

**Communication and Culture (CMCL) 313 – Lecture 01**  
**Interdisciplinary Research Methodologies**  
**Winter 2014**  
**Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 – 10:45**

**Instructor:** Dr. Delia Dumitrica  
**Office Location:** SS344  
**E-Mail:** dddumitr@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Thursday, 14:00 – 16:00 (or by appointment)

**Additional Information**

- ⤴ This is a research intensive course – you are expected to do fieldwork consisting of surveys, interviews or focus groups.
- ⤴ The course takes a hands-on approach, where students work with human subjects. You are expected to plan ahead and devote time to recruiting participants and meeting with them in a way that balances the assignments for this course with the rest of your coursework.
- ⤴ Assessment is based on a combination of individual (55%) and group (45%) work.

**Calendar Description**

An introduction to interdisciplinary social research methodologies. Students will explore, practice, and critique various quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and various perspectives on the processes of knowledge production.

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the basic elements of designing and conducting social research. Topics covered in this course include: designing a research project, conducting a literature review, assessing the ethical aspects of social research, quantitative research methods, and qualitative research methods. Five data collection methods will be applied in this course: surveys, content analysis, case studies, interviews and focus groups.

**Objectives of the Course**

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the process of social research. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Evaluate social research methods.
- Design, conduct and write a social research project.
- Critically evaluate social research done by yourself and others.

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

All cell phones should be silenced for the entire duration of the class. Laptops, smartphones and tablets can only be used for taking notes or working on the research projects.

**Required Textbook:**

Neuman, L. & Robson, K. (2011). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Edition. Toronto: Pearson Education Canada.

Additional readings (journal articles) will be made available on the first day of class.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

This course takes a 'hands on' approach to designing and conducting social research. You will work both individually and in groups on specific research projects focused on new media in Calgary. Those of you working with human subjects will be expected to recruit participants and meet with them for data collection purposes.

You will be graded on the following assignments:

Group work:

- Group work contract and schedule (group) (5%) – *January 24, 2014*
- Literature review (group) (15%) – *February 13, 2014*
- Final report (group) (25%) – *April 14, 2014*

Individual work:

- Data collection report (individual) (30%) – *March 27, 2014*
- 2x Quizzes (individual) (25%) – *February 11 & April 10, 2014*

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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**

### **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. Late assignments submitted five or more days after the deadline will not be accepted.

### **Description of assignments**

All assignments in this course focus on designing, planning, conducting and, to a lesser extent, evaluating a research project on new media. Students will work in groups to develop a research project. However, each student will independently apply one specific method; the group will then compare and evaluate the members' use of the chosen method. There are two types of assignments in this course:

- **Individual assignments (55% of the final grade):**
  - **Data collection report (30%):** This assignment tests comprehension of the method of choice and the ability to use it. The report consists of two sections: a discussion of the method, where the student will describe the steps s/he undertook to collect the data and evaluate the advantages/disadvantages of the method (approx. 8 pages); and a reflective section, where the student will reflect on the ways in which their own choices have affected the research process (approx. 4 pages).
  - **2 quizzes (Quiz 1 – 15%, Quiz 2 – 10%):** The quizzes test students' knowledge and comprehension of the required readings and class discussions. The quizzes consist of multiple-choice questions. The quizzes are non-cumulative. For each missed quiz, you will receive zero points.
  
- **Group assignments (45% of the final grade):** Unless there is compelling evidence to indicate otherwise, all group members will receive the same grade on the assignment. However, group members will evaluate each other's participation in class as well as group meetings, and will be asked to submit a peer-evaluation form to the instructor who may choose to grade each student individually and to assess applicable penalties in cases of unequal contributions to the project. Any problems with group work must be reported promptly to the instructor at least one week ahead of the deadline for the respective assignment.
  - **Group work contract and schedule (5%),** by email: This assignment paves the way for the group project, ensuring a fair distribution of work and a fair grading process for the group assignments. Students will work on developing a group contract outlining the responsibilities and expected project-related behavior of each group member, and a project schedule.
  - **Literature review (15%):** This assignment tests students' ability to work with the ideas covered in lectures and required readings. The literature review helps students explore the existing academic research on the topic of their project. It consists of a summary and evaluation of 10 academic sources relevant to the proposed project. The literature review will conclude by proposing a research question and outlining the proposed data-collection process for the research project (approx. 10 pages).
  - **Final report (25%),** instructor's office: This assignment tests comprehension of social research processes and ability to integrate and evaluate your own application of these processes. The final report will contain: a description of the research project (including a discussion of the methods applied by each student); an analysis of the findings; and, an assessment of the project's significance (approx. 20 pages).

Further information about assignments will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard.

## **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://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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

## **Grading System**

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

|     | 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### **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**

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 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/ethics/cfrieb>

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

To be provided on the first day of class and posted on Blackboard.