

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 201 (L01): Introduction to Communication and Media Studies

WINTER 2021: January 11 – April 15 (excluding Feb. 14 – 20; Apr. 2 and 5)

Lecture: Posted to D2L (Tuesdays)

(Lectures will be asynchronous. Labs will be synchronous Zoom sessions held Fridays.)

Lab 1 F 9:00–9:50, Lab 2 F 10:00 –10:50, Lab 3 11:00 – 11:50, Lab 4 12:00 – 12:50,
Lab 5 F 9:00–9:50, Lab 6 F 10:00 –10:50, Lab 7 11:00 – 11:50, Lab 8 12:00 – 12:50.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR WINTER 2021:

This Winter 2021 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor:	Dr. Samantha Thrift
Email:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesdays, 11:00-1:00 (by appt.)

Course Description

A general mapping of the field, with an emphasis on its breadth in the areas of media studies, communication of science and technology and rhetorical communication. General examination of how Communications Studies emerged during the twentieth century and how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

Additional Information

In this course we will explore the question of what we are doing when we “communicate”. Are we simply transmitting information? Are we creating meaning? Are we participating in a social process? Are we persuading others? Are we supporting the social status quo? Are we voicing challenges to the ‘system’? Incorporating examples from popular culture, COMS 201 will facilitate your finding an answer to these questions for yourself.

PowerPoint lectures will be posted to D2L weekly (Tuesdays). Students are responsible for reviewing the lectures and completing the assigned readings each week.

Students must also register in a Lab section. Labs (i.e., tutorials) are not optional; they are integral to the course and attendance and active participation are expected. Labs will be held via synchronous Zoom session (50 min.) each Friday. Please come to tutorial having completed the week's readings and lecture content.

Please be aware that much of this course deals with the artifacts, experiences, and products of popular culture. As such, some of the material we study may involve coarse language, sexuality and violence. If this is a problem for you, please see the instructor or your TA.

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

Through readings, lectures, written assignments and group discussions and activities, COMS 201 will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of communication and media studies. Recognizing that communication is integral to all human activities and interactions, this course explores elements of communication and media studies that appeal to scholars from a variety of academic disciplines.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- identify the major theoretical traditions informing the field of COMS;
- apply these theories to different and diverse media examples;
- find and use scholarly sources;
- develop original arguments based on scholars' conceptual frameworks;
- write an academic essay that adheres to disciplinary conventions.

Textbooks and Readings

Griffin, Em, Andrew Ledbetter, and Glenn Sparks. 2019. *A First Look at Communication Theory* (10th edition). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.

Students may use either the print or electronic version of the textbook. Information for purchasing the e-book will be available on D2L.

Used copies of the textbook may be available for purchase through the university bookstore (depending on COVID restrictions). Earlier editions of the textbook should not be used, due to differences in content and organization.

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) 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);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. 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 the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Email

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 201) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread. Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with the instructor.

Email is most useful for specific inquiries. If you have more detailed questions about the course material, assignments, or grades, please schedule an appointment to speak with the instructor (via Zoom) during office hours.

The instructor will respond to emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read (or replied to) until the next working day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	<p>Participation grades will be awarded on the basis of your active involvement in tutorial discussions and activities (via Zoom). Details of required tutorial activities will be provided in a Tutorial Outline, which will be posted to D2L.</p> <p>In order to receive participation grades, you are expected to be in attendance for tutorials, contribute to the discussions, and complete required group work and presentations. Each week, pairs of students will give presentations on key aspects of the week's readings. More details to come!</p>	Weekly
20%	<p>Quiz 1 will be composed of multiple-choice questions designed to provide early feedback on your comprehension of the course material so far. It will be useful preparation for Quiz 2 and 3.</p> <p>Chapters 1-3, 5, 6 and 13 (and related lecture content) will be covered on Quiz 1.</p> <p>This quiz is open-book. While completing the quiz, students may consult their textbook and course materials, but communicating with other students about the quiz before the quiz closes will be considered academic misconduct.</p> <p>Students will have 90 minutes to complete the quiz. The quiz will be available for 24-hours. Students will have one attempt to write the quiz.</p> <p>The instructor and TAs will be available to answer students' questions about the quiz at specified times (TBD).</p>	Feb 12-13 (9:00 am - 9:00 am)
20%	<p>Quiz 2 will be composed of multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Chapters 22-26 (and related lecture content) will be covered on Quiz 2.</p>	Mar 12-13 (9:00 am - 9:00 am)

	<p>This quiz is open-book. While completing the quiz, students may consult their textbook and course materials, but communicating with other students about the quiz before the quiz closes will be considered academic misconduct.</p> <p>Students will have 90 minutes to complete the quiz. The quiz will be available for 24-hours. Students will have one attempt to write the quiz.</p> <p>The instructor and TAs will be available to answer students' questions about the quiz at specified times (TBD).</p>	9:00 am)
15%	<p>Quiz 3 will be composed of multiple choice questions.</p> <p>Chapters 29, 30, 27, 32, and 33 (and related lecture content) will be covered on Quiz 3.</p> <p>This quiz is open-book. While completing the quiz, students may consult their textbook and course materials, but communicating with other students about the quiz before the quiz closes will be considered academic misconduct.</p> <p>Students will have 90 minutes to complete the quiz. The quiz will be available for 24-hours. Students will have one attempt to write the quiz.</p> <p>The instructor and TAs will be available to answer students' questions about the quiz at specified times (TBD).</p>	Apr 9-10 (9:00 am - 9:00 am)
35%	<p>The Research Essay for this course gives you an opportunity to combine academic research with the topics explored in lectures and discussions. You will be given a choice of several essay topics, and are expected to write a 1500-1750 word research paper on that topic. More information on the term paper will be provided in class and on D2L.</p>	Apr 15 (11:59pm)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments.

It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

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 recorded 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 5% or a partial 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. 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 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, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

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

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentage scores will be used for grading tests, essays, and tutorial presentations. In calculating final grades in this course, the calculated percentage grade will be translated to the corresponding letter grade according to the Department of CMF grade scale equivalents (ex. a calculated percentage score of 84% will receive a final letter grade of B+).

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 preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://success.ucalgary.ca/home.htm>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including 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.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes,

electronic versions of textbooks etc.). 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 deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <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, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 12	Course Introduction (Lecture on D2L)	None
Jan 15	Tutorial (Zoom)	
Jan 19	Theory Foundations (Lecture on D2L) Launching Your Study Talk About Theory Weighing the Words	Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Jan 22	Tutorial (Zoom)	
Jan 26	Interpersonal Coms (Lecture on D2L) Symbolic Interactionism Coordinated Management of Meaning	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
Jan 29	Tutorial (Zoom)	

Feb 2	Relationship Maintenance (Lecture on D2L) Media Multiplexity	Chapter 13
Feb 5	Tutorial (Zoom) Quiz 1 Review	
Feb 9	Rhetoric I (Lecture on D2L) Aristotle	Chapter 22
Feb 12	Quiz 1 (D2L) Available Feb.12 (9:00am) – Feb.13 (9:00am)	
Feb 16 - 19	Reading Break (No lecture, no tutorials)	None
Feb 23	Rhetoric II (Lecture on D2L) Dramatism Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23 Chapter 24
Feb 26	Tutorial (Zoom)	
Mar 2	Mass Communication (Lecture on D2L) Media Ecology Semiotics	Chapter 25 Chapter 26
Mar 5	Tutorial (Zoom) Quiz 2 Review	
Mar 9	Essay Overview (Lecture on D2L)	None
Mar 12	Quiz 2 (D2L) Available Mar.12 (9:00am) – Mar.13 (9:00am)	
Mar 16	Media Effects (Lecture on D2L) Cultivation Theory Agenda-Setting Theory	Chapter 29 Chapter 30
Mar 19	Tutorial (Zoom)	
Mar 23	Critical Cultural Theory I (Lecture on D2L) Cultural Studies	Chapter 27
Mar 26	Tutorial (Zoom)	

Mar 30	Critical Cultural Theory II (Lecture on D2L) Standpoint Theory Muted Group Theory	Chapter 32 Chapter 33
Apr 2	Statutory Holiday (No tutorial)	
Apr 6	No Lecture Independent review for Quiz 3.	None
Apr 9	Quiz 3 (D2L) Available Apr.9 (9:00am) – Apr.10 (9:00am)	
Apr 15	Final Essay Due	Submit essays by 11:59pm to D2L Dropbox.