

Department of Communication and Culture
Communications Studies (COMS) 601 - Seminar 01
Interdisciplinary Approaches to Communications Studies
Culture and Society (CUSP) 601 – Seminar 01
Interdisciplinary Approaches to Culture and Society

Fall 2012
W 13:00 – 15:50 SS 315

Instructor: Dr. Doug Brent
Office/Phone Number: SS 312 220-5458
Office Hours: W 11:00 – 12:00 or feel free to set up another time
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Additional Information

COMS 601 and CUSP 601 are in the process of being combined into a single course. This change has not yet received final approval, so students will officially be registered in one of the two separate courses. However, the section will be taught as if it is one course.

This unfortunately results in two Blackboard sites as well. For the sake of simplicity I will manually register CUSP students in on the COMS site so everyone and everything will be in the same place.

Course Description

A foundation seminar including the presentation and discussion of a range of topics in the study of communication and culture. Students will receive a broad introduction to research in communication and culture through discussion of a variety of research approaches and traditions, encompassing interaction, representation, media, and interpretation in social behaviour.

Course Objectives

- 1) familiarize students with the University's resources for research in communication and culture
- 2) introduce research traditions represented in our program
- 3) initiate students in the process of developing a feasible research agenda for communication and culture research

Textbooks/Readings

There is no required text for the course. Readings will be made available either electronically or in the Reserve Reading Room of the library.

Assignments and Evaluation

Final grade in the course will be based on the completion of the four following assignments:

September 26. Intellectual Introduction 20%

This assignment can be thought of as an intellectual biography or introduction. What are the ideas and who are the writers and researchers that brought you to this point in your intellectual development? What is it about the kind of work they do or the topics they work on that appealed to you? How have they shaped your own intellectual engagement? How do you see their work influencing your work in the near future?

Your paper should be approximately 5 typed, double spaced pages with appropriate footnotes, citations and references. APA is the preferred style, but if you are more comfortable with MLA style, that is also acceptable if used consistently.

October 31. Thesis Critique 25%

This assignment is designed to give you a sense of graduate research conducted in communication and culture at the University of Calgary and elsewhere. Select one or two MA theses or PhD dissertations in an area of your own interest. In 5-7 pages provide a summary and assessment of the project completed by the research. Your discussion should include a clear statement of their research question and objectives, an overview of the theoretical context in which they framed their question, the choice of methods and style of data analysis. You should conclude with evaluating the merits and accomplishments of the project (prefaced with an account of how you chose to evaluate the work).

Seminar Presentation 25% Dates coordinated with weekly topics, to be assigned in class

The due date of this assignment will be based on selecting a reading or author from those assigned in the weekly readings in the course outline. Students will be asked to provide a sense of historical and intellectual context to the work by the particular author they choose. Students should be able to critically evaluate the work of the chosen author and present this material in class on the relevant week.

A formal, 6-8 page paper should be submitted one week after the presentation.

December 5. Research Proposal 30%

The final assignment builds on skills acquired throughout the course. It asks students to develop a feasible research question. Drawing on relevant research traditions in communication and cultural analysis, students should suggest the relevance of their research question to the field, and should show how these traditions provide for an approach to answering the question. If relevant, try to relate your question to the evolution of the field. If appropriate, try to include work of relevant MA/MCS and PhD projects from the program. The final paper should be approximately 10-12 pages and include an annotated bibliography. The bibliography should indicate your familiarity with current journals, databases, dissertation abstracts, citation indices, government documents, and monographs that might be relevant to your topic.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. Assignments should be submitted via Blackboard using the view/complete assignment link provided, **not** the digital Dropbox. In particular, please don't e-mail assignments. My inbox isn't any tidier than yours probably is, and this is a sure way for assignments to get lost.

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.

If a major assignment coincides with the date of your seminar presentation or the paper resulting from it, please see me to discuss an extension.

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
<p>Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.</p>		
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
<p>Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise. Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.</p>		
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate
C-	1.7	Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade
D+	1.3	of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program
D	1.0	recommends otherwise.
F	0.0	

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. You will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up any assignments or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Graduate Calendar at the following link: <http://grad.ucalgary.ca/files/grad/UC%20Graduate%20Calendar%202010-2011%20July%206-10.pdf>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts, see www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su

Graduate Students' Association

For details on the Graduate Students' Association, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/services/ombudsperson.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly Points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and assembly points, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (ie. surveys, interviews, observation) as a 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:

Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB)
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

Schedule of Readings

To be posted on Blackboard.