

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS/FILM 597 (S01): Honours Thesis and Seminar

Winter 2023: January 9 to April 12 (excluding Feb. 19-25, Apr. 7 & 10)

Lecture: R 14:00 - 14:50

This course is in-person.

Instructor:	Dr. Samantha Thrift
Office:	SS 210
Email:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Thursdays, 2:50-3:20pm

Course Description

Supervised individual research and preparation of an honours thesis. Incorporating material from the Communication and Media Studies 595 or Film Studies 595 paper to complete the honours thesis. This course may not be repeated for credit.

Additional Information

This course requires student participation in two components: seminar activities and independent research:

1) The 597 seminar provides a collegial and supportive environment for discussion of thesis-related skills and issues. Students will participate in seminar, peer review, and participate in the Honours Showcase event (Jan. 19). They may also present their research on Honours Day (April, TBA) in recognition of successful completion of their projects.

2) Students will also complete their independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member and co-direction of the honours program coordinator. At the end of the this project, the student will submit a written thesis of approximately 40-50 pages (in addition to bibliography and appendices) and participate in an oral examination of the thesis by a committee of three faculty members including the thesis supervisor.

NOTE: FILM 595 or Communication and Media Studies 595 and admission to the Honours Program is required.

The schedule of topics 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 honours thesis and oral examination.
- To learn about various research methods, thesis research and writing processes, and thesis structures and styles through seminar 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.

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 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 (for online synchronous courses only).

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

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 597 or Honours Seminar) 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 specific inquiries. If you have more detailed questions about the course material, assignments, or grades, please schedule an appointment to speak with the instructor during office hours or following class.

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

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

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

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments

- Sections of your thesis and progress reports will be submitted directly to your thesis supervisor by email or as otherwise directed by them.

- 597 seminar documents will be submitted via D2L using the following file name format:
597-Draft01-LastnameFirstname.docx

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

Policy for Late Assignments

Late assignments may reflect on the quality of your thesis and your final thesis grade, at the discretion of your supervisor. Upon consultation with your thesis supervisor and the honours coordinator, you may reschedule your deadline dates to accommodate the phases of research and writing for your particular thesis.

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. 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.

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 only grade you will receive is from your thesis supervisor after the completion of the thesis and oral exam. Your grade in this course will largely rest on the quality of the written thesis, but your thesis supervisor will also take into consideration:

1. The evaluations of your two other committee members
2. Your performance at the oral exam
3. Participation in (a) the seminar, (b) meetings with your supervisor
4. Ability to meet deadlines (with accommodations as necessary)

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.

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, 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: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics> under “Individual Student Research”
- First, complete the Government of Canada Tri-Council Agency online training program at <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/>
- By the October 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/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Seminar Date	Activities	Due Dates
Jan. 12	Welcome Back! Progress Reports Workshop: Elevator pitches.	Progress report due. Prep for Showcase. <i>*Next peer review chapter due Jan. 17.</i>
Jan. 19	Honours Showcase event (2:00-3:30pm)	Attend Honours Showcase (until 3:30, if poss.) Prepare “elevator pitch” description of your project for Showcase.
Jan. 26	Peer Review	Arrive prepared for CH. 2 peer review! <i>*Next peer review chapter due Feb. 9.</i>
Feb. 16	Peer Review	CH. 3 Peer Review.
Mar. 9	Workshop: Creative presentations of research	Submit complete thesis draft to supervisor, mid-March.
Mar. 30	Workshop: Preparing for your oral exam.	Finalize thesis revisions. Submit completed thesis to committee members, ca. April 4-8.
Apr. 15-26	Thesis Oral Exams	Submit creative presentation of research to D2L in advance of Honours Day (date TBA).
April, TBA	Undergrad Research Celebration!	Share and Celebrate!