

CORH 216.101: LEGO® Building Systems

**Credits:** 3

**Instructor:** Marie H. Loughlin, PhD

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine LEGO® as a material medium of communication and rhetoric that has moved into other popular culture media—audio, visual, textual, and digital. Taking up class members’ strengths as student researchers, we will study and apply selected theories of communication and rhetoric, especially as they are employed in the humanities (such as literature, history, cultural studies and the visual arts), as well as the social sciences and professional disciplines (such as business, education, information science, and psychology), in order to understand how audience and message are inter-related for LEGO®’s many academic, professional, and public audiences. Understanding LEGO®’s various media messages in relation to their rhetoric, socio-psychological, and socio-cultural contexts, as well as their semiotic structures, students will leverage their academic skills in critical reading, writing, and research to illuminate how and why LEGO® has become central to contemporary discussions of play and work; creativity and conformity; corporate culture and participatory culture; gender, race, and identity, and much more. Students will translate their academic research into public-facing engagement through the creation of their own textual, audio, visual, performance and/or digital artifacts.

**Tentative Reading List:**

All of your required reading and viewing is freely available via our UBC Library databases or online. Below you will find representative samples of the required reading and viewing.

**Sample Textbook:**

[Author removed at request of original publisher]. *Communication in the Real World: An Introduction to Communication Studies*. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing Edition, 2016. This edition has been adapted from a work originally produced in 2013 by a publisher who has requested that it not receive attribution. Minneapolis, MN. Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike. <https://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/>

**Sample Required Viewing:**

*The LEGO Movie*. Directed by Phil Lord and Chris Miller. Color; Sound; 100 min. Warner Brothers, 2014. UBCO Library, *Criterion-on-demand* streaming service.  
<http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=11822848>

Greenpeace. “Everything is NOT Awesome.” Greenpeace International. *Youtube*. Length: 1:45  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhbliUq0\\_r4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhbliUq0_r4)

**Sample Academic Articles (by discipline)**

**Communications:** Hinthorne, Lauren Leigh and Katy Schneider. "Playing with Purpose: Using Serious Play to Enhance Participatory Development Communication in Research." *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 6, 2012, pp. 2801-2824. <https://go.exlibris.link/wps2CLXQ>

**Critical Business / Management Studies:** Ashton, Daniel and Seth Giddings. "At work in the toybox: Bedrooms, playgrounds and ideas of play in creative cultural work." *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, vol 19, no. 2, 2018, pp. 81-89. (9 pp.) <https://go.exlibris.link/vyNXnf4F>

**Gender and Sexuality Studies:** Reich, Stephanie M, Rebecca W. Black, and Tammie Foliaki. "Constructing Difference: Lego® Set Narratives Promote Stereotypic Gender Roles and Play." *Sex Roles*, vol. 79, no. 5-6, Sept 2018, pp. 285-298. <https://go.exlibris.link/Jkdv4IDN>

**Other:** **Assignments:** **5 reading quizzes** (multiple-choice, 10%); **in-class activities** (individual and team builds, public build day planning, informal oral reports on group activities, etc., 5%); **academic research summary and public audience translation** (individual or pair project, approx. 750-900 words + public audience translation: web page or web post, 15%); **academic research paper** (individual assignment, 1,250-1,500 words, 20%); **academic research paper public audience translation** (individual/pair/small group project; translation of academic research paper(s) into a public forum, such as material / digital poster; KnightLab Timeline or Storyteller; UBC Blogs; Wix; Youtube video, podcast, etc., 20%); **LEGO Public Build Day participation** (before or during, 5%); **written reflection** (250-300 words written reflection on your experiences during Public Build Day in light of reading/discussion of digital fandom communities, 5%); **final examination** (a critical essay and a reflective essay will form part of the final exam, 20%). **LEGO Materials:** The instructor will provide the LEGO bricks that we will be using in class and that you may wish to use in your public scholarship project. **Attendance and Participation:** Attending and actively participating are crucial to the success of this course. **LEGO Public Build Day:** Although participation in our end of term LEGO Public Build Day is required, I understand that scheduling may make this impossible for some students; participation in preparation for Public Build Day rather than attendance at the event is allowed.