

**University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**COMS 401.66 L01 Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies  
Embodied Media (in the COVID-19 Pandemic)**

**SUMMER 2020, June 29 – July 17 (excluding July 01)**

**Lectures: Pre-recorded audio lectures on D2L follow the schedule below  
Tutorials: Digital workshops available on D2L in correspondence with lecture topics**

**Instructor: Mickey Vallee  
Email: [mickey.vallee@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mickey.vallee@ucalgary.ca) (emails will be responded to within 24 hours)**

**Office Hours: By appointment by email or Zoom (or other preferred method)**

This course is delivered entirely online through the D2L platform, as the campus remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Course Description**

What does it mean to have and to be a body in the COVID-19 pandemic? Zoom, Skype, D2L, masks, wearables, all involve the body and the self in a new relationship with its network. This course takes the perspective of bodies, embodiment, and sense to make sense of the contemporary turn in embodied discourse. The course unfolds in three stages: first, it introduces the notion of the body as an entity that looks and is looked at. Then, the course explores the rise of wearables and the further exploitation of sense in our mediated landscapes. Finally, it rests on the recent changes to sense, perception and embodiment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, surveying the relevant literature as it was published during the first three months of the event. The goal of the course is to provide students with the opportunity, through lectures and tutorials, to gain an appreciation of the foundation of what we mean in media and communication by 'embodiment', how embodiment has broadened from 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of the gaze to 21<sup>st</sup> century theories of data-based and database governance, to recent public health discourses that exploit the body's digital presence. Students will be given the opportunity to write about their experiences in social distancing.

### **Additional Information**

This online, distance education course involves audio lectures and online discussion boards, where students will be responsible for participating in discussion and answering directed questions. Regular posting is expected and participation in D2L is crucial. Readings must be completed regularly, and students are expected to participate fully in online discussions of all assigned readings.

### **Objectives of the Course**

COMS 203 has the following major objectives:

1. To provide you with the basis to identify, analyze and evaluate the underlying ways that we think of the body as a site of mediation, as well as media as a site of embodiment;
2. To survey 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of embodied media as they were dominated by the visual paradigm, into 21<sup>st</sup> century theories that emphasized more haptic and non-ocularcentric frameworks;
3. To analyze the current COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of embodied mediation, including a robust reading list of provisional research on embodied media that accompanied the emergence of the COVID-19 event;

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4. To encourage critical thinking about the body's historical development and its broader role in society, economics, politics, and culture;
5. To help prepare you for advanced and independent study of embodied media.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

This course uses three books that correspond respectively with three sections:

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2017) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford University Press)

Deborah Lupton (2016) *The Quantified Self: A Sociology of Self-Tracking* (Polity Press)

Jessie Kindig, Mark Krotov, and Marco Roth (eds) (2020) *There Is No Outside: COVID-19 Dispatches* (Verso)

*Other readings will be distributed as the course unfolds, depending on the direction of discussion groups and the unique interests of students, expressed either individually or collectively.*

*The first two books (Sturken and Cartwright, 2017; Lupton, 2016) are available at the University of Calgary Bookstore. They are prepared to arrange for the delivery of a hard copy of the text. Alternatively, you may wish to download, at a lower cost, the e-text version of Sturken & Cartwright (<https://www.redshelf.com/book/786992/practices-of-looking-786992-9780190265755-marita-sturken-lisa-cartwright> or VitalSource <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/practices-of-looking-marita-sturken-lisa-v9780190265755?term=sturken>). You may also wish to purchase Lupton's book on Amazon as a Kindle book ([https://www.amazon.ca/Quantified-Self-Deborah-Lupton-ebook/dp/B07M5M7GV9/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=quantified+self&qid=1590996254&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.ca/Quantified-Self-Deborah-Lupton-ebook/dp/B07M5M7GV9/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=quantified+self&qid=1590996254&sr=8-1)). The COVID-19 book is also affordable, and can be downloaded as an e-text on the Verso site: (<https://www.versobooks.com/books/3620-there-is-no-outside>)*

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

This course is D2L intensive. It will have audio lectures, workshop activities, video examples, and discussion boards. I have tried to make the course as interactive as possible without actually being in the same place. I promise that it will be fun if you engage regularly with the material. It is easy to fall into the procrastinating trap in a distance education course. Please be careful and mindful of your work and try to develop a routine as quickly as possible. The course will move very quickly, so be sure you give yourself plenty of time each day to devote to reading and discussing.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

Weight	Course Components	Due
20%	<b>Participation</b> Discussion posts for modules <i>must</i> be posted on the day of each module, by 11:59 PM. Online discussions and exercises require active participation. Participation is not measured solely by how many posts you make. Informed, thoughtful contributions to discussion are more important than frequent contributions. An ability to demonstrate familiarity with the required readings is also crucial. Attentive reading and listening matters — students are expected to engage with one another and to respect one another.	As part of each module on D2L
20% x 3	<b>3 tests (must be answered within a two-hour window by end of each Friday)</b> After each week's modules, you will have the opportunity to write a short written response to a specific question posted on D2L on the Friday at 8 AM.	By the end of each Friday July 5, 12, 18
20%	<b>Short Paper</b> The short research paper (i.e. 2000-2500 words) will be a standard academic paper on embodiment and media, and will either be analytic, evaluative, or descriptive (not argumentative). The paper should demonstrate a background familiarity with the changing conceptual apparatuses of embodied media and mediation, from visual to haptic to quarantined, as outlined in the course material.	Sunday, July 26 by 11:59 PM

*\* Additional time will be added for individual students who get authorized accommodations through Student Accessibility Services*

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO**

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

**Policy for Missed Assignments/Exams:** If you miss a quiz, test, or presentation, you are responsible to contacting the instructor to arrange a make-up assignment.

**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/](http://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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/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 University Calendar: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

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### 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

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Course components will be graded using raw point scores. 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*
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding performance	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent performance	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>	Approaching excellent performance	<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>	Exceeding good performance	<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good performance	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>	Approaching good performance	<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory performance	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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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](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?utm\\_source=ssc&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_campaign=redirect](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect)

### **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 notesharing 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 ([www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.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>

### **Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal**

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the University Calendar: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.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.

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For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at [itsupport@ucalgary.ca](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca) or by calling 403-220.5555.

### Schedule of Lecture Topic and Readings

1	Monday, June 29	Course Outline, Introductions, ungraded discussion
2	Tuesday, June 30	Images, power, and politics (read Ch. 1 of Sturken and Cartwright)
3	Thursday, July 2	Modernity: Spectatorship, the gaze, and power (read Ch. 3 of Sturken and Cartwright)
4	Fri-Sun, July 3-5	First written test assigned at 8 AM on July 3, due before the end of day, July 5 (11:59 PM)
5	Monday, July 6	Realism and perspective (read Ch. 4 of Sturken and Cartwright)
6	Tuesday, July 7	Brand culture (read Ch. 7 of Sturken and Cartwright)
7	Wednesday, July 8	Scientific looking, looking at science (read Ch. 9 of Sturken and Cartwright)
8	Thursday, July 9	The global flow of visual culture (read ch. 10 of Sturken and Cartwright)
9	Fri-Sun, July 10-12	Second written test assigned at 8 AM on July 10, due before the end of day, July 12 (11:59 PM)
10	Monday, July 13	Knowing oneself and new hybrid beings (read Chs. 1-2 of Lupton)
11	Tuesday, July 14	The optimal human being, the datafied self (read Chs. 3-5 of Lupton)
12	Wednesday, July 15	Living inside (read Chs. 1-9 of <i>There Is No Outside</i> )
13	Thursday, July 16	Finding outside (read Chs. 10-18 of <i>There Is No Outside</i> )
	Fri-Sun July 17-19	Third written test assigned at 8 AM on July 18, due before the end of day, July 19 (11:59 PM)
	Thursday, July 26	<b>Short essay is due!</b>