

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 371 L01

CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES

SUMMER 2018

Wed., July 4 – Wed., Aug. 15 (excluding August 06th)
MW 9:00-11:45

Instructor: Maria Victoria Guglietti
Office: SS 254
E-Mail: mvguglie@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: NOON to 1PM after class or by appointment

Course Description

This course emphasizes major critical approaches in the field of communication studies with the intent of introducing students to the theoretical foundations of media related research. The course explores the contexts in which these theories arose, identifies their major strengths and weaknesses, and provides an appreciation of how critical theory engages the social world through research on communications and media.

Objectives of the Course

- To offer students a first approach to the theoretical foundations of critical media research.
- To encourage students to develop critical awareness of media strategies and contents.
- To help students develop analytical skills necessary for communication research.

Textbooks and Readings

Durham, M. & Kellner, D. (2012). Media and cultural studies: Keyworks. 2nd edition. Malden, MA.: Wiley-Blackwell.

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.

Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Course components | Due |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|
| 20% | Midterm- closed book. 90 minutes- a combination of short and long answers- covers content from Week 1 to 3. | July 23- 10:15 to 11:45 |
| 20% | Reading responses: 4 (2RR from RR1 to RR6; 2 from RR7 to RR 12) Students will submit 4 reading responses throughout the term (the total of reading responses available to choose from is 12). A list of instructions and questions will be posted on D2L the first day of the term. Each reading response is based on a mandatory reading. To complete the response students are required to read the reading and briefly answer the question linked to the reading and assigned by the instructor (approx. 250 words). Reading responses are due the day the reading will be discussed in class. Responses MUST be digitally submitted (D2L dropbox) by the | Ongoing |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | beginning of the class. No late responses will be accepted because the pedagogical objective of the response is to test the student's comprehension of the reading prior to the lecture and in-class discussion | |
| 20% | <p>In-class group activities: In groups of four, students will complete four open book assignments in class; each will require the theoretical analysis of a case study. Group activities are an hour-long and require the completion of a series of short analytical questions. Each group assignment is 5%. The themes and deadlines of the activities are the following:</p> <p>Marxism and culture- July 9 Audiences and the public sphere- July 25 Representation- August 1 Propaganda- August 8</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L</p> | July 9 and 25; August 1 and 8 |
| 15% | <p>Group presentation of case study: Students will form groups of 4 members to organize and deliver a 10-minute presentation. The mandatory components of the presentation are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a summary and critique of the mandatory reading, 2. the application of the theory to explain a contemporary event or phenomenon, 3. an abstract. <p>Students will form groups and choose the mandatory reading that they will address in their presentation the first week of the term. Presentations are generally due the day the reading selected is discussed in class unless indicated (see schedule below).</p> | Ongoing. Students will sign in for a presentation date the first week of the term. |
| 25% | <p>Final take-home exam: No word limit. Students will complete a comprehensive case study analysis questionnaire, which requires a critical engagement with the readings studied during the term. Exams will be digitally submitted (D2L dropbox).</p> | August 17- 9AM |

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments will be uploaded to D2L except for the midterm.

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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a 0.

Any medical condition that causes the student to miss a test or an assignment's deadline should be justified with a medical certificate. If a test is missed and the medical certificate is presented the student will arrange with the instructor the time and form of a make-up test.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline such as computer crashes, vehicle breakdowns, lack of printer ink or money, unexpected family obligations, etc. Students may use this day ONLY ONCE during the semester. Students using this day of grace must email the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day

to avoid a late penalty, and write “grace” on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date. **NOTE THAT THE DAY OF GRACE IS NOT APPLICABLE IN THE CASE OF READING RESPONSES.**

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.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- 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.
- 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>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. All other assignments (quizzes, in-class group activities and group) will receive a percentage grade

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

| 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% |

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. 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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

| For information about . . . | Visit or contact . . . |
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| ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC) | SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca |
| CAMPUS SECURITY | http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 |
| • Calgary Police Service | 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 |
| • Emergency Text Messaging | http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage |
| • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly | http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safewalk Program | 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 • 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 Lecture Topics and Readings

| | Monday Room SA 129 9:00 to 11:45 | Wednesday Room SA 129 9:00 to 11:45 |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Week 1 July 4 | | Topic: Introduction to the class and assignments. Marxism and Hegemony (Williams) Readings: Chapter 11 |
| Week 2 July 9, 11 | Topic: Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer) Readings: Chapter 4 Assignment: in-class group activity 1; RR 1 | Topic: Semiotics and the Encoding/Decoding model (Barthes & Hall) Readings: Chapters 7 & 13 Assignment: group presentation 1 & 2; RR 2 & 3 |
| Week 3 July 16, 18 | Topic: Cultural battles (Hebdige & Bourdieu) Readings: Chapters 12 & 20 Assignment: group presentation 3 & 4; RR 4 & 5 | Topic: Postmodernism (Baudrillard) Readings: Chapters 30 Assignment: group presentation 5; RR 6 |
| Week 4 July 23, 25 | Review (9:00 - 10:00) Midterm (90') (10:15 -11:45) | Topic: The Public Sphere Readings: Chapter 5 Assignment: group presentation 6; in-class group activity 2; RR 7 |

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| Week 5 July 30, August 1 | Topic: Feminism (Radway and Mulvey) Readings: Chapter 24 & 22 Assignment: group presentation 7 & 8; RR 8 & 9 | Topic: Race (hooks) Reading: Chapter 25 Assignment: group presentation 9; in-class group activity 3; RR 10 |
| Week 6 August 6, 8 | No Class: Alberta Heritage Day | Topic: Propaganda (Herman and Chomsky) Readings: Chapter 17 Assignment: group presentation 10; in- class group activity 4; RR 11 |
| Week 7 August 13, 15 | Topic: Globalization (Appadurai) Readings: Chapter 37 Assignments: group presentation 11; RR 12 | Class dedicated to exam preparation |
| Final take-home exam due August 17th at 9AM (D2L dropbox) | | |