

Semiotics of Communication

Code: 103042
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Journalism	OT	3
Journalism	OT	4

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

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

Prerequisites

None

Objectives and Contextualisation

The objective of the course is to develop the necessary skills to work efficiently self-learning and self-demanding. Semiotics is a discipline that helps us to understand the world and, therefore, cultural phenomena, from an analytical and critical perspective. So it is a very useful tool in the construction of storytelling (journalistic, political, fiction) , etc.) as well as in its interpretation.

The approach to the subject is theoretical and methodological (learning of the concepts / instruments and application). It aims to provide students with the theoretical bases and tools to analyze the discourses of media and to understand the strategies underlying the communication processes of the products of the cultural industries. At the same time, it shows them how to articulate the deep meaning of social representations and the values transmitted. The context where social discourses are produced and consumed is also included in the analysis.

The different parts of the program are articulated around some of the main contributions of structuralism semiotics (Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Algirdas J. Greimas, etc.) and interpretive semiotics (Charles S. Peirce, Umberto Eco).

Gender approach

Semiotics arises from the need to know and understand cultural facts, as well as the need to transform them. The richness of its theoretical concepts and its tools of analysis make it a very fruitful discipline for the study of social representations and, particularly, of those elements involved in the construction of meaning. Consistently with the critical vocation of this discipline, special attention will be devoted to the (de)construction of stereotypes and the study of the underlying mechanisms on which the stories are made, told and settled on the social imaginary.

Competences

Journalism

- Act with ethical responsibility and respect for fundamental rights and duties, diversity and democratic values.
- Demonstrate a critical and self-critical capacity.
- Differentiate the discipline's main theories, its fields, conceptual developments, theoretical frameworks and approaches that underpin knowledge of the subject and its different areas and sub-areas, and acquire systematic knowledge of the media's structure.
- Disseminate the area's knowledge and innovations.
- Introduce changes in the methods and processes of the field of knowledge to provide innovative responses to the needs and demands of society.
- Students can apply the knowledge to their own work or vocation in a professional manner and have the powers generally demonstrated by preparing and defending arguments and solving problems within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills in order to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Take sex- or gender-based inequalities into consideration when operating within one's own area of knowledge.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse the sex- or gender-based inequalities and the gender biases present in one's own area of knowledge.
2. Apply theoretical principles to the analysis of audiovisual processes.
3. Appraise the social impacts of technological mediation in modern communication.
4. Critically analyse the principles, values and procedures that govern the exercise of the profession.
5. Demonstrate a critical and self-critical capacity.
6. Disseminate the area's knowledge and innovations.
7. Explain the explicit or implicit code of practice of one's own area of knowledge.
8. Identify phenomena and consider theoretical problems regarding audiovisual communication.
9. Identify the theoretical principles of audiovisual production and consumption.
10. Lay the foundations for modern semiotic trends and apply them to communication and journalism.
11. Propose new ways to measure the success or failure of the implementation of innovative proposals or ideas.
12. Propose projects and actions that incorporate the gender perspective.
13. Students can apply the knowledge to their own work or vocation in a professional manner and have the powers generally demonstrated by preparing and defending arguments and solving problems within their area of study.
14. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
15. Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.

16. Students must develop the necessary learning skills in order to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.

Content

1. Foundations and applications of structuralism

1.1. Semiotics paradigms

1.2. Key concepts of Structuralism

1.3. Connotation and social myths

2. Storytelling

2.1. Origins of narrative

2.2. The morphology of the folktale

2.3. Introduction to the structural analysis

2.4. Narratology and storytelling

3. French structuralism

3.1. The narrative theory of A. J. Greimas

3.2. Axiology

3.3. Narrative structure

3.4. Enunciation and point of view

3.5. Representations

4. Interpretation of texts

4.1. Foundations of interpretative semiotics

4.2. Theory of the interpretation of Umberto Eco

4.3. Interpretation and cultural resignification

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures, seminars, readings	50	2	6, 10, 3
Readings, audiovisual viewing, assignments	82.5	3.3	6, 10
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	10	0.4	6

The course will be carried out through different activities, as indicated in the table.

During one of the classes, the teacher will provide students 15 minutes to answer the surveys on the teaching performance and the subject or module.

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
Assignments	30%	3.5	0.14	4, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 15, 13, 14
Exams, tests	50%	2	0.08	5, 6, 10, 8, 9, 16
Readings, participation	20%	2	0.08	4, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 3

Continued evaluation

This course combines different types of assessment:

1. Two exams of the different parts that make up the syllabus (50% of the total score). It will be compulsory to pass this part of the assessment (4.9 or higher) in order to pass the subject. Students who cannot do an exam for objective and documented reasons, will have the option to make it up on the day of January fixed for the re-evaluation.
2. Final course work (30%).
3. Readings, discussions and exercises carried out in the seminars (20%). The final grade of this part of the evaluation (readings, debates and exercises) will be obtained by performing the arithmetic mean.

Unjustifiable absences will be scored with a 0. The students who cannot perform the test for objective and documentary justified reasons, will have the option to make the test on the January reevaluation day.

Works delivered after the scheduled dates will not be accepted. Undelivered works will be scored as 0.

The final grade will be the result of the weighted average of the three parts that integrate the evaluation.

The calendar will be available on the first day of class. Students will find information on the Virtual Campus about the description of the activities, teaching materials, etc. In case of a change of teaching modality for health reasons, teachers will make readjustments in the schedule and methodologies.

Re-assessment

According to regulations, in order to be able to participate in the recovery process, students must have previously been assessed for at least 2/3 of the total assessable activities of the subject.

In the period for the reassessment, failed exams may be repeated if the average of the four tests is not less than 3.5 (unrealized tests score 0 in the calculation of the mean). If the average of the exams is at least 5, it will not be necessary to repeat the failed ones.

The final assignment of the course is an assessable task that cannot be reassigned in case of failure. The reason is that completing a task of this nature is practically impossible within the time available during the reassignment period.

The readings, debates, and exercises are linked to the in-class work, so they also cannot be reassigned.

The readings, discussions and exercises carried out in the seminars are linked to work in the classroom, so they can't be re-assessed.

Assignments and exercises that have not been previously agreed upon with the course coordinator or that do not follow the established guidelines will be considered NON-ASSESSABLE.

In the case of a second enrolment, students can do a single assignment. The grading of the subject will correspond to the grade of the synthesis exam/assignment.

Single evaluation

1. 50% Written exam. It will be essential to pass (5 points out of 10 or more) to pass the subject.
2. 20% Exercises of solving 4 case studies or communication challenges.
3. 30% Delivery of a research and conceptualization work. Review of scientific papers about the same topic (facilitated by the teacher), relate concepts highlight the most significant aspects, reflect on the topics discussed and suggest possible lines of research based on the most relevant contributions.

Recuperation: single evaluation

According to regulations, in order to be able to participate in the recovery process, students must have previously been assessed for at least 2/3 of the total assessable activities of the subject.

The reassessments and the review of the final grade will also follow the same procedure as for the continuous assessment.

Other informations

The student who makes any irregularity (copy, plagiarism, identity theft ...) will be rated with 0 this act of evaluation. In the event of a second irregularity, the final grade for the course will be 0.

The professor may indicate to the students that, for the correct development of the class and to guarantee good coexistence in the classroom, it is highly recommended not to use electronic devices or screens during the class, except when indicated the opposite for some specific teaching situation.

For this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively for specific tasks, such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction, or translation. Teachers will eventually indicate other specific uses of technology in the course. As for the students, they must clearly identify any parts generated with these technologies, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how AI has influenced the process and outcome of the assignment. Failure to disclose the use of AI in this assessed activity will be considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in a partial or total penalty to the assignment grade, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

Bibliography

The texts marked with an * indicate the basic bibliography of the course; the rest of them indicate the complementary bibliography.

- References of the first theme

BARTHES, Roland (1986[1964]) "Retórica de la imagen". *Lo obvio y lo obtuso*, Paidós.

BARTHES, Roland (1994 [1957]) "El mito hoy". *Mitologías*. Siglo XXI.

BERTETTI, Paolo (2015) "Capítulo I. Semiótica, audiovisual, historia, texto". *La historia audiovisual. Las teorías y herramientas semióticas*, UOC.

CHANDLER, Daniel (2022) "The Saussurian Model" (pp. 13-29). *Semiotics. The basics*. Rouledge (4th edition revised).

COBLEY, Paul; Litza Jansz (2010) *Introducing Semiotics. A graphic guide* (Apartats: Ferdinand de Saussure, Saussure and Semiology, The Structure of Myth, Structure and Mythemes, Structuralism). Icon Books.

DANESI, Marcel (2017) "Emoji grammar". *The Semiotics of Emoji* (77-94). Bloomsbury.

HALL, Sean (2012). "Signs and signing". *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics* (21-28). Laurence King Publishing, 2nd edition.

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Lorusso, Anna Maria (2015) "The Structuralist Perspective" (pp. 21-66). *Cultural Semiotics. For a Cultural Perspective in Semiotics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

MEUNIER, Jean-Guy (2021) "The complexity of semiotics" (1-16). *Computational Semiotics*. Bloomsbury.

- References of the second theme

BARTHES, Roland (1993[1966]) "Introducción al análisis estructural del relato". *La aventura semiológica*. Paidós.

BERTETTI, Paolo. (2015[2012]) "La historia como un contenido narrativo". *La historia audiovisual. Las teorías y herramientas semióticas*. UOC.

*CHATMAN, Seymour (2013[1978]) "Historia: sucesos"; "Historia: existentes". *Historia y discurso*, RBA Libros.

GENETTE, G. (1989[1972]) "La estructura del relato". *Figuras III*. Lumen.

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TOMASEVSKIJ, Boris (2012[(1928)]) "Temática". Tzvetan Todorov, *Teoría de la literatura de los formalistas rusos*. Siglo XXI.

VALLÉS CALATRAVA, Jose Rafael (2002) *Diccionario de la teoría de la narrativa*. Alhulía.

- References of the third theme

BERTETTI, Paolo. (2015) "La historia como enunciación". *La historia audiovisual. Las teorías y herramientas semióticas*. UOC.

CALABRESE, Omar (1995), "La información y el espectador". O. Calabrese, A. Silva y U. Volli, *Los juegos de la imagen*. Instituto Italiano di Cultura, págs. 129-143.

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*LAGOPOULOS, Alexandros; BLOKUND-LAGOPULOU, Karin (2020). "Paradigmatic analysis: Isotopies, qualitative approach". ***Theory and Methodology of Semiotics: The Tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure*** (pp. 130-139). De Gruyter.

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- References of the fourth theme

*CHANDLER, Daniel (2022) "The Peircean Model" (pp. 30-39). ***Semiotics. The basics***. Rouledge (4th edition revised).

*COBLEY, Paul; Litza Jansz (2010) ***Introducing Semiotics. A graphic guide*** (Apartat: Charles Sanders Peirce). Icon Books.

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Software

No specific

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
(SEM) Seminars	11	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(SEM) Seminars	12	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed