

## CSUS Communication Studies Graduate Program Analytic Essay Prompts

We would like to understand how you analyze communication problems and craft arguments. To demonstrate these abilities, please craft a short Analytic Essay (no more than two pages, single or double spaced) in response to one of the prompts below, and submit it with your application materials via Cal State Apply in Quadrant IV using the Intake and Analytic Essay form.

There is no one right answer. We want to see you develop an argument, make a case for your position, discuss possible counter-arguments, and demonstrate your writing and analytic abilities. Please use scholarly sources to support your claims and make sure to clearly identify which prompt you are addressing.

1. On May 31st, 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) renamed all coronavirus variants using Greek letters avoiding geographical stigma. A newly infectious disease is often assigned a name or commonly recognized associated with a geographical region, foreign national/county, or a particular group of people (e.g., Ebola, French pox, gay-related immune deficiency, Jewish disease, Mexican swine flu, Spanish flu). Please address intercultural communication issues with regard to these naming practices. Do you think renaming all coronavirus variants using Greek letters helps reduce discrimination toward the members of the group or geographical region? Why? Why not? What intercultural/intergroup theories and concepts might help understand the issue?
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has required tremendous change across all aspects of society, especially organizations. Since March 2020, organizations have contended with multiple shutdowns, abrupt workforce transitions to telework, supply chain issues, and constantly changing health guidelines and restrictions that have changed the fundamental ways employees interact and organizational cultures function. At the same time, workers have dealt with unemployment, financial precarity, record levels of personal stress, lack of boundaries between work and home life, burnout, and especially for women, dramatic increases in domestic labor and child care. As organizations start to navigate getting back to “normal,” what do you think will be the most important *communicative* challenges to address? What pandemic-era structural or practice changes should organizations keep, if any, and why? What organizational communication theories and concepts support your claims?
3. In a 2013 article for *The New York Times*, Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott said that, “invention remains one of the prerogatives of art and it is, after all, the job of writers, directors and actors to invent counterfeit realities. It is unfair to blame [media] makers if we sometimes confuse the real world with its representations. The truth is that we love [media artifacts] partly because of their lies, beautiful and not.” Do you agree with Dargis and Scott? If yes, why? If no, why not? Do showrunners or executive producers or anyone else involved in the creation of media texts have a responsibility to tell the “truth”? If so, how do we define media truth? Is there another party who should be involved and/or held accountable? Does genre complicate or elucidate this situation? Again, please use examples to support your points, and cite names and dates where appropriate.

4. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused upheaval across all spectrums of life, including, especially family and interpersonal relationships. Since March 2020, people have contended with mandated social distancing and quarantine, estrangement and isolation, increased use of mediated communication to maintain personal relationships, the negotiation of contact relative to health status and safety choices, and recently, reestablishing more “normal” contact as vaccines have become widely available. What do you think have been the most critical interpersonal communication issues during the pandemic? As we move forward, how should people engage in relational repair or rebuilding, conflict management, boundary management, etc.? Please use communication theories and concepts to support your points.
  
5. The 2016 and 2020 elections have shown a critical need for communication education in the U.S., from promoting digital information literacy, civic engagement, civil dialogue, and ethical forms of persuasion to navigating conflict, encouraging perspective taking, and negotiating communication ethics. What issues do you think are most important to address and why? How should we as communication scholars tackle these issues? What communication theories and concepts support your ideas?