

Department of Communication and Culture
COMS 627
Media and Politics
Fall 2014
M 14:00-16:45
SS315

Instructor: Dr. Michael Keren

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:15-1:15 or by appointment

Course Description

In this seminar we shall survey ideas by political thinkers who dealt with the interaction between media of communication and politics since ancient times to the present. The seminar consists of weekly discussions of selected writings and of student presentations of their seminar paper, due on the last day of the seminar.

Course Objectives

The seminar is devoted to in-depth understanding of the role of communication media in forming, reforming and destroying political systems.

Textbooks

Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007).
José Saramago, *Blindness* (San Diego, Harcourt, 1997).

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of electronic communication devices is not allowed. Laptops can be used for note taking only.

Assignments and Evaluation

For the paper (20 pages for graduate students, 10 pages for undergraduate students) every student will choose a political regime, movement, leader or event – historical or contemporary – and analyze the role played by one medium (newspaper, novel, pamphlet, radio, TV, theatre, cinema, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phone, etc.) or a combination of several media in its origin, its development and in its aftermath. The paper will be presented in class. All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. Note: please hand in your papers directly to your instructor at the beginning of the last session of the seminar.

Registrar's- scheduled exam: No

Composition of the Grade:

Class participation and paper presentation 20%.

Mid-term exam (on the lectures and readings) 40% (November 3, 2014)

Term paper to be written in accordance with scholarly rules, including references and bibliography 40%.

Policy for late assignments: The assignment is to be submitted on time. In case of emergency, please contact the instructor.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4	Outstanding
A	4	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.3	All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
C	2	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1	
F	0	

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 provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <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 (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES	http://grad.ucalgary.ca/home or 403-220-4938
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 • IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION • Student Ombudsman	http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson (403) 220-6420 or ombuds@ucalgary.ca
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS • Faculty of Arts Reps	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html
SU WELLNESS CENTRE • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus 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.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

September 8. Introduction

September 15. Communication and Civil Disobedience

Plato, *Apology* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>

September 22. Communication and Liberty

J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* http://www.serendipity.li/jsmill/on_lib.html

September 29. Communication in Different Political Regimes

Innis, *Empire and Communication*.

October 6. Communication and Mass Society

Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*: Introduction, chapter 1, Chapter 4.
<http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/64onedim/odm1.html>

Michael Keren, "Blogging and Mass Politics." *Biography* 33/1 (Winter 2010): 110-126.

October 13 Thanksgiving – no class

October 20 The Breakdown of Political Communication

J. Saramago, *Blindness*

October 27 Toward the Posthuman

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* – Prologue, Chapter 1, Conclusion

<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Hayles-Posthuman-excerpts.pdf>

Kafka, *Metamorphosis*

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200-h/5200-h.htm>

November 3 Mid term exam

November 12 - reading week – no class

November 17 – November 24 Class presentations.

December 1 Conclusion. Paper due at 2pm.