

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 591 (S01): Senior Seminar in Communication and Media
FALL 2020: September 8 to Dec. 9 (excluding Oct. 12th and Nov. 09-13)

Lecture: W 11:00 to 13:45

(Seminars will be held as synchronous Zoom sessions including lectures, discussions, individual work and group workshops for part or all of the class time.)

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.

Instructor:	Dr. Maria Bakardjieva
Email:	bakardji@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Tuesday 10am-12 pm by e-mail or Zoom sessions by appointment

Course Description

Explores the variety of ways in which communication builds social and cultural values with reference to a special topic. Completion of a major project that will integrate understanding of communication theory, history and methodology.

This course will give advanced undergraduate students interested in honing their research skills the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of media theory and methods in designing and implementing a small-scale study focused on topical issues related to social media. Students are expected to enter the course with an idea about a research topic. The lectures and seminars will review the main themes in the academic literature dealing with social media and will guide students through the different stages of their research project design and implementation. Active participation and independent work on the part of students is required. The final product of the course will be a research report summarizing the findings of the individual studies. Public presentations of the research results may be arranged.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings will be announced in the first class meeting and will be posted on D2L. Students should have reliable access to the Internet as well as valid UofC e-mail addresses. The course will involve regular use of D2L for sharing documents

and Zoom sessions for lectures, class discussion and group work. Research will be conducted on the Internet during and outside of class time. The class sessions will be synchronous and will take part or all of the designated class time as needed. Students are expected to take part in all classes on all days of the course (attendance will be taken). Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. Students will typically work in teams that will meet and work together via Zoom. Team contracts will be discussed and completed by members. Individual work on projects is possible under special arrangement.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of the course are to:

- give undergraduate students hands-on experience in formulating a research topic, applying a research methodology, and completing a research report;
- prepare students for Honours project work (if they wish to pursue an Honours degree);
- give students the opportunity to author a research document as a testament to their research competence;
- offer avenues for presenting students' research to peers and at conferences or in public settings;
- highlight the place of research in various professional fields;
- connect students to research teams in the Department of Communication, Media and Film and the university;
- equip students with in-depth critical understanding of social media.

Textbooks and Readings

Required readings will be made available through D2L, the Internet and library databases. As part of the investigation of a chosen topic, students will be expected to purchase or otherwise get access to one book (or e-book) of approximately \$40 value. Additional sources will be suggested by the instructor to individual students and research teams depending on their specific interests. Students will need to independently locate and study additional publications (scholarly articles and books) related to their research topics in the process of preparing the literature review constituting a component of their project report.

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.htm>

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.

Students are not permitted to audio or video-record lectures and class discussions or take pictures during class. All statements and interactions during class time are a matter of group privacy and cannot be publicized.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
5%	Personal statement of interest: a two-page informal personal statement of research interest/s. To be uploaded in the class discussion forum in D2L and discussed in class.	Week 2 Sept. 16
5%	Team research problem statement and rationale to be uploaded in the class discussion forum in D2L and presented in class.	Week 3 Sept. 23
10%	Article analysis – individual assignment. To be uploaded in the class discussion forum and discussed in class.	Week 4 Oct. 7
10%	Team research proposal submission: 6-7 double-spaced pages. The required elements of the proposal are: (1) a clearly formulated research question and explanation of its significance, (2) a brief outline of relevant literature; 3) a methodology; (4) an annotated bibliography and (5) a schedule of research activities.	Week 5 Oct. 14
15%	Book report (individual assignment). To be submitted in D2L Dropbox as PowerPoint presentation (max. 10 slides) and discussed in class. (Based on the respective academic book selected by students.)	Week 7 Oct. 21
10%	Reading quiz (individual assignment). To be completed in class. Based on questions derived from readings covered until that point.	Week 9 Nov. 4
5%	Project draft submission and in-class presentation by teams.	Week 12 Nov. 25
Required. No grade	Team final project presentation to be uploaded in the class discussion forum (PowerPoint document) and summarized in class. Teams that fail to present their project results in class will see 8 percentage points deducted from the grade for their final research report – see below.	Week 13 Dec. 2
25%	Final research report due: a 30-page double-spaced document (team work) akin to a scholarly article. It must include all elements of a research article and detail the results of the research project.	Week 14 Dec. 9
5%	Individual reflective journal (4-6 pages): reflection on the experience of conducting research and the lessons learned. To be submitted in the Dropbox (D2L)	Dec. 14
10%	In-class participation : including discussion of readings and active involvement in team project workshops as scheduled each week.	Ongoing

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. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

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.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 2% or a partial letter 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); 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. 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, *each course component will be evaluated using a percentage grade.*

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 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

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

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) 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>

Your instructor has received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. If the research you conduct in this course involves human participants, you must strictly follow the ethics protocol set in this approval. You are required to consult with your instructor concerning the details of your interaction with research subjects. All student will complete the CORE training tutorial and receive a CORE certificate as part of their participation in the course.

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 or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

To be posted in D2L in the first week of classes.