

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 371 (L01) Critical Media Studies
SUMMER 2022: June 28th – Aug 09th, 2022

Lecture: TuTh 9:00am-10:50am

Lab: TuTh 11:00am-11:50am

In-person, UCalgary Main Campus, SA 129

Instructor	Alora Paulsen Mulvey (she/her)
Email	alora.paulsen1@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours	Tuesdays 12:00pm to 1:00pm (in-person) or by appointment (Zoom)
Office	SS250
Course Web Page	D2L (accessed using your MyUofC portal)

Course Description

This course emphasizes major critical approaches in communication and media studies with the intent of introducing students to the theoretical foundations of media and mass communication related research. The course explores the contexts in which these theories arose, identifies their major strengths and weaknesses, and provides an appreciation of how critical theory engages the social world through research on communication and media. Areas to be covered include: the culture industry, political economy of the media, cultural studies, feminist media studies, and critical race theory.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L. This course meets in-person, on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays. Attending both the lecture **and** lab time is essential to your success in the course. We will take the full 10-minute break scheduled between the lecture and lab.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

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

- Critically evaluate and discuss a range of theoretical and empirical approaches to media
- Understand the development of media studies theories in relation to their historical, social, and political context
- Articulate the relevance of power, agency, identity, and representation to media, communications, and culture
- Apply key critical theories to primary research examples and case studies
- Develop both verbal and written analytic skills needed for undergraduate study

Textbooks and Readings

Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 9th edition. New York: Routledge.

This book is available for purchase through the U of C Bookstore. (Older additions may be used, although page numbers may differ slightly with edition.)

Additional reading will be supplied through D2L using the "Reading List" function. Please note that required readings should be read prior to the lecture for which they are assigned.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

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.

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 service. See

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

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Please respect other students in your use of electronic communication devices and computers. Laptops are permitted for note taking and participation in group activities only. Cell phones should be on silent and not be used during lecture or lab time.

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 Policy

When sending an email, please be sure to include "COMS 371" as well as a clear statement of purpose in the subject line. I respond to student emails Monday to Friday, during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm). I do not respond to emails over the weekends.

Email is best for specific inquiries. Students are encouraged to make use of my office hours for any in-depth questions about major course assignments such as the media analysis. Quiz and assignment results will not be discussed over email, but I am happy to meet during office hours to talk further.

Respect and Diversity in the Classroom

Student participation is an important aspect of this course. Lab periods, especially, are centred around student contributions and collaborative activities. During these discussion periods, I ask that students be respectful of diverse viewpoints; however, racist, sexist, homophobic, Islamophobic, and other types of discriminatory comments are not permitted in the classroom. Comments of this nature will be dealt with at the professor's discretion on an individual basis.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Component	Due Date
15%	<p>Check-in Quiz</p> <p>Students will complete an in-person, multiple choice quiz that covers course material from weeks 1-3. This quiz will take place in the first 30 minutes of lab. It is a closed-book quiz. There will be between 15 and 20 questions. Due to the condensed nature of this course, make-up quizzes will not be given in the event of unexcused absences. Students will not receive extra time to write if they are late. As such, be sure to arrive to class on time and ready to write.</p>	July 14, 11:00-11:30am
15%	<p>Group Presentation</p> <p>For this assignment, students will work in groups to create and deliver a 10-minute to 15-minute presentation that will be delivered during lab. These presentations will explore an idea, theory, or concept from our course readings in relation to a contemporary media example.</p> <p>Groups will also provide two discussion questions for the class. Two days prior to their presentation, groups will email the instructor by 11:59pm with their topic and discussion questions. Failure to contact the instructor with this information will result in a 10% deduction from the <i>assignment's</i> final grade. Visual material from your presentation should be uploaded to D2L by 11:59pm the day of your presentation. Again, failure to do so will result in a loss of 10% from the <i>assignment's</i> final grade.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing; students will sign up for a presentation date the first week of the term.</p> <p>Presentations will take place on July 7, July 12, July 19, July 21, July 26, and August 2 during our scheduled lab periods.</p>
15%	<p>Collaborative In-class Activities</p> <p>On the dates indicated, students will complete a short assignment with their peers. These assignments are designed to be completed within the scheduled lab period (50 minutes), though you will have until 11:59pm to submit your work via the D2L Dropbox. Any additional readings necessary to complete these activities will be posted to D2L. Each of these activities is worth 5% of your final grade. Because these are in-person,</p>	<p>June 30, 11:59pm July 28, 11:59pm August 4, 11:59pm</p>

	collaborative assignments, you are required to attend lab to participate. Students who do not reach out to the instructor prior to missing lab will not be eligible for a makeup assignment.	
30%	<p>Reflection Journal</p> <p>Throughout the term, you will be required to submit four reflective responses based on the course material and our in-class discussion <i>from the week prior</i>. For example, the submission for July 4th will cover material from week 1 (June 28, June 30). To be successful, these reflections should connect to the ideas and concepts raised by the assigned material to original examples and demonstrate critical engagement with our class discussions. There will be prompts provided to help guide your responses.</p> <p>Four submissions are due, meaning each post is worth 7.5% of your final grade. Students will submit their reflection as a PDF or Word Doc 11:59pm on the dates indicated. The fourth response may be submitted on a date of the student's choice prior to August 9th at 11:59pm. Each response should be min. 300-words and max. 500-words in length.</p>	<p>July 4, 11:59pm July 18, 11:59pm July 25, 11:59pm Student choice (any date/time between July 5th and August 9th)</p>
25%	<p>Media Analysis</p> <p>For this written assignment, you will conduct a 5-page (double-spaced, 12-point font) media analysis. This paper should demonstrate both your knowledge of course theories and the ability to apply them to an original media example. For this essay, you will choose a media text (television show, film, website, magazine, etc.) and analyze it, using key theories and ideas we've explored throughout the semester.</p> <p>This assignment requires that in addition to the use of course materials, you also conduct some original secondary research. Your essay must draw on a minimum of two academic sources from outside of course materials.</p>	<p>August 9th, 11:59pm</p>

****Detailed information regarding all course assignments will be posted to D2L.****

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all quizzes and assignments to complete this course.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

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 recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

The pandemic has revealed the ways in which social inequalities shape care work and responsibilities, which can affect one's ability to complete assessments on time. As such, I approach late assignments with flexibility when possible, however, you must communicate with me about your situation and needs. If you require extra time for an assignment, please book an office hours appointment and we can develop a plan for you to complete the assignment and receive full credit. This meeting should happen at least 72 hours prior to the deadline whenever possible.

If I do not hear from you, I assume that you will complete the assignment on time. As such, 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. This includes weekends (e.g., if an assignment is due Thursday and you submit it on Monday you will be penalized four grades). Late work will not be accepted one week past the original deadline without appropriate documentation. Late work will not receive written feedback.

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. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the Academic Regulations: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

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 grades will be used for written assignments, while numeric grades will be used for the quiz.

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%

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, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, 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 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.

All students are required to read the *University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Acceptable-Use-of-Material-Protected-by-Copyright-Policy.pdf>) and requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright 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 visit <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, visit <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/d2l-getting-started/>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Wellness and Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness, and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive support when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through Student Wellness Services (Room 370 MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings

Detailed information regarding weekly topics and readings, as well as course assignments, can be found on D2L.