

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies (COMS) 590A, S01
Film Studies (FILM) 590A, S01

Honours Thesis (Seminar)
Fall 2015 and Winter 2016
Thursdays 12:30 – 15:15 in

Instructor: Dr. Tania S. Smith
Office Location: SS 302
Office Phone: 403-220-7774
E-Mail: smit@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: Course: on D2L available through MyUofC portal
Instructor: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/smit>
Office Hours: Th 15:30-17:00, or by appointment, telephone or Skype (smit.ucalgary).

Course Description

Supervised individual research and preparation of an Honours thesis. This course may not be repeated for credit. Admission to the Honours Program and consent of Honours Program Co-ordinator. Also known as: (formerly Communication and Culture 590).

Additional Information

The course involves two components, an honours thesis and seminar participation.

- 1) The honours thesis consists of an eight-month independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member and co-direction of the honours program coordinator. At the end of this project you will submit a written thesis of approximately 40-50 pages (in addition to bibliography and appendices) and participate in an oral examination of your thesis by a committee of three faculty members including your thesis supervisor.
- 2) The 590 seminar provides peer-supported learning and thesis-related activities, peer review and presentation assignments, short lectures on thesis-related skills and issues, and the program coordinator's guidance throughout the process. The seminar will not meet every week, and may end early some weeks. Students are expected to participate in class activities, to personally present a poster on Honours day April 28, and to meet the thesis deadlines of the Honours program.

Objectives of the Course

- To conduct a senior undergraduate-level independent research project, culminating in an honours thesis and oral examination
- To learn about various research methods, thesis research and writing processes, and thesis structures and styles through peer review, in-class activities, and thesis-related assignments
- To learn how to effectively present one's research in a thesis document, in oral presentation format, and in a poster presentation

Internet and electronic communication device information

During student check-ins and presentations, electronic devices should be put away and laptop screens be closed. At other times, students should use electronic devices for course-related functions only. Show professional courtesy and attentiveness to the instructor and fellow students by using technology silently and discreetly, minimizing visual distraction to your peers.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- There is no required textbook for the 590 course, but students will be required to read and review a completed thesis and sections of each other's drafts.
- All Honours students are expected to be familiar with the program guidelines pages:
 - <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/honours-program>
 - <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/honoursthesis>
- Recommended readings and handouts will be provided on Desire2Learn.

Assignments and Evaluation

90% Final thesis and oral exam

Thesis due 2 weeks before Oral Exam

Oral Exam scheduled during Exam week

The final thesis is graded by your thesis supervisor, who will take into consideration the evaluations of your committee members collected at the oral exam, and your performance at the oral exam. The grade will largely rest on the quality of the written thesis.

10% Course participation

Due: As assigned throughout the term

Students are expected to be prepared for and regularly and actively engage in the class activities listed on the 590 schedule (below). High-priority class activities include scheduled peer reviews, the review of a published honours thesis, attendance during a former honours student's visit, a graduate class visit, and all presentations scheduled in class and on Honours Day. Students must also make every reasonable effort to meet deadlines for thesis progress listed on the schedule, and to reschedule thesis progress deadlines only as necessary and with the joint approval of the thesis supervisor and honours coordinator. This participation score will be assessed by the 590 course instructor (who is also the honours program coordinator).

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

NOTE: The thesis and oral examination must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

NOTE: This course is only part of the requirements of the BA Honours degree. Please see the calendar for full regulations for Honours Degrees with a Major Field in the Faculty of Arts at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/arts-3-4-3.html>. A Bachelor of Arts degree "with honours" requires that students maintain a minimum GPA of 3.30 in the final 15 FCE and all courses in the Major Field, including this 590 course. A degree with "first-class honours" requires a higher GPA of 3.60.

See also specific course requirements for honours in your major field:

- COMS: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/arts-4-14-3.html>
- FILM: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/arts-4-14-8.html>

If a student fails to meet the GPA and course requirements for an "honours" degree, they may still fulfill the requirements for a normal Bachelor of Arts degree in their major field.

Assignment submission

- Thesis sections assigned for 590 peer review, and 590 class presentations, will be submitted to discussion forum areas in Desire2Learn.
 - Do not include your confidential ID number on any materials shared with peers or the public.

- Use the following file name formats, with hyphens (-) instead of spaces: 590-ThesisPres01-LastnameFirstname.docx
 - Presentation slides should be saved to .ppt or .pptx and brought to class on a memory stick as a backup. Converting it to a PDF file is highly recommended in case your PowerPoint file is not compatible with the version on the classroom computer (TIP: you can convert files to PDF online at <http://www.freepdfconvert.com/>). As much as possible, ensure that all media you rely on is available even without an internet connection, and make backup plans (i.e. verbal summaries and descriptions of videos or audio) in case the technology does not work as desired.
- Sections of your thesis and progress reports will be submitted directly to your thesis supervisor either by email or in paper form, as directed by them.

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, or missed required participation activities, may be penalized with up to 2 points for each late assignment or each missed participation activity, deducted from the 10 points of the participation score. If you have a valid formal excuse for lateness (i.e. illness, or unexpected delays in the thesis process) please provide verifiable documentation (i.e. doctor's note) to avoid late penalties. Upon consultation with your thesis supervisor and honours coordinator, it may be allowable to reschedule your deadline dates to accommodate your unique thesis' phases of research and writing.

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>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using [check one & specify details if needed]

- letter grades
- percentage grades
- raw scores (e.g., a score out of 15 for an assignment worth 15 /100 of the final grade)
- GPA values (using any value on the 0 to 4.0 scale, including, e.g., 3.2 or 2.8)
- a combination of the above. (The thesis will be given a letter grade, i.e. A, B+, B-, which will be translated into a percentage using the “letter grade % equivalent” in the scale below. The participation grade will be a score out of 10 points with 0.5 increments, i.e. 7.5 out of 10).

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail—unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 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.

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 the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link: <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/resources/ethics>

If your thesis requires you to conduct any primary research involving human subjects (i.e. surveys, interviews, observations), or to access data which is not publicly accessible without login or special permission from individuals or organizations, you must complete the Government of Canada Tri-Council Agency online training program. Then you must include the certificate of completion as part of your individual application for ethics approval to the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. As you prepare your ethics application, seek the guidance of your thesis supervisor and obtain their approval of your application prior to your submission to the committee. Be prepared to submit revisions requested by the committee; the review may take up to 1 month to process. Prior to receiving ethics certification, the student must not begin recruiting participants or contacting people to obtain access to non-public data. Deadlines and links are provided in the course schedule.

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (403-220-5333). 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 • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
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

See the schedule of Honours Program deadlines and 590 course activities on this public Google Spreadsheet at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nCzkYnF6Y6vO0NEqUV_WOcxA3Y04tp4vQhngZiezAg/edit?usp=sharing

The schedule link will be posted on Desire2Learn. It may be updated as necessary during the year.