

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 481, L01
Advanced Studies in New Media and Society

Topic: Digital Selves and Identity Technologies

Winter 2019

Thursday, January 10 – Thursday, April 11 (excluding February 19 & 21)
Lectures, TR 12:30 – 13:45

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Office: SS 218
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 pm – 4 pm or by appointment

Course Description

Examines the nature, origins and social implications of new media with a focus on the Internet. Evolving forms of interpersonal, group and public communication based on the Internet will be assessed in terms of the role they play in identity formation, cultural integration, learning, political participation, commerce and work.

Our advanced topic for this term is *Digital Selves and Identity Technologies*. Students will examine identity and self-presentation in new media as it relates to personal engagement with various media platforms as extensions of the self in everyday life. In the course students will explore the way we construct and story identity, and define and navigate boundaries of self-presentation in and across digital and 'real life' contexts. In this course new media will be examined as an extension and expansion of self and identity.

Additional Information

This is an inquiry-based course. Success in the course requires making informed contributions during class discussions and demonstrating critical engagement with the readings. Class time is used to actively engage with the course material through discussion, writing, and in-class activities.

Objectives of the Course

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

- understand the production and presentation of self and identity as an ongoing practice of social construction in discursive and narrative form.
- critically discuss the affordances and challenges of specific social media platforms
- apply theoretical frameworks in order to explain the ways social media use influences and shapes individual and community identities.

Textbooks and Readings

A list of required readings will be posted on D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

- During class you may use a laptop or tablet for note taking and in-class activities. Please keep your focus on our class and not on surfing and searching the internet, gaming, messaging, or shopping etc., or working on material for other classes. Come to class ready to participate in discussions and activities.
- Close all electronics during presentations by your fellow students. Working on a laptop or device during student presentations will impact your participation grade.
- Turn off cell phones, gaming and similar devices during class time.
- No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

Include **COMS 481** 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 instructor during office hours.

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 read or replied to until the next business day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments will be reviewed in class & posted on D2L.	Weight	Due
Social Media Autoethnography Essay (1500 words)	10%	February 14
Identity Analysis Essay (1800 words)	15%	March 14
Research Essay: Comprised of 3 parts for a total of 40%. Workshop: Students hand-in a 750-word proposal, and a 750-word annotated bibliography (five academic articles), and participate in peer exchange in class. Presentation: Key essay findings (5-minutes). Research Essay: Self-Representation & Identity Technologies (2500 - 3000 words)	10% 5% 25%	Workshop: Mar. 28 Presentations: Final weeks of term Essay: April 11
Group Presentation & Discussion: In small groups, students present on a weekly topic and assigned reading(s) and facilitate class discussion (30 minutes).	25%	To be scheduled January - March
In-Class Participation Participation will be evaluated based on in-class activities and your comments and contributions during class	10%	Throughout term

discussions. Participation involves attentive listening, making informed thoughtful comments, and demonstrating knowledge of the readings.		
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments

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

Assignments for the course are due via uploads to D2L on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Please follow assignment instructions carefully. Please check the assignment instructions to see if a printed copy of the assignment is required.

As directed above, please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor. If it is not possible to do so, 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 grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations and Deferrals:

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) or for 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, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>
- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Assignments, exams, and other work in the course are graded using a combination of letter grades and weighted raw scores. Letter grades will be used for written assignments. Raw scores will be used to calculate scores on exams, and this is converted into a percentage and letter grade per the department chart below. All assignments are then weighted based on the percentage value for the course and the scale below is used to calculate the final 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	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%

	preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject			
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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>.

Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about citing 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, 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>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102, 403-220-3580 https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising
CAMPUS SECURITY & Safewalk Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly 	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
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 • Events & Info for Students 	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 Ombuds 	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"> • Health Services • Mental Health Services • Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus
<p><i>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.</i></p>	

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

COMS 481 W19 Schedule: This is the anticipated schedule of topics. Any changes to the schedule will be communicated via D2L. It is your responsibility to check D2L for schedule and reading updates, and to ensure D2L emails are received at your correct email address.	
Date(s)	Topics and Assignments
January 10	Course Introduction
January 15 & 17	Self and Society
January 22 & 24	Technologies of the Self
January 29 & 31	Internet Identity Research
February 5 & 7	Narrating the Self in Everyday Life
February 12 & 14	Social Networking and the Ongoing Construction of Subjectivity Due February 14: Social Media Autoethnography (1500 words)
February 19 & 21	<i>Reading Week – No classes</i>
February 26 & 28	Networked Sociality
March 5 & 7	Social Media Affordances and Challenges
March 12 & 14	Digital Self as Data Due March 14: Identity Analysis (1800 words)
March 19 & 21	Digital Identity and Community
March 26 & 28	Identity Technologies in Popular Media and Culture Due March 28: In-class Workshop, Hand-in Proposal (750-words) and Annotated Bibliography (750 words, five academic articles)
April 2 & 4	Perils and Promises of Digital Identity
April 9 & 11	Due: Presentations will be scheduled in the last two weeks of classes. Due April 11: Research Essay: Self-Representation and Identity Technologies (2500 - 3000 words)