

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 201 (L01): Introduction to Communication and Media Studies

WINTER 2023: January 9 to April 12 (excluding Feb. 19-25, Apr. 7 & 10)

Lecture: MW 12:00 to 12:50 (in-person; ENG 60)

Tutorials: Thursdays, 50min. (in-person; see chart below)

Tutorials			
Lab 1	T.A. Rebecca Wissink	R 9:00-9:50am	SA 107
Lab 2	T.A. Rebecca Wissink	R 10:00-10:50am	SA 107
Lab 3	T.A. Marcus Young	R 11:00-11:50am	SA 107
Lab 4	T.A. Marcus Young	R 12:00-12:50pm	SA 107
Lab 5	T.A. Claire O'Brien	R 1:00-2:00pm	SA 109
Lab 6	T.A. Claire O'Brien	R 2:00-2:50pm	SA 109

Instructor:	Dr. S. Thrift (she/her)
Office:	SS 210
Email:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Mondays, 1:30-3:00pm (or by appt via Zoom)

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. General examination of how Communication and Media Studies emerged during the twentieth century and how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

Additional Information

Please be aware that this course may address artifacts, experiences, and products of popular culture. As such, some of the material we study may involve coarse language, sexuality, and potentially violence. If this presents issues for you, please see the instructor or your TA.

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Respect and Diversity in the Classroom: This course is built around student participation.

While Dr. Thrift's classes will be lecture-oriented, there will be frequent opportunities for student contributions. Tutorials are highly discussion-based and encourage students to share their perspectives about the course material each week. Therefore, in both class and tutorials, we welcome your insightful comments (based on course materials) and questions. Please note, however, that racist, sexist, trans/homophobic, Islamophobic, and other types of discriminatory comments are not permitted in the classroom or tutorials. Comments of this nature will be dealt with at the professor's discretion on an individual basis.

On pronouns: I respect all students' preferred names and/or choice of pronouns. Please alert me to your pronoun and I am happy to oblige.

Objectives of the Course

Through readings, lectures, written assignments and group discussions and activities, COMS 201 introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of communication and media studies. Recognizing that communication

and media are integral to all human activities and interactions, this course explores elements of communication and media studies that appeal to scholars from a variety of academic disciplines.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- identify major theoretical traditions informing the field of COMS;
- apply these theories to diverse media examples;
- find and use scholarly sources;
- develop original arguments based on scholars' conceptual frameworks;
- write an academic essay that adheres to COMS disciplinary conventions.

Textbooks and Readings

Gasher, M., Skinner, D. and Coulter, N. (Eds.). (2020). *Media & communication in Canada: Network, culture, technology, audiences* (9th edition). Oxford University Press.

Students may use either a print or electronic version of the textbook.

The digital version of the book is offered through the bookstore as a 180-day rental, costing \$57.00. The print copy of the book may be purchased through the University Bookstore for \$129.90. Students may wish to purchase their copy through an online bookseller (new or used) – however, you must ensure that you're purchasing the **9th edition**.

Other editions of the course text may contain different content, organization, and/or pagination. It's the student's responsibility to ensure they're working with the correct course materials.

Supplementary readings will be posted to D2L. The Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings includes all non-textbook readings, so be sure to review that document weekly to remain current on course content. These additional readings are available through the Reading List (Leganto) tab on D2L. If you have difficulty accessing these readings, please contact your T.A..

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only:

- for course-related purposes;
- if their use is not distracting others;
- if their use does not negatively impact the learning environment.

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

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Email

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 201) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread.

Please maintain a professional tone in your correspondence with the instructor. To refresh your email writing skills, review [How to Email Your Professor \(Without Being Annoying AF\)](#) by Laura Portwood-Stacer.

Email is most useful for specific inquiries. If you have more detailed questions about the course material, assignments, or grades, please schedule an appointment to speak with the instructor during office hours or by a Zoom appointment. The instructor will respond to 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.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	<p>Participation grades will be awarded on the basis of your active involvement in tutorial discussions and activities. "Active involvement" means arriving to tutorials having read the week's materials and attended the lectures. In tutorial, be prepared to make informed contributions to group discussions (ex. bring questions or observations about the week's material) and be ready to undertake group and individual learning activities organized by your T.A. Details of required tutorial activities will be provided in a separate Tutorial Outline, which will be posted to D2L and reviewed in the first lab.</p> <p>NOTE: This is an in-person class and, as such, participation depends on <u>attending the weekly tutorials</u>. Infrequent attendance and/or participation will result in a lower grade and can also be expected to impact performance on tests and assignments. Students cannot "make-up" missed tutorial activities, barring exceptional circumstances (such as bereavement or serious illness; work schedules do not constitute exceptional circumstances and will not warrant accommodation).</p> <p>Students with Varsity sport obligations that conflict with tutorials must provide written documentation from their athletics program (i.e., coaching staff) detailing conflicts with class meetings in order to receive accommodation.</p>	Weekly.
2%	<p>Syllabus Quiz The Syllabus Quiz covers policies and information provided in the course outline. This online quiz contains 10-12 multiple-choice questions. The quiz will be available on D2L for the first two weeks of class (until the end of the add/drop period). Students will have 30 minutes to write the quiz once it starts. Students are allowed to consult the syllabus while writing the quiz ("open book"), however consultation between students is prohibited.</p>	Due: January 20 (11:59pm) Online quiz.
13%	<p>Quiz 1 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 Quiz 2.</p> <p>Chapters 1-4 (and assigned articles, related lecture/class content) will be covered on Quiz 1. This is a closed-book test, although students are permitted to bring a "cheat sheet" – the parameters of which will be discussed in class. This quiz is in-person and will be run during class time.</p>	Feb 15 (in-class)

15%	<p>Quiz 2 will be composed of multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Chapters 5, 6, 7, 10 (and assigned articles, related lecture/class content) will be covered on Quiz 2. This is a closed-book test, although students are permitted to bring a “cheat sheet” – the parameters of which will be discussed in class. This quiz is in-person and will be run during class time.</p>	April 3 (in-class)
35%	<p>Research Essay</p> <p>The major written assignment for this course, the research essay, gives you an opportunity to combine academic research with the topics explored in lectures and discussions. You will be given a choice of essay topics and are expected to write a 1500–1750-word (5-6 page) research paper on that topic, with the support of scholarly sources and the course textbook. More information on the term paper will be provided in class and posted to D2L.</p> <p><i>Failure to submit an essay will result in a course failure.</i></p>	March 9 (11:59pm)
25%	<p>Reflection Journal</p> <p>Throughout the term you will be required to keep an online reflection journal (using the free platform Padlet) where you will answer questions about each week’s course material.</p> <p>Journal questions for each week are included in the <u>weekly schedule</u>, along with the length of answer we expect. Each week, after you’ve attended lectures and completed the readings, you’ll answer the question(s) posed. Answers should be thoughtful and demonstrate an engagement with course material. During tutorials periods, you’ll often be asked to draw upon your journal entry as a ‘jumping off’ point for discussion.</p> <p>Detailed information about this assignment will be posted to D2L and will be discussed in class and your labs during the first week.</p>	Due: April 12 (11:59pm)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

NOTE: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Failure to submit the essay assignment will result in a course failure.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor or T.A. as soon as possible. Make-up assignments are not permitted, barring exceptional circumstances.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Assignments seven days or more (unexcused) late will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors.

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, letter grade percentage equivalents will be used for written assignments, including the Research Essay and Reflection Journal, while numerical scores will be used to assess quizzes and participation grades.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%

1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copy-right in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

The Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings will be posted on D2L in advance of the first day of class.