

Communications Studies COMS 580 - B01
Advanced BCS/BFS Project
F/W 11/12
Monday 14:30 - 17:20
SAIT Campus - Room TBA

Instructor: Dr. Steve Olson
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Web Page: None
Office Hours: By app't

Additional Information

Students undertaking practicum should inform the instructor of the dates as soon as possible.

Due to the nature of team projects students should anticipate costs of approximately \$50-\$100 for recording media, equipment rentals and services.

Course Description

COMS 580 is a full course. In the Fall semester individuals will complete a critical research paper. The first three weeks of the semester will be devoted to the discussion of relevant topics, research methodologies, and issues surrounding format and writing. In the Winter semester, teams will produce a media-based project. The first two weeks of the Winter semester project semester will be devoted to group formation, discussion of group process, elaboration of media and critical research projects. Both projects will be presented to the class at the end of the relevant semester. As some students may be undertaking practicum work, individual arrangements and expectations are to be made with the instructor. Class meetings will include student led discussions of communication events and theory.

Objectives of the Course

The course will help the student to: 1. Integrate theoretical research and practical experience in media production. 2. Increase understanding of theoretical constructs, methodological approaches and research skills while reflecting upon their value in application to specific productions. 3. Exchange ideas and experiences that will broaden understanding of the field of media production.

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of internet and laptop computers is welcome and encouraged during class time, particularly as they apply to presentations. Cell phones / pagers should be turned to vibrate mode. Phone calls should only be conducted during breaks. In case of emergency, please conduct your phone calls outside of the class room.

Textbooks and Readings:

No textbook required. Readings may be assigned according to the project.

Recommended reading:

Action Research, 3rd ed., Ernest Stringer, 2007.

Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 3rd ed., John Creswell, 2009

Theories of communication, culture and media are foundational for this course. Students should already be aware of a wide range of theories from previous studies. At a minimum, you should have a good working knowledge of:

- Interpersonal and Behavioral theories such as, Classical Rhetoric, Social Identity, Expectancy Value, Symbolic Interactionism, Uncertainty Reduction, Cognitive Dissonance, Theories of Attachment and Transportation, Cognitive Psychology, Social Psychology in Virtual Communities, and Captology.
- Mass Media / Media in Culture theories that include, Agenda Setting, Framing, Cultivation Theory, Dependency Theory, Gatekeeping, Hypodermic Needle, Spiral of Silence, Uses and Gratification, Media Ethics, Subliminal Communication, Theories of Propaganda, and Theories of Persuasion.
- Language / Linguistic theories including, Language Expectancy Theory, Semiotics and Semantics.

The above list is not exhaustive, and the placement of specific theories in the above categories is typical, not absolute. Students are encouraged to use any other theories relevant to their work.

Assignments, Evaluation, and Weighting

Fall semester 55%.

Outline / Preliminary bibliography: Due Sept. 26, 2011: 5%

Students will submit an outline of their research paper with a preliminary bibliography of approximately 6 to 8 sources. The outline, single spaced, should fit on one page, with the bibliography on a second page. Traditional outline format (I.A.1.a) should be used.

Annotated Rough Draft: Due Oct. 31, 2011: 10%

Students will submit an annotated rough draft of their research paper of 8 to 10 pages in length. A more comprehensive bibliography should also be included. At this stage of the writing it is impossible to calculate the number of sources you will need, as currency and relevancy of the topic will largely determine how many sources are actually available. As a rule of thumb, however, you should focus on scholarly / academic sources (peer reviewed journals, etc.). As an annotated draft, students will italicize comments inside the paper that speak to the process. This draft is submitted "as is," and is a pass/fail assignment with no extension granted. Individual meetings with each student will be conducted to review the draft.

Final Paper: Due Dec. 5, 2011: 30%

Students will submit a final research paper. Traditional and/or alternate formats for this paper are determined in advance in consultation with your instructor. The paper is 20 pages in length (or equivalent), 12pt., Times New Roman, 1" margins. A completed bibliography in a recognized format (preferably APA) must be included. Note: each student will present a short overview of their paper to the class on the due date.

In-class topic discussion I: Due as Assigned: 10%

Students will prepare and present an in-class discussion on a communications, culture, or media topic. Presentations are oral, and can include any visual and/or audio support deemed appropriate. Length of the presentation should not exceed 10 minutes. A format sheet to guide you through the process is available as a handout.

NOTE: No class Oct. 10, 2011 - Thanksgiving

Winter semester 45%.

Media Project Proposal: Due January 30, 2012: 5%

Working with a team, students will prepare a project proposal outlining the specifics of their media project. The proposal will include: information on the topic, justification for the topic, identification of significant theories relevant to the topic, a sequence of events necessary to complete the project including a timeline; and a list of duties / assignments for each member of the team. Traditionally the proposals are 5 to 6 pages in length. This is a group mark.

Media Project Mid-Term Group Meeting: As assigned: 5%

The purpose of this meeting is threefold: 1) to get a status update on your progress, 2) to view completed material to this point in the semester, and, 3) to identify and put together an action plan for any issues and/or problems faced by the team. This is an informal meeting, is a pass/fail group grade, and will be assigned based on availability of the groups during the semester.

Media project: Due weeks of April 2 / April 9, 2012 as assigned: 35%

The media projects will be presented to the class and any guests you invite. You will have a total of 45 minutes for your presentation. This time frame includes the presentation of your actual project, followed by class discussion. Traditionally, the presentations consist of a 5-minute introduction, a 20-minute presentation, and a 20-minute group discussion. These times can vary based on the needs of the individual project, but will not exceed 45 minutes.

NOTE: No class Feb. 20 – Reading Break.

Due to the tight timeframe of the presentation, NO EXTENSIONS will be offered for the Media Project!

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

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.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

U of C Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

SAIT Safewalk is available 6pm – 11pm Monday to Friday call 403-284-SAFE (7233). For an escort outside of these times please call SAIT Campus Security at 403-210-HELP (4357).

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Determined by group and semester requirements.

FALL – The first two weeks will be dedicated to topic discussions for the paper. The in-class discussions will commence in October, as assigned by sign-up sheet. Individual discussion regarding the paper leading up to both the rough draft and final draft will continue throughout the semester.

WINTER – The first two weeks will be dedicated to topic discussions and group formations for the media project. Individual schedules for each group will proceed through the remainder of the semester leading up to the presentation dates in April.