# International communication

**Titulaire**
Jan Zienkowski (Coordonnateur)

**Mnémonique du cours**
COMM-B570

**Crédits ECTS**
5 crédits

**Langue(s) d'enseignement**
Anglais

**Période du cours**
Deuxième quadrimestre

**Campus**
Solbosch

## Contenu du cours

The course offers historical insight, theoretical frameworks, as well as cases studies for understanding international communication systems on the one hand, and the way the economic, military, political and cultural dimensions of international relations get framed by geopolitical actors on the other hand.

Communication has always been seminal for the maintenance of power over time and space. It allows for the establishment of empires old and new. International technologies and systems of communication have been used in support of colonization, military interventions, international propaganda, as well as for the maintenance of more subtle forms of (inter)dependency and control. At the same time, international communication underpins well-intended but not necessarily effective emancipatory initiatives of international cooperation and development.

This course will focus on (struggles over) the infrastructures of international communication as well as on the strategic narratives deployed by national and international actors to make sense of the internatinal order. International communication is not the exclusive domain of nation-states. Inter-governmental institutions (e.g., EU, WTO, UN), non-governmental actors (e.g., terrorist networks, INGO's, international social movements), and multinationals (e.g., News Corporation, Facebook, Huawei) communicate across borders as well. Access to and control over communication infrastructures and narratives is important to all of them.

The course is split up in three parts. Part one provides an introduction into a selection of major theories and approaches in the study of international communication. This part provides an introduction into the concepts and theories of propaganda, information warfare, soft power, public diplomacy, and the analysis of strategic narratives. Part two provides a brief history of the infrastructures of international communication. Special attention will go to the way states have struggled for control over communication technologies throughout modern history, from the invention of the telegraph to the contemporary debates over "the next internet", its big data and cloud systems. Part three focuses on case studies and guest lectures about contemporary actors and developments in the field of international communication. Potential cases include Netflix and the question of cultural imperialism; the New Silk Road and the battle for the 21st century communications infrastructure; and EU-NATO-Russia relations through the lenses of information warfare and public diplomacy.

## Objectifs (et/ou acquis d'apprentissages spécifiques)

> Students will develop insight into the historical struggles over the global electronic communications infrastructure.
> Students will be able to critically discuss key theories and approaches in the study of international communication.
> Students will be able to critically analyze contemporary debates over communication infrastructures relying on key concepts developed the field of international communication.
> Students will be able to identify and analyze the way (inter)national actors construct strategic narratives about the international world order and their place therein.

## Pré-requis et co-requis

### Connaissances et compétences pré-requises

No specific competences or knowledge required.

## Méthodes d'enseignement et activités d'apprentissages

> Theoretical lessons
> Reading assignments
> Collective discussions of texts and cases
> Inverted classes
> Writing of an individual paper

### Contribution au profil d'enseignement

> This course challenges students to consider international communication as a cover term for a range of phenomena where political, economic, and cultural interests intersect.
> The course invites students to deepen their understanding of the way communicative infrastructures are both means and objects of international conflict and cooperation.
> This course moves beyond a mere instrumental approach to communication and a focus on individual messages and campaigns in the field of international communication.
> The course focuses on the strategic importance of controlling communication technologies, processes and flows for actors that communicate at an international or global scale.

> The course contributes to the methodological formation of students by familiarizing them with the qualitative analysis of strategic narratives articulated by geopolitical actors.

## Références, bibliographie et lectures recommandées

Major sources of inspiration for this course include (but are not limited to):

> Baines, Paul, Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, and Snow, Nancy, red. z.d. The SAGE Handbook of Propaganda. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: Sage Publications Ltd.

> Boyd-Barrett, Oliver. 2002. 'Global Communication Orders'. In Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication, edited by William B. Gudykunst and Bella Mody, 325–42. Sage / Thousand Oaks / New Delhi: Sage Publications.

> Colley, Thomas, and Carolijn van Noort. 2022. Strategic Narratives, Ontological Security and Global Policy: Responses to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-00852-8.

> Coticchia, Fabrizio, and Andrea Catanzaro. 2022. 'The Fog of Words: Assessing the Problematic Relationship between Strategic Narratives, (Master) Frames and Ideology'. Media, War & Conflict 15 (4): 427–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635220965622.

> Hafez, Kai, and Anne Grüne. 2022. Foundations of Global Communication: A Conceptual Handbook. London: Routledge.

> Holtzhausen, Derina, en Ansgar Zerfass, red. 2019. The Routledge handbook of strategic communication. New York: Routledge.

> Lams, Lutgard. 2018. 'Examining Strategic Narratives in Chinese Official Discourse under Xi Jinping'. Journal of Chinese Political Science 23 (3): 387–411. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-018-9529-8.

> Miskimmon, Alister, and Ben O'Loughlin. 2017. 'Russia's Narratives of Global Order: Great Power Legacies in a Polycentric World'. Politics and Governance 5 (3): 111–20. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v5i3.1017.

> Mosco, Vincent. 1996. The political economy of communication: rethinking and renewal. London: Sage.

> Mosco, Vincent. 2017. Becoming digital. United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing.

> Pomerantsev, Peter. 2019. This is not propaganda: adventures in the war against reality. London: Faber & Faber.

> Snow, Nancy, and Nicholas J. Cull, red. 2020. The Routledge handbook of public diplomacy. New York / London: Routledge.

> Sriramesh, Krishnamurthy, en Dejan Vercic, red. 2009. 'Public relations, Public Diplomacy, and Strategic Communication. In The Global Public Relations Handbook, Revised and Expanded Edition, 943–67. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203889374-52.

> Staal, Jonas. 2019. Propaganda art in the 21st century. Cambridge / London: The MIT Press.

> Thussu, Daya Kishan. 2009. *International communication#: a reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.

> Thussu, Daya Kishan. 2019. *International communication: continuity and change, 3rd edition*. London / New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

A list of recommended and obligatory readings will be published on the UV.

## Support(s) de cours

Université virtuelle

## Autres renseignements

### Lieu(x) d'enseignement

Solbosch

### Contact(s)

Professor : Jan Zienkowski - Jan.zienkowski@ulb.be
Assistant: to be determined

## Méthode(s) d'évaluation

Examen écrit et Travail personnel

### Méthode(s) d'évaluation (complément)

Individual paper and written exam with open questions.

### Construction de la note (en ce compris, la pondération des notes partielles)

> 50 % - individual paper:
>> Students who did not submit or failed their paper in the first session need to re-submit in the second session.
>> Students who did succeed for the paper in the first session automatically keep the grade they obtained for the paper in the first session.
>> Students who failed the course but succeeded in the paper and wish to improve their grade can re-submit upon request and registration.

> 50 % - written exam with open questions:
>> Students who did not take the exam in the first session need to re-submit in the second session.
>> Students who failed the course but did succeed for the exam in the first session automatically keep the grade they got for the exam in the first session.
>> Students who failed the course but succeeded for the exam in the first session and wish to improve their grade can re-take the exam upon request and registration.

### Langue(s) d'évaluation principale(s)

Anglais

## Programmes

### Programmes proposant ce cours à la faculté de Lettres, Traduction et Communication

MA-BABL | Master en communication multilingue | finalité Ressources humaines/bloc 2, finalité Relations internationales/bloc 2 et finalité Multiculturalité/bloc 2 et MA-COMU | Master en communication | finalité Communication politique et lobbying/bloc 2