

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 393 L01
Critical Perspective on Health & Science

Spring 2017
Monday May 15 – Monday June 26
(excluding May 22)
MW 9:00-11:45

Instructor: Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed
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Office Phone: n/a
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 13:00-14:00 (after class)

Course Description

Examines the construction and communication of health and science issues as a socio-cultural phenomenon and interrogates the ways in which health and science issues are communicated, defined, represented, and framed, particularly within contemporary media.

Additional Information

This course uses a team-based approach to learning in which students work together in teams to make sense of assigned readings. Teams are determined in the first class and retained through the semester. It is essential that students complete assigned readings before class, attend class regularly, and participate in class activities. Students will be held personally accountable for their preparedness and contributions to team work by way of a peer evaluation conducted at the end of term. Team grades will be adjusted to reflect peer evaluations.

Objectives of the Course

- To introduce students to key concepts and critical approaches in the social construction and communication of health and science issues.
- To equip students with the resources needed to critically interrogate the discursive construction and framing of health and science issues in contemporary media and communication (e.g., news, policy, science).
- To provide students with the opportunity to improve their critical thinking, textual analysis, scholarly research, and effective writing skills.
- To challenge students to think of science and health issues as made in society and culture (not just material realities) and to situate science and health issues socially and culturally.

Textbooks and Readings

All required readings will be posted to D2L as PDF files or permalinks. Students will be expected to bring a copy of assigned readings to class—as digital files or printouts.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to use laptops or tablets in class for sanctioned class-activities (note taking, research). Students are expected to refrain from checking email, social media sites, or playing games during class. Phones are to be muted for the duration of class—emergency calls are to be taken outside the classroom. Pictures of lecture materials or class activities is prohibited, unless explicit consent is given by the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due dates
P/F	Contract	May 24
P/F	Constitution	May 24
15%	In-Class Quizzes (team)	May 15-June 19
15%	In-Class Activities (team)	May 15-June 19
20%	In-Class Analyses (team)	June 5 & Jun 21
5%	Project—Issue (solo)	May 31
10%	Project—Bibliography (solo)	June 7
10%	Project—Proposal (solo)	June 14
25%	Project—Article (solo)	June 28

Contract (individual)

P/F

May 24

Students sign and submit the contract found at the end of the course outline. Signatures indicate that students understand and accept the terms set out in the syllabus.

Constitution (team)

P/F

May 24

Teams collaboratively develop a (1 page) constitution that articulates the fundamental principles held by the group, and the rights and responsibilities of team members. Each team member signs the constitution, to indicate they understand and accept its terms.

In-Class Quizzes (team)

15%

May 15-June 19

Working in teams, students write a brief in-class quiz at the beginning of most classes. The quiz includes a series of short questions that assess students' *remembering* and *understanding* of the assigned readings for that day. The goal of the quiz is to ensure students complete the assigned reading before class and come to class prepared to participate in class discussion and activities. Reading quizzes are 'closed book' assignments that take place in the first 15 minutes of class. They cannot be 'made up' at a later time. There will be 9 quizzes; only the top 8 quizzes count towards the final grade. Quiz grades are adjusted to reflect peer evaluations.

In-Class Activities (team)

15%

May 15-June 19

Working as teams, students complete short, structured in-class activities during most classes. Class activities will vary, but will always involve a set of instructions to follow, a task to complete, and a worksheet to complete that documents each team's work. Class activities are 'open book' assignments; they happen in-class and cannot be 'made up' at a later time. There will be 9 activities; only the top 8 count towards the final grade. Activity grades are adjusted to reflect peer evaluations.

In-Class Analyses (team)

20%

June 5 & June 21

At the end of each unit, teams complete a textual analysis in-class—as a review exercise. Teams are given a set of media texts (on a science/health issue) to analyze; they find noteworthy patterns in how the issue is framed; they consider how the patterns relate to assigned readings discussed to date; teams write up their findings in an exam booklet and present their findings to the class in an impromptu 3-5 minute presentation. These analyses are 'open book' assignments. They occur in-class and cannot be 'made up' at a later time. There will be 2 analyses, each worth 10%. Analyses grades are adjusted to reflect peer evaluations.

Project: Issue (solo)

5%

May 31

Students are assigned a broad topic for their solo project: the project investigates how a science or health issue is framed in contemporary media texts. Students narrow their assigned broad topic (e.g., mental illness) to focus on a specific issue (e.g., PTSD). They conduct a preliminary scan of contemporary media depictions of that specific issue (e.g., BuzzFeed articles on PTSD, or federal government websites on PTSD). Students report on 2 media sources that depict the issue differently: the short report identifies the 2 sources, summarizes how the issue is framed by each source, and compares/contrasts how the issue is framed by the 2 sources. A sample assignment will be posted to D2L.

Project: Bibliography (solo)

10%

June 7

Students find 4 scholarly, peer-reviewed research articles on how a science or health issue is framed in contemporary media. Students must stick to the issue they chose for the "Issue" assignment. Students create an annotated bibliography of these 4 articles. Each entry in the annotated bibliography should (1) cite the article using APA style, and (2) include an annotation 100-200 words long that summarizes the article's methods/results/conclusions, assesses the article's relevance to the solo project, and discusses the article's relationship to the other 3 articles annotated. A sample assignment will be posted to D2L.

Project: Proposal (solo)

10%

June 14

Students write a short research proposal that describes a project they will conduct. The project should consist of a *frame analysis of contemporary media depictions of a science or health issue*. Students must stick to the science/health issue they chose for the "Issue" and "Bibliography" assignments. The proposal should (1) introduce the issue, (2) review previous scholarly, peer-reviewed research on how this issue is framed in contemporary media (using material from the annotated bibliography), (3) identify a 'gap' in previous research, (4) propose to fill that 'gap' by

conducting a new frame analysis, (5) identify a specific research question the student will try to answer in their new frame analysis, (6) identify the sample of contemporary media texts they will be analyze, and (7) identify the method that will be used (i.e., frame analysis). The sample of contemporary media texts to be analyzed should be identified *specifically* and *attached* to the proposal. These texts should add up to ≥ 3000 words (giving students enough material to analyze). At least 3 relevant research articles should be cited & discussed in the review (#2, above). All sources should be cited using APA style. The proposal should be 200-350 words long, not including ‘attached’ texts + references list. A sample assignment will be posted to D2L.

Project: Article (solo)

25%

June 28

Students conduct the frame analysis they outlined in their proposal, making adjustments, as necessary, to accommodate feedback from the instructor (NOTE: if students majorly reconfigure their project, they need to check-in with the instructor to make sure the ‘new’ project is appropriate). Students determine how their chosen science/health issue is framed, identifying dominant frames and counter-frames, and discussing the implications of their findings. The point is not to decide whether contemporary media texts communicate the *material reality* of the issue accurately, but how media texts construct the *social/cultural reality* of the issue. Students write up their findings as a research article, using an Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion (IMRD) format. At least 4 relevant research articles should be cited & discussed in the literature review (in the Introduction); at least 1 relevant article should be cited & discussed in the Methods section. All sources should be cited using APA style. The article should be 1250-1500 words long, not including tables/figures + references list. A sample assignment will be posted to D2L.

Achievements

Students can unlock achievements through superior class-related conduct. Achievements do not earn grades; they earn an extension on the research article. To “cash in” achievements, students must hand-in proof of the achievement to the instructor *at the time of assignment submission*.

ACHIEVEMENT	your quest ...	your reward...
I DO DECLARE!	Complete the Syllabus Contract by May 24	Potion of Huzzah! x1
WE THE SHEEPLE!	Complete the Team Constitution by May 24	Potion of Huzzah! x1
PICTURE PERFECT!	Meet all formatting requirements on your bibliography or proposal.	Punctilious Headpiece x1
DOCUMENT THIS!	Meet all documentation requirements on your bibliography or proposal.	Gem of Allusion x1
SIZE MATTERS!	Meet all length requirements on your bibliography or proposal.	Really Big Stick x1
Punctilious Headpiece, Gem of Allusion, Really Big Stick	<i>Combine all three pieces—the stick, headpiece, and gem—to create one Staff of Extension. You can, conceivably, create two Staffs of Extension.</i>	
Potion of Huzzah!	<i>This potion grants you the power to activate one Staff of Extension. Without HUZZAH!, your Staff of Extension just won't work ...</i>	
Staff of Extension	<i>An ‘activated’ Staff of Extension grants you the power to hand in your <u>research article</u> one (1) day late without penalty—no questions asked.</i>	

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

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

Submission of Assignments: Hand in your essays directly to your instructor in class. 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. Do not submit assignments by email or via D2L.

Include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late, unless (1) proof of illness or family emergency is provided at the time of submission or (2) an activated Staff of Extension is provided at the time of submission.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Team Assignments = raw point scores. Solo Assignments = letter grades.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Letter Grade	CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations**
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** 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.

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 <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . 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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Lecture Topics and Readings

All readings will be posted to D2L. Make sure you can access readings as soon as possible. Most are also available through the University of Calgary Library website.

DATE	LECTURE & READINGS	ASSESSMENTS
May 15	<p>Health and Science as Social/Cultural Realities</p> <p>Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2009). Social construction of reality. In S. Littlejohn & K. Foss (eds.), <i>Encyclopedia of Communication Theory, Vol. 1.</i> (pp. 891-894). London: Sage.</p> <p>Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. <i>Journal of Communication, 43</i>(4), 51-58.</p>	quiz & activity 1
May 17	<p>SCIENCE UNIT: CLIMATE CHANGE</p> <p>Climate Change: Dominant Frames</p> <p>Nisbet, M. (2009) Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement, <i>Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, 51</i>(2), 12-23,</p> <p>Fleming, A., Vanclay, F., Hiller, C., & Wilson, S. (2014). Challenging dominant discourses of climate change. <i>Climatic Change, 127</i>, 407-418</p> <p>Project: Topic—topics assigned in class</p>	quiz & activity 2
May 22	NO CLASS	
May 24	<p>Climate Change: Apocalyptic Frames</p> <p>Foust, C. & Murphy, W. (2009). Revealing and reframing apocalyptic tragedy in global warming discourse. <i>Environmental Communication 3</i>(2), 151-167.</p> <p>Salvador, M. & Norton, T. (2011). The flood myth in the age of global climate change. <i>Environmental Communication 5</i>(1), 45-61.</p> <p>Project: Issue—a primer</p>	quiz & activity 3 syllabus contract team constitution
May 29	<p>Climate Change: Indigenous Frames</p> <p>Stoddart, M., & Smith, J. (2016). The endangered Arctic, the Arctic as resource frontier: Canadian news media narratives of climate change and the north. <i>Canadian Sociological Association, 53</i>(3), 316-336.</p> <p>Roosvall, A., & Tegelberg, M. (2013). Framing climate change and indigenous peoples: Intermediaries of urgency, spirituality and de-nationalization. <i>International Communication Gazette, 75</i>(4), 392-409.</p>	quiz & activity 4
May 31	<p>Climate Change: (In)Security Frames</p> <p>Fiskio, J. (2012). Apocalypse and ecotopia: Narratives in global climate change discourse. <i>Race, Gender & Class 19</i>(1), 12-36.</p> <p>Oels, A. (2015). Resisting the climate security discourse. In S. O’Lear & S. Dalby (eds.) <i>Reframing climate change: Constructing Ecological Geopolitics</i> (pp. 188-202). Routledge.</p> <p>Project: Bibliography—a primer</p>	quiz & activity 5 issue (5%)
June 5	SCIENCE UNIT REVIEW	analysis I (10%)

June 7	<p>HEALTH UNIT: OBESITY</p> <p>Obesity: Science vs. Society</p> <p>Rich, E. & Evans, J. (2005). "Fat ethics"—The obesity discourse and body politics. <i>Social Theory & Health</i> 3, 341-358.</p> <p>Bombak, A. E. (2014). The "obesity epidemic": Evolving science, unchanging etiology. <i>Sociology Compass</i>, 8(5), 509-524.</p> <p>Project: Proposal—a primer</p>	quiz & activity 6 bibliography (10%)
June 12	<p>Obesity: Moral Panics and Post-Modern Epidemics</p> <p>LeBesco, K. (2010). Fat panic and the new morality. In J.M. Metzl & A. Kirkland (eds.) <i>Against health: How health became the new morality</i> (pp. 72-82). New York: New York University Press.</p> <p>Boero, N. (2007). All the news that's fat to print: The America "obesity epidemic" and the media. <i>Qual Sociol</i> 30, 41-60.</p>	quiz & activity 7
June 14	<p>Obesity: Moral Anxieties about Gender and Class</p> <p>Maher, J., Fraser, S. & Wright, J. (2010). Framing the mother: Childhood obesity, material responsibility and care. <i>Journal of Gender Studies</i> 19(3), 233-247.</p> <p>Gerber, L. (2012). Fat christians and fit elites: Negotiating class and status in evangelical christian weight-loss culture. <i>American Quarterly</i>, 64(1), 61-84.</p> <p>Project: Article—a primer</p>	quiz & activity 8 proposal (10%)
June 19	<p>Obesity: Anxieties and Citizenship, Borders, Belonging</p> <p>Greenhalgh, S. & Carney, M. (2014). Bad biocitizens?: Latinos and the US 'obesity epidemic.' <i>Human Organization</i> 73 (3), 267-276.</p> <p>Elliott, C. D. (2007). Big persons, small voices: On governance, obesity, and the narrative of the failed citizen. <i>Journal of Canadian Studies</i>, 41(3), 134–149, 206.</p>	quiz & activity 9
June 21	HEALTH UNIT REVIEW	analysis II (10%)
June 26	<p>EVALUATIONS</p> <p>Project: Article—workshop</p>	peer evaluations
June 28	Assignment Drop-Off (no lecture)	article (25%)

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media, and Film
COMS 393 Spring 2017
Syllabus Contract

I _____ [FULL NAME—PRINTED] have read and understood the syllabus for this course.

- I understand that I'm responsible for completing assigned readings before class and showing up to class regularly, ready to participate in group activities.
- I understand that I need to complete all the assignments listed in the syllabus to pass the course.
- I understand that I need to complete all the assignments in ways that clearly display my intelligence, learning, and integrity to excel in this course.
- I understand that the listed assignment deadlines aren't just 'made up' for fun: they are deadlines, and if I miss a deadline (without proper documentation) I will lose marks on the assignment.
- I understand that this course includes team work and hinges, in part, on me collaborating with other students. I understand that I need to be civil, supportive, and actively engaged in group activities.
- I understand that my instructor is here to help and encourage me in my learning, but that I will need to do the tough work of actually learning to make headway in the course.

Name (printed): _____

Student ID: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____