

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401.57, L03
Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies:
MEDIA, INSPIRATION & HOPE

Fall 2018

Thurs., Sept. 6 - Thurs., Dec. 6 (excluding Nov. 13 & 15)
Lecture: TR 9:30-10:45

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Office: SS 254
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11 am - 1 pm or by appointment

Course Description

Special topics courses offer a critical study of contemporary topics or issues related to communications studies, media, technology, culture, or discourse. In this course, students will explore how conceptions of inspiration and hope are constructed, enacted, and presented in discourse. Students will critically and creatively assess how inspiration and hope are communicated in traditional and new media, and the implications of this. The course introduces students to historic and popular texts. Students will explore a variety of contexts where discourses of inspiration and hope are prevalent and powerful including self-help, wellness, learning, leadership, and relationship.

Additional Information

A special topics course is reading and writing intensive. Class time is an opportunity to actively engage with the course material through discussion, writing, and class activities. Students should come to class prepared by completing assigned readings. The course assumes students have knowledge of Communications theories.

Objectives of the Course

- To support students in developing skills of critical thinking and analysis of discourse in media and society.
- To engage students in the practice of researching and reviewing literature, and engaging with theoretical and methodological perspectives in the analysis of discourse and narrative.
- To provide students the opportunity to practice articulating their ideas and interests through discussion and writing.

Textbooks and Readings

Required readings will be posted on D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

- Laptops may be used during class for course related work.
- Cell phones, gaming and similar devices must be turned off during class.
- No audio or video recording, or photographing of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

Use email for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments, please speak with your instructor during office hours.

Include **COMS 401** in the subject line of all email sent to your professor. Include your name in the email as it appears in your university registration. All communication with your instructor and fellow students should be written in a courteous, professional manner.

Email will be answered weekdays during regular working hours, and usually on a first-come, first-served basis. You can generally expect an answer within 24 hours. Email sent in the evening or on weekends will not generally be read or replied to until the next business day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Details will be reviewed in class and posted on D2L.	Weight	Due
Early Essay: A critical reflection discussing the personal and social significance of an inspirational artifact (600 words).	10%	September 20
Presentation/Discussion: In small groups, students present on a weekly topic and readings, and lead class discussion (approx. 30-minutes).	20%	Sept. 25 - Nov. 29 To be scheduled
Essay 1 (1200 words). Topics will be discussed in class.	20%	October 18
Essay 2 (2500 words) The essay grade (40%) is comprised of three parts: workshop, presentation, and the final essay. <i>Workshop:</i> the progress of your draft essay and your participation during a Workshop will be graded. <i>Essay presentation:</i> this is an individual 5-minute presentation about your essay.	10% 25% 5%	November 6 Workshop Due Nov. 29 Essay 2 December 4 & 6 Essay Presentations
In-Class Participation Participation will be evaluated based on in-class activities and writing responses, and contribution during class discussion. Participation involves attentive listening, making informed thoughtful comments, and demonstrating familiarity with the required readings. Students who disrupt, interrupt or distract classmates, or use e-devices in a distracting manner, will see an impact on their participation grade.	10%	Throughout term

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments

Follow assignment instructions carefully. Assignments are due via uploads to D2L on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.

If it is not possible to hand in your assignment directly to your 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/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 may be penalized with the loss of a letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

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. Course work is graded using a combination of letter grades and weighted raw scores for individual assignments. This is converted into a percentage and letter grade for the assignment. All assignments are weighted based on the percentage value for the course. The chart below 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.

APA Referencing

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 . . .
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

<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>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.</p>
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Schedule of Topics - COMS 401.57 L03 Fall 2018			
This is the anticipated schedule of topics. Schedule changes will be communicated via D2L. It is your responsibility to check for updates and to ensure email via D2L are received at your correct email address.			
Week	Date	Topics	Assignments
<i>Week 1</i>	September 6	Course Introduction	
<i>Week 2</i>	September 11 & 13	Defining inspiration and hope	
<i>Week 3</i>	September 18 & 20	Addressing the everyday problems of everyday people	Due September 20: Early Essay
<i>Week 4</i>	September 25 & 27	Self-help I	
<i>Week 5</i>	October 2 & 4	Self-help II	
<i>Week 6</i>	October 9 & 11	Relationship I	
<i>Week 7</i>	October 16 & 18	Relationship II	Due October 18: Essay 1
<i>Week 8</i>	October 23 & 25	Business and Leadership II	
<i>Week 9</i>	October 30 & Nov. 1	Business and Leadership II	
<i>Week 10</i>	November 6 & 8	Nov. 8 TBA	November 6: Workshop
<i>Week 11</i>	<i>November 13 & 15 Reading Break (no classes)</i>		
<i>Week 12</i>	November 20 & 22	Our Community	
<i>Week 13</i>	November 27 & 29	Our World	Due November 29: Essay 2
<i>Week 14</i>	December 4 & 6	Essay 2 Presentations	