

University of Calgary  
Faculty of Communication and Culture

**COMMUNICATIONS (COMS) 201, Lecture 01**  
**Introduction to Communications Studies**

FALL 2007, MW 9:00- 9:50, ICT 102  
Tutorials: F 9:00-9:50 (5) or 10:00-10:50 (5)

**Instructor:** Dr. Kathleen Scherf  
**Office Location:** SS 320  
**Office Phone:** 220-5885  
**E-Mail:** kath@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** On Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** By appointment with Mimi

In this course, we will explore the question of what we are doing when we 'communicate.' Are we simply transmitting information? Are we creating meaning? Are we participating in a social process? Are we persuading others? Are we supporting the social status quo? Are we voicing challenges to the 'system'? It is my hope that our discussions, each initiated by an example from popular culture, will facilitate you finding an answer for yourself. This is an outline for the term's lectures

There is one textbook for this course: Julia T. Wood, Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Thomson Wadsworth, 2004). Available at the Bookstore.

Please be aware that most of this course deals with the artifacts, experiences, and products of popular culture. As such, some of the material we study manifests coarse language, sexuality, and violence. If this is a problem for you, please see me.

**SECTION ONE: LAYING A FOUNDATION**

10 September: Intro to the course, housekeeping  
12 September: Intro to the field of Communications  
17 September: Intro to theories (Chapter 2 and 3)

**SECTION TWO: INTERPERSONAL MESSAGES**

19 September: General Semantics (Chapter 4)

24 September: Symbolic Interactionism (Chapter 5)  
26 September: Co-ordinated Management of Meaning (Chapter 7)

### SECTION THREE: COGNITIVE PROCESSING

1 October: Constructivism (Chapter 7)  
3 October: Ethnography (Chapter 6)

### SECTION FOUR: RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

10 October: Interactional Theory (Chapter 8)

### **12 OCTOBER: TUTORIAL EARLY TEST**

15 October: Dialectical Theory (Chapter 8)  
17 October: Social Exchange Theory (Chapter 9)  
22 October: Developmental Theory (Chapter 9)

### **24 OCTOBER: HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR ESSAYS, CHRIS THOMAS**

### **29 OCTOBER: MID TERM EXAM. IN-CLASS. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

### SECTION FIVE: COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

31 October: Standpoint and Speech Community Theories (Chapter 10)  
5 November: Organizational Culture Theory (Chapter 10)  
7 November: The Rhetorical Model (no assigned reading)  
14 November: Dramaturgy (Chapter 6)

### SECTION SIX: MASS MEDIA

19 November: Technological Determinism (Chapter 11)  
21 November: Cultivation Theory (Chapter 11)

### SECTION SEVEN: CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS THEORIES

26 November: Muted Group Theory and Feminist Theories (Chapter 12)  
28 November: Cultural Studies Theories (Chapters 12 and 13)

### SECTION EIGHT: REVIEW

3 December: Traditions in Communications Studies (handout)  
5 December: Question and Answer session

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Tutorial early test: 5% (Friday 12 October)  
Tutorial participation: 10%  
Mid-term exam: 25% (Monday 29 October)  
Essay: 30% (due at final tutorial Friday 7 December)  
Exam 30% (scheduled in the December examination timetable)

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 SS110; 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: YES**

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.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Faculty 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 [www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info). 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](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

**Grading System**

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

A+ (96-100); A (92-95); A- (86-91); B+ (81-85); B (77-80); B- (71-76);  
C+ (65-70); C (62-64); C- (59-61); D+ (55-58); D (50-54); F (0-49)

**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 (SS 106, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **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 Communication and Culture see [www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su)

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

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.

### **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 U of C Research Ethics "Information for Applicants," sections 3.0 to 9.0, inclusive:

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/research/html/ethics/info\\_undergrad.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/research/html/ethics/info_undergrad.html)