

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 435 (L01): Communication and Canadian Society

Winter 2021: Jan 4, 2021- Jan 8, 2021

See Schedule of Lectures Topics and Readings for synchronous Zoom sessions

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR WINTER 2021:

This Winter 2021 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. Gregory Taylor |
| Email: | gregory.taylor2@ucalgary.ca |
| Web Page: | D2L (access via MyUofC portal) |
| Office Hours: | Available for email (or video) consultations Tuesday 12:30 – 2:30 pm. Please email to set appointment. |

Course Description

This course introduces students to literature on various aspects of the Canadian media, including public policy questions such as the concentration of media ownership, Canadian content requirements, censorship, the role of the media during elections, and the problems and opportunities that might be brought by advances in technology. The course draws upon historical and contemporary examples to explore the unique relationship between Canadian citizens and the mass media

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

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

- Explore a range of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of mass communications and Canadian society.
- Develop critical and analytical skills through the interrogation of texts, media, policies, organizations, corporations, and events.
- Examine the social, political, and economic impacts of contemporary Canadian mass communications upon Canadian populations.
- Reassess common perceptions of the role of mass communications in Canadian society.

Textbooks and Readings

David Taras. *Digital Mosaic: Media, Power, and Identity in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 2015 (Required)

Students are expected to have all readings completed prior to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities.

Additional required readings to be posted or linked on D2L.

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.

Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Assessed Components | Due |
|------------------|--|---|
| 3 X 10 = 30 % | <p>Quiz (Numeric grade)</p> <p>Three online quizzes available via D2L. All quizzes will be available for 24 hours (as per U of Calgary policy) beginning at 3 pm of the dates listed. All quizzes are scheduled for one hour (60 minutes) plus 30 minutes for technical issues. The quiz is closed book and based upon the readings and lectures up to that day or since the previous quiz. Students are not to be in contact with each other regarding the quiz. All quizzes will be multiple choice. Class time will be given for these quizzes and it expected that students use this time, so they are completed with time to prepare for the next day's class.</p> | <p>Jan 5 Jan 6 Jan 7</p> |
| 20 % | <p>Final exam (Numeric grade)</p> <p>As with the quizzes, this exam will be available on D2L for 24 hours starting at 3 pm on Friday, January 8. The final exam is open book and will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. Students should not be on contact with each other regarding the quiz. The time is scheduled for 90 minutes plus 45 minutes in case of technical issues.</p> | <p>Jan 8</p> |
| 15 % | <p>Group presentations (Letter grade)</p> <p>In 2018, the government of Canada announced that it will be reviewing both the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act. This is the legislation that determines how Canadian mass media will be structured – it sets the rules. Students will work in groups of 5 to prepare a 10-15-minute presentation on one or two elements of either Act that either must change or must be preserved in your view. Further details on this assignment will be provided in class.</p> <p>These presentations will be recorded and uploaded to D2L. They will be evaluated by the course professor as well as a selection of your class peers.</p> | <p>Jan 7 by 8:00 PM</p> |
| 5% | <p>Peer Evaluation (numeric grade)</p> <p>All students are required to write an evaluation of two of the class presentations posted to D2L. These will be assigned to ensure all presentations undergo peer evaluation. Marks will be awarded for evidence of close listening, identification of strengths and quality of suggestions for improvement. Evaluators will remain anonymous to groups.</p> | <p>Jan 11 by 11 am</p> |

| | | |
|------|--|--------|
| 30 % | <p>Final Paper (Letter grade)</p> <p>Students will submit a 2000 word (5-6 pages) research essay, excluding bibliography. The final essay must be printed in a double-spaced format (12 font), paginated, and with your name, course & professor, a title and a properly cited bibliography. Essays must have a clear thesis statement to be argued throughout the body of the text. Essays must demonstrate strong research in support of the thesis.</p> <p>Students will ask one critical question about the relationship between mass communications and Canadian society. As such, each essay must include a critical analysis of a particular development in media and its impact, or potential impact, on Canadian society. The essay should build upon a theme identified in class discussion or in one or more of the articles/works under examination throughout the course. Your point must be unified throughout and introduced by a clear thesis statement in the first paragraph.</p> <p>Students may strengthen and develop their original argument by drawing upon their own experiences, however, the main focus of the paper must demonstrate clear applications of the resources cited. Sources outside the six (6) scholarly works required may be used to support your thesis but must be from a credible source (if uncertain, ask Dr. Taylor).</p> <p>All references must be properly and fully cited in a consistent format (APA or Chicago preferred).</p> | Jan 15 |
|------|--|--------|

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.

| 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://success.ucalgary.ca/home.htm>

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

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Monday, January 4</p> <p>Required: Taras. Chapters 1, 2</p> | <p>9:00 am – 10:30 pm (synchronous)</p> <p>Media and citizenship</p> <p>10:30 (break)</p> <p>10:45 – 12:00 Digital shock (synchronous)</p> | <p>1 pm – 5:00 pm (synchronous) Policy foundations</p> <p>2:30 (break)</p> <p>2:45 – 4:00 Telecommunications</p> <p>4:00 Assignment of groups for presentations.</p> |
| <p>Tuesday January 5</p> <p>Knowlton Nash, The Microphone Wars, Chapter 3: “The Dream of National Public Radio” (65-89) Available via D2L</p> <p>The Aird Report, 1929. Available via D2L (not required to read all appendices; don’t worry – the report is 13 pages)</p> <p>Taras: Chapter 7. The Ever-Shrinking World of Public Broadcasting</p> | <p>9:00 – 10: 30 Early Canadian broadcasting (synchronous)</p> <p>10:30 (break)</p> <p>10:45 – 12:00</p> <p>Asynchronous recorded lecture: the Canadian Radio League</p> | <p>1:00 – 2:00</p> <p>The challenges of public broadcasting (synchronous)</p> <p>2:00 – 3:00 pm Time for group work on presentations. No break scheduled.</p> <p>3:00 pm Quiz #1</p> |
| <p>Wednesday, January 6</p> <p>Ownership and Private Broadcasting</p> <p>Taras: Chapter 3, The Ownership Juggernaut</p> <p>Hunter, Lawson A. W. and Englehart, Kenneth and Miller, Peter, Strengthening Canadian Television Content: Creation, Discovery and Export in a Digital World (December 19, 2017). C.D. Howe Institute Commentary Available via D2L</p> <p>Canadian Media Concentration Research Project. Growth and Upheaval in the Network Media</p> | <p>9:00 – 10:30 asynchronous recorded lecture Vertical and horizontal ownership</p> <p>10:45 – 12:00</p> <p>Synchronous lecture: The CMCR report</p> | <p>1:00 – 2:30</p> <p>Synchronous lecture: the Canadian television industry.</p> <p>3:00 pm Quiz #2</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Economy in Canada, 1984-2019 (0-32) Available via D2L or online</p> | | |
| <p>Thursday January 7</p> <p>Beyond the Anglosphere</p> <p>Roth, Lorna. (2000). Bypassing of Borders and Building of Bridges: Steps in the Construction of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in Canada. <i>International Communication Gazette</i>. Vol. 62, Issue 3-4, pp. 251 – 269 (available via library)</p> <p>Dallas Smythe. On the Audience Commodity and Its Work. From <i>Dependency Road</i> (230-256). Available via D2L</p> | <p>9:00 – 10:30 am Asynchronous lecture: Third language broadcasting</p> <p>Break</p> <p>10:45 – 12:00</p> <p>Quebec media and APTN</p> | <p>1:00 – 2:00 Synchronous lecture: Smythe and the audience commodity.</p> <p>2:00 – 3:00 Time for presentation preparation and study for quiz.</p> <p>3:00 pm Quiz #3</p> <p>***presentation videos due by 8 pm.</p> |
| <p>Friday January 8</p> <p>Censorship and New(ish) Media</p> <p>Davis, Charles, and Emilia Zboralska. "Transnational over-the-top media distribution as a business and policy disruptor: The case of Netflix in Canada." <i>The Journal of Media Innovations</i> 4.1 (2017): 4-25. Available online</p> <p>Taras. Chapter 9</p> | <p>9:00 – 10:30 Asynchronous lecture: Censorship</p> <p>11:00 – 12:00</p> <p>Synchronous lecture/discussion Is Taras right?</p> | <p>1:00 – 2:30 Synchronous lecture: Does Netflix Change Everything?</p> <p>3:00 pm Final Exam</p> |