

**Communications Studies (COMS) 401-L20**  
**Special Topics in Communications Studies – Convergence Culture**  
**Spring 2013**  
**Mondays & Wednesdays 15:00 – 17:45**

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**Location:** Room 351  
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**Office Hours:** Mondays 1:00pm – 2:30pm or by appointment

### **Course Description**

Technological advancements, particularly the digitization of voice, data and video content, have drastically changed the media landscape over the past two decades. Telecommunications, Internet and cable services, once separate entities, converge via integrated broadband networks, altering the way in which media is produced, distributed and consumed.

Through the examination of case studies in television, film, music and gaming, this course will uncover how convergence has resulted in transformative modes of media production, circulation and reception, manifesting in a fundamental paradigm shift in North American popular culture.

### **Objectives of the Course**

Through lectures, readings, class discussions, and course assignments, students will:

- Understand the implications of technological and economic convergence on the production, distribution and consumption of media
- Develop critical and analytical skills through the examination of a myriad of cultural texts
- Examine key theoretical positions about the relationship between technology, new media and society

### **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 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:**

Jenkins, H. (2008). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press. (Required)

Additional readings and resource materials will be provided in class or available via the University of Calgary Library website.

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.*

Quizzes (3 x 10%) **30%**  
Participation **10%**  
Final project/essay proposal **15%**  
Oral Presentation **15%**  
Peer Evaluation **5%**  
Final project **25%**

\*Please note detailed assignment guidelines and marking rubrics will be presented at the first lecture.

#### ***Quizzes (3 x 10%) – 30%***

Three (3) quizzes will be administered throughout the course (May 29, June 12 and June 24). Quizzes will test knowledge on readings and/or content presented in lectures. Quizzes must be taken in class and no opportunity for make-up quizzes will be given.

#### ***Participation 10%***

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

### ***Essay/Final Project Proposal 15%***

Students must submit a minimum of three paged, double-spaced proposal regarding their final project. Proposals will be returned the following week. Students are encouraged to submit a proposal for a non-traditional final project employing the themes and issues addressed in class (e.g. a short film, an infographic, a mock website). Should students choose to write an essay, the final paper should be between 10-12 pages in length. Once approved, the proposal will serve as the basis for your final project/essay. Please note group projects are allowable, with the maximum of three participants.

Proposals are due **IN CLASS June 3**. Proposals can be handed in at any time prior to this date.

### ***Oral Presentation 15%***

All students will be expected to give a five-minute presentation emulating a TED Talk. Presentations should address a single idea related to an issue presented in a lecture, screening or in a reading. Students will be marked on their ability to present idea(s) clearly, think critically, stimulate discussion and relate to the over-all course objectives. Students will also be marked on their ability to answer questions from the instructor and the class after their five minute presentation. A schedule of presentation times will be determined during the first lecture.

### ***Peer Evaluation 5%***

Students will evaluate a fellow student's oral presentation. Students will be marked on the level of *valuable* feedback and constructive criticism they can offer. Feedback should be at least 250 words to be submitted to me via email by 11:59 MST the day of the presentation. Students presenting will have the option to decline viewing the feedback from their peers. Students will be notified by email who they will be evaluating in an effort to maintain anonymity for honest feedback.

### ***Final Project/Essay 25%***

Due Date: **IN CLASS June 26, 2013**

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

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your 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: No**

## 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://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: <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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 the consequences thereof 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 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  
<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**

The schedule will be distributed during the first lecture.