

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401 L03
Special Topics in Communication Studies (Journalism and Social Media)

Winter 2020

Wed., Jan. 15 – Wed. Apr. 15 (excluding Feb. 17- 21 & April 10)

WF 14:00-15:15

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Course Description

The class offers a critical study of the changes experienced in journalism since the advent of new media, with a special emphasis on the transformations introduced by the popularization of social media platforms. Some of the topics explored are the emergence of networked and entrepreneurial journalism, algorithmic audiences, automated and ambient journalism, fake news, and the reformulation of traditional journalistic values such as objectivity and ethics.

The changes introduced to accommodate a remote delivery of this class are the following:

1. The lecture will be uploaded on Wednesday as a narrated ppt.
2. Optional video conferences will be scheduled for every Friday beginning at 2PM.
3. Discussion threads will be available for students to share their comments about the content discussed in the lectures and in the group presentations.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- identify the main transformations experienced by journalism as a discourse and a profession,
- critically assess contemporary discursive strategies of journalism scholars and professionals aimed at constructing journalism as a profession and scholarly discipline,
- analyze journalistic phenomena from a critical perspective,
- critically engage with the literature in the area of journalism studies,
- work effectively in groups.

Textbooks and Readings

The following is the list of mandatory readings for this class:

- Anderson, C. W. (2011). Deliberative, agonistic, and algorithmic audiences: Journalism's vision of its public in an age of audience transparency. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 529-547. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=97317363&site=ehost-live>
- Bogaerts, J. & Carpentier, N. (2012). The postmodern challenge to journalism. Strategies for constructing a trustworthy identity. In C. Peters & M. J. Broersma (Eds.), *Rethinking journalism: Trust and participation in a transformed news landscape*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=1092745&ppg=73>
- Carey, J. (2007). A short history of journalism for journalists: A proposal and essay. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 12(1), 3-16. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/abs/10.1177/1081180X06297603>
- Carlson, M. (2015). The robotic reporter: Automated journalism and the redefinition of labor, compositional forms, and journalistic authority. *Digital Journalism*, 3(3), 416-431. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/21670811.2014.976412>
- Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism*, 19(2), 165-181. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/full/10.1177/1464884916688550>
- Farkas, J. & Schou, J. (2018). Fake news and the floating signifier: Hegemony, antagonism and the politics of falsehood. *Javnost – The Public*, 25(3), 298-314. DOI: 10.1080/13183222.2018.1463047 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/13183222.2018.1463047>
- Hayes, A., Singer, J., & Ceppos, J. (2007). Shifting roles, enduring values: The credible journalist in a digital age. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 22(4), 262-279. <http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=27441549&site=ehost-live>
- Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 4(3), 297-308. <http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=52062645&site=ehost-live>
- Nielsen, R. (2016). The business of news. In T. Witschge, C. W. Anderson, D. Domingo & A. Hermida (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of digital journalism*. Retrieved from

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4531651&ppg=70>

****E-book licence permits only one online user at a time; per day, a user may print to PDF up 125 pages**

Schudson, M. (2018). Is journalism a profession? Objectivity 1.0, Objectivity 2.0 and beyond. In M. Schudson, *Why journalism still matters*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=5566687&ppg=53>

****E-book licence permits only one online user at a time; per day, a user may print to PDF up 46 pages**

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2014). Is WikiLeaks challenging the paradigm of journalism? Boundary work and beyond. *International Journal of Communication (Online)*.

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A398953471/AONE?u=ucalgary&sid=AONE&xid=05900122>

Ward, S. (2014). Radical media ethics: Ethics for a global digital world. *Digital Journalism*, 2(4), 455-471.

<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/21670811.2014.952985>

Zelizer, B. (2015). Terms of choice: Uncertainty, journalism, and crisis, *Journal of Communication*, 65(5), 888–908, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1111/jcom.12157>

Internet and electronic communication device information

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. No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor's permission.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
35%	<p>Group activities: in groups of max. 5 members, students will complete five problem solving activities that require the analysis of different aspects of journalistic discourse and phenomena in light of the critical studies discussed in class. The activities will be completed in class and handed in at the end of the day via dropbox submission. Students will have a week time to complete the activity.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will become available the day the assignment is introduced in class.</p> <p>To complete the activity, students must be present in class.</p>	Jan. 31, Feb 14, Mar. 6, 20 AND April 3,
10%	<p>Discussion groups: This grade will be assessed based in each student's documented participation in ten in-class group discussions. Students will form groups of up to 8 members to</p>	Ongoing (see schedule below for more information)

	<p>discuss and answer a question connected to the reading material scheduled for that day. To receive a discussion group grade, students must be present in class, access the question via D2L, collaborate with a group in answering a question from a list compiled by the instructor, and sign in their names next to the question answered as proof of participation. Each documented participation in a discussion group session is worth 1%.</p> <p>Note: given the transition to remote learning, participation during the last 4 weeks of class will be measured in the following way:</p> <p>Students are required to participate in two of the four discussion threads associated with the 4 remaining lectures until the end of the term in order to receive two points towards their remaining participation grade. Each contribution will be assigned one point.</p> <p>There is no minimum or maximum length to the contribution to this forum though students are asked to avoid one sentence responses. Students should make sure to participate sometime between the day the discussion thread is created until the day before the following lecture is posted.</p> <p>In addition, students are required to write two responses to group presentations to add two points to their final participation grade. Each response will be assigned one point. Responses must address the questions proposed by the group. There is no minimum or maximum length to the contribution though students are asked to avoid a single sentence response.</p> <p>The discussion forum will remain open until April 15 though students are encouraged to post responses to group presentations before that so that groups receive some feedback from peers in a timely fashion.</p>	
10%	<p>Group presentation: 10 minutes each- all group members must present. In groups of four, students will plan and deliver a remote presentation that consists in the description and critical analysis of a journalistic text or phenomenon. The presentation should address the topic of the week and establish three connections between the case study presented and the mandatory reading assigned for that week. In addition, groups are responsible for introducing two questions for audience discussion.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to contact the instructor to discuss appropriate formats for remote presentation (i.e. narrated ppt, video recording). The deadline will remain the same day and time of the previously scheduled oral presentation. A D2L dropbox has been created for digital submission.</p> <p>The presentations will receive a group mark. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	TBD by groups during the first week of class. Dates available: Fridays from January 24 to April 3.

20%	Take-home midterm exam: individual assignment- open book, take-home. The midterm will consist in the analysis of a case study in light of the theories studied in class from Week 1 to Week 5 (included). Further instructions will be posted on D2L on January 31st .	Feb. 15 by 11:59 PM (D2L dropbox)
25%	Take-home final exam: individual assignment- open book, take-home. The final exam will consist of two sections. The first part will require students to research and write a critical analysis of a phenomenon or discursive instance of contemporary journalism (approx.1000 words). A second part will consist in a series of 4-6 short answer questions about the mandatory readings discussed in class. Further instructions will be posted on D2L on March 27th .	April 17 by 2PM (D2L dropbox)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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

Submission of Assignments

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and upload them to the D2L dropbox assigned.

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.

***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 upload 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 given the difficult circumstances we are living in, students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor before the original deadline of the assignment a potential extension of the day of grace.

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. 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

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All other assignments (group activities, discussion group work, group presentations, midterm and final exams) 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.

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 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>

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 and Readings

	Wednesdays 14:00 – 15:15 ST129	Fridays 14:00 – 15:15 ST129
Week 1 Jan. 15 & 17	Introduction to the class and assignments. Topic: Crisis and the specter of social media Reading: Zelizer (2015). Terms of choice: Uncertainty, Journalism and Crisis. (class discussion)	Topic: Brief historical overview Reading: Carey (2007). A short history of journalism for journalists.1 Assignment: discussion groups
Week 2 Jan. 22 & 24	Topic: New strategies of legitimization Reading: Bogaerts & Carpentier (2012). The postmodern challenge to journalism. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: New strategies of legitimization Assignment: group presentations Group activity 1
Week 3 Jan. 29 & 31	Topic: Networked journalism Reading: Deuze & Witschge (2018). Beyond Journalism.	Topic: Networked journalism Assignment: group presentations Group activity 1 due

1 All links to readings will be available on D2L.

	Assignment: discussion groups	Midterm instructions posted on D2L.
Week 4 Feb. 5 & 7	Topic: A new business model Reading: Nielsen (2016). The business of news. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: A new business model Assignment: group presentations Group activity 2
Week 5 Feb. 12 & 14	Topic: Algorithmic audiences Reading: Anderson (2011). Deliberative, agonistic and algorithmic audiences. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Algorithmic audiences Assignment: group presentations Group activity 2 due Midterm take-home due on Feb. 15 @11:59 PM (dropbox)
Week 6 Feb. 19 & 21	NO CLASSES- READING WEEK	
Week 7 Feb. 26 & 28	Topic: Fake news Reading: Farkas & Schou (2018). Fake news as a floating signifier. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Fake news Assignment: group presentations Group activity 3
Week 8 Mar. 4 & 6	Topic: Renegotiating authority Reading: Wahl-Jorgensen (2014). Is Wikileaks challenging the paradigm of journalism? Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Renegotiating authority Assignment: group presentations Group activity 3 due
Week 9 Mar. 11 & 13	Topic: Objectivity 2.0 Reading: Schudson (2018). Is journalism a profession? Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Objectivity 2.0 Assignment: group presentations Group activity 4
Week 10 Mar. 18 & 20	Topic: Trust Reading: Hayes, Singer & Ceppos (2007). Shifting roles, enduring values Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Trust Assignment: group presentations Group activity 4 due
Week 11 Mar. 25 & 27	Topic: Radical ethics Reading: Ward (2014). Radical media ethics. Assignment: discussion groups, group activity 5 introduced	Topic: Radical ethics Guest Speaker: Sally Haney, Associate Professor and Assistant Chair of Journalism, MRU School of Communication Studies Final take-home exam instructions posted on D2L.
Week 12 Apr. 1 & 3	Topic: Ambient journalism Reading: Hermida (2010). Twittering the news. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Ambient journalism Assignment: group presentations Group activity 5 due
Week 13 Apr. 8 & 10	Topic: Automated journalism Reading: Carlson (2015). The robotic reporter (class discussion)	NO CLASS- GOOD FRIDAY
Week 14 Apr. 15 & 17	NO CLASS CLASS DEDICATED TO FINAL PREPARATION/ End of term	Final take-home exam due: April 17 at 2PM (dropbox)