

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media & Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 381, LEC 1

Communications History

Fall 2018

Thurs., Sept. 6 – Thurs., Dec. 6 (excluding Nov. 15 & 16)

Lectures: Thurs. 14:00-15:50, Labs Fri. 10:00-10:50, 11:00-11:50

Instructor:	Annie Rudd
Office:	SS 312
Office Phone:	(403) 220-5458 (email preferred)
E-Mail:	annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca (when emailing, please mention "COMS 381" in the subject line)
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	M 16:00-18:00 or by appointment

Course Description

How have changes in communications media shaped the ways people have formed and maintained communities, gained and exercised political agency, practiced and contested religious beliefs, and participated in acts of consumption, self-presentation, and social interaction? And how, in turn, have shifts in social, political, and economic conditions informed new developments in communications media? These are some of the questions that will guide our discussions in this course.

This course offers a general survey of how communication systems and practices have developed through history, and of the social contexts within which they emerged, transformed, and adapted through time. Within this framework, we will examine major technological developments in the history of human communication. In addition to surveying a range of important secondary sources tracing important developments in the history of communication, we will draw on primary sources and on theories of communication to contextualize shifts in communications history and to trace the impacts of these shifts on social organization and everyday life.

Our course begins with the transition from oral to literate cultures in the ancient world, and extends to the digital cultures of the early 21st century. Historical developments that we will trace include the moveable type printing press, the newspaper, photography, radio broadcasting, television, and digital social media, among others. As we look at how humans have communicated in the past, we will contextualize the "new media" of today, considering both continuities and changes between the media of the past and the media of the present.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims:

- to expose you to, and familiarize you with, a series of important developments in the history of communication;
- to enable you to draw connections between communications and broader processes of social and cultural change, through readings, lectures, and writing assignments

that link communications technologies with phenomena such as imperialism, religious reform, consumer culture, and globalization;

- to introduce you to techniques of historical interpretation and research;
- to provide you with context that will help you approach the media of the present moment in a critical and historically literate way.

Readings

All readings will be posted on D2L. You should have the week's readings completed before you get to lecture. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to lectures and labs, as some in-class assignments and activities will require you to have them on hand.

An important note: all readings and dates listed on the course outline are subject to change—so please check D2L regularly for the most up-to-date version of the course schedule.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

The use of laptop computers and tablets is permitted in lectures, but they should be used solely for notetaking and you're responsible for ensuring they do not cause any distractions for you or others. Phones must be silenced and put in your bag before lectures and tutorials begin. Audio recording or filming during lectures and tutorials is prohibited without permission from the instructor.

A Note on Email Communication

Emails to your instructor should be sent from your University of Calgary email account, with "COMS 381" mentioned in the subject line. Please do not use email to ask questions that can be answered by looking at the course outline or D2L. I aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them—if you have emailed me and have not heard back within this timeframe, please feel free to send a follow-up message. Of course, you should also feel free to visit my office hours to discuss course content or solicit feedback on work in progress. In fact, I encourage you to do so, as meeting with you individually helps me put a face to the name in a large class like this one! You are welcome to address me as Annie, Prof. Rudd, or Dr. Rudd—whichever you prefer.

Assignments and Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be determined based on the following:

Assignment	Date	Percentage of final grade
Primary source analysis	Due October 18	20%
Midterm exam	In lecture on November 8	25%
Research essay proposal	Due November 22	5%
Research essay	Due December 6	30%
Lab presentation	Scheduled throughout the term (sign-up will take place in labs on September 14)	10%
Participation in labs and lectures	Throughout the term	10%

Primary Source Analysis

With this writing assignment, you'll engage in a task that is central to the work of communications history: you will analyze and interpret a primary source. Choosing from a list of primary sources available through online library and museum collections, your task will be to situate the source within its historical context through secondary readings found in the course reader, and to discuss how the artifact reveals information about the historical context in which it appears, as well as how knowledge about its historical context allows us to better understand the artifact. More details will be provided early in the semester.

Midterm Exam

A midterm exam will be given in lecture before the mid-term break. It will include multiple choice, true-or-false, and short-answer questions, and it will require you to demonstrate your comprehension of material covered in the assigned readings, in lectures, and in labs. The exam will be closed-book. Further information will be provided in advance of the exam, and there will be a prep session in labs the week before the exam.

Research Essay Proposal

You will be asked to submit a research essay proposal via the D2L Dropbox two weeks before your essay is due. This proposal must include a brief (minimum 150-word) description of your essay topic, a working thesis statement, and two academic sources outside of the course reader (these can include academic journal articles and academic books) that you intend to use in this essay. The primary purpose of this proposal is to encourage you to get started on your research well in advance of the due date. Detailed feedback will not be provided on proposals, so if you have questions about your essay topic, approach, sources, or argument, please visit office hours or email your professor or TA.

Research Essay

Drawing on the critical approaches to communication history that we have examined, you will be asked to write a research essay that considers, in focused and specific ways, how a communications medium has been connected with a specific historical development or complex of developments. With the medium you have chosen, what is the nature of the relationship between communication and historical change? This essay will require you to make thoughtful use of academic sources, and you are also encouraged, though not required, to make use of at least one primary source. You will have the option to write a traditional essay (2000-2500 words), or a digital essay that includes appropriate and well-integrated images, video, or other multimedia as appropriate (1500-2500 words). More details will be provided on the essay assignment sheet, which will be provided to you early in the term. Examples of successful digital essays will also be provided. You should plan on getting started on this essay well in advance of the due date.

Lab Presentation

In small groups, you will facilitate class discussion in labs with a presentation and a set of discussion questions. Your presentation should include a summary of the key takeaways of the assigned readings; an analysis of one or more primary sources through the lens of those readings; and at least three questions that will facilitate deep, interesting discussion among your classmates. You're strongly encouraged to use a presentation format that will allow you to incorporate multimedia elements (images, video, audio, etc.). You're also encouraged to make connections with other week's readings, and with contemporary life as

you see fit. In addition to submitting the finalized script of your presentation to your TA as a group, each group member should submit a brief written report describing what they contributed to the presentation. Failing to submit any of these supporting materials will result in you not receiving credit for your work, so please be sure to do this!

Participation in Labs and Lectures

Because class participation is a required component of this course, consistent attendance at lectures and labs as well as active and informed involvement in lab discussions is required. Your participation grade will be assessed not only on the frequency with which you speak up, but the quality of your contributions. Attendance will be taken in labs; if you do not expect to attend lectures or labs frequently, you should not enroll in this course. Infrequent participation or attendance will result in a lower grade or possibly a failing grade in the course, and will also make it difficult for you to do well on quizzes and writing assignments. In addition to participating in an active and informed way, you are expected to behave in a respectful and non-disruptive way in this class. This means showing up on time, staying for the duration, and not having private conversations or using your phone during class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams weighted more than 25% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments:

Research essays should be submitted in lecture. If it is not possible for you to hand in your essay directly to your TA or instructor, 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 marked final exams in SS 320. 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 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 be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Brief extensions may be given by the instructor provided the student has a compelling reason to request one, and the request is made well in advance of the deadline.

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>

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 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. Letter grades will be used for essay assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes.

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.

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 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 . . .
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 • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints 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

All readings can be found on D2L.

Important note: All readings and dates are subject to change! Please consult the week-by-week tabs in the “Content” section on D2L for the most up-to-date version of the reading schedule.

Week 1

September 6

Introduction to the course.

Week 2

September 13

From speech to writing.

Required readings:

Eric Havelock, “The Greek Legacy”

Walter Ong, excerpts from *Orality and Literacy*

Week 3

September 20

Print culture and the rise of reading publics.

Required readings:

Elizabeth Eisenstein, “Aspects of the Printing Revolution”

Benedict Anderson, excerpts from *Imagined Communities*

Week 4

September 27

Photography and visual communication.

Required readings:

Susan Sontag, excerpts from *On Photography*

Week 5

October 4

Electricity and communication.

Required readings:

James Carey, “Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph”

Week 6

October 11

Journalism: word and image.

Required readings:

Michael Schudson, excerpts from *Discovering the News*

Vicki Goldberg, “The News Photograph”

Week 7

October 18

Primary source analysis due by end of day today via D2L Dropbox.

Modernity and urban spectacles.

Required readings:

Rosalind Williams, excerpts from *Dream Worlds*

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

Week 8

October 25

Visual media and consumer culture.

Jib Fowles, "Mass Media and the Star System"

Week 9

November 1

Radio.

Required readings:

Stephen Kern, excerpts from *The Culture of Time and Space*

John Durham Peters, "The Public Voice of Radio"

Week 10

November 8

Midterm exam in lecture today.

Week 11

November 15

Mid-term break—no class this week.

Week 12

November 22

Research essay proposal due by end of day today via D2L Dropbox.

Television.

Required readings:

Lynn Spigel, excerpts from *Make Room for TV*

Mitchell Stephens, "Television Transforms the News"

Week 13

November 29

Situating "new media" in history.

Required readings:

Lev Manovich, "How Media Became New"

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, excerpts from *Remediation*

Week 14

December 6

Research essays due by end of day today via the D2L Dropbox.

Concluding discussion.