University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 201 (L01): Introduction to Communication and Media Studies
SUMMER 2023: June 26 to August 8 (excluding July 3rd and August 7th)

Lectures (asynchronous): Mondays and Wednesdays (uploaded by noon)
Lab (synchronous): Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 am-10:50 am

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.
Note: If you cannot participate in synchronous online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

Instructor:	Xenia Reloba de la Cruz (she/her)
Office:	SS 240
Email:	xenia.relobadelacruz@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Fridays, 11:00 am-1:00 pm (over Zoom, prior booking through a link on D2L)

Course Description
A general mapping of the field, with an emphasis on its breadth in the areas of media studies, communication of science and technology and rhetorical communication. General examination of how Communication and Media Studies emerged during the twentieth century and how the field relates to social and cultural change issues.

Additional Information
This course is grounded on topics and examples that affect our everyday life, so please, be advised of the potentially conflicted nature of these topics. Do not hesitate to reach out and openly express concerns or discomfort to your instructor.

All lectures will be delivered asynchronously and posted to D2L on Mondays and Wednesdays. Lectures must be viewed in advance of tutorials on Tuesdays/Thursdays.

Important note: Since the Canada Day long weekend falls on a Monday, I will synchronously deliver that class's lecture during the Tuesday, July 4 tutorial. An extended version of that lecture (with additional resources) will also be uploaded to D2L for your review.

Attendance at tutorials is **highly recommended**, as this is the ideal space to clarify content in the lectures, goals, and expectations about assignments, and as evidence of active engagement in this course (see: **Participation brief & self-assessment** in the Assignment section). If, for any reason, students cannot attend a tutorial session, the instructor encourages them to contact the instructor and/or a classmate to learn what was missed.

The weekly **schedule of topics and readings** will be posted on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and apply key theoretical approaches in COMS through practical exercises and assignments.
- Engage in informed and critical discussions about the media landscape, including actors defining media content, policy, and the role of audiences.
- Produce original reflections about their media practices, the role of media in contemporary life, and their own process as learners in a COMS course.

Textbooks and Readings

Gasher, M., Skinner, D. and Coulter, N. (Eds.). (2020). *Media & communication in Canada: Network, culture, technology, audiences* (9th edition). Oxford University Press.

Students may use either a print or electronic version of the textbook. The digital version of the book is offered through the bookstore (online), and the print copy may be purchased through the University Bookstore. Students may wish to purchase their copy through an online bookseller (new or used) – however, you must ensure that you're purchasing the **9th edition**. Other editions of the course text may contain different content, organization, and/or pagination. It's the student's responsibility to ensure they're working with the correct course materials.

Any additional material (papers, digital resources, or links) will be provided via D2L (**Tools/Reading List**).

Learning Technologies and Requirements

To complete courses, the University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system and the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled.
- Broadband internet connection and a current and updated web browser.
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you have any concerns about the necessary hardware, please, do not hesitate to contact your instructor. Your instructor will provide relevant information and links if you need access to other software programs to complete assignments. If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices
As we will work synchronously for only two hours per week, your instructor expects an active presence in the virtual classroom. This implies putting aside other devices that might distract your attention during tutorial delivery. However, some activities might involve using those devices. The instructor will inform in advance if any device other than the one used to access the Zoom sessions will be required in every tutorial.

The content of this course, including any resource created by your instructor, is subject to Copyright. It cannot be recorded nor disseminated in any form without the expressed authorization of your instructor (see below in this outline: **Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation**)

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on recording lectures, which is outlined at https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html.

Communications with the instructor:
The instructor will aim to answer emails within the weekdays, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. This is the best way to address specific inquiries or to follow up with a booked appointment. You are encouraged to book an appointment during office hours for more detailed explanations concerning the course, assignments, or grades.

Assignments and Evaluation
Due to the timeline and delivery of this course, all assignments will be submitted individually, although the instructor will encourage collaboration among peers within the tutorial sessions. Details about each assignment will be posted on D2L and will be further clarified during tutorial sessions.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15 %	**Personal Media Practices, creative assignment:** Students will examine their most recurrent media practice (ex., texting, posting on social media, gathering information…) and, based on the content learned in chapters 1 and 2 of the textbook and the lectures, will produce a personalized reflection about how the history of media has contributed to their current media practices. The goals are for the students to reflect critically on their current practices and connect such practices with pre-existing media. Key questions to consider when preparing this assignment are: How the history of media has contributed to their current media practices? What elements of previous media are relevant to their media practices?	Friday, July 7, 11:59 pm (D2L/Dropbox)

	For this assignment, students will submit a short essay (approx. 500 words) or a media-based format. The media submission may be either an audio recording (ex. a personal podcast episode) or an audiovisual presentation (ex. narrated PPT or self-recording). The media submissions should be <u>no more</u> than 10 minutes in length.	
25 %	**Q&A - Workbook, written assignment:** Based on the content provided in chapters 3, 4 and 6 of your course textbook (and the lectures corresponding to those chapters), students will examine several scenarios based on academic research to answer questions about the theoretical approach used by the authors, the reasons why that theoretical approach has been used, and hypothesize other ways to examine the central subject in the paper. Questions prompts will be provided in week 2 to get you started. The assignment will follow the structure of a workbook, allowing students to revise their answers throughout weeks 2 and 3 before submitting their workbook in week 4.	Wednesday July 19, 11:59 pm (D2L/Dropbox)
10 %	**Participation mark & self-assessment (a set of prompts will be provided):** The instructor will assess your participation in the course based on engagement in tutorial activities and interactive activities proposed in the lectures. The participation grade will also take into account a student self-assessment, comprised of a set of prompts. Students' self-assessment must be submitted on August 4th to be considered.	Friday August 4, 11:59 pm (D2L/Dropbox)
20 %	**Creative reflection journal:** Throughout the term, the instructor will propose a "gold question" during the asynchronous lectures. Students will reflect on those questions periodically and, on the due date, they will submit a document comprising their four favorite reflections via Dropbox for the instructor's consideration. The format of those reflections (creative writing, multimedia or any audiovisual + text format) is up to the student and details concerning extension/duration for each format will be clarified in the guidelines on D2L. In all cases, the reflections must clearly evidence: 1. active engagement with the material in the lectures and readings, 2. clarity in articulating the concepts and its applicability to everyday life, and 3. an original, personalized take on those elements. Problematization of topics and discussions included in this course will be considered a bonus. The four reflections will be assessed as a whole, not individually. Please, keep on the top of this assignment. Do not rely on a last-minute inspiration, as this is a fast-paced term!	Tuesday August 8, 11:59 pm (D2L/Dropbox)

30 %	**Final essay:** Students will examine a media artifact (ex., a media coverage of a social or political event; a social media campaign; the profile of a social media personality) and produce an academic essay of 1200-1500 words (Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing). Your essay must adopt a clearly identifiable theoretical approach among those taught in this course, and based on that approach, should also include a discussion about elements of the media environment affecting the media artifact (ex., actors involved, ideologies of producers or potential audiences, economic or political interests, included but not limited to advertising, and existing communication policies). The instructor will provide a list of three (3) topics + recommended theoretical approaches + relevant aspects of the media environment that could be analyzed in connection to those topics. Your essay requires a list of references, including **at least three scholarly sources (including your course textbook).** You may also use non-scholarly sources such as popular media, public information, or blog posts about your topic. <u>All</u> sources must be listed and properly cited throughout your essay and in the bibliography, using APA citation style. The instructor will address the goals and expectations for this final assignment during tutorials (don't miss tutorials!).	Friday August 11, 11:59 pm (D2L/Dropbox)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No
Note: You must complete the **Q&A, Workbook** and the **Final Essay** to pass this course.

Submission of Assignments
Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox. **Include your name and ID number on all assignments**. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by the University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*.

Policy for Late Assignments
In this course, students can use a **one-time "extra day"** without previous agreement with the instructor. Such an "extra day" will allow students to submit the specific assignment within 24 hours after the official due date. Students must clarify in their late submission that they use the "extra day". After consuming the "extra day", students needing an extension must explicitly ask for it via email at least three days before the official due date, briefly specifying the reason for the extension.

Assignments submitted after the deadline without any extension granted may be penalized with a loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors.

Expectations for Writing
Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), general clarity, organization, and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale
The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

This course will use letter grade percentage equivalents for all the assignments.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%

2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism
Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly, suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages, A.I. content generators, or visual media.

You must document direct quotations and paraphrases, and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end, and other people's words and ideas begin**. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by your documentation style). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure, with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support

Instructor policy concerning A.I. generated content:
A.I. tools are to be treated like any other non-scholarly source with credibility issues, such as Wikipedia. Any ideas or wording from ChatGPT or other A.I. tools must be cited as you would for other non-scholarly sources. When used, the full A.I. conversation must be saved and appended to the student's assignment.

Students must adhere to the instructor's course policy regarding using A.I. generated content in coursework. Unsanctioned use of A.I.-generated content in coursework may be reported as academic misconduct.

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation
Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the instructor's intellectual property. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. Posting course materials to third-party websites, such as note-sharing sites, without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html). Students who use material protected by copy-right in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct
For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html

Research Ethics
Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments; in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics

The assignments have been designed to offer you alternatives that do not require ethical review. However, if you have any doubts concerning ethics, please, contact your instructor.

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal
For university regulations and procedures related to the deferral of term work, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html
For information about deferrals of final examinations, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html
For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html

Student Support Services and Resources
Please see https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines for information
about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources,
Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and
Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

The Schedule of Topics and Readings will be posted to D2L in advance of the first class.