

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media & Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 381, LEC 1

Communications History

Winter 2018

Wed., Jan. 10 – Wed., Apr. 11 (excluding Feb. 21 and Feb 23)

Lectures: Wed. 12:00-1:50, Labs Fri. 9:00-9:50, 10:00-10:50

Instructor: Annie Rudd
Office: SS 312
Office Phone: (403) 220-5458 (email preferred)
E-Mail: annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca (when emailing, please mention “COMS 381” in the subject line)
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Wed. 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

Course Description

How have changes in communications media shaped the ways people have formed and maintained communities, gained and exercised political agency, practiced and contested religious beliefs, and participated in acts of consumption, self-presentation, and social interaction? And how, in turn, have shifts in social, political, and economic conditions informed new developments in communications media? These are some of the questions that will guide our discussions in this course.

This course offers a general survey of how communication systems and practices have developed through history, and of the social contexts within which they emerged, transformed, and adapted through time. Within this framework, we will examine major technological developments in the history of human communication. In addition to surveying a range of important secondary sources tracing important developments in the history of communication, we will draw on primary sources and on theories of communication to contextualize shifts in communications history and to trace the impacts of these shifts on social organization and everyday life.

Our course begins with the transition from oral to literate culture and extends to the digital cultures of the early 21st century. Historical developments that we will trace include the moveable type printing press, the newspaper, photography, radio broadcasting, television, and digital social media, among others. As we look at how humans have communicated in the past, we will contextualize the “new media” of today, considering both continuities and changes between the media of the past and the media of the present.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims:

- to expose you to, and familiarize you with, a series of important developments in the history of communication;
- to enable you to draw connections between communications and broader processes of social and cultural change, through readings, lectures, and writing assignments

that link communications technologies with phenomena such as imperialism, religious reform, consumer culture, and globalization;

- to introduce you to techniques of historical interpretation and research;
- to provide you with context that will help you approach the media of the present moment in a critical and historically literate way.

Textbooks and Readings

The required textbook for this course is *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer, 6th edition, which is available in the University Bookstore. Earlier editions of this reader do not contain all of the required readings, so you are encouraged to get the 6th edition. All other readings will be posted on D2L. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to lectures and tutorials.

An important note: all readings and dates listed on the course outline are subject to change—so please check D2L regularly for the most up-to-date version of the course schedule.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

The use of laptop computers is permitted in lectures, provided they are used solely for notetaking and do not cause any distractions for you or others. Phones must be silenced and put in your bag before lectures and tutorials begin. Audio recording or filming during lectures and tutorials is prohibited without permission from the instructor.

A Note on Email Communication

Emails to your instructor should be sent from your University of Calgary email account, with “COMS 381” mentioned in the subject line. Please do not use email to ask questions that can be answered by looking at the course outline or D2L. I aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them—if you have emailed me and have not heard back within this timeframe, please feel free to send a follow-up message.

Assignments and Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be determined based on the following:

Assignment	Date	Percentage of final grade
Reading response 1	Due January 23	5%
Reading response 2	Due February 6	5%
Midterm exam	February 28	20%
Research essay proposal	Due March 14	5%
Research essay	Due March 28	30%
Final exam	Part 1: in class, April 11	10%
	Part 2: take-home, April 13	15%
Participation in labs and lectures	Throughout semester	10%

Reading Responses

Due by 10pm on Tuesday, January 23 and Tuesday, February 6, these writing assignments will allow you to critically engage with the course readings and reflect on aspects of communication history that you find particularly interesting. In response to a selection of prompts provided on D2L, you will be required to write a short written response (minimum 400 words) and submit it using the D2L Dropbox. Further details will be provided early in the term. These assignments will be given a grade but no qualitative feedback; if you'd like to know why you got the grade you did, you're welcome to inquire via email or visit office hours.

Midterm Exam

A midterm exam will be given in lecture on February 28. It will include multiple choice, true-or-false, and short-answer questions, and it will require you to demonstrate your comprehension of material covered in the assigned readings, in lectures, and in labs. Further information will be provided in advance of the test.

Research Essay Proposal

You will be asked to submit a research essay proposal no later than March 14, via the D2L Dropbox. This proposal must include a brief (minimum 150-word) description of your essay topic, a working thesis statement, and two academic sources outside of the course reader that you intend to use in this essay.

Research Essay

Drawing on the critical approaches to communication history that we have examined, you will be asked to write an essay of at least six double-spaced pages that connects communications with history—an essay that considers, in focused and specific ways, how a communications medium has been connected with a specific historical development or complex of developments. With the medium you have chosen, what is the nature of the relationship between communication and historical change? This essay will require you to make thoughtful use of academic sources, and at least one primary source. The essay is due March 28. More details will be provided on the essay assignment sheet, which will be provided to you early in the term.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of a multiple-choice section to be written in lecture on April 11 (worth 10% of final grade), and a take-home section to be written on April 13, which will consist of essay questions and will take approximately two hours to complete.

Participation

Because class participation is a required component of this course, consistent attendance at lectures and tutorials as well as active and informed involvement in tutorial discussions is required. Attendance will be taken in this course; if you do not expect to attend lectures or labs frequently, you should not enroll in this course. Infrequent participation or attendance in tutorials will result in a lower grade or possibly a failing grade in the course, and will also make it difficult for you to do well on quizzes and writing assignments. You are expected to behave in a respectful and non-disruptive way in this class. This means showing up on time, staying for the duration, and not having private conversations or using your phone during class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams weighted more than 15% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments:

Blog posts must be submitted to D2L by the stated deadline.

Research essays should be submitted in lecture. If it is not possible for you to hand in your essay directly to your TA or instructor, 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 marked final exams in SS 320. 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 will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Brief extensions may be given by the instructor provided the student has a compelling reason to request one, and the request is made well in advance of the deadline.

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. Letter grades will be used for essay assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes.

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

Unless otherwise noted below, readings can be found in the course reader.

Week 1

January 10

Introduction and discussion of course themes.

Week 2

January 17

From speech to writing.

Required readings:

Eric Havelock, "The Greek Legacy"

Walter Ong, "Orality, Literacy, and Modern Media"

Week 3

January 23: reading response 1 due—submit via the D2L Dropbox.

January 24

Print culture and the rise of reading publics.

Required readings:

Lewis Mumford, "The Invention of Printing"
Elizabeth Eisenstein, "Aspects of the Printing Revolution"

Week 4

January 31

Photography and visual communication.

Required readings:

Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography* (on D2L)

Week 5

February 6: reading response 2 due—submit via the D2L Dropbox.

February 7

Electricity and communication.

Required readings:

James W. Carey, "Time, Space, and the Telegraph"

Claude Fischer, "The Telephone Takes Command"

Week 6

February 14

Journalism: word and image.

Required readings:

Michael Schudson, "The New Journalism"

Ulrich Keller, "Early Photojournalism"

Week 7

No class—Happy Reading Week!

Week 8

February 28

Midterm exam in lecture.

Week 9

March 7

Film.

Required reading:

Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment" (on D2L)

Jib Fowles, "Mass Media and the Star System"

Week 10

March 14

Research essay proposal due today.

Mass media and consumer culture.

Required reading:

Rosalind Williams, "Dream Worlds of Consumption"

Week 11

March 21

Radio broadcasting.

Required readings:

Susan J. Douglas, "Early Radio"

John Durham Peters, "The Public Voice of Radio"

Week 12

March 28

Research essay due today.

Television.

Required readings:

Lynn Spigel, "Making Room for TV"

Pierre Bourdieu, excerpts from *On Television* (on D2L)

Week 13

April 4

Situating "new media" in history.

Required readings:

Lev Manovich, "How Media Became New"

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, "The World Wide Web"

Week 14

April 11

Part 1 of final exam to take place in lecture.

Concluding discussion.