

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond In Writing

Course Number: **COMM 493**

or Degree Plan(s):

The Department of Communication and Sociology would like to open a new course, COMM 493 (Rhetoric of Social Movements).

	Campus-Level Academic Review¹	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	Change to a Course Include signatures from all chairs/program directors for cross-listed courses. ¹						
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	I	A
5.	Number of credit hours	A	A	A	A	A	A
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	A	A
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	I	I
9.	Course restriction (e.g., majors only, junior standing)	A	A	A	A	A	A
10.	Level change (U to G or G to U)	A	A	A	A	A	A
11.	Cross list course	A	A	A	A	A	A
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	A	A
13.	Open or close a course	A	A	A	A	A	A
	Change to a Degree Plan						
14.	Educational Program — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A
15.	Educational Program — Adopt/revise admission requirements	A	A	A	A	A	A
16.	GPA — Revise program-required GPA	A	A	A	A	A	A
17.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A

		Department Chair	Associate Dean	Dean	Provost	Senior Vice President	President	Board of Trustees	Students
	Full Review								
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)								
18.	General requirements for Bachelor's and Associate Degrees	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	I
19.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	I
20.	Requirements for graduating with honors	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan								
21.	Educational Program — Add or Discontinue ^{2 3}	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
22.	Educational Program — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	I
23.	Minor — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
24.	Minor — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	-	A	I
25.	Degree — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
26.	Degree — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	I

	Change to General Education Requirements for Undergraduates (System)	Department Chair	Associate Dean	Dean	Provost	Senior Vice President	President	Board of Trustees	Students
27.	Change course outcomes of an included course	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
28.	Add or drop a required course from the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	A	I
29.	Add or drop a course from a menu within the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	-	A	I
30.	Comprehensive revision of General Education Requirements	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	I

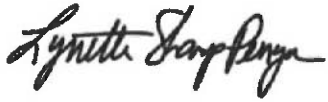
Notes

² Any change to a cross-listed course requires the signature of both department chairs or program directors overseeing the course to ensure that the courses stay in sync. This includes courses taught at other campuses (e.g. BIBL 101 and BIBO 101).

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible. Master's programs must include a minimum of 30 hours, and doctoral programs must include a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master's.

⁴ When a department/school or dean proposes closing a program, approval routing follows the typical process beginning with the department/school. An administrative proposal by the provost or senior vice president for academic affairs would follow the "provost-proposed" routing on the chart.

Department/School(s)



3-16-2026

Chair Signature

Date

Chair/Program Director Signature

Date

College Academic Council(s)

Chair Signature

Date

Chair Signature

Date

Dean(s)

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Teacher Education Council

Signature

Date

**Campus Academic Council:
Abilene Undergraduate or Abilene Graduate**

Signature

Date

Provost

Signature

Date

University General Education Council

Signature

Date

University Faculty

Abilene Faculty Senate Chair signature

Date

Dallas Faculty Council Chair signature

Date

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Signature

Date

President

Signature

Date

Abilene New Course Application

You may delete the preceding instructional pages before submitting application.

Course ID (<i>Subject Code and Number</i>)	COMM 493
--	----------

1. Systems and Catalog Information Complete each item.

A	Course Developer	Randall Fowler & Kholo Theledi
B	Course Instructor	Kholo Theledi or Randall Fowler
C	Course Title	Rhetoric of Social Movements
D	Course Abbreviation for Banner if title is more than 30 characters	
E	College	CAHSS - Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
F	Department or School	CMSO - Communication & Sociology
G	Number of Credit Hours	3
G1	Number of Lecture Contact Hours	3
G2	Number of Lab Contact Hours	0
H	Is the course for a fixed or variable number of credit hours?	Fixed If variable, explain rationale:
I	Is the course repeatable for additional credit?	No
J	Maximum total number of credit hours a student can earn for this course	3
K	Course Schedule Type	<u>Lecture (LEC)</u> See Schedule Type definitions in the Reference section.

L	Number of Faculty Workload Hours	3
M	Grading Mode	<u>Standard</u>
N	Maximum Enrollment	20
O	Catalog Description (50 words or less)	This course analyzes the rhetorical strategies and tactics employed by agitators and the establishments they seek to change. Students will explore the nature and types of social movements, both historical and contemporary, from a variety of contexts and perspectives thereby gaining an appreciation for communication's role in shaping society.
P	List any prerequisites (course/s, test scores, class standing, major, etc.)	Sophomore standing
Q	List any corequisites (these <i>must</i> be taken at the same time; note that a single requirement cannot be both a prerequisite <i>and</i> a corequisite)	none
R	If the course is cross-listed, specify the subject code and course number of the other course	no
S	Does this course require any additional student course fees?	<u>No</u> If yes, attach a completed course fee form (see form "Request to Add or Change Course Fees").
T1	Will the course be offered in fall terms?	<u>No</u>
T2	Will the course be offered in spring terms?	<u>Yes, every year</u>
T3	Will the course be offered in summer terms?	<u>No</u>

U	First semester this course will be offered under new Course ID. <i>May not be earlier than the coming fall semester.</i>	Spring 2027
V	Is this course required for a program(s)?	<u>Yes</u> If yes, submit a separate completed curriculum proposal to change the program(s). COPA concentration, BA & BS
W	Should the addition of this course be retroactively applied to the degree plan it supports? <i>This is rare, and rationale should explain compelling extenuating circumstances.</i>	<u>No</u> If yes, provide rationale:
X	Has this course been offered as a Special Topics course? <i>New courses are not required to be taught as Special Topics courses prior to approval.</i>	<u>No</u> If yes, provide course ID, term, and enrollment:
Y	List any courses in which the content overlaps the proposed course. (Course ID and Name). <i>Attach a statement from the instructor/dept chair of the existing course justifying the new offering.</i>	none

2. Curriculum

- A. Explain any effects of this course on any degree plans. If the addition of the course alters program requirements, submit a separate [Approval Chart for Curriculum Change](#) to update the program.

This course will be required in COMS, COPA concentration for the BA and BS.

- B. Justify the addition of this course to the current curriculum, explaining the gap it meets.

This course is commonly taught in our field. Adding this course both enhances the offerings in our Strategic Leadership and Social Influence concentration and addresses a gap in our curriculum.

3. Course Design

- A. Audience and Course Goal
1. Describe the intended audience, including prerequisite skills.

2. State the overarching course goal(s) in performance terms.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Measurements

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
1	Identify and evaluate how movements generate solidarity, construct arguments, legitimize authority, and respond to opposition.	Course discussion and participation Exams and quizzes
2	Examine how movements operate within complex sociopolitical environments characterized by various networks, legal structures, historical memory, cultural norms, and governance systems.	Exams and quizzes
3	Explain how communication functions as a force through which groups define problems, mobilize publics, and influence cultural and institutional change across diverse societies.	Course discussion and participation Exams and quizzes
4	Demonstrate an understanding of communication as a resource that exists independently of formal administrative structures.	Case study
5	Articulate how their lives have been impacted by social movements as participants and recipients of the rhetoric of social movements.	Course discussion and participation Case study

C. Text and Resources

Give the full publication information of the textbook/s and other required resources and outside readings. For **combined undergraduate/graduate** courses, make two lists:

- A. full publication information; label **Undergraduate**.

Robert C. Holt, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2023.

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas by the instructor.

- B. full publication information; label **Graduate**.

4. Supporting Documentation

Required of all applications	
1	Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes
2	Syllabus — Attach the syllabus for the course based upon the anticipated first-semester offering.
4	Library — Submit new course application and syllabus to the Library dean's office. Attach the Library's memo.
Attach if applicable	
5	Content Overlap — Include one document for each course you listed in Section 1Y. Attach statement from instructor/dept chair of existing course justifying the new offering.
6	Departmental Resources — List the resources that support the course and are available only through the department, if applicable. Attach the list of the holdings and the location(s).
7	Resources — List resources (other than library or departmental resources) that are needed to support this course (computers, lab equipment, other technology, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items and indicate possible sources or estimated cost of each. List the sources of any needed funds.
8	Expenses — List additional expenses needed to implement this course (full-time or part-time faculty, graduate or lab assistants, student employees, travel, special student costs, room renovation, storage facility, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items, the estimated cost of each and the source of the funds.
9	Justification — Attach any documents to which you refer in Section 2B.



Rhetoric of Social Movements

COMM 493

Fall 2027

Course Description

This course will analyze the persuasive strategies and tactics employed by agitators and the establishment they seek to change. It explores the nature and types of social movements and the rhetorical duties, obstacles, and needs of leaders and followers within the movement. Students will engage with social movements past and present from a variety of contexts and perspectives to gain a better appreciation for the role of communication in shaping society.

This 3-credit course meets for approximately 45 contact hours across the semester. Students should expect 6–8 hours of reading, writing, and project work outside of class each week, consistent with university guidelines.

University Mission

To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

Department of Communication & Sociology Mission

To create excellent and ethical communicators, transforming lives through teaching, scholarship, and service.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to...

1. Identify and evaluate how movements generate solidarity, construct arguments, legitimize authority, and respond to opposition. Emphasis will be placed on close rhetorical analysis rather than normative judgment about the movements themselves.
2. Examine how movements operate within complex sociopolitical environments characterized by various networks, legal structures, historical memory, cultural norms, and governance systems.
3. Explain how communication functions as a force through which groups define problems, mobilize publics, and influence cultural and institutional change across diverse societies.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of communication as a resource that exists independently of formal administrative structures.
5. Articulate how their lives have been impacted by social movements as participants and recipients of the rhetoric of social movements.

Required Course Materials

Robert C. Holt, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2023.

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. XXXX

xxxxx@acu.edu

Class Meets

MTWRF

8:00am – 9:00pm

Classroom

Office Hours

Sherrod 12345

MWF 12:30-2:00pm

TR 3:00-4:15pm

and by appointment

Course Communication

Email is best. I will try to answer within 24 hours. I will not answer emails after 7pm or during the weekend most times.



Food & Drink Policy

You should refrain from consuming **meals** during class time. However, you are welcome to bring tea, water, coffee, or another non-aromatic drink or snack (watch the smell).

Course Overview

Social movements are a ubiquitous feature of political life, both historically (especially since the onset of modernity) and in the present. They may be long, short, general, specific, civil, transgressive, violent, and non-violent. They are often protest movements seeking to bring about social change of some kind. They are usually concerned with rectifying an existing social “wrong”—something unjust, oppressive, upsetting, untruthful, or exclusionary—by directly mobilizing people through non-traditional political and judicial routes. In many cases, social movements involve “demands” that aim to capture public attention and pressure governmental action. One could even think of the early Christian church as a kind of social movement that forever changed the world.

This course will seek to further our understanding of social movements by posing and exploring a series of questions: What are the main theories of social movements? How have social movements changed over time? How has our understanding of social movements changed over time? Why do some people, not others, become active participants in social movements? How has globalization affected social movements? How have new technologies of information and communications influenced the scope and function of social movements? What are the strategies and tactics, both discursive and non-discursive, that social movements deploy to publicize their goals and demands? Why do some social movements succeed while others fail? Why do so many social movements decay, decline, and disappear? And what are social movements doing today? Why do social movements occur, often in clusters, more frequently in some periods than in others?

Course Technology & Academic Integrity Policies

You must be fully engaged in class. Refrain from looking at electronic devices unless you are referencing course materials or taking notes.

Academic integrity is defined as academic work completed as assigned for each class by the individual or group responsible for the work. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating involve the intention to deceive, mislead, or misrepresent and therefore are a form of lying. Such actions are contrary to behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: 1) Failing to give credit to sources used in a work in an attempt to present the work as one’s own, 2) Submitting papers or projects obtained from another source (e.g., research service or sorority/fraternity/team paper file) as one’s own, 3) Falsifying information orally or in writing, and 4) Receiving, giving, or using unauthorized aid on an examination or quiz. Academic misconduct may result in, but is not limited to, a zero on the assignment and/or an F in the course. See the full university policy by following this link: <https://cdn01.acu.edu/community/offices/administrative/office-of-the-provost/academic-integrity-policy/overview.html>.

For this class, reusing your own work without permission is also academic misconduct. See the full policy, including AI-use guidelines, on the course Canvas page.

Course Attendance Policy

This is a discussion-based course. You are therefore expected to engage in class discussion and make an active contribution. Attendance is required for the course and will be a major part of the participation grade earned. You will be counted absent if you are more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early without prior approval, or if you are not engaged during class time. This includes, but is not limited to, disruptive behaviors like using

electronic devices during class when they are not part of a course activity or doing homework for other courses. **You must attend 20% of class sessions to pass this course.** Absences will only be excused in the event of major family emergencies, university travel, or illness.

Academic Accommodations

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. To receive accommodation(s), you must be registered with Alpha and complete a specific request for each course. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call the Alpha Scholars Program office directly at 325-674-2667.

ACU Anti-Harassment Policy

As a Christian community, Abilene Christian University has committed itself, unequivocally, to ensuring a working and learning environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected. You can find the full university policy on harassment as well as other policies for student and campus conduct by following [this link](#).

Together, we will work to create and sustain a constructive learning environment. This requires your consistent preparation for and active contributions to class discussions. Here are some suggestions for ways to participate in the course (adapted from Lester Olson's "Ground Rules for Discussion"):

- You may choose to use the classroom as a testing ground for ideas, advancing or defending an opinion "for the sake of the argument."
- You may affirm your own point of view on an issue and how you arrived at that point of view.
- You may engage in friendly argumentation, but you may not belittle or personally criticize another individual for holding a point of view different than your own.
- You may ask how another person arrived at a point of view in an effort to understand it.
- You may choose to pass on specific questions or topics.
- Your use of language should be respectful of other individuals or groups.
- You need not represent any group, only yourself, though you may choose to do so if you wish.

Format & Citation Policy

All written assignments must be formatted in 18th Chicago Style with 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced format, numbered pages, and one-inch margins.

Late Work Policy

All non-speaking assignments should be submitted on Canvas unless stated otherwise. Assignments will be penalized a letter grade for every 24-hour period that they are missing. Course work will not be accepted after 5 calendar days late. This policy does not apply to speeches delivered during class time (see attendance policy).

Grade Appeals Policy

If you want to discuss a grade that you've earned, you must contact your instructor(s) in writing. After waiting at least 24 hours from when your grade is posted, email within one week of receiving the grade. Explain what part of the grade you do not understand. The instructor will respond, setting up a time to meet to discuss your grade. All course grades are final 7 days after being posted.

Grade Curving Policy

Your grade is determined by your performance in the course and is assigned individually (not curved) at semester's end.

Assignment Breakdown

You will find more detailed information regarding course assignments on Canvas.

Letter Grade	Points
A	1000-900
B	899-800
C	799-700
D	699-600
F	599-0

Quizzes – There will be regular quizzes over reading assignments and course materials. (200 points)

Movement Rhetoric Analysis Case Study – The primary assignment of the course is an original research project in which students select a social movement and conduct a sustained rhetorical analysis of its discourse. The project must answer how the movement's internal communication sustains its cohesion, how it identifies and reaches strategic external audiences, which platforms or types of communication mediums are most valuable to it, how its members understand their relationship to societal and institutional power structures, and how the movement's goals are formulated, negotiated, and promulgated through rhetorical discourse of various kinds.

The final 2–3 weeks of the semester will be devoted to formal conference-style presentations. Each student will deliver a 12–15 minute presentation summarizing their findings, followed by structured peer questions. This assignment may be converted to a group project. The project should demonstrate rigorous engagement with course material and offer a clear contribution to scholarly conversations about social movements. (250 points)

Participation and Attendance – As mentioned above, your active participation in class is vital for this course. To that end, you will be penalized for every absence that is not due to a university-related activity, medical illness, or imminent family emergency. You will automatically fail the course if you miss more than 25% of the classes, which equals 9 absences. Each unexcused absence will deduct 10 points from your semester grade. (250 points)

Exams (COMM 415) - There will be two exams over the reading in this class, a midterm and final (300 points).

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

LIBRARY

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 14, 2026
TO: Dr. Lynette Sharp Penya
FROM: Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Library Information Services
RE: Course application for COMM 493 – Rhetoric of Social Movements

After reviewing the course application and syllabus, the library should be able to adequately support the proposed course. If additional resources are needed for the course please contact Laura Baker, Librarian Liaison for the Department of Communication and Sociology, at bakerl@acu.edu. Thank you for letting us examine the course application and syllabus.