

Course Description

Course number and section: CORH 216

Course Topic: **Communication and Media: LEGO® Building Systems**

Instructor: **Marie Loughlin, PhD**

Course Description:

Course Topic: Invented by Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, the Danish building system LEGO® (coined from the Danish phrase, leg godt or “play well”) has become not just a global brand but a cultural phenomenon. In this course, we will examine LEGO® building bricks as a material medium of communication and rhetoric that has moved into other popular culture media—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, social sciences and professional disciplines), in order to understand how audience and message are inter-related for the LEGO® building system’s diverse audiences. We will explore this system’s increasing centrality to academic, professional, and public discussions of play and work; gender and race; creativity and conformity; corporate culture and participatory culture, and much more.

Tentative Reading List: selected academic articles and popular media sources.

Examples:

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>

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>

Goggin, Joyce. “‘How Do Those Danish Bastards Sleep at Night?’*: Fan Labor and the Power of Cuteness.” *Games and Culture*, vol. 13, no. 7, 2018, pp. 747-64. <https://go.exlibris.link/nM4jQxNj>

Other: This course meets in-person. LEGO building is required; all LEGO materials will be supplied by the instructor.