

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

**Communication and Media Studies (COMS) 503 - L01**

**Advanced Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies  
Telecommunications Policy  
Fall 2020**

Wednesday, Sept. 9 – Wednesday, Dec 9 (excluding Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> and Nov 9 - 13)

Wednesday 2:00- 4:45 pm  
(Classes will be held via synchronous Zoom sessions)

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:**

This Fall 2020 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>Instructor:</b>   | Dr. Gregory Taylor   |
| <b>Email:</b>        | gregory.taylor2@ucalgary.ca  |
| <b>Web Page:</b>     | D2L (access via MyUofC portal)   |
| <b>Office Hours:</b> | Available for email (or video) consultations Tuesday 12:30 – 2:30 pm. Please email to set appointment. |

**Course Description**

The internet is a physical, economic and political construct. It is the product of material objects (cables, towers, internet exchange centres), high tech national and multinational industries (Bell, Microsoft, Ericsson), as well as government policies, and laws. This essential means of communication of contemporary life also remains firmly rooted in foundations established more than a century ago.

Through lectures, discussions and workshops, students will engage with the physical, legislative and regulatory environment for telecommunication and the Internet. Students will explore social, legal, political and economic theories of regulated industries, focusing primarily upon wired and wireless telecommunications.

Students will then apply this knowledge to topical communication issues that currently are under consideration or review in the Canadian regulatory system, as centered in the Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Students will prepare individual papers and will also engage in intensive group work. Teams will prepare, present and argue regulatory interventions on specific issues in front of an expert panel in a moot CRTC hearing. Teams will work in conditions that mirror those of an actual regulatory intervention.

The first weeks of the course will be devoted to an examination of the essential theories, instruments, institutional structures, and practices of telecommunication regulation, coupled with an exploration of how regulatory processes respond to evolution in technologies. The latter part of the course situates these materials in their Canadian contexts. The last part focuses on practice: acquiring and applying the research and professional skills necessary in order to prepare effective regulatory interventions.

Given that this class has graduate and undergraduate students, there will be additional readings, some longer assignments, and a different midterm exam for graduate students in COMS 717.

### **Objectives of the Course**

In this course students will:

- Gain knowledge of the history, theory and practice of regulation as applied to communication infrastructures;
- Understand the technological, political and industrial components of the communications infrastructure, how they work and how they interact;
- Acquire specialized research skills involving government and public documents;
- Experience the tactics and strategy of engaging in the regulatory process;
- Analyze, develop and argue regulatory positions under conditions akin to what they would encounter in actual regulatory proceedings.

### **Textbook and Readings**

#### ***Required textbook:***

Nuechterlein, J. E. & P. J. Weiser (2013) *Digital Crossroads: Telecommunications Law and Policy in the Internet Age*, (Second Edition), Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Fully accessible online via the University Library. Other readings are available either via D2L or the University of Calgary library website.

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

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- 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.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 201) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread. Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with the instructor.

Email is most useful for short, specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material, assignments, or grades, visit the instructor during office hours.

The instructor will respond to emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read (or replied to) until the next working day.

Email inquiries will be responded to on a first-come, first-serve basis. If deemed appropriate by the course instructor, a virtual meeting (via Zoom or Skype) can be held with the student to address the issue.

**NOTE:** Email submissions of work will NOT be accepted unless otherwise specified.

Online submission of work is now standard, and specific methods of submission have been identified by your professor. Please review those instructions below ("Assignments and Evaluation").

## Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Assessed Components  | Due      |
|--------|--|----------|
| 10%    | <p><b>Short Writing Assignment:</b> Students will be required to write an early response to a course reading. The assignment must be completed within any of the first five weeks of class (by Oct 7). This assignment is about your reflections on the reading – therefore the response is due before the class in which the reading will be discussed. Assignments will not be accepted after the class. Analysis of the reading is primary, however, students should strengthen and develop their response by drawing upon their own experiences while demonstrating clear knowledge of the work cited. What is the author’s main point? What is your response?</p> <p>The class on Oct 7 is the final class to submit the short writing assignment. Each response must be between 600 and 800 words (COMS 503)/ 800 – 1000 words (COMS 717). Responses must critically interrogate the text and analyze its implications. Avoid excessive summary.</p> <p>Responses must demonstrate sound analysis of the ideas from assigned readings and include specific quotes. Other sources may be used if formally cited but are not required. This assignment is to be uploaded to D2L.</p> | By Oct 7 |
| 10%    | <p><b>Participation</b> grades will be awarded on the basis of your active involvement in online class discussions and activities. In order to receive participation grades, you are expected to be in attendance for class, contribute to the discussions, and demonstrate a sound knowledge of required readings.</p>  | Ongoing  |
| 25%    | <p><b>Mid-Term Exam</b></p> <p>A 1.5 hour online quiz will test for comprehension of key concepts, definitions, legal and regulatory instruments, and readings to this point in the course. Different exams will be provided for 503 and 717 students.</p> <p>The exam will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer. The exam will be available from 2:00 pm November 4 to 2:00 pm November 5. Once you open the exam, you must complete and submit it within the <b>135 minute time period allowed</b> (= 1.5 hours + a 50% time buffer in case of technical difficulties). The exam is closed book and you must not consult with other students in completing it.</p>   | Nov 4    |
| 25%    | <p><b>Group project exercise</b></p> <p>Regulatory interventions on important topics are typically developed in teams that integrate several areas of expertise. Depending upon the subject matter, teams can require input on</p>   | Nov 25   |

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|     | <p>legal, economic, political, cultural, commercial and strategic matters.</p> <p>The group exercise aims to reproduce this environment in real time and under realistic working conditions. Small teams (3-4 participants) will be formed around 4-5 specific topical issues that are currently on the Canadian regulatory agenda. Two teams will be assigned to each issue. One team will be assigned to argue in favor of a proposition or position, the other against it. Students will be assigned to teams, and teams to issues and positions by lottery.</p> <p>Teams will allocate different responsibilities and research tasks to different group members. Each group will then research the issues and prepare their position with reference to the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, and to CRTC decisions and rulings. In-class workshop sessions will assist teams in researching and developing their cases, and in formulating presentation and argumentation strategies.</p> <p>The class will take the form of a mock CRTC hearing in front of a panel of experts. Each group will have ten minutes to present their case, with an additional 10 minutes to respond to questions from the panel.</p> <p>The hearing presentations will be backed up by written submissions from each team – maximum 2 pages – that summarize the key points and arguments of the presentation. These must be submitted by email to the instructor on or before April 8, so that they can be distributed in advance of the mock hearing to members of the panel.</p> <p>Exercises will be assessed on the adequacy of background preparation, the strength of the argumentation, the ability to respond to specific questions, and the overall persuasiveness of the presentation.</p> |       |
| 30% | <p><b><i>Policy Briefing</i></b></p> <p>Each student will individually prepare a fully referenced policy briefing such as might be required by a government ministry, an NGO, a community group etc. Briefings will take a general subject or theme that is covered in the first eight weeks of the course, and discuss it critically with reference to the current situation in Canada relevant to this subject or theme. Papers will be minimum 8 pages (2000 words) and maximum 10 pages in length for COMS 503 / minimum 14 pages (3500 words) COMS 717, exclusive of references.</p> <p>A more detailed organizational outline will be provided in class and posted to D2L.</p>  | Dec 9 |

## **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

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

Please note that tests and examinations will only be deferred in the case of documented illness, bereavement, or varsity team travel. **Tests and exams will not be rescheduled due to travel and vacation plans, work obligations, or other scheduling conflicts.**

Lecture slides, when used, will be posted to D2L.

### **Submission of Assignments:**

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

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

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

### **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 submitted one week or more after the due date will not be accepted, unless accommodations have been arranged with the instructor.

### **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>

### 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, final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentage scores will be used for grading tests, essays, and tutorial presentations. In calculating final grades in this course, the calculated percentage grade will be translated to the corresponding letter grade according to the Department of CMF grade scale equivalents (ex. a calculated percentage score of 84% will receive a final letter grade of B+).

| 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%                                       |

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| <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%    |

### 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.

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 note-sharing 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>

### **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 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.

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 Topics and Readings**

Weekly readings are posted to D2L