

Communications Studies (COMS 435 L21)

MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND CANADIAN SOCIETY

Spring 2011

Saturday: 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Class dates: May 7, 14, 21, 28

June 4, 11, 18

Instructor: Catherine Ford
Office Location: n/a
Office Phone: n/a
E-Mail: cford@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: n/a
Office Hours: **By appointment**

Additional Information

Contact instructor with questions by e-mail. Confirmation of assignments and/or readings will be sent out by group e-mail each week. Changes to the course outline will also be made by e-mail. NB: While the order of the classes and assignments may change, the content will not.

FINAL EXAM: Date and time to be determined by the registrar between June 27 to 29.

Course Description

The course will offer a broad introduction to English-language mass media, both new and old, and will examine the roles they play in Canadian society and how they affect Canadian values. Some of the theoretical research will be included, but the emphasis will be on understanding what exposure to the media does to society, communities and the individual. Media are carriers of social and cultural values and influence public opinion. Class discussion will include

ownership, content, bias (real or perceived), audiences and whether the media

Objectives of the Course

Students should become aware of the different forms of media and how competing views of Canadian society shape our communities. The course should develop an understanding of the relationship between different forms of communication and the audiences they serve and how essential it is to a democratic society to encourage a thriving media climate of differing opinions and attitudes.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops may be used in class but other electronic devices must be turned off during class.

Textbooks and Readings:

Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication edited by Leslie Regan Shade (Third Edition, 2009; Thomson Nelson)

Selected readings for COMS 435 L29 bound by U of C bookstore.

Assignments and Evaluation

A term paper (the terms of which will be outlined during the first class) will be due June 4 and will account for 40 percent of the final mark.

Two multiple-choice quizzes will each be worth 10 percent of the final mark and will be held May 21 and June 4.

The final exam will be two hours long scheduled by the registrar between June 27 and 29, and will account for 40 percent of the final mark. NB: You must show your student ID to be admitted to the final exam.

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

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or 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: YES

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	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.

Grading System

In this class, students will receive a letter grade for the term paper and the final mark. The two quizzes (each 15 multiple choice questions) will be graded initially on a raw score and subsequently converted into percentages for the purpose of the final letter grade.

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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) 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.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

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/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

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Class 1: May 7

TOPICS:

Introductions and expectations

Objectives and term work

Discussion of readings:

The Making of the Canadian Media by Paul Rutherford (pages 1 – 20)

Discussion of Chapters 1 and 2 of textbook

Questions 1 through 5 at end of Chapter 1

Questions 1 through 4 at end of Chapter 2

Guest: Dr. David Taras, Mount Royal University

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read Chapter 3: Beyond the F-Word and answer questions 1, 4 and 5 at end of chapter

Read Chapter 4: Canadian Cultural Policy in the Age of Media Abundance and answer questions 2 to 4 at end of chapter

Part II of textbook: Audiences and the Cultural Marketplace in Canada's Mediascape

Read Chapter 5 Audience-Making: Issues in Canadian Audience Studies and answer questions 3 and 5.

Read Chapter 6 Advertising in Canada and answer questions 1 through 5.

Class 2: May 14

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TOPICS: Audiences, markets, public relations and advertising

What is an audience and how is it targeted?

What about children/minorities/gender?

How are markets defined?

Guest: Justin Robinson, Manager Communications, Osum Oil Sands Corp.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read Calgary Herald and Calgary Sun, compare and contrast

Read National Post and Globe and Mail, compare and contrast

Read Part III of textbook: Media Ownership and Public Dialogue in Canada's Mediascape

Chapter 12 The Culture of Democracy: How Ownership and Public Participation Shapes Canada's Media Systems and answer questions 2, 3 and

Readings: Media Lullabies by Bill Hilf pages 77 to 90

CLASS 3: May 21

First multiple-choice quiz

TOPICS: Newspapers

Old media vs. new media

Does print have a future?

Guest: Doug Firby former editorial page editor, Calgary Herald

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read Chapter 7 Surviving the Slings and Arrows of Canadian Television: A Case Study of Success.

Read Chapter 8 Making a Mockery of Canadian Cinema: Interpreting the Rise of Mock-Documentary

Chapter 13 Minding the Growing Gaps: Alternative Media in Canada and answer questions 2, 3, 4 and 6

Chapter 14 Canadian First People's Mediascapes: A Snapshot with Three Corners and answer question 1

Chapter 15 The National-Global Nexus of Ethnic and Diasporic Media and answer questions 1 and 2

Chapter 16 Race(ing) The Nation: Media and Minorities and answer questions 1, 2 and 4

Class 4: May 28

TOPICS: Television as communication.

Does television actually reflect our society?

Does appearance triumph over brains?

Is it possible to tackle the tough questions on television? If not, why not. If yes, how?

What are the stereotypes confirmed by television and do other media reinforce or seek to shatter the stereotypes?

Radio and television in Canada: Private vs. public. Is there bias in reporting among different outlets?

Guest: Doug Dirks, CBC-TV sports reporter and former news anchor

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ASSIGNMENTS:

Textbook Chapter 9 Selling Youth: Youth Media and the Marketplace and answer questions 2 and 5

Readings: Good Kids/Bad Kids: What's a Culture to do? Pages 59 to 76

Readings: Youth Violence, Moral Panic, and the Canadian Media pages 77 to 95

Chapter 10 Gold For Whom? Canadian Sports, Mega-Events and the 2010 Olympics and answer question 1

Chapter 11 Blue Froot Loops, Giggling Dough-Boys and The Smell of Beer: Why The Senses Matter

Readings: Sipping Starbucks: (Re)Considering Communicative Media pages 44-

58

Class 5: JUNE 4

TERM PAPER DUE TODAY

Second multiple-choice quiz

Film: Media and society: Cultural Sovereignty/ Shaping information

TOPICS: How is information/communication slanted and/or biased to different outlets and audiences?

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read Part IV of textbook: The Canadian New Media Mediascape

Chapter 17 Smoke and Mirrors: Climate Change and the Janus Face of Public Relations

Chapter 18 What Is 'New Media' Anyway and answer question 4

Chapter 19 Internet Governance: What a Long and Not So Strange Trip It's Been

Chapter 20 Privacy in a Networked Environment and answer questions 2, 4 and 5

Chapter 21 Balance or Betrayal: Copyright Reform and the Right to Culture in the Digital Age

Readings: Media Law for Canadian Journalists by Dean Jobb pages 21 to 42

Finish term papers

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Class 6: June 11

TOPICS: Alternate media

Film: Thought Control In a Democratic Society

Law and the media

Culture of punishment

Do media outlets tell the truth?

Can you say/write whatever you please?

Privacy in an Internet age

ASSIGNMENTS

Textbook Chapter 21 Balance or Betrayal: Copyright Reform and The Right to Culture in The Digital Age and answer question 1

Chapter 22 Mobile and Mobilities and answer questions 1 through 5

Class 7: June 18

TOPICS:

Media and communications

How well do we understand “communication?”

How do you think you are perceived in our society?

What message do you communicate to friends/family/co-workers/employers?

ASSIGNMENTS:

Review Need To Know Questions for final exam