

PROSEMINAR ESSAY QUESTIONS
Sections A and B

- A. Answer any ten of the fifteen questions below.
- B. The answer to each question should be typed on a separate sheet. The length should not exceed one page.
- C. Each answer sheet should have the following information on top of the page; Course (COMM. 600, A&B), your name, and the number and complete text of the question answered on that page.
- D. Answers to all questions are due by Tuesday, October 24, 2 p.m. in the mailbox labeled "Colloquium-Proseminar" in the School office.

QUESTIONS

1. What is implied by saying that "a message is transmitted" as opposed to "a signal is transmitted?" Be fairly specific as to what is involved in the process.
2. The rise and problems of the study of communications has been described and debated by some of its prominent practitioners. Summarize the views of three of four writers on the subject.
3. As the statistical order of approximation to English increases, would you say that the meaning tended to increase or the grammaticality? Both? Neither? Discuss and justify your answer in the light of your readings.
4. What are some of the overt and covert effects of an audience (in the generalized sense) on the producer of messages?
5. Within a possible discipline of communication what is the function of axiomatic and scientific modes of inquiry for a praxiology of communication?
6. Consider the message "What hath God wrought!"
 - a. Discuss how an historically significant use of this message is related to the concepts of time, space, and control.
 - b. How would you measure the amount of information conveyed in this message?
7. Specify the steps that would be involved in determining the amount of information received per second by a pianist playing from sheet music.
8. Give examples and discuss the extension of Chomsky's notion of grammaticality to social situations (as proposed by Dell Hymes).
9. Sartre says "words are loaded pistols". One ought to aim them at a target, not just fire them off for the sake of hearing the shot go off. - Comment and discuss possible consequences of accepting this statement.

10. Suppose a chain of human communicators is to transmit information verbally. The input rate into this chain is about 10^3 bits/second
 - a. How much information can approximately be transmitted and why?
 - b. Suppose you have the power to create a special purpose language by how much could you increase the transmission rate?
11. Describe the Whorfian hypothesis and its "extension" to mass media effects.
12. Can linguistic representation (referential meaning) be described as a code in the technical sense (involving encoding and decoding)? Why or why not?
13. Differentiate between technical, semantical and pragmatical levels of communication. What does Shannon's information actually measure?
14. Which of the universals of language (design features) could you identify in film? Explain your answer.
15. Take any two definitions of communication as mentioned in class or suggested in readings and show comparatively what they exclude or include.