

University of Calgary

Department of Communication and Culture

Communication Studies (COMS) 201 L01 Introduction to Communications Studies Spring 2014

**Thursday, May 15 to Thursday, June 26
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00pm – 2:45pm**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am – 11:30am or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the field of communications, surveying the major theoretical fields including feminism, rhetoric, dramaturgy and technological determinism. Students will explore the nature of communications, cultivating an understanding on how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

Additional Information

Tutorial activities such as student presentations and class discussion will be integrated into the lecture period.

Objectives of the Course

Through lectures, readings, class discussion and course assignments, students will be able to:

- Obtain foundational knowledge of communications theory
- Explain the key concepts, methodological traditions and major theoretical currents apparent in the interdisciplinary field of communication studies
- Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking through the examination of various cultural texts

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to use laptops and other electronic note-taking devices in this course. Please be considerate of others during lectures, screenings, and discussions and switch off all iPods, cellphones, etc. whenever you enter the classroom. Sending/receiving text messages or taking calls during class is disruptive and will not be tolerated unless absolutely necessary.

In some weeks, feature-length films or full television episodes will be screened and in the spirit of being as non-disruptive as possible, laptops and all other electronic devices must have brightness dialed to its lowest setting and students using such devices are asked to sit near the back of the classroom.

Failure to respect these rules may result in the revocation of your privileges to use devices in the classroom.

Textbooks and Readings:

Wood, Julia T. *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*. Third Edition. Canada: Wadsworth, 2004. **(REQUIRED)** *

**Earlier editions of this book may be purchased secondhand, but since the instructor will be teaching from the Third Edition, students are responsible for all of the information in the Third Edition. If you purchase an earlier edition, you must ensure that you obtain copies of any additional chapters that we may cover. You are also responsible for keeping abreast of any relevant pagination differences.*

Students are expected to have readings completed **prior** to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities. A detailed schedule of readings will be distributed at the first lecture.

Assignments and Evaluation

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

Participation: **10%**

Group Presentation: **20%**

In Class Tests (2 x 10%): **20%**

Research Paper: **20%**

Final Examination: **30%**

Participation 10%

Students are expected to not only be in attendance *every* week, but to contribute significantly to the class discussions and group work. Oral participation will help solidify concepts.

Group Presentation 20%

All students will be expected to give a ten-minute presentation applying a particular communication theory to a recent (2013 or 2014) cultural artifact such as a film, television episode, song, current event etc. A five-minute class activity must accompany the presentation. Students will be marked on their ability to present ideas clearly, think critically, and demonstrate their understanding of a communications theory. A schedule of presentation times will be determined in the second week of classes.

In class tests 20%

Two tests will be administered in class on **May 29 & June 19**. The format will be short answer questions. Students will be tested on their knowledge of the readings and/or content presented in lectures. Should a student be unable to take the test due to illness or extenuating circumstances, accommodation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis provided that official documentation is provided.

Research Paper 20%

The research paper for this course will provide students with the opportunity to combine out-of-class research with the topics explored in lectures and discussions. Choosing from several communication theory topics, students will write a 1250-1500 word (5-6 page) research paper using academic journal articles to support their argument. More information on the term paper will be provided in class.

The research paper is due IN CLASS June 26

Final Examination: 30% (Registrar-Scheduled)

The format will be a combination of multiple-choice and short answer questions. Students will be responsible for all material covered in the textbook as well as lectures and class discussions.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. 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.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: YES

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.

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 Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

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 (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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 <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points 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 (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 The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site: <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics> or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Advisory: Some of the content presented in this course may contain course language, sexuality, violence or disturbing imagery. Some people may find this content difficult to engage with but as participants in the course it is crucial (and expected) that you will foster a critical distance and be able to contribute to discussion. Students who are unable to do so are invited to speak directly with the Instructor.

A class schedule will be distributed during the first lecture.