

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media & Film**

**Communication and Media Studies COMS 381, LEC 1**

**Communications History**

**Winter 2017**

**Thurs., Jan. 12 – Thurs., Apr. 6 (excluding Feb. 23)**

**Lectures: Thurs. 12:30-14:20, Labs Fri. 9:00-9:50, 10:00-10:50**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Annie Rudd
<b>Office:</b>	SS 312
<b>Office Phone:</b>	(403) 220-5458 (email preferred)
<b>E-Mail:</b>	annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca (when emailing, please mention "COMS 381" in the subject line)
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L available through MyUofC portal
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wed. 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course offers a general survey of how various communication systems and practices developed through history, and of the social contexts within which they emerged, transformed, and adapted through time. Within this framework, the course examines major technological developments in the history of human communication and uses theory to understand their origins and impacts on social organization and everyday life.

Our course begins with early writing systems and extends to the digital cultures of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Historical developments that we will discuss include alphabets, the moveable type printing press, the newspaper, photography, radio broadcasting, television, and digital social media, among others. As we look at how humans have communicated in the past, we will contextualize the "new media" of today, considering both continuities and changes between the media of the past and the media of the present.

### **Objectives of the Course**

This course aims:

- to expose you to, and familiarize you with, a series of important developments in the history of communication;
- to enable you to draw connections between communications and broader processes of social and cultural change, through readings, lectures, and writing assignments that link communications technologies with phenomena such as imperialism, religious reform, consumer culture, and globalization;
- to provide you with context that will help you approach the media of the present moment in a critical and historically literate way.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

Almost all of the readings for this course can be found in the course reader, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer, 6th edition, which is available in the University Bookstore. Earlier editions of this reader do not contain all of the required readings, so you are encouraged to get the 6<sup>th</sup> edition. All other

readings will be posted on D2L. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to lectures and tutorials.

An important note: all readings and dates listed on the course outline are subject to change—so please check D2L regularly for the most up-to-date version of the course schedule.

### **Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information**

The use of laptop computers is permitted in lectures, provided they are used solely for notetaking and do not cause any distractions for you or others. Phones must be silenced and put in your bag before lectures and tutorials begin. Audio recording or filming during lectures is prohibited without permission from the instructor.

### **A Note on Email Communication**

Emails to your instructor or TA should be sent from your University of Calgary email account, with “COMS 381” mentioned in the subject line. Please do not use email to ask questions that can be answered by looking at the course outline or D2L. I aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them, excluding weekends—if you have emailed me and have not heard back within this timeframe, please feel free to send a follow-up message.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Your grade in this course will be determined based on the following.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Percentage of final grade</b>
Blog post 1	Due January 26	5%
Blog post 2	Due February 16	5%
Midterm exam	March 2	25%
Research essay	Due March 23	25%
Blog post 3	Due March 30	5%
Final exam	Part 1: April 6	10%
	Part 2: Take-home	15%
Participation in labs and lectures	Throughout semester	10%

### **Blog Posts**

Due before lecture on January 26, February 16, and March 30, these posts will allow you to critically engage with the course readings and reflect on any aspects of communication history that you find particularly interesting. In response to a selection of prompts provided on D2L, you will be required to write a short written response. Further details will be provided early in the term.

### **Midterm Exam**

A midterm exam will be administered in lecture on March 2. This exam will include multiple choice and true-or-false questions, and will require you to be familiar with material covered in the assigned readings, in lectures, and in labs.

### **Research Essay**

Drawing on the critical approaches to media history that we have examined, you will be asked to write an essay of 7-10 double-spaced pages that connects communications with history—an essay that considers, in focused and specific ways, how a communications medium of your choice has been connected with a specific historical development or complex of developments. With the medium you have chosen, what is the nature of the relationship between communication and historical change? This essay will require you to make thoughtful use of academic books and at least one primary source. More details will be provided on the essay assignment sheet, which will be provided to you early in the term.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam consists of a multiple-choice section to be written in lecture on April 6 (worth 10% of final grade), and a take-home section to be written in a 24-hour period shortly thereafter, which will consist of essay questions.

### **Participation**

Because class participation is a required component of this course, consistent attendance at lectures and tutorials as well as active and informed involvement in tutorial discussions is required. Attendance will be taken in this course; if you do not expect to attend lectures or labs frequently, you should not enroll in this course. Infrequent participation or attendance in tutorials will result in a lower grade or possibly a failing grade in the course, and will also make it difficult for you to do well on quizzes and writing assignments. You are expected to act in a respectful and non-disruptive way in this class. This means showing up on time, staying for the duration, and not having private conversations or using your phone during class.

### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Note:** All assignments and exams weighted more than 10% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

### **Submission of Assignments:**

Blog posts must be submitted to D2L by the stated deadline.

Research essays should be submitted in lecture. If it is not possible for you to hand in your essay directly to your TA or instructor, 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Brief extensions may be given by the instructor provided the student has a compelling reason to request one, and the request is made well in advance of the deadline.

### **Student Accommodations:**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in 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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### **Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Letter grades will be used for essay assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

\* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

\*\* 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.

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. 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 the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### 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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333 <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>

<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

### Week 1

**January 12**

Introduction and discussion of course themes.

### Week 2

**January 19**

Early writing.

Required readings:

Eric Havelock, "The Greek Legacy"

Walter Ong, "Orality, Literacy, and Modern Media"

### Week 3

**January 26**

**Blog post 1 due before lecture.**

The rise of printing.

Required readings:

Lewis Mumford, "The Invention of Printing"

Elizabeth Eisenstein, "Aspects of the Printing Revolution"

### Week 4

**February 2**

Photography and visual communication.

Required readings:

Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography* (on D2L)

**Week 5**

**February 9**

Electricity and communication.

Required readings:

James W. Carey, "Time, Space, and the Telegraph"

Claude Fischer, "The Telephone Takes Command"

**Week 6**

**February 16**

**Blog post 2 due before lecture.**

Journalism: word and image.

Required readings:

Michael Schudson, "The New Journalism"

Ulrich Keller, "Early Photojournalism"

**Week 7**

**No class—Happy Reading Week!**

**Week 8**

**March 2**

**Midterm exam in lecture.**

**Week 9**

**March 9**

Film, visual culture, and consumption.

Required readings:

Rosalind Williams, "Dream Worlds of Consumption"

Jib Fowles, "Mass Media and the Star System"

**Week 10**

**March 16**

Radio broadcasting.

Susan J. Douglas, "Early Radio"

John Durham Peters, "The Public Voice of Radio"

**Week 11**

**March 23**

**Research essay due in class.**

Television.

Required readings:

John Durham Peters, "The Public Voice of Radio"

Lynn Spigel, "Making Room for TV"

**Week 12**

**March 30**

**Blog post 3 due before lecture.**

Situating “new media” in history.

Required readings:

Lev Manovich, “How Media Became New”

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, “The World Wide Web”

Manuel Castells et al., “A Mobile Network Society”

**Week 13**

**April 6**

**Part 1 of final exam to take place in lecture.**