

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communications Studies COMS 201, L03
Introduction to Communication Studies
Winter 2015
Saturday 1:00 P.M. – 4:30pm
Class dates: January 17, 24, 31; February 7, 14, 28; March 7, 14, 21, 28;
April 11.

Instructor: María Victoria Guglietti
Office Location: SS 307
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Office Hours: Saturdays 16:30 to 17:30 or by appointment

Course Description

A general mapping of the field, with an emphasis on its breadth in the areas of media studies, communication of science and technology, and rhetorical communication. The course also provides a general examination of how Communication Studies emerged during the 20th century and how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

Objectives of the Course

To offer students a first approach to the theoretical foundations of communication studies.

To encourage students to develop critical awareness of media.

To help students develop analytical skills necessary for communication research.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted in class as long as they are used EXCLUSIVELY for note taking. Cell phones should be turned off during class.

Textbooks and Readings:

Griffin, E. (2015). *A first look at communication theory* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Narrative and Rhetorical Analysis: (Feb. 7, 15%)
Using the ideas from narrative theory and Aristotelian rhetoric, students will analyze a text found in the media. The length of the analysis will be 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted.
2. Semiotic Analysis: (Mar. 21, 15%)
Students will apply Barthes' semiotic theory to a cultural artifact or event. The goal is to identify a text's meaning and explain how this meaning is produced. The required length of the analysis is 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted.
3. Midterm Exam: (Feb. 14, 20%)
In-class multiple-choice and short or long answer questions based on the theories and readings discussed from Week 1 to Week 4.
4. Group Seminar Activities (20%)
Students will complete four mandatory group activities in class. Students will have one hour to complete the assignment. Activities will comprise a series of short questions that will require the analysis of a cultural text or media event through the systematic application of the theories studied in class. The four activities planned will be the following:
 - A symbolic interactionism seminar (Jan. 31)
 - An agenda-setting seminar (Feb. 28)
 - A standpoint theory and muted group theory seminar (Mar. 21)
 - An organizational communication seminar (Mar. 28)
5. Final Exam: TBA -- Registrar scheduled (30%)
Analytical questions focusing on the theories presented throughout the entire semester, with an emphasis on the content (lectures, readings, presentations) covered since the midterm.

IYou do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

Assignment guidelines will be handed out the first day of class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

Submission of Assignments: 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. 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. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

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.

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 14 days after the start of the course.

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. 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. 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>

Dept of Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using the following grade scale used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department 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	00 - 49.99%	0%

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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . 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:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research 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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

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

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

	Saturdays Room PF-128 1:00 to 4:30 P.M
Week 1 Jan. 17	Topic: Introduction to course, textbook and projects. What is theory? Interpretivism vs. objectivism; research methods Reading: Chapter 2 Laboratory: Introduction to theoretical analysis
Week 2 Jan. 24	Public Rhetoric (Aristotle) Narrative Paradigm (Walter Fisher) Reading: Chapter 22 and 24 Laboratory: Rhetoric and Narrative analysis practice
Week 3 Jan. 31	Topic: Symbolic Interactionism (George Mead) Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Charles Berger) Readings: Chapters 5 and 10 Laboratory: Symbolic Interactionism seminar
Week 4 Feb. 7	Topic: Historical Perspectives on Media Effects and Uses and Gratifications (Elihu Katz) Cultivation Theory (George Gerbner) Readings: Chapter 28 and 29 Assignment: Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment due Laboratory: midterm practice
Week 5 Feb. 14	Midterm (1:00 to 3:00 PM) Break 3:00 to 3:15 3:15- 4:30 Topic: Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw) Readings: Chapter 30
Feb. 21	No classes
Week 6 Feb. 28	Topic: Media Ecology (Marshall McLuhan; Harold Innis) Reading: Chapter 25 Laboratory: Agenda Setting seminar
Week 7 Mar. 7	Topic: General Semantics and Semiotics (Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes) Reading: http://www.afirstlook.com/docs/gensem.pdf Chapter 26 Laboratory: Semiotic analysis practice
Week 8 Mar. 14	Topic: Cultural Studies (Stuart Hall) Reading: Chapter 27 Laboratory: Encoding/Decoding model practice
Week 9 Mar. 21	Topic: What is feminist communication theory? Standpoint Theory (Harding & Wood) Muted Group Theory (Cheris Kramarae) Readings: Chapter 35 & Chapter 36 Assignment: Semiotic Analysis due Laboratory: Standpoint Theory and Muted Group Theory seminar

Week 10 Mar. 28	Topic: Cultural Approach to Organizations (Geertz and Pacanowsky) Critical Theory of Communications in Organizations (Stanley Deetz) Readings: Chapter 20 and 21 Laboratory: Organizational communication seminar
Apr. 4	No classes
Week 11 Apr. 11	Topic: Postmodernism Readings: Lectures notes Laboratory: Final review

Deadlines

Assignment	Due date	Weight
Symbolic Interactionism seminar	Jan. 31	5%
Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment	Feb. 7	15%
Midterm	Feb. 14	20%
Agenda setting seminar	Feb. 28	5%
Semiotic Analysis	Mar. 21	15%
Standpoint theory and Muted Group Theory seminar	Mar. 21	5%
Organizational communication seminar	Mar. 28	5%
Final exam	TBA	30%
TOTAL		100%