Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 401.54 (L01): Special Topics in Communication and Media

Topic: Race, Representation, and Media

FALL 2020: September 8 to Dec. 9 (excluding Oct. 12ᵗʰ and Nov. 9-13)

Lecture: T, Th 9:30 to 10:45

Lectures will be asynchronous on Tuesdays;
Synchronous class activities on Thursdays.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:

This Fall 2020 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. S. Thrift (she/her pronouns)
Email:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	W 11:00-12:00, Th 11:00-12:00

Course Description
Critical study of contemporary topics or issues related to communications media, technology, culture, or discourse.

This course critically examines representations of race and racialized identities in Canadian and American media cultures. Students are introduced to critical race and intersectional feminist frameworks for analyzing representations, programming policy, and mediated practices generated within "post-racial" cultural contexts. The class also specifically considers the circulation of racialized discourses in digital culture(s), as well as anti-racist activism. Examples from political and popular cultures will be used to illustrate these issues and debates.

Additional Information
Please note that we will be studying some challenging material in this course that may involve coarse language, discussion of racist rhetoric and white supremacy, discriminatory practices, and depictions of racialized violence.

This course offers a combination of lecture, class discussion, and small group discussion.

Coming to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the material in a respectful, informed manner is essential to success in this course.

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.

This course contains both synchronous and asynchronous course components (detailed in the schedule of activities below). The class meets synchronously every Thursday throughout the term. Office hours will be held via Zoom; contact the instructor to make an appointment.

Objectives of the Course
The course objectives are to:
• identify media practices and discourses that shape perceptions;
• recognize power relationships, including the relative privilege or marginalization of social groups, including one's own;
• understand how notions of race have been defined and shaped in mediated forms;
• demonstrate this understanding through identification and analysis of contemporary and historical media examples, current events, and controversies.

Textbooks and Readings
A digital course pack has been prepared and will be made available on the COMS 401 L01 course website.

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 (ex. COMS 401 or RRM) 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 short, specific inquiries. If you have more detailed questions on the course material, assignments, or grades, please contact the instructor about arranging a Zoom appointment during her 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
20%	**Ongoing Conversations** During synchronous Zoom sessions, students will be provided discussions prompts related to that week's topic(s) for small group conversation. These ongoing conversations will take place in break-out rooms. Each student will complete a "conversation tracker" sheet, documenting the date of the conversation, the classmates spoken with, and some bullet-point notes about what they covered. **Each student is responsible for updating their conversation tracker every session, and for submitting their tracker to D2L Dropbox each week (due: Friday, 5pm).** Each documented conversation in the tracker is worth 2.5 points (to a max of 20 points).	Weekly, except for Oct. 22 & Nov. 26
25%	**Ignite Presentation** For this assignment, students will work in groups to create and deliver a 10-slide, 10 minute Ignite presentation that will be delivered during one of our synchronous Zoom sessions. The slides will advance every 1 minute, forcing speakers to make their point quickly. The presentation will explore an idea, theory or concept from the week's reading or lecture in relation to a media example, current event, or relevant historical example. The presentation must also include <u>two discussion questions</u> for the class. Groups will be formed during the second week of class. **NOTE:** Groups must receive topic approval by the <u>Monday</u> prior to their presentation date (5% of grade).	TBD
	Media Analysis Essay The main piece of writing for this course is an 8-10 page (2500 word) essay that analyzes a media artifact from a critical race/feminist perspective. "Media artifact" can refer to any of a wide variety of cultural objects, including videos, advertise-ments, film, a meme or hashtag, or even product packaging. The artifact can be activist media or otherwise "critical" of racial politics in its self-presentation, or not.	

Your task is to analyze the artifact drawing on the tools of critical media analysis and racial politics developed in this course. Your paper must explain and argue a thesis (that is, it must have a point to demonstrate). Ideally, your thesis will investigate the construction of racialized identity (-ies) or racial politics, as manifested by your chosen artifact. You must use at least two readings from the course and two external scholarly sources. The assignment will be completed in four steps:

5%	**Essay Brainstorm Session** Synchronous class time will be given for students to work in groups to develop their essay topic ideas in advance of the proposal submission. This interactive session requires that students come prepared with a rough draft of their essay proposal and be ready to discuss their ideas (ex. solicit feedback, answer and ask questions) with a small group of peers. Assessment: Students will submit their proposal rough draft to the Instructor via D2L Dropbox to evidence their preparation for the session (2.5 points). Students will also submit peer feedback about the group session (2.5 points).	Oct. 22
10%	**Proposal & Bibliography** Submit a 2-3 page essay proposal that describes your essay topic in concise, theoretically informed terms. In the proposal, you must present a clear research question, propose a preliminary thesis statement that answers the research question, and briefly describe how your chosen media example will illustrate or support your argument. You must also identify 3 main areas (or sub-arguments) to be addressed in the analysis. These should stem from ideas and concepts discussed in the assigned course readings. Your proposal must be accompanied by a bibliography of four, relevant academic sources – two of which are from the course. You will not receive credit for Wikipedia entries, popular and/or news stories (although you may include those, as they pertain to your project). The bibliography is not included in the page count for this assignment.	Nov. 5
10%	**Work-in-Progress Workshop** Synchronous class time will be provided for sharing and discussing a draft version of your final paper in peer groups. For this session, students should complete a full rough draft (intro, body, conclusion, bibliography) of their final essay and have it on hand to discuss. Submit one copy of the rough draft to the instructor via D2L Dropbox. The draft will be evaluated for its level of completeness and overall quality (more details to be provided in class). **NOTE:** Workshop attendance is important, as part of your grade is based on your attendance and participation.	Nov. 26

30%	**Final Essay Submission** The final essay is the culmination of your media analysis, stemming from the proposal, essay draft, and feedback received during the workshop form your peers. The final essay must be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced (Times New Roman font), and include a complete bibliography. Both the essay and the bibliography must be properly formatted using MLA or APA style guides (see "Plagiarism" section below for links to online citation style guides).	Dec. 8

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. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, point scores will be used for workshops, presentations, and ongoing conversations, while percentage grade will be used for the essay proposal and final essay.

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://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

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 (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.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

In the following schedule, synchronous meeting dates are **bolded** and indicated with an **(S).**

Date	Topic & Readings	Deadlines
Sept 8	Kandist Mallett. 2020. "The Black Lives Matter Revolution Can't be Co-Opted by Police and Lawmakers." *TeenVogue.* (July 15). Available: https://www.teenvogue.com/story/black-lives-matter-revolution-coopt	
Sept 10 (S)	**Course Introduction**	
Sept 15	**Motivated Representations** Stuart Hall. "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media." In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader,* edited by Gail Dines and Jean Humez, 89-93. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Raka Shome. 2000. "Outing Whiteness." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 3: 366-371.	
Sept 17 (S)	**Tips & Tricks for Zoom Presentations**	
Sept 22	**Trolls, Memes, and Dog Whistles** Whitney Phillips. 2015. "Race and the No-Spin Zone." In *This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture,* 95-115. Cambridge: MIT Press. Dawn Chmielewski. 2016. "Internet Memes Emerge as 2016 election's dog whistle." *USA Today.* Available: https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2016/09/30/internet-memes-white-house-election-president/91272490/	
Sept 24 (S)	**Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Sept 29	**Controlling Images** Patricia Hill Collins. 2004. "Get Your Freak On: Sex, Babies, and Images of Black Femininity." In *Black Sexual Politics,* 119-148. New York: Routledge. Roxane Gay. 2014. "The Politics of Respectability." In *Bad Feminist,* 257-260. New York: HarperCollins.	
Oct 1 (S)	**Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	

Oct 6	**Eating the Other** bell hooks. 2015[1992]. "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance." In *Black Looks: Race and Representation,* 21-40. New York: Routledge. Sesali B. 2015. "Flirting with Blackness." *Feministing.* Available: http://feministing.com/2015/07/17/flirting-with-blackness/	
Oct 8 (S)	**Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Oct 13	**Commodity Activism** Lamiyah Bahrainwala & Erin O'Connor. 2019. "Nike Unveils Muslim Women Athletes." *Feminist Media Studies* doi: 10.1080/14680777.2019.1620822 Sarah Banet-Weiser. 2018. "Nike, Colin Kaepernick, and the history of 'commodity activism'." *Vox* (Sep 7). Available: https://www.vox.com/first-person/2018/9/7/17831334/nike-colin-kaepernick-ad	
Oct 15 (S)	**Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Oct 20 **Oct 22 (S)**	**Citizenship Discourses** Yasmin Jiwani. 2006. "Mapping Race in the Media." In *Discourses of Denial: Mediations of Race, Gender, and Violence,* 30-64. Vancouver: UBC Press. **Essay Brainstorm Session**	Brainstorm Session: Draft Proposal due
Oct 27 **Oct 29 (S)**	**Protest Tactics** Yasmin Jiwani. 2011. "Pedagogies of Hope: Counter Narratives and Anti-Disciplinary Tactics." *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies* 33, no. 4: 333-353. Nimalan Yoganathan. 2020. "Black Lives Matter Movement Uses Creative Tactics to Confront Systemic Racism." *The Conversation Canada.* (July 30). **Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Nov 3 **Nov 5 (S)**	**Indigenous Media** Augie Fleras. 2011. "Unsilencing Aboriginal Voices: Toward an Indigenous Media Gaze." In *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada,* 215-228. Vancouver: UBC Press. Screening: TBA **Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	Final Proposals due
Nov 10-12	Reading Break	
Nov 17	**Visibility & Grievance** Tasha G. Oren. 2005. "Secret Asian Man: Angry Asians and the Politics of Cultural Visibility." *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture* (eds. Shilpa Dave, LeiLani Nishime, and Tasha G. Oren), 337-359. New York: NYU Press.	

Nov 19 (S)	Jenn Fang. 2018. "Yellowface, Whitewashing, and the History of White People Playing Asian Characters." *teenVogue* (Aug 8). Available: https://www.teenvogue.com/story/yellowface-whitewashing-history **Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Nov 24 **Nov 26 (S)**	**Digital Counterpublics** Marc Lamont Hill. 2018. "'Thank you, Black Twitter': State Violence, Digital Counterpublics, and Pedagogies of Resistance." *Urban Education* 53, no. 2: 286-302. **Work-in-Progress Workshop**	WiP Workshop: Draft Essay due
Dec 1 **Dec 3 (S)**	**Afrofuturism** Ytasha L. Womack. 2013. "The Evolution of a Space Cadet." In *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture,* 3-24. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books. **Ignite Presentation & Ongoing Conversation**	
Dec 8	Essay Submission	Essay due