical questions, which allow for ongoing monitoring of the learning process. This assessment includes three main components: critical questions on the required readings (20%), a group project in the form of a Communication Plan (40%), and a final exam covering the readings and class content (40%). To ensure proper follow-up of the group project, two mandatory group tutorials will be held-one between February and March, and another in April-as well as a draft oral presentation in May.

All required evidence must be submitted to qualify for continuous assessment. Submissions without a name or submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. Additionally, it is important to remember that plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Academic knowledge relies on the traceability of data and sources, and therefore, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is not considered appropriate in the theoretical construction phases, formulation of research questions, definition of objectives, development of the analytical model, diagnosis, data collection and interpretation, or in the writing of results and conclusions. However, AI may be used to break the ice when writing, for formal text revision, summarizing, code correction, data analysis, and reviewing bibliographic references.

In any case, students must clearly indicate which parts of the work were generated using AI, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how these tools influenced the process and the final outcome. Lack of transparency in this regard will be considered academic dishonesty. Plagiarism or improper use of AI will result in a grade of 0 for the affected assignment, and if repeated, may lead to a 0 for the entire course.

Finally, the use of mobile phones, laptops with Wi-Fi, tablets, or other electronic devices is not allowed in the classroom.

To be eligible for the resit exam, students must have been previously assessed in at least two-thirds of the total course grade. Field notes and partial submissions of the group project are not recoverable.

Students opting for single assessment must inform the instructor at the appropriate time and submit the critical questions (20%) and the communication plan (40%) on the same day as the final exam (40%).

Non-assessable students. When it is considered that the student has not been able to provide sufficient evidence for assessment, the subject will be recorded as non-assessable in the official transcript. The course guide must establish the criteria for assigning a non-assessable status.

## Bibliography

Compulsory Bibliography

Airoldi, Massimo. (2022). *The Machine Habitus. Towards a Sociology of Algorithms*. Polity Press.

Bell, Julia. (2021). *Atención radical*. Barcelona: Alpha Decay.

Benjamin, Walter. (1936/2021). *L'obra d'art en l'època de la reproductibilitat tècnica*. Barcelona: Edicions de la L Geminada.

Bruns, Axel. (2019). *Are Filter Bubbles Real?* Polity Press.

Castells, Manuel. (2002). *La galàxia internet*. Barcelona: La Rosa dels Vents.

Cheney-Lippold, John. (2017). *We Are Data: Algorithms and the Making of Our Digital Selves*. New York University Press.

Couldry, Nick, & Hepp, Andreas. (2018). *The mediated construction of reality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Eco, Umberto. (1968/2006). *Introducció. Apocalípticos e integrados*. Barcelona: Tusquets.

Farkas, Johan, & Maloney, Marcus (Eds.). (2024). *Digital media metaphors: A critical introduction*. London: Routledge.

Floridi, Luciano. (2023). *The ethics of artificial intelligence: Principles, challenges, and opportunities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freud, Sigmund. (1921). *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*. London: Penguin.

Fuchs, Christian. (2024). *Social media: A critical introduction* (4th ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Gillespie, Tarleton. (2018). *Custodians of the internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Han, Byung-Chul. (2023). *La crisi de la narració*. Barcelona: Herder.

Levi, Simona. (Ed.). (2019). *#fakeyou*. Barcelona: Raig Verd.

Levi, Simona. (n.d.). *Digitalización democrática: Soberanía digital para las personas*. Barcelona: Rayo Verde Editorial.

López Borrull, Alexandre. (2020). *Bulos científicos*. Madrid: Anaya.

O'Brien, Jodi. (2017). *The production of reality: Essays and readings on social interaction* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Postman, Neil. (1990). *Divertim-nos fins a morir*. Barcelona: La Campana. (Amusing Ourselves to Death. Nova York, Viking Penguin, 1985)

Rius-Ulldemolins, Quim, & Pecourt, Juan. (2021). *Digitalización de la sociedad, creatividad y nuevas prácticas culturales. La sociología de la cultura en la era digital*. Valencia: Universitat de València (PUV).

Wajcman, Judy. (2016). *Time in the digital age*. Barcelona: CCCB.

For the first part of the course:

Mattelart, Armand i Mattelart, Michèle. *Historia de las teorías de la comunicación*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1997, 126 pp.

On media:

Berrio, Jordi. (1990). *L'opinió pública i la democràcia*. Barcelona: Pòrtic.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1997). *Sobre la televisió*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.

Boyd, Danah. (2015). *It's complicated. The social lives of networked teens*. Yale University Press.

Cardús i Ros, Salvador. (1995). *Política de paper. Premsa i poder, 1981-1992*. Barcelona: La Campana.

Castells, Manuel. (2002). *La galàxia Internet. Reflexions sobre Internet, empresa i societat*. Barcelona: Rosa dels Vents.

Castells, Manuel. (2003). *L'era de la informació: Economia, societat i cultura* (3 volums). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. (Ed. original: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. New Jersey: Blackwell).

Champagne, Patrick. (s.d.). *Faire l'opinion*. París: Seuil.

Chomsky, Noam. (1992). *Las ilusiones necesarias*. Madrid: Libertarias/Prodhufi.

Katz, Jon. (1997). *Virtuous reality*. Nova York: Random House.

Lacroix, Michel. (2005). *El culte a l'emoció. Atrapats en un món d'emocions sense sentiments*. Barcelona: Edicions La Campana.

Lippmann, Walter. (1932). *Public opinion*. Londres: Allen & Unwin.

Saperas, Enric. (1992). *Introducció a les teories de la comunicació*. Barcelona: Pòrtic.

Weber, Max. (1992). Para una sociología de la prensa. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas (REIS)*, (57), 251-259.

Wihbey, John P. (2019). *The social fact: News & knowledge in a networked world*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Journals:

[Visual Studies](#)

[Yearbook of Moving Images Studies](#)

[Journal of Visual Culture](#)

[Visual Methodologies](#)

Magazines

Trípodos

Anàlisis

Capçalera

Comunicació21.

Treballs de Comunicació. Societat Catalana de Comunicació (IEC)

Webs

[CAC \(Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya\)](#)

[www.fair.org](#)

[www.medialens.org](#)

[Media.cat Observatori Crític dels Mitjans](#)

[Reuters Institute](#)

[https://fcic.periodistes.cat](#)

[http://incom.uab.cat](#)

[www.portalcomunicacio.com](http://www.portalcomunicacio.com)

[www.aulamedia.org](http://www.aulamedia.org)

## Software

Any word processor

## Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed