

Exam 1: Core COM 500/501 Question

This question involves two parts. Please answer both parts (in a total of 4500 words) and feel free to split your answers between the two questions however you think is most appropriate.

1. The Wikipedia article for "[communication theory](#)" is almost exclusively about Claude Shannon's information theory plus a brief discussion of different models of communication. With the exception of a couple sentences summarizing Craig's (1999) "Communication Theory as a Field" article, it touches on nothing from your communication theory reading list.

Your charge is to write a new encyclopedia article about communication theory as it was discussed in the material you read in COM 500 (feel free to write a subsection of the existing article, if you think that's more appropriate). The article you write should be suitable for posting onto Wikipedia. Like Wikipedia articles about theory in other academic disciplines and fields, your article should summarize major epistemologies, modes and/or approaches to theorizing, debates, contexts, important thinkers, influential pieces of work, and so on. The "[sociological theory](#)" article might serve as a source of inspiration (although you'll see that it's far from perfect). Like any excellent Wikipedia article, yours should be suitable for a general audience, be focused on the most "notable" material about the subject, eschew extended quotations, and include references to reliable sources throughout.

2. COM 500 focused on a range of different epistemological traditions in communication research. Using the material on your reading list and/or other material covered in COM 500, briefly situate your paper on "underproduction" submitted as part of these exams in terms of the epistemologies introduced in COM 500. Next, contrast the approach you took to other epistemologies covered in COM 500 by describing how 2-3 communications scholars with different epistemological commitments (the more distinct from your own, the better) might seek to approach the concept of underproduction. How might these scholars conceive, theorize, and/or approach the concept and/or phenomena differently? Then, drawing from your exposure to other methods in 501, briefly describe a study each type of scholar might conduct.

Exam 2: Organizational Communication

Select two of these three questions and write a 2000-2500 word essay that employs literature from your list in response to each of those two questions:

1. DeSanctis and Poole (1994) proposed adaptive structuration theory (AST) as a way to study “the role of advanced information technologies in organization [sic] change.” Since then, other scholarly works in your reading list have articulated other theories/theoretical frameworks that also seek to support the work of scholars studying information and communication technologies in organizational change. What are the analytical affordances of AST for research on technology and organizing processes and/or organizational change compared to those of at least two other theories/theoretical frameworks from your reading list? In your response please briefly introduce each theory/theoretical perspective and summarize how it has been and/or could be in such research, then articulate points of similarity and difference between them.
2. How is sociomateriality in organizations conceptualized and/or theorized in the relevant literature you read and why are differences in these veins of ideas significant for research? Articulate 2-3 distinct veins of ideas in your response and compare them.
3. How does scholarship on sensemaking—focused on processes and organization—contrast with any of the theories of institutions and/or networks focused on structure in your reading list? Are there ways they could be complementary? After briefly summarizing and substantively comparing key aspects of the literature you read on each, please describe how you envision employing either or both approaches in your own research.

Exam 3: Social Scientific Study of Computing and Collective Action and Public Goods Online

This question has two parts. Your answers to each part should be roughly equivalent in length and depth.

1. Authors you have read variously use the terms "peer production", "online communities", and "social computing" to refer to similar and overlapping phenomena. Considering the papers from your reading list, and any other sources you would prefer to use, how can we systematically describe the relationships and differences between these three ways of characterizing computer-mediated interaction and collaboration?

Using two of the above three concepts, consider how they provide alternate frames for understanding "underproduction." Provide two alternate descriptions of underproduction that exemplify the differences you described when comparing the three terms in the first part of this question.

2. You created the acronym "ATOTI" to describe unconvincing theorizing about online phenomena that merely demonstrates that some theory, concept or relationship is "*also true on the Internet*." Your charge is to describe 2-4 influential scholarly works about online communities and/or peer production on your reading list by identifying a series of claims in each that you believe are unsurprising in terms of prior theory and empirical research on collective action and organizing processes in offline settings (i.e., "ATOTI") as well as claims in the same works that you believe point to substantively and theoretically important differences between offline and online forms of organizing processes. You should pick influential work that you think will be particularly fertile ground for carrying out your charge. For example, you might choose Fulk et al. 1996, Rheingold 2000, and Benkler 2006.