

Welcome to the course Introduction to Communication Science. My name is dr. Rutger de Graaf and I'm a lecturer here at the University of Amsterdam, the department of Communication Science. We're standing in the beautiful courtyard of the 17th century headquarters of the Dutch East India Company. In this historical landmark, over 150 scientists study and teach the science of communication.

This course is a so called MOOC. This is a new trend of online courses, initially designed by Stanford and MIT. MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course. It's massive in the sense that it's open to a potentially much larger audience than our normal courses, which are of course limited to the available space in a classroom. A MOOC is completely open, which means it's free of costs and designed so that **everyone, also without any specific experience³¹** in the field, can enter. Finally, all our lectures, class materials, self- evaluation tests and exams, will be available through an online portal. This of course, gives new options to our teaching environment. For instance, you can download all captions. Also, additional links and tips for further content will be offered at the end of each class. Next to this, there's a small community in which you can ask questions or share your thoughts. **And to test your recall and understanding³²** of each topic,

I'll often add some multiple choice questions that you can use for self evaluation. We will cover some of the basic theories, models and concepts from the field of communication. On this first class I'll talk about the scope of our field, what exactly is communication? and how does our discipline relate to other studies, like sociology and psychology.

In future weeks **we'll discuss the history of communication theory³³**. Obviously, people have been communicating since the dawn of men, but when and why did communication theory arise? but when and why did communication theory arise? After that, we'll use three dominant approaches to the field to discuss our topic further.

First, **we'll look at communication as a means of persuasion³⁴**, both from a political and a corporate angle. The second perspective is that of communication processing, which is simply put 'how we give meaning to a message?' The final part of this course will focus on **social and cultural³⁵** aspects of communication, like group dynamics and audience formation.

What exactly is communication? The **most simple definition: Communication is each act of transmitting information³⁶**. Information in the broadest sense of the word: including thoughts, ideas and emotions. Giving someone a bouquet of flowers is communicating a certain message. Adding to that gift a verbal compliment, "You're pretty" is another separate act of communication. Blushing 'because you've just received flowers and a compliment is again another form of communication.

As social animals we communicate day in day out with spoken words, non-verbal gestures, signs and symbols³⁷.

Sometimes we use media to communicate a message. Media are the channels that we use to communicate. Scholars don't really agree on the definition of the word media. Television, internet, radio, mobile phones, the soapbox we stand on to give a speech, they are all technical media in a way. Things we constructed to amplify our communication. In the more broader definition, we can include our hands, voice and eyes, that we all use to communicate somehow, in the list of communication channels, of media. In general however, whenever we discuss mediated communication or the mass media, we only mean the first category.

Over the years scientists from different scientific disciplines have studied these channels of communication and all these different forms that communication can take. The results of their studies have formed the basis of the relatively new 'science of communication'. Even today, many scholars in other disciplines study the exact same communication phenomena as we do. We share theories, models and often use the same methods to analyse & describe our field. It is therefore useful to be aware of how these other disciplines are connected with ours. To get an idea of the different levels of communication and how they are connected to other scientific disciplines, we

can look at the so-called pyramid of communication. **On the highest level of this pyramid we find societal communication³⁸**, which is by its very nature aimed at a large mass audience. Therefore mainly historians, political scientists and sociologists studied this perspective.

Under that is the level of institutional communication, that is performed by political parties, organized religions, large corporations and such. **Then comes the level of group communication³⁹**. Groups are audiences that feel a high level of group identification, for instance a family or a fan club. Both institutional and group communication are in the field of sociology and cultural anthropology. We have now arrived to the level of interpersonal communication, basically the communication between two or more people. **Both sociologists and psychologists study this field.⁴⁰**

Finally there is the level of intrapersonal communication. This would be the communication you have with yourself. With this we mean all information processing, thinking, internalizing information and the process of giving meaning to the world around us. And of course this approach leans heavily on the discipline of psychology.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhGPbjxy2F8> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7CN9Trw43w&t=17s>

Answers :

31. specific experience
32. recall and understanding
33. scope
34. persuasion
35. Social and Cultural
36. information
37. Media
38. Societal
39. Group
40. sociologists and psychologists