

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 601 S01
Interdisciplinary Approaches to Communication Studies

Fall 2018

Class Dates: Thursday, Sept. 6 – Friday, Dec. 7 (excluding Nov. 11 - 17)

Seminar: Mondays, 2PM-4:45PM in SS315

Instructor: Jessalynn Keller, Ph.D.
Office: SS 304
Office Phone: 403-220-8728
E-Mail: Jessalynn.keller@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1PM-3PM, or by appointment

Course Description

Communication studies is an interdisciplinary field concerned with how messages are created, transmitted, and understood. There are hundreds of competing approaches to questions under this broad umbrella, divided into sub-fields that sometimes disagree and sometimes overlap. In this course, we will work toward mapping these sub-fields according to the interests of students in the class. Students will be steering the direction of the course, with the guidance of the instructor, to help them locate their own research interests within the diverse theories, problematics, and approaches of communication studies.

In the process of encouraging students to situate themselves within specific sub-fields, the course also considers the demands of graduate education. What does it mean to be a graduate student? We will explore this question by building up the reading, writing, analytical, presentation, and professional skills concomitant to membership within a scholarly community. As part of this community, students will be expected to develop their critical capacities as contributors to the production of knowledge within and beyond academia.

Additional Information

This is a seminar course. That means students are active participants in building the course and the learning experience for yourselves and your peers. You will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the required readings, listen attentively, and engage with others' presentations.

Objectives of the Course

By taking this course, students will:

- explore and situate themselves within sub-fields of communication studies
- develop key reading, writing, analytical, presentation, and professional skills
- relate scholarly approaches to the history of ideas and contemporary social life

Textbooks and Readings

There is no textbook for this course, although you will be required to purchase one monograph (TBD by class vote). A list of required readings can be found towards the end of this syllabus and all readings will be posted to D2L. Supplementary readings can be found listed on D2L according to class date.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. **iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class.** Please respect the instructor and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

Assignments and Evaluation

Overview

Reading response papers (x4)	Sept. 17, 24, Oct. 15 & Nov.19	20%
Annotated bibliography	Oct. 29	20%
Conference talk (& abstract)	Nov. 26 (& Nov. 19)	15%
Literature review paper	Dec. 10	35%
Seminar participation	Ongoing	10%

Reading response papers (Sept. 17, 25, Oct. 15 & Nov. 19, 4 x 5% each): 20%

On September 17, 24, October 15 and November 19, at the beginning of class, submit a **2-3 page (600-900 word)** response to the readings. You can choose one or more of the assigned or supplementary readings to write about. Your response should show evidence that you: a) understand and can paraphrase the author's main argument(s); and b) have developed a critique. The critique doesn't have to be critical or negative. It can be an application of the approach to a real-world example or news story. It can be an assessment of the contribution of the reading to a sub-field of communications and media studies. It can be a comparative analysis of two or more of the readings. What's important about the critique is that you demonstrate your own thinking and analysis in relation to the reading. Finally, each reading response paper should end with a properly formatted reference list and a set of 3 discussion questions. These questions – along with your response paper -- will be used to facilitate class discussion each week. Reading responses will be reviewed by your peers at the beginning of each class – students will be asked to read and comment on each other's responses with constructive suggestions for improvement.

Annotated bibliography (Oct.29): 20%

One of the first steps in researching a topic is to read widely; creating an annotated bibliography is essential for managing the reading process. For this assignment, students will consult with the instructor to create an annotated bibliography of **2 books and 7 articles (MA), or 3 books and 10 articles (PhD)**. This means starting with a general topic of study or sub-field, and choosing a list of sources that you believe reflect the most significant contributions to that area. **For each source, write 1-2 paragraphs (150-300 words)** that summarize the author's main argument and (depending on the source) describe: the methodology used; the main findings;

the structure of the article/book; a particular detail you found useful; an element you found problematic or lacking. Basically you are adding your own take on each source. Sources should be listed alphabetically, according to a recognized formatting style. The annotated bibliography will serve as the foundation for your final literature review paper.

Conference talk & abstract (10 minutes, Nov. 26, abstract emailed by Nov. 19): 15%

The class will hold a workshop-style conference for students to be able to present initial ideas for their final papers. Each talk will be 10 minutes, organized within panels of four papers each. Panel sessions will include a brief discussion period after the four talks, when students will be expected to give each other feedback. Your conference talk should build on your annotated bibliography, providing a sketch of your final literature review paper with a clear argument. As such, the goal of this conference talk is to prepare students for writing the final paper by sharing and workshopping their ideas with the class. The talk also gives students the opportunity to model how a conference talk works in preparation for future conference presentations. To that end, **students will be required to submit an abstract for their talk (150-300 words)** to the instructor via email, no later than midnight on Monday, November 19. All abstracts will be made available to the class on D2L.

Literature review paper (Dec. 10): 35%

A literature review demands careful consideration of the key texts in a particular sub-field or topic area. For this assignment, students will write a literature review of **15-20 pages (3750-5000 words)** that either: a) offers an account of a specific communications sub-field; or b) positions a specific thesis topic or research question among a sub-field(s). Ideally, the literature review will build on your annotated bibliography by integrating the sources mentioned there into a narrative. The goal is not only to summarize the contributions of each source to the sub-field or topic area, but to place different authors in dialogue with each other in order to develop an argument. By relating texts in this way, you should be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the existing literature. Elements in a literature review might include: major debates or controversies in your sub-field; key findings that have shaped the area; typical research methods used; formative theoretical frameworks; and recent research trends. Throughout this assessment, work to position yourself as a scholar and/or set up the context for your own thesis topic and research questions.

Seminar participation (ongoing): 10%

Attendance in a graduate seminar is mandatory to succeed, so please avoid scheduling conflicts during the entirety of the seminar period. Students are expected to come to each seminar prepared. You should not only have read the assigned reading, but also be ready to contribute to class discussion. Graduate seminars are “student-driven” and an engaging and productive seminar is only possible with students present, prepared, and engaged.

All assignments must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS 320; 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.

Please include your name, ID number, and instructor's name on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

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.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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_0.pdf.

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Support Services

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

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://commfilm.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>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in 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

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4	Outstanding
A	4	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.3	All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.

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. 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/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 (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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES CMF Graduate Programs Office	ES 1010 403-220-4938 http://grad.ucalgary.ca SS 222 403-220-5623 commfilm.ucalgary.ca/graduate
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Ombudsman 	http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson (403) 220-6420 or ombuds@ucalgary.ca
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Week 1: Monday, September 10 -- Course Introduction

We'll spend today getting to know one another and our academic interests – arrive being ready to share some of your academic journey with us. We'll also talk about course requirements, assignments and expectations for the semester. Finally, we'll begin considering the field of communication and media studies by discussing the two required readings as entry points into the conversations we'll be having this semester.

Read:

Kearney, Mary Celeste. 2018. "Introduction, or how to cook an artichoke." In *The Craft of Criticism*, edited by Michael Kackman and Mary Celeste Kearney, 1-8. New York: Routledge.

Pooley, John. 2016. "The Four Cultures: Media Studies at Crossroads." *Culture Digitally*, March 9. <http://culturedigitally.org/2016/03/the-four-cultures-media-studies-at-the-crossroads/>

Week 2: Monday, September 17 – Mapping the Field

Today we focus on mapping the complex field of Communication Studies, surveying the multiple (interdisciplinary) approaches and topics that constitute the field of communication.

Key questions we'll tackle include: What are the various sub-fields in Communication Studies and how have they emerged? What are their constitutive debates and how do these fields relate to one another? Where might your interests as a budding researcher fit in?

Due: Reading Response #1

Read:

Katz, Elihu. 1987. "Communications Research Since Lazarsfeld." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 51, S25-S45.

Zelizer, Barbie. 2016. "Communication in the Fan of Disciplines." *Communication Theory* 6 (3), 213-235.

Peters, John Durham. 2011. "Sweet Lemons." *International Journal of Communication* 5, 1467-1471.

Waisbord, Silvio. 2016. "Communication Studies Without Frontiers? Translation and Cosmopolitanism Across Academic Cultures." *International Journal of Communication* 10, 868-886.

Week 3: Monday, September 24 – The Canadian Context

What is special about Canadian Communication Studies? Many would argue that Canada has its own distinct intellectual history that informs the study of communication, media, and film. Usually, Harold Adams Innis and Dallas Walker Smythe are identified as the key thinkers that have shaped a uniquely critical Canadian approach marked by political economy. In addition to this theoretical orientation, Canada has its own trajectory of institutional development of Communication Studies within universities, journals, and associations. This week we work to understand the national scope of the field and where the University of Calgary fits in.

Due: Reading Response #2

Read:

Babe, Robert. 2000. "Foundations of Canadian Communication thought." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25(1). n.p.

Tremblay, Gaëtan. 2012. "From Marshall McLuhan to Harold Innis, or From the Global Village to the World Empire." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37(4): 561-575.

Robinson, Gertrude. 2000. Remembering our past: Reconstructing the field of Canadian Communication Studies. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 25(1). n.p.

Shade, Leslie and Barbara Crow. 2006. "Canadian Feminist Perspectives on Digital Technology." *Topia* 11, 161 – 176.

Week 4: Monday, October 1 – Getting Grants: SSHRC Workshop

In today's session I will provide an overview of the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) granting process. SSHRC gives lucrative grants (including to MA students!) to Canadian researchers conducting research in the social sciences and humanities. As a Canadian academic it is imperative for you to know how to navigate SSHRC, with the hopes of getting money for your studies. All first year MA and PhD students are **REQUIRED** to complete a SSHRC application in consultation with your (interim) supervisor. This session will provide you with the information needed to get started and key deadlines, as well as models of successful applications and tips and tricks for SSHRC glory!

Read:

SSHRC website: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx>

Info for MA students: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp

Info for PhD students: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/fellowships-doctoral-doctorat-eng.aspx>

Week 5: Monday, October 8 – HAPPY THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Read: N/A

Week 6: Monday, October 15 – Research as Politics

Research is never neutral. A researcher is not simply "discovering" the truth out there, but actively constructing it. The process of research is a process of knowledge production, mired in the power dynamics of representation and voice. Academic research is legitimized through institutions that further reflect hierarchies of social privilege.

The politics of studying communication is the focus this week, where you will be asked to critically self-reflect on your own responsibilities as a researcher. Think about your research interests in terms of the groups you're seeking to represent, and how such representation always entails political choices.

Due: Reading Response #3

Read:

Ahmed, Sara. 2015. "Feminist Shelters." <https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/12/30/feminist-shelters/>

Hall, Stuart. 1992. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." In *Formations of Modernity*, edited by Bram Gieben and Stuart Hall, 184-227. Cambridge: Polity Press.

AND choose 1 of:

Andersen, Chris. 2009. "Critical Indigenous studies: From difference to density." *Cultural Studies Review* 15(2): 80-100.

Fuchs, Cristian and Vincent Mosco. 2012. "Introduction: Marx is back – The importance of Marxist theory and research for Critical Communication Studies today." *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique* 10(2): 127-140.

Griffin, Rachel Alicia. 2010. "Critical race theory as a means to deconstruct, recover and evolve in communication studies." *Communication Law Review* 10(1): 1-9.

Henderson, Lisa. 2001. "Queer communication studies." *Annals of the International Communication Association* 24(1): 465-484.

Kearney, Mary Celeste. 2009. "Coalescing: The development of girls' studies." *NWSA Journal* 21(1): 1- 28.

Paterson, Kevin and Bill Hughes. 1999. "Disability studies and phenomenology: The carnal politics of everyday life." *Disability & Society* 14(5): 597-610.

Shome, Raka and Radha S. Hegde. 2002. "Postcolonial approaches to communication: Charting the terrain, engaging the intersections." *Communication Theory* 12(3): 249-270.

Treichler, Paula A. and Ellen Wartella. 1986. "Interventions: Feminist theory and communication studies." *Communication* 9(1): 1-18.

Week 7: Monday, October 22 – Library and Research Strategies

In this workshop CMF librarian Susan Beatty will show you the tools and techniques you'll need for locating academic sources, conducting research, and organizing your findings. We'll talk about important elements of research and writing, such as creating bibliographies, managing references, and avoiding plagiarism.

Read: N/A

Week 8: Monday, October 29 – Literature reviews and Abstracts

Writing a literature review is the first step in formulating any research project. It also helps to be able to determine the contours of a sub-field. How should you go about writing a literature review? We will answer this question in today's class by examining a literature review section from a past MA thesis and breaking it into its constituent parts to form a literature review

template. In the second part of class we'll discuss how to write a good abstract and look at examples of abstracts from our discipline.

Due: Annotated bibliography (hard copy in class)

Read:

Excerpts from: Hart, Chris. 2009. *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*. London: Sage.

Week 9: Monday, November 5 – Getting Research “Out There:” Journals, Publishing and the Public Intellectual

You've completed your research and written up your findings – but now what? How do you get your research read by your peers, and maybe even the public? Publishing research books and articles is the main way to communicate scholarly findings to others, within and beyond the field. But that doesn't mean publishing is straightforward -- an increasing variety of journals and publishing houses have contributed to the diversity and messiness of Communication Studies. Today we'll discuss publications strategies, including finding the best journal for your research, how to approach editors, and how you may translate your academic research for public audiences.

Read:

Pooley, Jefferson. 2015. “Sinking the flagship: Why communication studies is better off without one.” *International Journal of Communication* 9, 1247- 1255.

Roelofs, Portia and Max Gallien. 2017. “Clickbait and Impact: How Academia Has Been Hacked.” LSE Impact Blog, September 19.

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2017/09/19/clickbait-and-impact-how-academia-has-been-hacked/>

Choose one article to read from *The Conversation* Canada (theconversation.com – choose Canadian edition in top menu) OR *Flow Journal* (flowjournal.org) that relates to your research interest (theconversation.ca) – please bring a copy of the article to class to share

Week 10: Monday, November 12 – MIDTERM BREAK -- NO CLASS

Read: N/A

Week 11: Monday, November 19 – The Future of the Field

What is the future of Communication Studies as a scholarly field of study? What are the key questions that will shape the field for the next decade? How might scholars approach the study of increasing digital, convergent, and amateur-produced media? For this session we'll read one

“hot” recently published book in the field. Students will vote on September 17th to read ONE of the following:

Christian, Aymar Jean. 2018. *Open TV: Innovation Beyond Hollywood and the Rise of Web Television*. New York: NYU Press.

OR

Noble, Safiya Umoja. 2018. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York: NYU Press.

Due: Reading response #4 and conference abstract (emailed by midnight)

Read: Book TBA – student vote on September 17th

Week 12: Monday, November 26 – Conference

Conference day! Conference program and abstracts will be posted on D2L prior to class. Refreshments will be provided!

Read: N/A

Week 13: Monday, December 3 – Advice and Humor

In our final meeting we’ll wrap up by debriefing on last week's conference, and putting together a collaborative map of the sub-fields we've explored throughout the term. You'll be asked to reflect on how your intellectual trajectory has progressed so far and where you envision it going as you continue through the program.

Being in grad school is rewarding but also stressful -- so we end the class with some advice and humour to carry forward. It's normal to feel overwhelmed at times and lost at others. Thankfully there are lots of useful (and amusing) online resources to help you through it! We’ll also hear advice from other CMF profs about how they’ve navigated grad school and academic life.

Read: N/A, but, check out the humorous online resources for “surviving grad school” posted to D2L

** Literature review paper due Monday, December 10 by 5pm, can be submitted via email**

