

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 413 (L01): Advanced Research Methods
FALL 2021 Sept. 7 to Dec. 9 (excluding Sept. 30, Oct. 11, Nov. 7-13)
Monday 14:00-15:15 classes are synchronous via Zoom and will include
lecture, discussion and activities for part or all of class time.
Wednesday classes are asynchronous.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the registrar scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

Online Quizzes and Exams: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24-hours to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully. Time specified for online assessments includes 50% extra time.

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Email: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office: SS 254
Office Hours: T 11-12 in office, R 11-12 via Zoom, and by appointment

Course Description

This course provides students an in-depth exploration of selected qualitative methods for social and cultural research in communications and media studies. The prerequisite for this course is successful completion of COMS 313 (Communication Research Methods). Building on the overview of basic social science research approaches and techniques as covered in COMS 313, this course will engage students to think critically about methodological choices in designing, planning and proposing research. Students will review philosophical and historic foundations of qualitative research methods and consider these methods in view of how they apply to contemporary social and cultural issues and contexts.

Additional Information

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. The course emphasizes learning through participation, which means attendance and attention during class time are essential for success in the course. Students should come to synchronous online classes prepared to take part in discussions and activities. A schedule of topics, assignments, and readings will be posted on D2L.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize and articulate the value of qualitative inquiry, and describe key epistemological perspectives that guide qualitative research practices

- Understand the value and practices of qualitative methods (relative strengths and weaknesses), and how these methods apply in communications and media studies
- Review literature and propose research that builds upon the work of other scholars
- Understand ethical issues and challenges of qualitative research in contemporary social and cultural contexts

Textbooks and Readings

van den Hoonaard, D. K. (2019). *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*, Third Edition. Oxford University Press. Don Mills, ON.

Students may use the Second Edition (2017) but should note that some material will vary from the Third Edition. Students may use the print or e-textbook. Additional readings will be posted on D2L.

Email Policy

- Include **COMS 413** in the subject line of all email sent to your professor. Include your name in the body of the email *as it appears* in your university registration.
- **Email will usually be answered M-F between 11 am – 6 pm.** You can generally expect an answer within 48 hours. Email will not be answered on weekends.
- **Email is best used for short specific inquiries.** If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments make an appointment during office hours.
- Regularly check your @ucalgary.ca email. Ensure email is not in spam or junk folders.
- Email sent to your professor and fellow students must be courteous and professional.

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

For online or blended courses, students are required to have reliable access to the following:

- 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;
- A webcam (built-in or external);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.
- Technical difficulties? Visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment. Close all electronics during presentations by your fellow students. Working on a laptop or device during student presentations may impact your participation grade. NO audio or video recording or photographing of course materials is allowed in any class without the instructor's permission. Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>), and carefully review the section on Instructor Intellectual Copyright in this outline.

Instructor Intellectual Copyright

All 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 explicit consent of the instructor. Posting course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites is prohibited. Sharing extracts of 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 questions about sharing materials with classmates. *Students are not permitted to audio or video-record lectures and discussions or take pictures/screen shots during this class. All statements and interactions during class time are a matter of group privacy and cannot be publicized.*

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students using material protected by copyright in violation of the policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Assignments and Evaluation

All assignments will be discussed in class and detailed instructions posted on D2L.

Discussion Prompts (25%) (Individual)

Due dates: September 20, 27, October 18, 25, November 1, 15, 22, 29

Students answer/address prompts about readings, screenings, or class materials (weekly word count range 300-500 words). Students should be ready to discuss their response during synchronous class time. Successful responses must demonstrate engagement in class and familiarity with readings and course materials. Evaluation will be based upon quality of content and writing, and on level of participation during synchronous classes. On Wednesdays, a prompt will be provided with instructions on D2L. Responses must be submitted to D2L the following Monday before class begins (1:30 pm). Partial grade deduction for late submissions. Students may complete all prompts and have the lowest mark dropped or students may miss one prompt at any time in the term without penalty.

Pairs Presentation (15%) Scheduled September 27 – December 6

In self-formed pairs, students present (7-8 minutes) on an assigned research method (list provided). Slides and script must be submitted (by 11:59 pm) the day before presenting.

Topic Paper (15%) (Individual) Due: October 4

Students write a 1200-word paper on the general state and significance of a topic of interest (list provided). Students share key points about the topic in a 3-minute live Zoom talk to class.

Literature Review (25%) (Individual) Due: November 3 (11:59 pm)

Building from the topic paper, students examine research and write a literature review (2400-2500 words) and include minimum five peer-reviewed articles. Full details discussed in class.

Research Report (20%) (Individual) Due: December 8 (11:59 pm)

Students prepare a 2000-word research report. Full details and outline instructions will be provided and discussed in class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments

Students must complete all assignments or a course grade of 'F' may be assigned at the discretion of the professor. Contact the professor asap if you miss a component.

Follow all assignment instructions carefully. All assignments are due via upload to D2L (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) on the due date stated on the assignment, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Include your name and ID number on all assignments AND include your surname in the file name of assignments you upload to D2L. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the correct version. Do not email your assignments unless directed to by your professor.

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

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after due dates may be penalized with the loss of a partial letter grade for each day late (e.g.: A- to B+ to B).

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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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 all assignments.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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 non-traditional formats, i.e. 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 this course use APA style formatting. 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, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/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, 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 see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

The weekly schedule of topics, readings and detailed assignment instructions will be available on D2L.