

ECA 2025 Short Courses

From Theory to Practice: Slow Media as a Creative Solution for Mindful Learning and Assessment

Sponsor: Short Courses

Presenters:

Ryan P McCullough, West Liberty University

Jennifer L Adams, DePauw University

For the past several years, students, faculty and administrators in higher education have reported feeling increased stress and anxiety in both work and social life (for example, see the special issue of Liberal Education published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities titled "The Mental Health Crisis, Summer 2024). While there are no easy answers to this contemporary problem, we suggest that one small creative solution relevant to communication faculty is the practice of Slow Media.

Slow Communication emphasizes mindful engagement, thoughtful expression, and active listening to foster deeper connections and meaningful interactions. This short course will introduce the concept of Slow Media, outlining its underlying principles and exploring how it can be integrated into the communication curriculum. Using group discussion, examples, and hands-on activities, attendees will learn how to incorporate Slow Media. From individual student assignments to program-wide assessments, we'll discuss practical applications and strategies for implementing 'Slow Media' in your teaching.

Historical Narratives and Theoretical Foundations: A Storyteller's Approach to Critical Health Communication

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Presenter:

Henneh Kwaku Kyereh, Chapman University

Storytelling can be crucial for health communicators to inspire empathy, create a sense of connection, and even spur behavior change. We will explore critical health communication through storytelling techniques, theoretical considerations, and historical narratives. In this session, we will examine the intersection of health messaging, power structures, creative writing techniques, and social determinants that shape health discourse and inclusive health messaging.

Discovering Creative Solutions to Contemporary Problems Using Media Literacy and Critical Pedagogy

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Presenters:

Jack Banks, University of Hartford
Nancy Bressler, West Virginia Wesleyan College

In celebration of ECA's theme, this short course demonstrates how students can creatively engage in social awareness, through the analysis and production of media. Since media consumes so much of our students' time, presenters exhibit how instructors can utilize that desire to illustrate critical thinking, media literacy skills, and a greater engagement in diversity and inclusion. Rather than see students' desire for media as a problem, presenters discuss how media immersion can be a solution.

Building the Business Acumen of Communication Students: A Case Approach

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Presenter:

Amanda G McKendree, University of Notre Dame

A contemporary problem facing communication faculty is building the business acumen of students (Ragas & Culp, 2014; 2018). This short course offers a creative solution through the use of case method teaching and applied learning pedagogies. Participants will gain practical expertise in the case method and receive access to *Business Ethics: A Case Approach* (Kendall Hunt Publishing Company) along with a repository of case study resources. This text introduces students to business concepts including ethical influence, corporate reputation, codes of conduct, environmental and social sustainability, the role of business education, and inclusive economics. The featured case studies highlight authentic business problems at some of the most popular brands (Wendy's; H&M; Starbucks Corporation) and encourage students to apply their knowledge in new contexts (Ellet, 2007). By bringing the language of business into the communication classroom, faculty can directly address these underdeveloped skills in communication students. Preparing future strategic communicators to influence the companies and organizations that employ them begins with honing their business literacy skills in the communication classroom.

Contemporary Problems in Journalism: Finding Solutions Through News-Academic Partnerships

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Presenter:

Lara Salahi, Endicott College

This course will explore the growing importance of news-academic partnerships, particularly in fostering solutions to contemporary challenges in media education and journalism practice. Participants will learn about successful models of news-academic partnerships, their benefits for students, faculty, and local communities, and strategies for implementing such programs. The course will cover practical aspects of establishing partnerships, designing curricula, and navigating institutional challenges. Attendees will gain insights into how these collaborations can address

contemporary problems in journalism education and local news while providing creative solutions for workforce development and community engagement.

This course addresses the convention theme by exploring how news-academic partnerships can tackle contemporary problems in journalism education, local news ecosystems, and community engagement. It demonstrates how communication studies can contribute to solving societal challenges by bridging the gap between academia and professional practice. Participants will examine practical strategies to prepare students for the evolving media landscape and innovative approaches to journalism and community storytelling.

Solving Contemporary Issues by Applying Theory to Practice: Strategies for Fostering Translation

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Presenters:

Sean M Horan, Fairfield University

Chris Wernecke, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Erin Sheila Crow, Fairfield University

Today, the importance of communication skills is increasingly emphasized, yet concurrently, organizations report a gap in effective communication from recent graduates entering the workforce. Therefore, there is a critical need for students to understand the role of communication theory and translate their skills in professional contexts. The authors of *Communication Theory and Practice: From Classroom to Boardroom* will share their innovative approach to the textbook and instructional materials, focusing on teaching students the utility of communication theory and research in driving creative solutions to problems. The short course will highlight strategies for enhancing engagement among communication theory students, going beyond understanding to prompt theory-to-practice connections. The course combines discussion, examples, and interactive activities to foster ideas for teaching communication theory through a contemporary, applied lens. The workshop will also explore ways to help students translate their communication skills and the utility of communication research in excelling across diverse career paths.

How Hard Can It Be?: Getting Started with Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

Sponsor: Short Courses

Presenter:

Mary E Donato, Central College

Thinking about adding a travel abroad component to one of your existing courses? Ever wondered, "Just how complicated is it to travel abroad with students?" Or perhaps you find that your institution is lacking in resources to help faculty study abroad with students? This may just be the short course for you! Faculty-led study abroad trips can look different across institutions but, in common, they are short-term study abroad experiences, led by faculty, where students earn credit hours either through a pre-trip classroom experience or classroom experience on the trip. Having

facilitated two faculty-led study abroad experiences (Greece in 2019 and Iceland in 2023) with an accompanying pre-trip course, I have learned helpful tips and tricks I believe others looking to participate in faculty-led study abroad would benefit from. From designing and/or aligning a course with a travel experience to finding the proper partners and completing the appropriate forms – all will be addressed in this open discussion about the benefits, challenges, and rewarding nature of faculty-led study abroad trips.

“Framing, Agenda, and Spin: [Manufacturing] Contemporary Rhetorical Problems and [Maybe Some] Creative Solutions”

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Presenters:

Richard Eugene Vatz, Towson University

D.L. Stephenson, Western Connecticut State University

This short course focuses on the process of how powerful speakers, writers, and communicators shape public discourse, make meaning, create salience, and frame and spin facts and events in order to shape public perceptions and opinions. The agenda/spin model of persuasion assumes that knowledge, information, and public discourse, generally, come from sources that have the authority to control, create, and shape current public discourse. The agenda/spin model assumes that all communication comes from a source with a particular agenda. However, an agenda needs to bear little or no relationship to its inherent importance. In other words, problems literally can be created or manufactured, while others can be minimized or ignored, depending on the agendas of those who hold the power to control public discourse.

The agenda/spin model provides a framework for interpreting persuasion in public discourse. Persuasion is always grounded in some world view, some ideological perspective, regardless of the politics of the communicator, no matter the agenda, politics, or motives of those who have stakes in controlling public discourse. What we pay attention to, dispute, challenge, and accept is always a matter of persuasion, always a matter of promoting certain ideas while dismissing or diminishing others. The Agenda/Spin model of rhetorical analysis makes explicit how problems are framed and then spun in order to create salience and meaning for audiences. While Spin is always a matter of interpreting what the "facts" or events mean, "framing" is always about the selection of certain aspects of an issue or problem (real or manufactured) to generate a specific response. As well, the agenda/spin model of persuasion always makes central the agenda and ideological perspective(s) that inspire what will be considered important problems requiring solutions.

This year's seminar/short course begins with a brief overview (lecture) of *The Only Authentic Book of Persuasion: The Agenda Spin Model*. Both co-presenters will take turns explaining the agenda/spin model and providing clear examples of its use and relevance to the study of persuasion.

Addressing the Contemporary Problems of AI: Creative Solutions for Active Learning in Introductory Theory Courses

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Presenter:

Maxine Gesualdi, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

This short course presents a combination of in-class, active learning techniques designed for introductory theory courses to address the contemporary problem of students' prohibited use of AI on assessments. Using in-class activities related to inter-teaching, active learning summarizing techniques, group work, and applied examples, this short course will provide participants with tools to enact creative assessment solutions that avoid the ability for students to use AI on their assessments. The course will present the framework of active learning methods for use in an introductory theory course. The short course will then walk participants through example lessons to simulate a week's worth of class meetings. Participants will leave the short course with a framework to assess learning in the classroom to avoid the problematic AI tools that students are using to complete assessments such as essays, speech outlines, papers, and online quizzes outside of class.

In submitting the attached paper or proposal, I/we recognize that this submission is considered a professional responsibility. I/we agree to present this paper or program/panel if it is accepted and programmed. I/we further recognize that all who attend and present at ECA's annual meeting must register and pay the required fees.

AI Literacy: Policy, Pedagogy, and Prompt Engineering

Sponsor: Short Courses

Presenters:

M.E. Yancosek Gamble, Fairmont State University

Danielle R Mehlman-Brightwell, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

This workshop introduces educators to generative AI by providing a foundational understanding of AI policy, personalized learning pedagogy for students, and prompt engineering techniques for professors.

Leveraging Generative AI for Backward Design in Curriculum Development and Course Design

Sponsor: Short Courses

Presenters:

Jana Duckett, Morgan State University

Nicole M. Westrick, Morgan State University

This 75-minute course equips media and communication professors with practical strategies to use generative artificial intelligence in supporting backward design for curriculum development. In this short course, faculty will explore generative artificial intelligence (genAI) with an overview of the tools available and an introduction to the value and importance of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). After a review of Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), faculty will complete hands-on exercises to explore the benefits and limitations of various genAI tools. All exercises will rely on Fitzpatrick, Fox, and Weinstein's (2023) PREP and EDIT prompt engineering approach. Each exercise will begin with PREP, "Prompt the machine, give it a Role or a voice, be Explicit in your instructions and set the Parameters for the answer" (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2023, p. 90). Following generation of the results, participants will work in small groups or pairs to apply the EDIT framework of "Evaluate the content for language, facts, and structure ...Determine accuracy and corroborate sources...Identify biases and misinformation...[and] Transform the content to reflect any of your own adjustments" (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2023, p. 100). The PREP and EDIT approach allows faculty to utilize a structured framework to explore how genAI can support curriculum design and create courses that are both pedagogically sound and innovative. Finally, the debrief discussion will include suggestions on to adapt the PREP and EDIT approach to course activities.

Integrating AI into the Public Speaking Classroom: Contemporary Problem, Creative Solutions

Sponsor: Short Courses

Presenters:

Eryn Travis, West Chester University

Laura Hamilton Brown, West Chester University

Although generative AI's presence doesn't justify its integration into higher education, generative AI's adoption across a variety of industries necessitates that our undergraduates develop generative AI literacy. They need to understand how this technology works, its strengths and weaknesses, and when and how to use it.

Generative AI works best in public speaking development when the technology is used to refine student created content - content that is accurate and designed to engage the audience.

To that end, this short course will cover:

Part I: AI 101: How Large Language Models work; strengths & weaknesses

Part 2: "Tech how-tos:" Using AI to generate engaging speech topics; Using AI to gauge audience knowledge & interest in topic of choice; Using AI to refine thesis statements; Using AI to practice delivery; Using AI to provide rapid peer evaluations.

While generative AI can help students with parts of their speech, the core skills of effective communication- speaker authenticity, engagement, mastery of the topic, audience connection - must be honed by the speaker.