

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 201 L01
Introduction to Communication Studies

Winter 2017

Jan. 9 – Apr 12 (excluding Feb. 19-26)

Lecture: W 12:00-13:50

Tutorial: F 10:00-10:50 or 11:00-11:50

Instructor: Dr. S. Thrift
Office: SS 210
Office Phone: 403-220-5320
E-Mail: samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: M (10-11am); W (10-11am)

Course Description

In this course we will explore the question of what we are doing when we “communicate”. Are we simply transmitting information? Are we creating meaning? Are we participating in a social process? Are we persuading others? Are we supporting the social status quo? Are we voicing challenges to the ‘system’? Incorporating examples from popular culture, Coms 201 will facilitate your finding an answer to these questions for yourself.

Additional Information

Students must register in a Lab section. Labs (i.e., tutorials) are not considered optional; they are an integral part of the course and attendance and active participation are expected. It is essential that you come to every tutorial with a copy of your readings.

Please be aware that much of this course deals with the artifacts, experiences, and products of popular culture. As such, some of the material we study may involve course language, sexuality and violence. If this is a problem for you, please see the instructor or your TA.

Objectives of the Course

Through readings, lectures, written assignments and group discussions and activities, Coms 201 will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of communications. Recognizing that communication is integral to all human activities and interactions, this course explores elements of communication studies that appeal to scholars from a variety of academic disciplines.

Through an overview of the key concepts, methodological traditions, and major theoretical currents of the field, Students will have an opportunity to experience the cutting-edge diversity that defines communication studies. In addition, the course will seek to introduce Students to the activity of scholarly communication itself by covering some of the basic

principles of academic research: finding and using sources, developing original arguments based partly on those of others, and writing papers in the genre of academic research.

Textbooks and Readings

Wood, Julia T. *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*. Third Edition. Canada: Wadsworth, 2004.

Any additional readings will be made available via the COMS 201 D2L course website.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class. Please respect the lecturer, teaching assistants and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

Therefore, cell phones and other electronic communication devices should be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time.

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course number (COMS 201) and a clear statement of purpose in the subject line. If you do not include the course number in your email's subject line, your email may get lost in your instructor's overflowing inbox and go unread! Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with course instructors (including your T.A.).

Email correspondence is most useful for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material or assignments please visit me during office hours.

I will return emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read or replied to until the next working day.

NOTE: I do not accept email submissions of work.

Assignments and Evaluation

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

| Weight | Course components (with hypothetical examples only) | Due |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| 10% | Participation | Weekly |
| 15% | Test 1 | Feb. 10 (in tutorial) |
| 20% | Test 2 | Mar. 17 (in tutorial) |
| 25% | Research Essay | Mar. 29 (in class) |
| 30% | Final Exam | TBA |

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

Participation (10%) grades will be awarded on the basis of your active involvement in tutorial discussions and activities. Details of required tutorial activities will be provided in a Tutorial Outline, which will be posted to D2L. In order to receive participation grades, you are expected to be in attendance for tutorials, contribute to the discussions, and complete required group work and presentations. Each week, pairs of students will give presentations on key aspects of the week's readings. More details to come!

Test 1 (Feb. 10, in tutorial) will be composed of multiple-choice questions designed to provide early feedback on your comprehension of the course material so far. It will be useful preparation for **Test 2** (Mar. 17, in tutorial), which will also be composed of multiple-choice questions.

The **research essay** (25%) for this course gives you an opportunity to combine out-of-class research with the topics explored in lectures and discussions. You will be given a choice of several essay topics, and expected to write a 1500-1750 word research paper on that topic. More information on the term paper will be provided in class and on D2L.

The **final exam** (registrar scheduled) will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay-style questions. You will be responsible for all material covered in the assigned textbook readings and additional required readings posted on D2L, as well as the content of lectures and tutorial discussions. **Lecture slides, if used, will be posted to D2L after the lecture.**

Please note that tests and examinations will only be deferred in the case of documented illness, bereavement, or varsity team travel. Tests and exams will not be rescheduled due to travel and vacation plans, work obligations, or other scheduling conflicts.

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 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 may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each 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, percentage scores will be used for grading tests, essays, and tutorial presentations.

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 (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>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

| 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 | 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 more 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 | https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ 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 Lecture Topics and Readings

| Date | Topic | Reading |
|--------|---|--|
| Jan 11 | Course Introduction | |
| Jan 18 | The Field of Communications Understanding Theories Building and Testing Theory | Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3 |
| Jan 25 | General Semantics Symbols (symbolic interactionism) | Chapter 4 Chapter 5 |
| Feb 1 | Symbols (dramatism, narrative theory) | Chapter 5 (con't) |
| Feb 8 | Review (Ch. 1-5) | Test 1 (Friday in Tutorial) |
| Feb 15 | Communication as Performance (dramaturgy, performance ethnography) | Chapter 6 |
| Feb 22 | No Class (Reading Break) | |
| Mar 1 | Relational Dialectics Social Exchange Theory | Chapter 8 (pp.172-183 only) Chapter 9 (pp.191-200 only) |
| Mar 8 | Standpoint Theory Speech Communities | Chapter 10 (pp.209-226 only) |
| Mar 15 | Rhetoric | Additional reading on D2L. Test 2 (Friday in Tutorial) |
| Mar 22 | Technological determinism Cultivation theory | Chapter 11 Chapter 11 |
| Mar 29 | Critical Theories I | Additional readings on D2L. Term Paper Due Today! |
| Apr 5 | Critical Theories II | Additional reading on D2L. |
| Apr 12 | Wild Card | No assigned readings |

