

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401 L03
Special Topics in COMS: Environmental Media

FALL 2017
Sep 12, 2017 - Dec 07, 2017
Tu&Th 12:30PM - 1:45PM

Instructor: Dr. Mél Hogan
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Office Phone: 220-3248
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 pm. Please make an email appointment.

Course Description

Environmental Media engages an array of media texts, discourses, and objects, to understand the mutual entanglements of media and environment. The course content is divided into 3 parts:

1- *Representations of the Environment* - we look at documentary films, media campaigns, advertisements, etc., to understand and analyse how 'nature,' 'wilderness' and 'the outdoors' are created and sustained as important concepts (in relation to, for example, the technological sublime, environmental justice, race and privileged spaces, and historical understandings of Nature/Culture).

2 - *Materialities & Infrastructures* - we look at the lifecycle of our current global communications infrastructures, from mining rare earth minerals for electronic devices, to e-waste disposal, to cell towers, data centers, and everything that connects the wired world.

3- *The Environment as Medium* - we look globally at how 'natural disasters', climate change, and air pollution become inscribed into the environment, and how nature itself becomes medium and message.

Objectives of the Course

- to demonstrate an ability to read and interpret texts in the field
- to describe how communication plays a significant role in the framing and discussion of environmental problems and solutions historically
- to survey and compare a wide variety of media (podcasts, print ads, documentaries, websites, etc) for the way they tell a story about the environment
- to produce written and oral discourse appropriate to the field
- to further develop your analytical, writing, and communication skills

→ to work cooperatively in groups and become familiar with methods of peer evaluation

Textbooks and Readings

Readings are posted on the Desire2Learn (D2L) course website.

Internet and electronic communication device information

No cell phones allowed during class. If you'd like to take notes on an electronic device, bring in your laptop or tablet. Stay off Facebook and all social media, games, and texting, etc., during class. (You can check your cell phone during break, or step outside the class to make urgent calls.) For these reasons, and to help you be less distracted and retain more, you're strongly encouraged to take notes by hand!

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	<u>Presentation on Keywords</u> Pick a keyword from list and present on it for 5 minutes	Ongoing (Sign up)
30%	<u>Midterm</u> : 1 hour, in class, closed book	Nov 2
35%	<u>Final paper</u> : 3000 word final paper (hand in with forms) Submit hard copy	Oct 26 - V.1 (5%) Nov 30 (optional) - V.2 Dec 11 - V.3 (30%)
25%	<u>Writing Prompts</u> (in class, 10-20 minutes) (5% each)	Sept 21, Oct 5, Oct 12, Nov 16, Dec 5

Presentation on Keywords

You will be given one keyword to present on for five minutes. These presentations take place at the beginning of class each week. Remember that other students might not have read your keyword entry so your task is to explain it to the class.

Midterm

This will be a closed book in-class midterm. It will take 1 hour (you have the duration of the class to complete it) and will cover everything up to this point. You will not have access to your notes or readings. The midterm will be a mix of multiple choice questions and short essay questions based on the readings and in-class discussions.

Final Paper

You will write a research paper linking media and the environment, as covered in class. Pick a media or tech company, like Netflix, Alibaba, Apple, Amazon, Nintendo, Google or Facebook. How does it position itself in relation to the environment and nature? How does it rely on it, or

use it as resource, how does it speak about it? What does the company understand its role to be in relation to the environment? How does it make its environmental stances known? V.1 includes a form and short draft (500-1000 words) and V.3 includes an updated form and a 3000 word final essay. V.2 is optional and can be sent to me for feedback ahead of time. Details in class.

Writing Prompts

These are in-class assignments that take 10 to 20 minutes to complete, on average. They will be linked to the week's readings and to class content/discussion. You must be in class to do these - no late submissions, no exceptions.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

#	TOPICS	DATES	DUE
0	Intro Week	Sept 12	Syllabus Overview Sign up for Keywords Presentations
		Sept 14	Intro to Environmental Media Sign up for Keywords Presentations cont'd
1	Ecological Ethics	Sept 19	<i>Indigenous and Feminist Ethics and Ecology</i>
		Sept 21	<i>Truth and Reconciliation</i> WP1: response to T&R
2	The invention of Nature, Ecology, and the Wilderness	Sept 26	<i>Wilderness</i>
		Sept 28	<i>Ecological Cybernetics</i>
3	Greening Media Studies and the Problems of Neoliberalism	Oct 3	<i>Green Media</i>
		Oct 5	<i>Neoliberalism</i> WP2: response to article
4	Alberta Beef, Risk Perception and the	Oct 10	<i>Agro-Industrial Complex</i>

	Agro-Industrial Complex	Oct 12	<i>Branding Beef</i> WP3: ideas for final paper
5	DNA	Oct 17	<i>Genomics and Whiteness</i>
		Oct 19	<i>The Natural</i>
6	Disasters	Oct 24	<i>Bacteria and Temporalities</i>
		Oct 26	<i>Gendering Oil</i> Paper V.1
7	Invisibilities	Oct 31	<i>Radiation Controversies</i>
		Nov 2	Midterm (in class)
8	Materiality	Nov 7	<i>Digital Technologies</i>
		Nov 9	<i>Internet Infrastructures</i>
9	E-waste and Other Toxicities	Nov 14	<i>E-waste</i>
		Nov 16	WP4: Watch film at home/library and answer Qs
10	Memory and Death	Nov 21	<i>Sustainable Media</i>
		Nov 23	<i>Natural Objects</i>
11	Elemental Media	Nov 28	<i>Pigeons, Iceberg and Clouds</i>
		Nov 30	Hand in paper V.2 via D2L (optional)
12	Final Week	Dec 5	WP5: Provide feedback to class partner
		Dec 7	Final paper feedback workshop Hand in paper V.3 via hard copy (due Dec 11)

Submission of Assignments

Please hand in your essays directly to me at the beginning of class, in D2L and as a hard copy format unless otherwise specified in class. Use 12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, default margins.

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.

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 5% per day late.

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/.

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. In this course, percentages are used for all written assignments.

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%
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* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, the 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 (3rd 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>

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Calgary Police Service · Emergency Text Messaging · Emergency Evacuation & Assembly · Safewalk Program 	<p> http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 </p> <p> http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints </p> <p> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ </p>
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · IT help line 	<p> http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca </p>
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Writing Support Services · Student Services Mobile App 	<p> http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents </p>
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Faculty of Arts Reps · Student Ombudsman 	<p> https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds </p>
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Counselling Services · Health Services · Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE · Online resources and tips 	<p> 403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health </p> <p> 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus </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>