

Communications Studies (COMS) 471 L01
Audience & Reception
Winter 2014
Fridays 12pm-245pm

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Course Description

This course approaches the communications process from the point of view of the audience. Students will be introduced to the history of media research dealing with the public and the audience, and consider the changes in theoretical and research paradigms from administrative approaches to those paradigms centred on fan practices and subcultures. Topics may include public opinion, uses and gratifications, reception theory, constructivism, shopping, consumption and subjectivity, fan cultures, experiential marketing, and culture jamming.

Additional Information

Some assignments in this course may require research involving human subjects. Students should be aware of information contained in the notes on “Ethics” below. Some course content may contain material that is sexually explicit, violent or otherwise offensive. If you have concerns about this please make them known to the instructor in advance. Lecture notes will not be made available for electronic distribution: it is the student’s responsibility to make notes on lecture material during the lecture. Use of recording technologies in class is prohibited.

Objectives of the Course

Students should through this course be able to understand the rationales for qualitative and quantitative research focused on media audiences, become familiar with historical changes in the role and practice of audiences and an awareness of changes in how the audience’s role has been understood in Communications Studies, as well as the ability to conceptualize an audience-focused research project.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Unless used for reasons of accessibility, electronic devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc) are not permitted.

Textbooks and Readings:

Brooker, W., & Jermyn, D. (Eds.). (2002). *The Audience Studies Reader* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Additional readings may be included for specific topics, however, these will be available through electronic means, either through open-source documents or library resources. A detailed reading list will be posted to blackboard 2 weeks prior to class commencement.

Assignments and Evaluation

Ongoing: Weekly Responses – 20%

January 31: Proposal Due – 5%

February 28: Midterm – 20%

March 7: Group Presentations – 10%

April 4: Papers due – 25%

Registrar Set: Final Exam – 20%

Weekly Responses: 20%

Students will produce weekly responses that will demonstrate both an understanding of the week's reading and a reflection on their own position as a member of an audience or an agent of reception. Responses will be due each week, submitted via blackboard. Two instructor chosen responses will be graded on February 28th and April 4th. Students must have a "complete" set of responses in order to receive a grade.

Group Presentation: 10%

Students will work in groups to produce a presentation that compares two theories from the class through an analysis of a specific media event or text. For example, students may provide a critical reading of a YouTube video, and conversely, a uses and gratifications approach to the same video. Students will also "test" these theoretical approaches through a form of audience research – asking friends to watch the video and respond, for example.

Research Paper: 25%

Students will generate their own topic of research and write a 2500 word paper. The paper will draw upon theories of audience and reception from the course, but will demand further focused individual research. Students are strongly encouraged to choose a topic related to audiences of "new media," and may wish to conduct some sort of primary audience research, interviews, surveys, or field-observation.

NOTE: Topics presented on in the Group Presentation CANNOT be replicated in the individual paper.

Research Proposal: 5%

Students will generate a research proposal of 300 words that will outline their research topic, potential direction of research, and preliminary thesis. The proposal will also include an annotated bibliography of 5 sources that the student intends to use for the research paper.

Mid-Term and Final Exam: 20% each Selection of long and short answer questions that will be generated from the course materials.

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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://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 (3rd 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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

Will be posted on blackboard two weeks prior to the start of course.