



Department of Communication, Media and Film

**COMS 401 (L02): Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies**

**Energy Transition and Media and Communication (shortened to Comm. & Energy Transition)**

**Winter 2022: January 10 – April 12 (excluding February 20-26)**

**Lecture: MW 14:00 to 15:15**

The lectures and seminars will be taught synchronously on Monday and Wednesday each week. We may use Zoom for guest lectures. Zoom links will be available on D2L.

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY**

*Note: This course will be delivered in-person.* If you are unable to participate in-class owing to time differences or geographical location, please arrange to take this course in a future term.

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Brooks DeCillia
<b>Email:</b>	brooks.decillia@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wednesdays, 16:00 – 18:00 (via Zoom)

**Course Description**

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

This course explores the nexus of communication, media and energy transition. It examines relevant research and theory from communication, media and political science. Over the course of the semester, students will examine how language, images, narratives, media frames, and societal values and belief systems shape public understanding(s) of the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy (such as wind and solar power) as well as the practices involved in energy transition. This course scrutinizes how communication and media can influence public opinion about environmental policy. The class uses readings, examples, cases studies, films, audio, group discussions, presentations and lectures to explore the themes of this course.

**Additional Information**

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. The lectures and seminars will be taught synchronously on Monday and Wednesday each week. **We may use Zoom for guest lectures where the guest is not in Calgary. Zoom links will be available on D2L.**

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. Students are expected to participate in discussions about the course material.

## **Objectives of the Course**

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

- Engage and interpret texts in the field;
- Critically engage with political communication theory such as agenda-setting, priming, and framing in relation to energy transition;
- Understand how media and communication play a role in attitudes about energy transition and environmental policy;
- Explore theoretical and methodological approaches to studying the nexus of energy transition, media and communication;
- Critically engage with key debates in the field surrounding environment and communication;
- Develop critical and analytical skills that help interrogate texts, media and communication;
- Produce written and oral work appropriate for a 400-level course; and
- Collaborate effectively with peers.

## **Textbooks and Readings**

There is no textbook for this course. Required course readings are linked in the course schedule (below). The links to the readings are also available on the course D2L site.

## **Learning Technologies and Requirements**

In order to complete 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), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online courses only).

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 IT support services. See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

## **Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices**

Please keep the use of mobile phones to a minimum during class.

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only:

- for course-related purposes;

- if their use is not distracting others; and
- if their use does not negatively impact the learning environment.

No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor’s explicit permission.

Please familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Component	Due
10%	<b>1. Critical Reading Responses</b>  NB: Critical Reading Responses are to be completed on the weekly reading marked with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule. Submit before the start of Monday’s class, using D2l Dropbox.	Weekly
10%	<b>2. Podcast Critical Reflection Paper</b>	February 16
25%	<b>3. Midterm</b>	March 9
10%	<b>4. Final Project Proposal &amp; Annot. Bibliography</b>	March 14
15% (10% for presentation; 5% for peer evaluation)	<b>5. Final Project: In-class Presentation + Peer Evaluation</b>	March 14 – April 11 Peer evaluation – April 11
30%	<b>6. Final Project: Essay</b>	April 11

#### **1. Critical Reading Responses (500 words) → January 17 – March 7 (Submit to D2L Dropbox)**

Produce a weekly critical reading response to one of the weekly readings using the [Parrot and Cherry](#) (2011) template (below). Submit the critical reading responses before each Monday class, using D2L Dropbox.

Parrott, H. M., & Cherry, E. (2011). Using Structured Reading Groups to Facilitate Deep Learning. *Teaching Sociology*, 39(4), 354–370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X11418687>

The “\*” in the weekly schedule = the weekly reading for the critical reading response.

Late = zero. All reading responses are graded as a pass or fail. Pass = 100 per cent. Fail = 0 per cent. **Use APA citation style.**

## **PART ONE:**

**Key Points:** What are the three main points/observations arising from the readings? (Cite page numbers if available).

## **PART TWO:**

**DISCUSSION LEADER:** come up with three questions related to the readings for the group to stimulate the initial discussion.

**CREATIVE CONNECTOR:** go off on a tangent by drawing connections between the required readings and other sources, which might include recent events, other forms of media etc.

**PASSAGE MASTER:** select and transcribe one short passages/quotations from the readings that resonated with you and briefly explain why.

**DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:** act as the free-thinking contrarian in the group. Dare to test and challenge one to two assertions within the readings by taking an alternative position and defending it.

## **2. Podcast Critical Reflection Paper (500-800 words) → February 16 (Submit through D2L)**

Submit a 500–800-word paper about a podcast focused on energy transition.

Briefly outline the focus of the energy transition podcast. Devote the bulk of your reflection (approx. 600 words) to analyzing the podcast. What do you learn about energy transition and media communication from the podcast? How does the podcast connect, if at all, to a theory or theories taught in the course? **Use APA citation style.**

### **Podcasts:**

Volts podcast: Amy Westervelt on disinformation and propaganda

Nature Podcast special: onboard the climate train to COP26

Andreas Malm thinks through how to break the spell of climate change defeatism & fossil fascism

The Dangers Of Fossil Fascism

Drilled: Jay Rosen And Nicholas Johnson On What The Media Can Do About Disinformation

Drilled: Winning the War

ARC: Powering Canada's net zero future with wind, solar and energy storage

ARC: "Planet of the Humans" Exposes inconvenient truths on green energy

What on Earth: How Indigenous pipeline resistance keeps emissions in the ground

West of Centre: “Walking the walk”: A major oil CEO on emissions targets, COP26 and new ministers

### **3. Midterm (in class) → March 9**

An in-class, one-hour multiple choice and True/False midterm examination of 50 questions to test course knowledge from January 9 – March 7, 2021. This is a closed book exam.

### **4. Final Project: Proposal & Annotated Bibliography → March 16 (Submit to D2L Dropbox)**

For the final project, students will choose a research topic from the list provided (on D2L). Students will work in groups to create an in-class presentation on this topic as well as submit a final research essay (completed independently). The first step in this final project is to write a proposal that outlines the research project and presentation.

Proposal: Submit a two page (500-word), double-spaced proposal that describes the topic for your final research paper and group presentation plan. While you may collaborate on your presentation, the proposal must be completed individually (your sources, examples and argument will, of course, be akin to your group colleagues).

The proposal submissions must include the following:

- a critical question concerning energy transition and media and communication;
- a thesis statement; and,
- a rationale as to why you have chosen your critical question (ex. why is this area of research significant?)

Marks will be awarded for clarity of proposal and its relevance to the greater themes studied in the class.

Annotated Bibliography: Your research essay proposal will also include an annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography must include eight academic sources from a variety of resources (ex. books, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) **from outside the course syllabus**. Each academic source must include a brief annotation *in your own words* of three-to-five (3-5) sentences, as to its importance for your potential final essay research project. **Use APA citation style.**

NB: Non-scholarly sources (i.e., news stories) may be used, but only as an addition to the eight academic sources.

### **5. Final Project: In-Class Presentations and Peer Evaluation → March 23 – April 6 or 11 (assigned randomly by instructor)**

Presentation: In randomly assigned groups, present your research to the class. Each presentation will be allotted 20 minutes, with 10-15 minutes for Q&A and discussion (total time: 35 minutes).

(After presentation, one member of each group should forward the instructor the group's presentation materials.)

Peer Evaluation: Complete a peer evaluation of one of the other groups' in-class presentations. Peer evaluations must be uploaded to the D2L Dropbox by April 11.

## **6. Final Project: Individual Research Paper (2,000-word double spaced) → Apr 11 (Submit to D2L Dropbox)**

Write a 2,000-word research paper on the same topic as your group presentation. **You should write the paper on your own. Do not collaborate on the final paper.** Your research paper addresses the question you presented on in class and must include a clear, identifiable thesis and coherent, sustained argument. As with the group presentation, the research paper must also be positioned in relation to the relevant scholarly debates and address the “so what” question – that is, how does your research paper relate to current concerns or policy surrounding energy transition and media and communication?

Your essay will be evaluated, in part, on your critical thinking and application of theory to your example(s). **Use APA citation style.**

A comprehensive grading rubric for all assignments (except the Critical Reading Responses) is provided on D2L and will be reviewed on the first day of class.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

**Note:** You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams to receive a passing grade in this course.

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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 recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Weekly critical reading responses must be handed in before the start of each Monday class. Late = zero. All other assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% for each day late. Final research papers will not be accepted after April 15, 2022 (end of day).

### **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/](http://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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

### 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, all assignments will be assessed with percentages.

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%

<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	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](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

## Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws->



[lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html](http://lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html)). Students who use material protected by copy-right 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 deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

### Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

### Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

\* = the required reading required for the weekly critical reading response

Week	Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Due
1	January 10 January 12	Energy transition, the environment and climate change in communication and popular media	<a href="#">Communicating Climate Change: Theories and Perspectives</a> <a href="#">Communicating the Canadian Clean Energy Transition</a> <a href="#">Planet of the Humans</a>	
2	January 17 January 19	The historic and structural context of fossil fuels and energy transition	* <a href="#">The coming sustainable energy transition: History, strategies, and outlook</a> <a href="#">Global energy transition could be a \$61B</a>	Critical reading response – January 17

			<a href="#">opportunity for Alberta, new study finds</a>	
3	January 24  January 26	Energy transition as a discourse  Energy transition / climate change and disinformation / climate denial	<a href="#">Model and manage the changing geopolitics of energy</a>  * <a href="#">Climate Change Disinformation and How to Combat It</a>  <a href="#">Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern</a>	Critical reading response – January 24
4	January 31  February 2	Agenda-setting, framing, priming surrounding energy transition	* <a href="#">Explaining Media and Congressional Attention to Global Climate Change, 1969—2005: An Empirical Test of Agenda-Setting Theory</a>	Critical reading response – January 31
5	February 7  February 9	Guest lecture: U of Calgary Professor Melanee Thomas  Public opinion / communication and energy transition / climate change	* <a href="#">If it ain't broke, don't fix it: how the public's economic confidence in the fossil fuel industry reduces support for a clean energy transition</a>  <a href="#">Climate Change Communication. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication</a>	Critical reading response – February 7
6	February 14  February 16	Media / journalism and energy transition  Guest lecture: CBC News reporter Kyle Bakx	* <a href="#">Are the pens working for justice? News media coverage of renewable energy involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada</a>	Critical reading response – February 14  Podcast paper – February 16
7	READING BREAK February 20-26			
8	February 28 March 1	Communication and media research methods and energy transition	* <a href="#">Environmental Communication</a>	Critical reading response - February 28
9	March 7	Advocacy / resistance and social media communication and energy transition	* <a href="#">No Surrender. No Challenge. No Protest Paradigm: A Content Analysis of the Canadian News Media Coverage of</a>	Critical reading response – March 7

	March 9	Guest Lecture: U of Ottawa Professor Patrick McCurdy	<a href="#">the “Yellow Vest Movement” and the “United We Roll Convoy</a>	Midterm - March 9
10	March 14  March 16	Alberta and energy transition communication  Guest Lecture: MRU Professor Brad Clark	<a href="#">Alberta’s Energy War Room Reveals its True Colours as a Propaganda Mill</a>  <a href="#">72 facts about oil and gas: A summary research brief</a>	Final essay + presentation plan / annotated bibliography – March 14
11	March 21  March 23	What have we learned? What do we still need to learn?  Presentations	  Groups 1 and 2	
12	March 28 March 30	Presentations	Groups 3 and 4 Groups 5 and 6	
13	April 4 April 6	Presentations	Group 7 and 8	
14	April 11	TBA / Possible Guest Lecture		Final paper + presentation materials – April 11  Peer evaluations for presentation – April 11

Detailed reading list available on D2L.