

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 401.46 L01
Special Topics in Communications Studies (Environmental Media)

Winter 2017
Jan 9 to April 12 (excluding February 21 and 23)
Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:15

Instructor: Méli Hogan
Office: SS310
Office Phone: 220-3248
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10pm - 12pm, by email appointment

Course Description

Environmental Media engages an array of media texts, discourses, and objects, to understand the mutual entanglements of media and environment. The course content is divided into 3 parts:

1- *Representations of the Environment* - we look at documentary films, media campaigns, advertisements, etc., to understand and analyse how ‘nature,’ ‘wilderness’ and ‘the outdoors’ are created and sustained as important concepts (in relation to, for example, the technological sublime, environmental justice, race and privileged spaces, and historical understandings of Nature/Culture).

2 - *Materialities & Infrastructures* - we look at the lifecycle of our current global communications infrastructures, from mining rare earth minerals for electronic devices, to e-waste disposal, to cell towers, data centers, and everything that connects the wired world.

3- *The Environment as Medium* - we look globally at how ‘natural disasters’, climate change, and air pollution become inscribed into the environment, and how nature itself becomes medium and message.

Objectives of the Course

→ to demonstrate an ability to read and interpret texts in the field

- to describe how communication plays a significant role in the framing and discussion of environmental problems and solutions historically
- to survey and compare a wide variety of media (podcasts, print ads, documentaries, websites, etc) for the way they tell a story about the environment
- to produce written and oral discourse appropriate to the field
- to further develop your analytical, writing, and communication skills
- to work cooperatively in groups and become familiar with methods of peer evaluation

Textbooks and Readings

Readings are posted on the Desire2Learn (D2L) course website, and see below.

Internet and electronic communication device information

No cell phones allowed during class. If you'd like to take notes on an electronic device, bring in your laptop or tablet. Stay off Facebook and all social media, games, and texting, etc., during class. (You can check your cell phone during break, or step outside the class to make urgent calls.) For these reasons, and to help you be less distracted, you're strongly encouraged to take notes by hand.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	Presentation on weekly reading	ongoing, based on sign up
20%	Writing Prompts (WP 1-5)	ongoing (5% each)
20%	Podcast response paper (2-3 pages double spaced)	Feb 9
20%	Midterm	Feb 28
30%	Final Paper (8-10 pages double spaced + presentation materials)	Apr 11

Podcast response paper (2-3 pages double spaced) Feb 9

You will submit a 2-3 page report about a podcast episode from HumaNature <http://humanaturepodcast.org/> (selected episodes will be chosen by the instructor). The report will introduce the featured author/theorist and their main argument. Outline two points that

support the author’s argument by pulling out two key quotations and explaining their significance. Focus on how humans and habitat interact and are defined in relation to one another, identifying and defining the keywords that emerge from the episode.

Midterm paper (in class) March 23

This will be an in-class midterm. It will take the duration of the class and cover everything up to this point. You will not have access to notes or readings.

Final Paper (8-10 pages double spaced) Apr 11

In-class Conference April 4, 6 and 11.

You will write a research paper and present it during that last 2 weeks of class, in a conference panel format. Pick a media or tech company, like Netflix, Alibaba, Apple, Amazon, Google or Facebook. How does it position itself in relation to the environment and nature? How does it rely on it, or use it as resource, how does it speak about it? What does the company understand its role to be in relation to the environment? How does it make its environmental stances known? More details in class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Overview of Lecture Topics and Assignments

(Readings below)

#	Dates	Theme	Materials
1	Jan 10 Jan 12	Overview Documentary screening	Syllabus Before the Flood (2016)
<i>Part 1 Representations of the Environment</i>			
2	Jan 17 Jan 19	Wilderness Human animals	Cronon, 1995 Foster, 2016; Grizzly man (2005) *WP1
Cronon, W (1995). “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” In William Cronon, ed., <i>Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature</i> , New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995, 69-90.			
Foster, C (2016) <i>Being a Beast: Adventures Across the Species Divide</i> (chapter to be selected).			

3	Jan 24 Jan 26	Communicative Regimes Omnivore	Berland, 2009 Blue, 2009 *WP2
<p>Berland, J (2009) “Animal and/as Medium: Symbolic Work in Communicative Regimes” in <i>The Global South</i>, Vol. 3, No. 1, <i>War by Other Means</i> (Spring, 2009), p. 42-65. http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/40339247?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents</p> <p>Blue, G (2009) “Branding Beef: Marketing, Food Safety, and the Governance of Risk” <i>Canadian Journal of Communication</i>, Vol 34 (2009) 229-244 2009 <i>Canadian Journal of Communication</i></p>			
4	Jan 31 Feb 2	News Temporalities Silent Spring	Berland, 2005 Carson, 1962 x2 *WP3
<p>Jody Berland (2005) “Walkerton: The Memory of Matter.” <i>TOPIA</i> 14 p.93-108</p> <p>Carson, R (1962) “The Obligation to Endure” and “Elixirs of Death” In <i>Silent Springs</i>.</p>			
5	Feb 7 Feb 9	Climate Justice Podcast paper due	WhOyte, 2016 Discuss podcast papers in class
<p>Whyte, K (2016) “Is it Colonial Déjà Vu? Indigenous Peoples and Climate Injustice” p 88-104 in <i>Humanities for the Environment: Integrating Knowledges, Forging New Constellations of Practice</i>. Edited by Joni Adamson, Michael Davis, and Hsinya Huang. Earthscan Publications. https://www.academia.edu/24999116/Is_it_Colonial_D%C3%A9j%C3%A0_Vu_Indigenous_Peoples_and_Climate_Injustice</p>			
6	Feb 14 Feb 16	Solar Guest speaker: J. Matchett	Zehner, 2012 http://studentenergy.org/
<p>Zehner, O (2012) “Chapter 1: Solar Cells and Other Fairy Tales” p.26-53. in <i>Green illusions: the dirty secrets of clean energy and the future of environmentalism</i> http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary/detail.action?docID=10559323</p>			
--- BREAK ---			
Part 2 Materialities & Infrastructures			
7	Feb 28 Mar 2	Midterm Energy and Oil	<i>In-class</i> Hitchcock, 2009
<p>Hitchcock, P (2009) “Everything’s Gone Green: The Environment of BP’s Narrative” http://imagination.csj.ualberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/3.2_Pg_104-114_Hitchcock.pdf</p>			
8	Mar 7 Mar 9	Invisibilities Ewaste	Mukherjee, 2016. Maxwell and Miller, 2014 (ch6) *WP4

<p>Mukherjee, R (2016) ““City Inside the Oven” Cell Tower Radiation Controversies and Mediated Technoscience Publics” in <i>Television & New Media</i> 1–18: 2016. http://tvn.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/content/early/2016/05/17/1527476416649242</p>			
<p>Maxwell, R and Miller, T (2014) Chapter 6 “Greening Media Studies” In: Maxwell, Richard, Raundalen, Jon, and Vestberg, Nina Lager, eds. <i>Routledge Research in Cultural and Media Studies: Media and the Ecological Crisis</i>. London, GB: Routledge, 2014. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016. http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary/reader.action?ppg=110&docID=10951173&tm=1477616999397</p>			
9	Mar 14 Mar 16	Infrastructures 1 Infrastructures 2	Parks & Starosielski, 2015. (intro, p1-27) Holt and Vonderau, 2015. (ch3, p71-93)
<p>Parks & Starosielski (2015) “Introduction” + “Chapter 3” in <i>Signal Traffic : Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures</i> http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary/detail.action?docID=11055527</p>			
10	Mar 21 Mar 23	(no class) (no class)	Tuesday off to work on final paper Thursday off to work on final paper
<p>Part 3 The Environment as Medium</p>			
11	Mar 28 Mar 30	Icebergs Elemental Media	Ruiz, 2014 Li, 2016 *WP5
<p>Ruiz, R (2014) “Iceberg Media” <i>International Journal of Communication</i> Vol.8 Feature 2525–2530 http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3270/1271</p> <p>Li, J. (2016) “The Grey Clouds: Eco-Apps, Elemental Media, and Mobile Ecologies” <i>Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference</i>, Seattle, WA, April 2016.</p>			
12	Apr 4 Apr 6	Conference 1 Conference 2	Group 1 presents Group 2 presents
13	Apr 11	Conference 3	Group 3 presents All final papers due

Submission of Assignments

Please hand in your essays directly to me at the beginning of class, in hard copy format. 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 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.

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, percentages are used for all written assignments.

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, the 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>

If this course requires (or allows) students to conduct (or act as participants in) primary research involving surveys, interviews, or observations, state that here, describe the nature of students' participation, and indicate whether you have received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee or if you expect students to apply for ethics approval themselves. If you have not received course-based ethics approval and do not expect your students to apply on their own for research ethics clearance (and allow time for that step), then you should not assign any course work requiring research involving human participants. *(One approved exception is for usability studies in COMS 363 in which students may conduct anonymous online usability surveys to get their classmates' opinions on the usability of a website. [Delete this paragraph if your course will not require research with people.]*

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	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm

<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Counselling Services· Health Services· Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE· Online resources and tips	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthy-campus</p> <p>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.</p>
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