**COMS 401.61 (L02): Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies**

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Communication**

**FALL 2019: September 5 to December 6 (excluding Nov. 10-16)**

**Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 14:00 to 15:15**

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| **Instructor:** | Dr. Monique Solomon |
| **Office:** | SS 218 |
| **Email:** | solomonm@ucalgary.ca |
| **Web Page:** | D2L available through MyUofC portal |
| **Office Hours:** | Tuesdays 3:15 pm to 5:15 pm or by appointment |

## Course Description

Special topics courses offer study of contemporary topics or issues related to communications studies, media, technology, culture, and discourse. In this course students will be introduced to issues and developments in artificial intelligence (AI) in light of communications and media studies. The course will explore the ways and means with which AI is increasingly part of our everyday lives. Students will review popular and scholarly examples and representations of AI, and critically consider discourses and narratives of AI adoption and integration. The course focus is on how we communicate, construct, adapt, resist, and accept relationships with AI technologies and how this, in turn, shapes and re-informs communication in our everyday human relationships.

## Additional Information

This is an inquiry-based course which involves active class participation and discussion. A special topics course is reading and writing intensive. Students should come to class prepared to take part in discussions of course readings and current event topics. Class time is used to engage with course material through discussion and class activities. A schedule of topics, assignments, and course readings is posted on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies described in this outline.

## Objectives of the Course
By the end of this course, students should be able to…

- Understand basic concepts, issues and debates about artificial intelligence (AI) in society and trace relationships between social life, AI and communication.
- Critically and creatively discuss texts in scholarly and popular literature that aim to address and explain relationships between communication, media, technology and AI.
- Practice research and evaluation of information and communicate the importance of findings in writing, presentations and discussions.

## Textbooks and Readings
Please see the course D2L for the list of readings.

**Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices**
Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment. Close all electronics during presentations by your fellow students. Working on a laptop or device during student presentations may impact your participation grade. NO audio or video recording or photographing of course materials is allowed in any class without the instructor's permission.

**Email**
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 your fellow students should be written in a courteous, professional manner.

**Email is best used for short specific inquiries**. If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments, please speak with your professor in-person. 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, but email will not normally be answered in the evening or on weekends. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be replied to until the next business day.

| Assignments and Evaluation<br>Assignment details posted on D2L and reviewed in class. | Weight | Due |
|---|---|---|
| Reading Response 1<br>Students write a 1200-word response to an assigned reading. Prompts for writing the reading response will be provided and reviewed in class. | 12.5% | Oct. 1 |
| Reading Response 2<br>Students write a 1200-word response to an assigned reading. Prompts for writing the reading response will be provided and discussed in class. | 12.5% | Oct. 29 |
| Group Presentation<br>In small groups, students give a 15-minute presentation relating an article of their choice to the weekly topic and readings. The article chosen by the students must be approved by the professor minimum five-days before the presentation. Following the presentation, students lead a 15-minute class discussion relating their article to the weekly topic and readings. Students are to post discussion questions the day before their class presentation, and following the presentation post a 500-word reflection about the class discussion. | 25% | To be scheduled Sept. – Nov. |
| Term Paper: Comprised of three (3) parts for a total of 40%<br>    *Proposal and Workshop:* Students hand-in a 750-word proposal, and a 750-word annotated bibliography that includes five (5) scholarly journal articles), and participate in peer exchange in class. | 10% | Workshop: Nov. 19 |
|     *Term Paper:* Students research and write a 2800-word paper about a topic of their choice applying course concepts. Prompts/questions for the paper will be provided and reviewed in class. | 25% | Due: Dec. 3 |
|     *Term Paper 5-minute Presentation:* Students give a presentation to the class explaining the thesis and key points of their paper. | 5% | Dec. 3 & 5 |
| Participation<br>Participation will be evaluated based on contributions during class discussions and completion of in-class activities. Participation grading considers attentive listening, active | 10% | Weekly throughout term |

| contribution during small group activities, making informed thoughtful comments, preparing written activities during class, and demonstrating familiarity with readings. Please arrive on time. Disrupting class, or using laptops and devices in a distracting manner will result in a reduced participation grade. | | |
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**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

**You must complete all assignments or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.** If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

**Submission of Assignments**
Follow assignment instructions carefully. Assignments are due via upload to D2L (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments AND include your name in the file name of all documents uploaded to D2L.

If you are unable to upload to D2L, and unable to provide your instructor with a printed copy in-person please use the drop box 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.

**Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the correct version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. 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 (deadline) may be penalized with the loss of a partial 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); 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/. 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 as early as possible. 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, final grades are reported as letter grades. Course work is graded using a combination of letter grades and weighted raw scores for some individual assignments. The reading responses, group presentation, and term paper and presentation are graded using letter grades. The participation grade is calculated using a weighted score out of ten. All assignments are weighted based on the percentage value for the course.

| 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

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

**Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation**
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 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.

**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-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 or by calling 403-220.5555.

**Schedule of Lecture Topics**
Please see the course D2L for the weekly schedule of topics and readings.