

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**COMS 381 (LEC 1): Communications History**

**WINTER 2022: January 10 to April 12 (excluding Feb. 20-26)**

**Lectures: Asynchronous (Posted to D2L by Thursdays 10:00)**

Lab 1: M 9:00–9:50; Lab 2: M 10:00 –10:50, Lab 3: M 11:00-11:50,

Lab 4: M 12:00-12:50, Lab 5: M 13:00-13:50

**Course lectures are offered asynchronously and will be posted to D2L. Lab sections 1-4 are offered in-person, while lab section 5 is offered online via Zoom. Please only register for the online lab section if you are unable to attend classes on campus.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY**

**Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components:** Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

**Note:** If you will not be able to participate in synchronous in-class or online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, then consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

**Online Quizzes and Exams:** You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully. The time specified for any timed online assessments includes 50% extra time.

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Annie Rudd
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<b>Email:</b>	annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wednesdays, 10am-12pm (via Zoom; make an office hours appointment by emailing <a href="mailto:annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca">annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca</a> ).

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **Additional Information**

The weekly schedule of topics and readings will be provided on the course D2L site prior to the start of classes.

Course lectures will be offered asynchronously, and will be posted to D2L by 10am on Thursdays. Labs are synchronous, and take place on Mondays. Students should attend Monday labs having already watched the lectures posted the previous Thursday.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

### **Objectives of the Course**

This course’s objectives are to:

- Expose you to, and familiarize you with, a series of important developments in the history of communication;
- 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;
- Introduce you to techniques of historical interpretation and research; and,
- Provide you with context that will help you approach the media of the present moment in a critical, historically literate way.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

No textbook is required for this course. All readings will be posted to the course D2L site.

### **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 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 viewing online lectures and participating in labs, you are expected to give your full attention to the course material and to avoid getting distracted by your phone, social media, email, and the like.

It can be especially easy to get distracted when you are not in the physical space of a lecture hall, but paying close attention during lectures will ultimately be a better use of your time than half-watching them while doing other things. By taking notes while watching lectures, you will avoid having to go back and re-watch them when you have work due that requires you to be familiar with their content.

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 table below provides details on the nature, timing, and grade weight of the assignments you'll be required to complete in this course. More details on each assignment will be provided on D2L, in lectures, and in labs well ahead of each deadline. Please be sure to consult assignment sheets on D2L for full details before you get started!

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	<b>Lab participation</b> Your participation in labs will be assessed by your TA throughout the term. Your grade will be based on your active, consistent, and informed participation in weekly discussions and lab activities.	Throughout term
10%	<b>Group presentation</b> Working in groups, you will deliver a presentation in lab that introduces the week's topic, relays key points from the week's readings, and poses at least two discussion questions to your classmates. All members of your group will be assigned the same grade unless there is significant disparity in the amount or quality of work that members contributed.	Throughout term (Presentation dates to be selected during Week 2 of labs)
25%	<b>Primary sources assignment</b> This assignment will ask you to engage in a task that is central to communications history research: you will analyze and interpret primary sources and craft this analysis into a short, well-organized essay (min. 800 words). Please read the assignment sheet carefully, as it offers full details on how to complete this assignment.	February 10 (Submit via D2L Dropbox)
20%	<b>Midterm test</b>	March 3

	<p>This test, which you will complete online and submit via D2L, will require you to demonstrate your understanding of information from the assigned readings, lectures, and labs. The exam will be open-book and open-notes, and it will include short-answer and short essay questions. You should expect to be tested on any course material that was covered before Reading Week. A prep session will take place in labs on February 28.</p> <p>In the event of technical difficulties, contact Prof. Rudd immediately via email to coordinate an alternate midterm plan.</p>	<p>(Midterm exam will be posted to the D2L Dropbox at 10am, and you will have 24 hours to complete and submit it via the D2L Dropbox. You should plan to spend about two hours on it.)</p>
<b>5%</b>	<p><b>Final research project proposal</b></p> <p>This proposal is meant to help you prepare for the final research project. Your proposal should include three components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A brief (minimum 150-word) summary of your research topic</li> <li>2) A prospective thesis statement, which should summarize the argument you expect your research project will make; and</li> <li>3) A list of three credible, scholarly sources you intend to use in this project. If you would like, you can also include in this list primary sources you intend to discuss.</li> </ol>	<p><b>March 15</b></p> <p>(Submit via D2L Dropbox)</p>
<b>30%</b>	<p><b>Final research project</b></p> <p>This assignment will ask you to draw on the critical approaches to communication history that we have examined in this course and put them into action. You will craft a research essay or digital project 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 secondary sources as well as at least one primary source. You have the option to write a research paper (minimum 1800 words), or a digital project that includes appropriate, well-integrated images, video, or other multimedia as appropriate (minimum 1200 words). More details will be provided on the assignment sheet, and examples of successful digital projects will also be made available on D2L. You should plan on getting started on this essay well in advance of the due date.</p>	<p><b>April 11</b></p> <p>(Submit via D2L Dropbox)</p>

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

**Note:** You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox (or, in cases where assignments are due in labs, according to the assignment instructions provided by your TA). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Because take-home exams are more time-sensitive, the lateness penalty is more significant: late submissions will receive a significant hourly grade reduction if submitted after the deadline, and possibly a grade of F.

### **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. 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. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

### **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, all assignments will be assessed with percentage grades. Your final grade in the course will be translated into a letter grade, based on the grading scale 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%

\* 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](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>

### **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**

Please see the course D2L site for a list of weekly lecture topics and readings.