

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

**COMS 595 (S01): Honours Seminar**  
**FILM 595 (S01): Honours Seminar**

**FALL 2021: September 7 to December 9 (excluding Sept. 30 and Nov. 7-13)**

**Seminar: Th 14:00 to 15:50**

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY**

**Note:** This course will be delivered in-person. If you are unable to participate in-class owing to time differences or geographical location, please arrange to take this course in a future term. Masks are mandatory in the classroom and must be worn at all times during class (i.e., covering mouth and nose). Failure to comply with this policy will result in dismissal from the classroom and possible disciplinary action under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Samantha Thrift
<b>Office:</b>	SS 210
<b>Email:</b>	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	T 15:30-16:30; Th 16:00-17:00 (via Zoom)

**Course Description**

Individual research and seminar activities (e.g., critiques, presentations, and peer reviews of drafts) to produce a proposal and a paper to be used as the basis for the Honours Thesis.

**Additional Information**

This course requires student participation in two components, bi-weekly seminar activities and independent research:

- 1) The 595 seminar provides a collegial and supportive environment for discussion of thesis-related skills and issues. Students will take part in group critiques, individual presentations, and peer review of draft chapters.
- 2) Students will also write an extended proposal and paper, which will form the basis for the Honours Thesis. These writing projects will be executed under the supervision of a faculty member and co-direction of the honours program coordinator.

Note: Communication and Media Studies 313 or Communication Studies 313 and admission to the Honours Program is required.

**Please note that the Honours Seminar meets every two weeks in Fall.** Please make a standing appointment to meet your supervisor in the intervening weeks.

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

## Objectives of the Course

The course objectives are to:

- Conduct a senior undergraduate-level independent research project, culminating in an expanded honours thesis proposal and complete literature review and/or theory chapter.
- Understand various research methods, thesis research and writing processes, and thesis structures and styles through peer review, seminar activities, and thesis-related assignments.
- Effectively present one's research in a written document and oral presentation format.

## Textbooks and Readings

No textbooks are required, however students will be required to read materials for their thesis and to review each other's drafts and presentations.

## Learning Technologies and Requirements

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), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with 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 IT support services. See <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 only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others and/or otherwise negatively impacting the learning environment. No audio/video recording of the class is permitted without the instructor's permission.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15%	<b>Previous Thesis Study</b> (4-5 pages, note form) Students will select two Honours Theses (one Film, one Coms) from the Honours website ( <a href="https://arts.ucalgary.ca/communication-media-film/future-students/undergraduate/programs/honours-program">https://arts.ucalgary.ca/communication-media-film/future-students/undergraduate/programs/honours-program</a> ). Students must read both theses and prepare detailed notes that compare and contrast the theses' structure and argument development.	Sept. 23

	Your notes will be submitted for assessment and will form the basis of a group discussion about the structure of Honours Theses for the two disciplines.	
15%	<p><b>Thesis Project Presentation</b></p> <p>Students will prepare a 10-minute presentation describing their honours thesis projects, based on initial research and conceptualization of the project. These presentations will be evaluated on the suitability of the presentation format, the clarity of the ideas communicated, and the ability of the presenter to field questions about their research.</p>	Oct. 7
25%	<p><b>Honours Thesis Proposal &amp; Bibliography (~5 pages)</b></p> <p>Students must prepare an expanded honours thesis proposal (with bibliography &amp; timeline). This proposal may be based on the initial proposal used to gain admittance to the honours program, but must be developed more fully through additional research and more advanced conceptualization of the project. This proposal should demonstrate the feasibility of the honours research by stating the key research question(s), identifying the key theories and/or literatures to be used, describing the methodological approach (ex. what will be analyzed? how will it be analyzed?), and producing a clear timeline to completion.</p>	Oct. 7
20%	<p><b>Draft Chapter</b></p> <p>Draft Chapter: Students must complete a draft chapter (~10-20pp, in consultation with supervisor) (15%)</p> <p>Chapter Post: Students need to upload one thesis chapter to D2L for peer review by Nov. 15 (5%)</p>	Nov. 15 NB: Monday submission
10%	<p><b>Peer Review Session</b></p> <p>Students are expected to produce a draft of at least one thesis chapter during the fall term. The seminar provides an opportunity to conduct peer review of one chapter. Participation in the peer review process entails pre-reading each other's drafts, preparing written and verbal feedback (notes) on the draft, and constructively discussing each other's work during a peer review session.</p>	Nov. 18
15%	<p><b>Progress Reports</b></p> <p>Students' participation in the Honours Seminar will be measured by their active engagement in group discussion and class activities. Specifically, on days when progress reports are due, students should come prepared to share a status update on their thesis work. These progress reports will be delivered verbally during our meetings on the specified dates.</p> <p>Each report is worth 5 points.</p>	Oct. 21; Nov. 4; Dec. 2

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

**Note:** You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course. However, students must achieve a grade of B- (or higher) in order to take COMS 597 / FILM 597 (unless exceptional circumstances apply).

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

## **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments in class or by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. **Include your name and ID number on all assignments.** Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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 the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% 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/](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. 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 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, 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>

### **Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation**

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

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 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>

**Note:** If your thesis requires you to conduct any primary research involving human subjects (i.e., surveys, interviews, observations), OR to analyze data which is not publicly accessible without login or special permission from individuals or organizations (i.e., privacy-protected social media, or internal organizational documents), you must first obtain Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee approval.

- Do not recruit any participants or contact organizations until you obtain approval. Guidelines and forms are at: <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>
- By the October 7th deadline, submit your ethics application to the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. Seek the guidance of your thesis supervisor and obtain their approval of your application. Include the Tri-Council certificate of completion in your application.

After submitting the application to the Faculty of Arts, be prepared to submit revisions requested by the committee; the review may take several weeks to process.

## 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

Seminar Dates	Topics	Activities/Deadlines
Sept. 9	Welcome & Introductions. Review of thesis timeline. Ethics applications.	Introductions! *Select previous theses to read and compare for next meeting.
Sept. 23	Structure of an honours thesis: COMS & Film. Tips on preparing your expanded honours proposal.	Previous thesis comparison: submit your notes to D2L. Be prepared to share your findings with the group.
Oct. 7	Presentation of honours thesis projects.	Project presentations. Revised proposal & bibliography due. Ethics applications due (if necessary).
Oct. 21	Thinking about theory: lit reviews and theoretical frameworks.	Progress Reports.
Nov. 4	Research methods and why they matter.	Progress Reports. Draft thesis chapter due & circulated to group by <u>Nov. 15</u> (or earlier)
Nov. 18	Peer review of first draft chapter.	Read peer submissions for Nov. 18. Come prepared to participate in review session.

Dec. 2	Fall wrap-up: goal setting for winter break.	Progress Reports. Submit winter break thesis goals.
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