

# 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 on the one hand, and the way the economic, military, political and cultural dimensions of international relations get framed and narrated 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 international 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 provides an introduction into a selection of major theories and approaches in the study of international communication. It introduces concepts and theories of propaganda, information warfare, soft power, public diplomacy, and strategic narratives. Students will explore issues related to the infrastructural aspects of international communication. For instance, we will discuss 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. 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 historical struggles over global electronic communications infrastructures.
- > 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-requis

No specific competences or knowledge required.

## Méthodes d'enseignement et activités d'apprentissages

This course requires attendance and active participation of students. For most lessons, students will be required to prepare themselves by reading texts and/or doing exercises in preparation of the class. Teaching methods include:

- > Inverted classes
- > Theoretical lessons
- > Reading assignments and collective discussions of texts or cases
- > Presentations and/or discussions related to collective paper assignments

## 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.

Obligatory and optional readings will be published on the UV (Université Virtuelle) platform of the ULB.

## Support(s) de cours

Université virtuelle

## Autres renseignements

### Lieu(x) d'enseignement

Solbosch

### Contact(s)

Professor : Jan Zienkowski - [Jan.zienkowski@ulb.be](mailto:Jan.zienkowski@ulb.be)

Assistant: Lucile Coenen - [lucile.coenen@ulb.be](mailto:lucile.coenen@ulb.be)

## Méthode(s) d'évaluation

Examen écrit, Présentation orale et Travail personnel

### Examen écrit

Question ouverte à développement long

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

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following elements:

- attendance and active participation in class (20%)
- collective or individual paper (40%)
- written exam with open questions (40%)

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

## Evaluation in the first exam session (May/ June)

**20%** of the grade is based on the student's **presence and active participation** in class: students need to be present at 80% of the lessons to obtain 20% of the grade for this course. Those who do not reach an attendance rate of 80% lose 20% of their grade. Attendance is considered to be obligatory.

**40%** of the grade is based on the evaluation of a **collective paper assignment**

- students who do not hand in their collective paper in the first session will be graded with an 'ABS' (absence) and need to submit an individual paper in the second session



- > students who did not pass their collective paper assignment and fail the course will need to submit an individual paper in the second session
- > students who passed their collective paper assignment but who failed the course in the first session will keep the grade for their collective paper in the second session: they do not need to write an individual paper

**40%** of the grade is based on the evaluation of a **written exam with open questions** (in English)

- > Students who passed the exam but fail the course in the first session keep the grade for their exam in the second session. They do not need to re-take the exam.
- > Students who failed the exam and fail the course in the first session will need to re-take the exam in the second session.
- > Students who did not take the exam but did submit a paper in the first session will receive an ABS (absence) as a grade for the first session. If they succeeded their collective paper this grade will be transferred to the second session on condition that they take the exam.

## Evaluation in the second exam session (August/September)

**20%** of the grade is based on the student's **presence and active participation** in class

**40%** of the grade is based on the evaluation of an **individual paper assignment**

- > students who do not hand in their obligatory individual paper in the second session will be graded as 'ABS' (absence) and will therefore fail this course
- > students who did not pass the collective paper assignment in the first session and who failed the course need to submit an individual paper in the second session
- > students who succeeded their collective paper assignment but who failed the course in the first session will keep the grade for their collective paper in the second session

**40%** of the grade is based on the evaluation of a **written exam with open questions** (in English)

- > students who passed the exam in the first session but who failed the course keep the grade for their exam in the second session

## 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

