

**Communications Studies (COMS) 201-Lecture 02/Lab B11
Introduction to Communications Studies
Fall 2007**

Saturday: 08:00-12:00

**Class dates: September 15, 22, 29; October 13, 20, 27; November 3, 17, 24;
December 1**

Instructor: Amanda Williams
Office Location: 209
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

An overview of the major theoretical and methodological traditions in the field and key concepts in areas such as: cultural and gender studies, semiotics, rhetoric, mass media research, and interpersonal, small group, intercultural and organizational communication.

Objectives of the Course

This course is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Introduce you to a broad range of approaches in communication theory.
2. Increase your ability to analyse concepts and issues in communication theory and to develop and defend your own positions on a variety of issues.

Overall, by the end of the course you should have an appreciation of current communication theories and research practices and the ability to apply some of these theories to your understanding of contemporary events.

Textbooks and Readings:

- Griffin, Em. *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 6th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

*Earlier editions of this book may be purchased second-hand, but since the instructor will be teaching from the Sixth Edition, students are responsible for all of the information in the Sixth Edition. If you purchase an earlier edition, you must ensure that you obtain copies of any additional chapters that we may cover. You are also responsible for keeping abreast of any relevant pagination differences.

Assignments and Evaluation

The assignments and exams are intended to test your knowledge of some of the major communication theories that are used today; they are also designed to make you think about how you can apply theories to make sense of occurrences in the everyday world.

1) Participation: 10%

- In each class we will engage in group discussions, your attendance and your participation in these activities will be evaluated

2) Mid-term Examination: OCTOBER 20 (25%)

- format: multiple choice, short, medium & long answer questions
- Based on textbook and lecture material covered in weeks 1-4

3) Essay: NOVEMBER 17 (30%)

- This essay will ask you to apply one of the different theories we have covered in the course (weeks 2-6) to a contemporary event (details to follow)
- 6-8 pages (double spaced)
- You will be required to do research beyond the parameters of the textbook but you will given instruction on how to use the library and write a critical essay in class, as well as a detailed grading rubric

4) Final Examination: DECEMBER 8 (35%)

- format: multiple choice, short answer and essay questions
- Cumulative, with an emphasis on the content (lectures and readings) covered in weeks 6-10

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.ualgary.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.ualgary.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.ualgary.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.ualgary.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

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

All readings should be completed prior to the class!

Week 1 (September 15)- *Introduction to Communication Theory*

Readings: "Introduction", Chapters 1, 2, 3

Week 2 (September 22)- *Classical Rhetoric and Modern Articulations*

Readings: "Public Rhetoric", Chapters 22, 23, 24

Week 3 (September 29)-*Media & Cultural Theories*

Readings: "Media & Culture", on-line chapter(media ecology/McLuhan), Chapters 25, 26

Week 4 (October 13) - *Media Effects & Agenda Setting*

Readings: "Media Effects", Chapters 27, 28, 29

Week 5 (October 20)– **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 6 (October 27)-*Using the library/Essay preparation, Interpersonal Communication*

Readings: "Interpersonal Messages", Chapters 4, 5

Week 7 (November 3)– *Interpersonal Communication (continued...)*

Readings: "Relationship Development" "Relationship Maintenance", "Influence", Chapters 9, 11, 15

Week 8 (November 17)- *Organizational/Group Theories*

Readings: “Group Decision Making” “Organizational Communication”, Chapters 17, 20, 21

TERM PAPER DUE

Week 9 (November 24)- *Intercultural Theories/Gender & Communication*

Readings: “Intercultural Communication”, “Gender & Communication”, Chapters 31, 33, 35

Week 10 (December 1)- *Comparing Theories/ Final Exam Preparation*

Readings: Chapter 36

Week 11 (December 8)- **FINAL EXAM**