

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods**  
**SUMMER 2021: June 28 – August 11 (excluding August 2)**

**Mondays synchronous class meeting (13:00 – 14:30). Wednesdays asynchronous.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR SUMMER 2021:**

This Summer 2021 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

**Instructor:** Dr. Monique Solomon  
**Email:** solomonm@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L (access via MyUofC portal)  
**Office Hours:** By appointment. Include COMS 313 in subject line of all emails

**Course Description**

This course provides a critical introduction to communication research methods. Students will explore, practice and critique selected qualitative and quantitative research methods and perspectives on the processes of knowledge production.

**Additional Information**

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies presented in this outline. In this course, students are introduced to material through zoom lectures and discussions, readings, and in-class activities. The schedule of course topics and readings can be found on D2L.

**Objectives of the Course**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- describe the relevance and value of communications research
- explain fundamental concepts and practices of select methodological approaches
- understand how communications scholars use methods to study social issues
- recognize the importance and use of ethical practices in the research process
- identify ethical, rigorous research methodologies and designs in scholarly articles
- apply knowledge and practical skills in proposing and designing research

## Textbooks and Readings

Merrigan, G., Huston, C., and Johnston, R. (2012). *Communication Research Methods*. Canadian Edition. Oxford University Press. New York and Oxford.

## Email Policy

- Include **COMS 313** in the subject line of all email sent to your professor. Include your name in the body of the email *as it appears* in your university registration.
- Email will usually be answered M-F between 11 am – 6 pm. You can generally expect an answer within 48 hours. Email will not be answered on weekends.
- Email is best used for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments make an appointment during office hours.
- Regularly check your @ucalgary.ca email. Check that it is not in spam or junk folders.
- Emails sent to your professor and fellow students must be courteous and professional.

## Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. 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);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.
- Technical difficulties? Visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

## Instructor Intellectual Copyright

*Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are NOT to share recordings with others.* All course materials created by the instructor (including 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 explicit consent of the instructor.

Posting course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites is prohibited. Sharing extracts of 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 questions about sharing materials with classmates. *Students are not permitted to audio or video-record lectures and discussions or take pictures/screen shots during this class. All statements and interactions during class time are a matter of group privacy and cannot be publicized.*

Assignments and Evaluation	Weight	Due
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<p><b>Participation</b> Students take part in individual and group activities during synchronous Zoom classes to gain check marks for participation. To earn check marks, students join discussion and post comments (approx.125-250 words) in response to prompts provided during class time. Posts will be reviewed for quality of content and engagement. One check mark may be earned per synchronous class to a total not exceeding six check marks. Students must post their response to D2L Discussion by 11:59 pm on the day of class.</p>	5%	Throughout term
<p><b>Weekly Reading Quizzes</b> The quizzes are intended to encourage and evaluate student review of weekly course readings and engagement in class. Each quiz will include 20-multiple choice questions. Students will have 1-hour to complete each quiz. The time to complete a quiz includes 50% extra time in case of technical difficulty. Each quiz will be open for 48-hours. Quizzes are open book and material covers weekly chapter reading and class lecture material. Contingency plan: Given the short duration of the term students are encouraged to complete each quiz on the designated date. In case of a missed quiz a student must contact the professor as soon as possible to indicate why the test was missed and to reschedule. Class are asynchronous on Wednesday quiz days giving students time to prepare and complete the quiz. I will closely monitor email 1-3 pm Wednesdays.</p>	45%  (7.5% each)	Quiz 1 June 30 Quiz 2 July 7 Quiz 3 July 14 Quiz 4 July 21 Quiz 5 July 28 Quiz 6 August 4
<p><b>Literature Review</b> Students write a literature review analyzing seven (7) sources (peer-reviewed journal articles) on a topic chosen from a list provided. The review will discuss and synthesize the approach and methods used by the sources and focus on research design, sample, analytical framework, benefits, limitations, and ethical considerations (1400-1500 words)</p>	20%	July 14 (11:59 pm)
<p><b>Research Proposal</b> Students propose a research study they would like to conduct about a communication and media topic (list provided). Students will formulate a research statement, propose a design and plan, and suggest a suitable method for the project using one of the methods learned in class. The proposal will include the following sections: topic and rationale, research questions, methods, design, limitations, ethical considerations. Students may complete this assignment individually or in pairs (2000-2200 words). Details will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. Class time provided.</p>	30%	August 11 (11:59 pm)

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Submission of Assignments**

Students must complete all assignments or a course grade of 'F' may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a component contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Follow all assignment instructions carefully. All assignments are due via upload to D2L (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) on the due date stated on the assignment, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Include your name and ID number on all assignments AND include your surname in the file name of assignments you upload to D2L. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each

submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the correct version. Do not email your assignments unless directed to by your professor.

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

### Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after due dates may be penalized with the loss of a partial letter grade for each day late (e.g.: A- to B+ to B).

### 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. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

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 that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

### 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 the literature review and the research proposal, whereas total numeric points will be converted to percentage for participation and quizzes.

Grade Point			Dept of CMF grade scale	Letter grade % equivalent for
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Value	Description	Grade	equivalents*	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 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, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://success.ucalgary.ca/home.htm>

## Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright ([www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-)

protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). 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>

### **Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal**

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

### **Student Support Services and Resources**

Please visit <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, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at [itsupport@ucalgary.ca](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca) or by calling 403-220.5555.

### **Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**

The weekly schedule of topics, readings and detailed assignment instructions will be available on D2L.