

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**Communications Studies COMS 201, L03**  
**Introduction to Communication Studies**  
**Winter 2015**  
**Saturday 1:00 P.M. – 4:30pm**  
**Class dates: January 17, 24, 31; February 7, 14, 28; March 7, 14, 21, 28;**  
**April 11.**

Instructor: María Victoria Guglietti  
Office Location: SS 307  
E-Mail: [mvguglie@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mvguglie@ucalgary.ca)  
Office Hours: Saturdays 16:30 to 17:30 or by appointment

### **Course Description**

A general mapping of the field, with an emphasis on its breadth in the areas of media studies, communication of science and technology, and rhetorical communication. The course also provides a general examination of how Communication Studies emerged during the 20th century and how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

### **Objectives of the Course**

To offer students a first approach to the theoretical foundations of communication studies.

To encourage students to develop critical awareness of media.

To help students develop analytical skills necessary for communication research.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Laptops are permitted in class as long as they are used EXCLUSIVELY for note taking. Cell phones should be turned off during class.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Griffin, E. (2015). *A first look at communication theory* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

## Assignments and Evaluation

1. Narrative and Rhetorical Analysis: (Feb. 7, 15%)  
Using the ideas from narrative theory and Aristotelian rhetoric, students will analyze a text found in the media. The length of the analysis will be 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted.
2. Semiotic Analysis: (Mar. 21, 15%)  
Students will apply Barthes' semiotic theory to a cultural artifact or event. The goal is to identify a text's meaning and explain how this meaning is produced. The required length of the analysis is 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted.
3. Midterm Exam: (Feb. 14, 20%)  
In-class multiple-choice and short or long answer questions based on the theories and readings discussed from Week 1 to Week 4.
4. Group Seminar Activities (20%)  
Students will complete four mandatory group activities in class. Students will have one hour to complete the assignment. Activities will comprise a series of short questions that will require the analysis of a cultural text or media event through the systematic application of the theories studied in class. The four activities planned will be the following:
  - A symbolic interactionism seminar (Jan. 31)
  - An agenda-setting seminar (Feb. 28)
  - A standpoint theory and muted group theory seminar (Mar. 21)
  - An organizational communication seminar (Mar. 28)
5. Final Exam: TBA -- Registrar scheduled (30%)  
Analytical questions focusing on the theories presented throughout the entire semester, with an emphasis on the content (lectures, readings, presentations) covered since the midterm.

**I**You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

Assignment guidelines will be handed out the first day of class.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** Yes

**Submission of Assignments:** Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; 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 and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams 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.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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, 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>

### **Dept of Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale**

Work in this course will be graded using the following grade scale used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

<b>Grade Point Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Department grade scale equivalents</b>	<b>Letter grade % equivalent for calculations</b>
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>		<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>		<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%

<b>3.00</b>	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> 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:

<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 . . .
<b>ARTS STUDENT CENTRE</b> (advising)	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:picarts@ucalgary.ca">picarts@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333 <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html">http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a> <b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a> 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

	<b>Saturdays</b> Room PF-128 1:00 to 4:30 P.M
<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 17	<b>Topic:</b> Introduction to course, textbook and projects. What is theory? Interpretivism vs. objectivism; research methods <b>Reading:</b> Chapter 2 <b>Laboratory:</b> Introduction to theoretical analysis
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 24	Public Rhetoric (Aristotle) Narrative Paradigm (Walter Fisher) <b>Reading:</b> Chapter 22 and 24 <b>Laboratory:</b> Rhetoric and Narrative analysis practice
<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 31	<b>Topic:</b> Symbolic Interactionism (George Mead) Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Charles Berger) <b>Readings:</b> Chapters 5 and 10 <b>Laboratory:</b> Symbolic Interactionism seminar
<b>Week 4</b> Feb. 7	<b>Topic:</b> Historical Perspectives on Media Effects and Uses and Gratifications (Elihu Katz) Cultivation Theory (George Gerbner) <b>Readings:</b> Chapter 28 and 29 <b>Assignment:</b> Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment due <b>Laboratory:</b> midterm practice
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 14	<b>Midterm (1:00 to 3:00 PM)</b> <b>Break 3:00 to 3:15</b> <b>3:15- 4:30</b> <b>Topic:</b> Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw) <b>Readings:</b> Chapter 30
Feb. 21	<b>No classes</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 28	<b>Topic:</b> Media Ecology (Marshall McLuhan; Harold Innis) <b>Reading:</b> Chapter 25 <b>Laboratory:</b> Agenda Setting seminar
<b>Week 7</b> Mar. 7	<b>Topic:</b> General Semantics and Semiotics (Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes) <b>Reading:</b> <a href="http://www.afirstlook.com/docs/gensem.pdf">http://www.afirstlook.com/docs/gensem.pdf</a> Chapter 26 <b>Laboratory:</b> Semiotic analysis practice
<b>Week 8</b> Mar. 14	<b>Topic:</b> Cultural Studies (Stuart Hall) <b>Reading:</b> Chapter 27 <b>Laboratory:</b> Encoding/Decoding model practice
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 21	<b>Topic:</b> What is feminist communication theory? Standpoint Theory (Harding & Wood) Muted Group Theory (Cheris Kramarae) <b>Readings:</b> Chapter 35 & Chapter 36 <b>Assignment:</b> Semiotic Analysis due <b>Laboratory:</b> Standpoint Theory and Muted Group Theory seminar

<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 28	<b>Topic:</b> Cultural Approach to Organizations (Geertz and Pacanowsky) Critical Theory of Communications in Organizations (Stanley Deetz) <b>Readings:</b> Chapter 20 and 21 <b>Laboratory:</b> Organizational communication seminar
Apr. 4	<b>No classes</b>
<b>Week 11</b> Apr. 11	<b>Topic:</b> Postmodernism <b>Readings:</b> Lectures notes <b>Laboratory:</b> Final review

### Deadlines

Assignment	Due date	Weight
Symbolic Interactionism seminar	Jan. 31	5%
Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment	Feb. 7	15%
Midterm	Feb. 14	20%
Agenda setting seminar	Feb. 28	5%
Semiotic Analysis	Mar. 21	15%
Standpoint theory and Muted Group Theory seminar	Mar. 21	5%
Organizational communication seminar	Mar. 28	5%
Final exam	TBA	30%
TOTAL		100%