

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 203, L01
New Media

Fall 2015

Mon. Sept. 14 – Mon. Dec. 7 (excluding Mon. Oct. 12)

Lecture: M 15:00-16:50

Lab: F 11:00-11:50; 12:00-12:50 (according to registration)

Instructor: Tamara Shepherd
Office: SS 318
Office Phone: 403-220-6729
E-Mail: tamara.shepherd@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Mondays 13:45-14:45, or by appointment

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of new media. New media will first be situated historically and set up as manifestations of different kinds of power. Topics to be examined include the defining characteristics of new media in relation to networked infrastructure, visual culture and representation, identities, audiences, political engagement, and regulatory frameworks. Toward the conclusion of the course, these elements will be brought together through case studies of specific new media forms: social media platforms, mobile applications, and digital games. The overarching goal of the course is to provide students with the opportunity, through lectures and labs, to gain a broad understanding of new media as a terrain marked by diverse struggles for communication power.

Additional Information

Please be aware that much of this course deals with the artifacts, experiences, and products of new media culture. As such, some of the material we study manifests coarse language, sexuality, and violence. If this is a problem for you, please see the instructor, and think carefully about whether this particular course is the best fit for you.

This course is comprised of both lectures and lab sessions, where students will be responsible for participating in discussion and working as part of a smaller group. Regular attendance is expected and **participation in labs will be crucial**. Readings must be completed in advance of class, and students are expected to participate fully in group discussions of all assigned readings.

Please note: There will be no tutorials on Friday, September 11; our first class will be the lecture on Monday, September 14.

Objectives of the Course

COMS 203 has the following major objectives:

1. To provide you with the basis to identify, analyze and evaluate the social factors influencing the design and use of new media;
2. To encourage critical thinking about new media's historical development and its broader role in society, economics, politics, and culture;
3. To provide you with the opportunity to discuss how the course material relates to everyday new media cultures through written assignments as well as lab activities and group discussion;
4. To help prepare you for further undergraduate study.

Textbooks and Readings

The required textbook for the course is *New Media: An Introduction, Second Canadian Edition* by Terry Flew and Richard Smith (Oxford University Press, 2014). Copies are available for purchase at the campus bookstore, and there are also reserve copies held at the library. A schedule of assigned readings from the textbook as well as from online sources will be posted to D2L on September 8, 2015.

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 instructor and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

Assignments and Evaluation

Overall Grade Breakdown:

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Participation: | Weekly in labs | 10% |
| Reflection Paper: | October 5 | 20% |
| Mid-term Test | November 2 | 20% |
| Ignite Presentation: | Nov. 20, 27 & Dec. 4 | 15% |
| Final Exam: | December exam period | 35% |

Participation (10%, weekly in labs):

Labs inherently require active participation in both activities and group discussion. Participation is not measured solely by how often you speak up. Informed, thoughtful contributions to discussion are more important than frequent contributions. An ability to demonstrate familiarity with the required readings is also crucial. Attentive listening matters – students who interrupt others, distract their classmates, or use electronic devices in a way that distracts the instructor or other students will see an impact on their participation grade. Students are also expected to participate by engaging with the presentations of fellow students by attending presentations, asking questions, and

offering thoughtful and constructive commentary.

Reflection Paper (20%, October 5, 600-900 words or 2-3 pages):

Using essay format – structured by a central argument – reflect on your relationship to a particular new media platform (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.). This will be a personal reflection that highlights the specific unique ways in which you use the platform and how you might complicate those uses given some of the material covered on the course so far. The idea is to start from a particular assumption you had going into the course, illustrated by the way you approach the particular new media platform, and revisit it using **two or more** of the authors discussed. Make sure to stake a position in the essay, and structure it with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.

Mid-term Test (20%, November 2, 50 minutes):

In the first half of lecture on November 2, students will complete a mid-term test that covers all course material up to (but not including) that date. The test will feature a mix of fill-in-the-blanks, short answer questions, and one long answer question. All of the questions will pertain to material from the textbook and lectures, testing your understanding of the ideas presented in the course so far.

Ignite Presentation (15%, Nov. 20, 27 & Dec. 4, 5 minutes):

For lab sessions on November 20 and 25, students will individually present on a particular new media text or practice, according to the topic for the week: social media, mobile applications, or digital games. A signup sheet for presentation slots will be available in labs on November 6 – those who do not sign up will be assigned to a slot. Students should prepare a five-minute ignite-style talk that presents the example to class and highlights **one** specific problem or challenge related to the social, economic, political, or cultural aspects of that text or practice. An ignite-style talk involves 20 slides that each automatically advance after 15 seconds. For more on ignite talks and to view some examples, see: <http://igniteshow.com/>.

Final Exam (35%, December exam period, two hours):

The final exam, which students will have two hours to complete, will take place during the December examination period (December 11-22) at a date to be determined by the Registrar. The exam will cover all material included in the course lectures and readings, in order to evaluate students' understanding of new media in broad contexts. The format of the exam will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

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

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.

Written assignments should be typed, double spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with pages numbered. Citations and references should follow APA style. For a guide to using APA style, see: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

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>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using raw scores (for example, an assignment worth 15% will be graded out of 15).

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

| Grade | | Department | Letter grade % |
|-------|--|------------|----------------|
|-------|--|------------|----------------|

| Point Value | Description | Grade | grade scale equivalents | 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 <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 (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/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 | 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) |

• **Online resources and tips**

<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

To be posted on D2L in the first week of classes.