

**Communications Studies (COMS) 435 - L01**  
**Mass Communications and Canadian Society**  
**Fall 2012**  
**Wednesday, 12:00 – 14:50**

**Instructor:** Dr. Delia Dumitrica  
**Office**  
**Location:** SS344  
**E-Mail:** dddumitr@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 15:15 – 17:15 or by appointment

**Calendar Description**

This course introduces students to theoretical literature on various aspects of the media, including public policy questions such as the concentration of media ownership, Canadian content requirements, censorship, the role of the media during elections, and the problems and opportunities that might be brought by advances in technology.

**Additional Information**

- ▲ This is a reading, writing and research intensive course.
- ▲ The course assumes basic familiarity with communication theories (e.g. COMS 201, COMS 371), particularly Habermas' theory of the public sphere.

**Objectives of the Course**

This course will provide a broad understanding of the historical, legal, economic and social context of mass media in Canada. We will examine different mass media institutions and question their role in fostering a democratic society. We will take a case study approach, where students will be expected to work individually and in groups to examine specific mass media institutions.

By the end of this course, students should:

- Be able to describe and interpret the historical, legal, economic and social context of mass media in Canada.
- Be able to evaluate the role of Canadian mass media in fostering a democratic society.
- Be able to use case study methodology to examine specific media institutions in Canada.

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

All cell phones should be silenced for the entire duration of the class. Laptops, smartphones and tablets can only be used for taking notes or for research purposes.

**Required Reading:**

Mary Vipond (2011). *The Mass Media in Canada*. Fourth edition. Toronto: Lorimer & Company Ltd. Publishers.

Additional readings consisting of journal articles accessible through the library will be indicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

You will be graded on the following assignments:

- Midterm (20%) – *October 31, 2012*
- Final exam (20%) – *TBD, registrar scheduled*
- Group project (20%) – *November 7 – December 5, 2012*
- Research paper (40%)
  - Proposal (5%) – *September 28, 2012*
  - Annotated bibliography (10%) – *October 24, 2012*
  - Paper (25%) – *December 5, 2012*

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. 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.

### **Description of assignments**

Detailed information on the assignments will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard. Note that while there is no grade assigned for participation, your consistent contribution in class (informed by the required readings) and your participation in in-class activities are crucial to tackling all assignments.

#### **1. Exams: midterm (20%) – October 31, 2012; final (20%) – TBD, registrar scheduled**

This assignment tests your knowledge and comprehension of the required readings and lecture material. A combination of multiple-choice, short answer and essay questions will be used.

#### **2. Group project (20%) – November 7 – December 5, 2012**

This assignment helps you gain in-depth knowledge of a mass media institution in Canada. You will work in groups of maximum five to develop a 15 minutes presentation (10%) and a written report (10%). The group project consists of an institutional case study, where you will discuss the historical, economic and social aspects of a specific mass media institution in Canada.

Report: approx. 1500 words.

#### **3. Research paper (40%): Proposal (5%) – September 28, 2012; Annotated bibliography (10%) – October 24, 2012; Paper (25%) – December 5, 2012**

This assignment helps you evaluate the democratic potential of mass media in Canada. The research paper consists of an investigation of a conflictual situation in Canadian mass media.

Proposal: approx. 300 words.  
Annotated bibliography: approx. 1000 words.  
Paper: approx. 2500 words.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: YES**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

**Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Assignments overdue for more than a week will not be accepted.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. 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 System**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: (Revised, effective September 2008)

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99

C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

### **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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Digital Family Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

### **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

**"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

**Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

To be provided on the first day of class and posted on Blackboard.