UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Communication, Development, and Social Change

Code: 42440
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Media, Communication and Culture	OT	0

Contact

Name: Ana Isabel Fernández Viso

Email: ana.fernandez.viso@uab.cat

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

- Basic knowledge of communication theories and sociology.
- Basic skills for the design and execution of either a research project or a strategic communication project.
- Those of the Master.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The basic objectives of the module are the following:

1. Critically analyze the relationship between communication, power, culture, and social change.
2. Understand the connections between communication, development, democracy, and social justice, as well as their practical implications.
3. Become familiar with the main academic approaches and professional experiences in communication for development and social change.
4. Develop skills to design, plan, and manage communication strategies aimed at social change in diverse contexts.

Competences

- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Lead and work in interdisciplinary teams.
- Plan and lead basic and applied research projects in media communication and culture.
- Plan, direct and evaluate policies on culture and communication in both the local and the international fields using the new forms of social communication
- Plan, direct and evaluate public communication projects to meet the needs of institutions, businesses and social organisations.
- Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.

Learning Outcomes

1. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
2. Design and direct comunication projects.
3. Develop innovative proposals regarding communication policies for development.
4. Develop research projects on communication for development and social change.
5. Evaluate the results of communication projects of institutions, companies, associations, foundations and other entities.
6. Generate ideas and innovative solutions regarding communication, development and social change.
7. Lead and work in interdisciplinary teams.
8. Recognize the scope and application of the current policies of communication for development.
9. Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.

Content

Brief description of the contents of the module:

1. Introduction to the concepts of development, social change and global justice: Causes and dynamics of generation of inequalities.
2. Culture, communication and power: basic conceptual approach.
3. Introduction to debate on the role of communication in the processes of development and social change.
4. Historical evolution of the design and the practice of communication strategies for development and social change.
5. Communication, democracy and social change in the current digital environment.
6. Practical construction of a communication strategy for social change.

The content of the module will be sensitive to cultural diversity and aspects related to the gender perspective.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Case analysis	30	1.2	9, 1, 7
Review of theories of development and communication for social change	30	1.2	9, 1
Type: Supervised			
Design of a communication project for social change	40	1.6	9, 1, 7
Type: Autonomous			
Readings, seminar dynamics.	50	2	9, 1, 7

The pedagogical method will be based on the collective construction of knowledge, based, on the one hand, on the debate generated by the lecturer's explanations, the presentations prepared by the students on reference readings on the subject and the common analysis of practical cases and, on the other hand, on project-based and challenge-based learning. The course thus incorporates innovative methodologies such as challenge-based learning (CBL) and project-based learning (PBL), which place students at the center of the learning process. These methodologies promote the practical application of content, stimulate critical and creative thinking, and encourage collaborative work. By engaging with real or simulated problems, students develop key competencies for analyzing and intervening in communication processes for social change. Their use is especially relevant in a course oriented toward action and transformation.

This approach will take the form of five complementary working dynamics:
1. Explanations by the lecturer on the more theoretical aspects of the course.
2. Collaborative workshop on reference readings in the field of communication, development and social change.
3. Analysis and presentation by the students of practical cases.
4. Design in small groups of a strategic communication project for social change, under the tutoring of the lecturer and in response to a challenge posed by a social organisation from the UAB area.
5. Presentation and discussion in class of the communicative strategies designed by the students.

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
Analysis and discussion of case studies	25%	0	0	5, 9, 6, 1, 8, 7
Collaborative workshop on reference readings	25%	0	0	5, 9, 6, 1, 8
Design of a communication project for social change.	50%	0	0	9, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7

Evaluation:
The students of the module will be evaluated based on the three main working dynamics of the module:

1. The development of a specific communication project for a social organisation in the UAB environment, following the challenge-based learning model and taking into account the main lines of communication for social change. This project must be agreed in advance with the lecturer. (50%)

2. Reading workshop that the students will have to prepare and present in class, as a previous step to the debate on the issues and ideas addressed in the texts. (25%)

3. Analysis, presentation and discussion in class of case studies of communication strategies for development and/or social change. (25%)

Not assessable:

Students who do not hand in the final project in the time and in the form indicated by the teacher will receive a grade of 'not assessable'.

Single-assessment system:

This course/module does not provide for a single-assessment system.

Reassessment:

Only the communicative project/analysis can be retaken, applying the knowledge acquired in the course and following the guidelines provided by the teacher in the grade review process. The maximum grade that can be achieved in the retake assessment is a 7, which will be weighted average with the grades obtained in the other two evaluative activities of the module.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI):

In this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted as an integral part of assignment development, provided that the final outcome demonstrates a significant contribution from the student in terms of analysis and personal reflection. Students must clearly identify any content generated using AI, specify the tools employed, and include a critical reflection on how these technologies have influenced both the process and the final result 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

Basic bibliography:

BELTRÁN, Luis Ramiro (2005): "La comunicación para el desarrollo en Latinoamérica. Un recuento de medio siglo". Available on: https://revistas.udem.edu.co/index.php/anagramas/article/view/1117/1090

COULDRY, Nick (2010). *Why voice matters. Culture and politics after neoliberalism*. London: Sage.

DAVIS, Aeron; FENTON, Natalie, FREEDMAN, Des; and KHIABANY, Gholam. (2020). *Media, Democracy and Social Change. Re-imagining Political Communications*. London: Sage.

De-ANDRÉS, Susana, and CHAPARRO, Manuel. (2022). *Comunicación radical. Despatriarcalizar, descolonizar y ecologizar la cultura mediática*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

FERNÁNDEZ-VISO, Ana. (2013). Medios de comunicación y modelos de desarrollo: de la modernización al buen gobierno. *Revista Orbis*, 24 (año 9), 132-158. http://www.revistaorbis.org/pdf/24/art8.pdf

GUMUCIO DAGRON, Alfonso. (2001): *Haciendo Olas, Historias de comunicación participativa para el cambio social.* La paz: Fundación Rockefeller.

GUMUCIO DAGRON, Alfonso & TUFTE, Thomas. (2008): *Antología de comunicación para el cambio social: lecturas históricas y contemporáneas*. SouthOrange, NJ: Consorcio de Comunicación para el Cambio Social.

GWINN WILKINS, Karen; TUFTE, Thomas; and OBREGÓN, Rafael. (2014): *The Handbook of Development Communication and Social Change*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

HAN, Byung-Chul. (2022). *Infocracia. La digitalización y la crisis de la democracia.* Barcelona: Taurus.

JONES, Owen (2013). *Chavs: la demonización de la clase obrera*. Madrid: Capitán Swing.

KOTHARI, Ashish; SALLEH, Ariel; ESCOBAR, Arturo; DEMARIA, Federico; and ACOSTA, Alberto (Eds.) (2019). *Pluriverse. APost-development Dictionary*. Shahpur Jat (New Delhi): Tulika Books.

LIE, Rico; and SERVAES, Jan (2015). Disciplines in the Field of Communication for Development and Social Change. *Communication Theory*, 25 (2), 244-258. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12065

PAXTON, Robert (2006): *Anatomía del fascismo*. Madrid: Capitán Swing.

PIKETTY, Thomas (2019). *Capital e ideología.* Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto.

SERVAES, Jan. (2021). *Learning from Communicators in Social Change. Rethinking the Power of Development.* Singapor: Springer.

THOMAS, Pradip Ninan (2019). *Communication for Social Change: Context, Social Movements and the Digital* . Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: Sage.

TUFTE, Thomas. (2015). *Comunicación para el cambio social. La participación y el empoderamiento como base para el desarrollo mundial.* Barcelona: Icaria.

WILKINSON, Richard; and PICKETT, Kate (2019). *Igualdad: Cómo las sociedades más igualitarias mejoran el bienestar colectivo.* Madrid: Capitán Swing.

VV.AA. (2009): *Metodologías participativas. Manual.* Madrid: CIMAS. Available on: https://www.redcimas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/manual_2010.pdf

This bibliography will be complemented with additional readings that will be discussed in the reading workshop.

Software

The module does not require the knowledge of specialized software beyond the usual office automation packages.

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
(TEm) Theory (master)	40	Spanish	second semester	afternoon