

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 613/713 (SEM 1): Communication Theory/PhD Theory Seminar
WINTER 2022: January 10 to April 11 (excluding Feb. 20-26)
Seminars: Mondays, 14:00-16:45

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY

Note: This course will be delivered in-person. If you are unable to participate in-class owing to time differences or geographical location, please arrange to take this course in a future term

Instructor:	Dr. Annie Rudd
Office:	SS 312
Email:	annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesdays, 10am-12pm (via Zoom; please email annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment)

Course Description and Objectives

This course offers MA and PhD students an intensive immersion in theoretical texts that have informed contemporary studies of media, communication, and culture. These texts range from foundational works to recent interventions. Some of the core questions we will consider in this course include:

- What is a public? How do publics form and change shape? Who is included, and who is excluded? What new forms of solidarity, collective experience, or knowledge might accompany the experience of exclusion?
- What is culture? How do cultures function as sites for the negotiation of meaning? What is the relationship between culture and identity? Between culture and capitalism?
- What kinds of power do media images possess, and what role does visual culture play in the enactment of power? What kinds of oppositional or radical purposes can images serve?
- What is history? Who authors it, and whose voices tend to get excluded? What forms of redress are open to those whose perspectives have traditionally been omitted or silenced?
- How should we define media and technology? What is the nature of the relationship between technological change and social change?
- What can theory tell us about the experience of living?

The main aim of this course is to offer graduate students in communications, media, and film studies a base of theoretical knowledge that will inform their research as it takes shape. An additional aim is to acquaint students with a variety of theoretical perspectives that will enrich their own interpretations of and engagements with media and culture, beyond the

scope of their own research programs. Moreover, this course aims to help students build their competence in reading, discussing, and critically engaging with complex texts, and hone their skills as academic writers.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on D2L. The course will be offered as an in-person seminar.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Textbooks and Readings

All required readings will be posted on D2L. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to each class, whether on your computer or printed, as close reading will be an important part of this course.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops and tablets are permitted in this class, provided they are used solely for note-taking and other in-class activities and they do not present a distraction to you or others. Phones should be silenced and placed in your bag during class, though they can be used during the break. If distraction due to electronic devices is impeding class participation, a policy prohibiting the use of all electronic devices may be introduced.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
20%	<p>Seminar presentation</p> <p>Each student in the course will be required to lead one session. Presenters will be expected to deliver an approximately 40-minute-long presentation during which they will critically engage with the week's readings and facilitate class discussion. Full details on expectations surrounding seminar presentations will be given during the first week of class.</p>	<p>Throughout term (presentation dates chosen Week 2)</p>
25%	<p>Theory in practice journal</p> <p>Each student will be asked to maintain an online journal documenting their experiences of, and critical engagements with, the course readings. These journals will be posted to the D2L Discussion Board, and students will be expected to write a minimum of 8 posts over the course of the term. Posts must be at least 400 words long and must demonstrate critical engagement with some aspect of the assigned readings as well as an effort to apply insights from the readings to practice: to their own research, to contemporary or historical examples, or to everyday life. More details will be provided early in the term.</p>	<p>Throughout term (posts must be submitted at least 24 hours before class, and students should submit at least 4 posts by Reading Week)</p>
15%	<p>Seminar participation</p> <p>As this is a small seminar class, regular verbal participation in class discussion is expected and will be essential not only to your own success in the course, but to the experience that each participant has in it. This course is intended to be a space for open, informed, generative, and respectful discussion. Your participation will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussions and your participation in in-class activities and assignments. Note that your participation is not assessed based on the regularity of your verbal contributions alone: you are expected to contribute in a way that enhances the class discussion, and this means coming to class with the readings done, ready to discuss them, and interacting with your interlocutors in respectful and productive ways. Given the importance of participation, regular attendance is mandatory, and more than two unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade in the course.</p>	<p>Throughout term</p>
5%	<p>Final paper prospectus</p> <p>In anticipation of the final paper, you will be asked to submit a research prospectus outlining the topic of your paper and offering a brief annotated bibliography. The prospectus should be 1-2 pages long. Further details will be provided well in advance of the due date.</p>	<p>March 7 (submit via D2L Dropbox before the start of class)</p>

35%	<p>Final paper</p> <p>Drawing on the texts we have read and the discussions we have had together in class, as well as substantive independent research, you will write a research paper that offers critical engagement with theories of communication, media, and culture. Your paper should be 15-20 pages long, and it should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with theoretical texts; judicious application of theory to the objects, problems, phenomena, or artifacts of your choosing; and skillful academic writing. Further details will be provided early in the term.</p>	<p>April 11 (submit via D2L Dropbox before the start of class)</p>
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam in the evening, but there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

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

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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 recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a third 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); 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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*. <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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

Work in this course will be graded using [choose one] letter grades, GPA values (using any value on the 0 to 4.0 scale, including, e.g., 3.2 or 2.8). The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	4.00	Excellent performance
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass
C+	2.30	All grades of "C+" or lower 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	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

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, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). 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 deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see

<https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

The weekly schedule of topics and assigned readings will be posted on the course D2L site.