

University of Calgary  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**

COMS 502 (L01): Political Economy of Communication

**WINTER 2020: January 13 to April 6 (excluding February 17)**

**Lectures: Mondays 11:00 to 1:45**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Richard Hawkins
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 to 11:30 or by appointment.

### **Course Description**

The political economy of communications looks at how humans communicate through the lens of how economic and political power over the media of communication is obtained, organized and applied. The seminar will explore the ideas of a select group of scholars, several of them Canadian, who made seminal contributions to defining this field of study and in setting out its fundamental perspectives and theories.

The course will be conducted as a seminar in which individual students prepare, present, discuss and debate ideas and positions based upon in-depth readings of selected texts. The seminar method relies on division of labor, whereby exploration of a significant body of literature is shared among participants.

### **Additional Information**

**NOTE: As from 16 March 2020, all Lectures and Tutorials will be delivered online via D2L and Zoom. Office hour appointments will also be scheduled on Zoom for the remainder of the Term. All assignments are due on the dates originally specified and should be uploaded to the designated dropbox in D2L.**

### **Objectives of the Course**

The objectives of the course are:

- to familiarize students with significant ideas, approaches and methods that have had decisive influences on the study of communication phenomena from a political economy perspective;
- to provide students with a theoretical and methodological grounding in concepts that are essential for understanding the logic, development, and practices of the communication industries;
- to encourage the development of critical reading, analytical and debating skills.

## **Textbooks and Readings**

All readings will be available electronically on D2L.

### ***The roots of communication studies in classical political economy***

Fleischacker, Samuel (2009) On Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations": A Philosophical Companion, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Part III: Foundations of Economics

Ruskin, J. (1921/1862) Unto this Last, London & Toronto: Dent. Essay I: "The Roots of Honour"

Giddens, A. (1971) Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Part One: Marx

Veblen, T. (1994/1899) The Theory of the Leisure Class, New York: Dover. Chapter 3 "Conspicuous Leisure" and Chapter 4 "Conspicuous Consumption"

Veblen, T. (1921) The Engineers and the Price System, New York: Huebsch. Chapter 3 "The Captains of Finance and the Engineers"

### ***Persuasion, propaganda and mass culture***

Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer (1973) Abridged in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott (1977) (eds.) Mass Communication and Society, London: Edward Arnold.

Bernays, E.L. (1928), Manipulating public opinion: the why and the how, American Journal of Sociology, 33 (6), 958-71.

Smythe, D. (1981) The Audience Commodity and its Work, in D. Smythe (1981) Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness and Canada, Norwood NJ: Ablex.

Leiss, W. (2014) (1975) The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. Parts One and Two. (two reviewers)

### ***The communication infrastructure, economic power and dependency***

Innis, H.A. (1944), On the economic significance of culture, Journal of Economic History, 4, (Issue supplement: The Tasks of Economic History), 80-97.

Smythe, D. W . (1957). The structure and policy of electronic communication, Urbana: University of Illinois Press. (two reviewers)

McLuhan, M. (1960) Effects of the Improvements of Communication Media, The Journal of Economic History, 20 (4), 566-575.

### ***The post industrialists***

Hayak, F. A. (1945) The Use of Knowledge in Society, The American Economic Review, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 519-530.

Machlup, F. (1962) The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the US Economy, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. Chapters 1 and 2

Drucker, P. (1993) *Post-Capitalist Society*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. pp 1-42 (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Duff, A. S. (1998) Daniel Bell's theory of the information society, *Journal of Information Science*, 24 (6), 373–393.

### ***The regulators***

Melody, W. H. (1987) Information: An emerging dimension of institutional analysis, *Journal of Economic Issues*, 21 (3), 1313-1339.

Trebing, H. J. (1969) Government Regulation and Modern Capitalism, *Journal of Economic Issues*, 3 (1), 87-109

Gabel, R. (1969) The Early Competitive Era in Telephone Communication, 1893-1920, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 34 (2), Communications: Part 1, 340-359.

Babe, R. E. (1990) *Telecommunication in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapter 1, *Mythologies of Canadian Telecommunications*.

### ***The media industry perspective***

Schiller, H. (1991) *Culture, Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression*, Oxford: OUP. Chapter 7 Thinking About Media Power. Who Holds It? A Changing View.

Murdock, G. (1982), Large corporations and the control of the communications industries, in M. Gurevitch et al. (1982) *Culture Society and the Media*, New York: Methuen.

Mosco, V. (1983) Critical research and the role of labor, *Journal of Communication*, 33 (3), 237-248.

Mosco, V. and A. Herman (1981) Critical Theory and Electronic Media, *Theory and Society*, 10 (6), 869-896.

Wasko, J. (1982) *Movies and Money: Financing the American Film Industry*, Norwood NJ: Ablex. Chapters 1 and 2

### ***The production of culture perspective***

Williams, R. (2005/1974) *Television*, London: Routledge. (two reviewers)

Garnham, N. (2001) Reaching for my revolver: Problems with the concept of culture, *European Review*, 9 (4), 413–420.

Schiller, H. (1991) *Culture, Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression*, Oxford: OUP. Chapter 2 The Corporation and the production of culture.

### ***Political economy and the new media***

Mansell, R. (2010) New visions, old practices: Policy and regulation in the Internet era, *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 25 (1), 19–32.

Garnham, N. (2011) The Political Economy of Communication Revisited, in J. Wasko et al.; (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communications*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 41-61.

Gordon, R. J. (2000) Does the 'new economy' measure up to the great inventions of the past?, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14 (4), 49-74.

Castells, M. (2007) Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society, International Journal of Communication 1, 238-266.

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

Except for purposes of direct relevance to the conduct of the seminar – e.g. note taking and reference to course materials, assignments and readings – the use of electronic devices in class is not permitted. Upon prior notification, exceptions may be granted in the case of expected important or emergency communications. No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor’s permission.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

<b>Weight</b>	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Due</b>
30%	Panel expositions and discussions (2 @ 15% each)	As scheduled
10%	Term paper abstract (2-3 pages including bibliography)	Mar. 16
30%	Critical journals (2 @ 15% each) (each 5-6 pages)	Feb.3 and Mar. 2
30%	Term paper (10-12 pages excluding bibliography)	April 6

**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.

### ***Panel expositions and discussions:***

In the first half of each session, each student in the panel for that day will give a 10-15 minute critical exposition of one of the 4-5 readings assigned for that day.

Each exposition should be structured around “five key ideas” which the student must extract from the reading. These will be documented on a single page to be handed in to the instructor before the seminar commences. The one-pager will not be marked separately, but a grade for the assignment will not be awarded if the document is not submitted. The student will be expected to explain and comment critically on each of these five ideas. The second half of the seminar will involve the panel in a discussion/debate in which the ideas they presented in their expositions are explored with respect to a set of questions or issues as provided by the instructor.

The assignment will be assessed on the basis of the relevance, coherence and clarity of the five key ideas extracted from the paper and the ability of the student to incorporate these ideas into debate and to respond to questions from the instructor.

### **Each student in a panel will receive a separate grade.**

Where excused for legitimate reasons, students unable to present scheduled panel discussions will be afforded one of two “make up” options: (1) present as part of a subsequent panel or (2) engage in a scheduled discussion with the instructor.

**Term Paper abstract:**

- 10% of final grade
- Due March 16

Abstracts must state the topic and approach and include an indicative bibliography.

**Critical journals:**

- 30% of final grade
- two submissions per student (15% each)
- Journal One due Feb 3
- Journal Two due March 2

Each student will prepare two critical journals based upon a selection of their own choice from the assigned readings. The student must select 3 readings for each journal (excluding the readings worked up for the seminar presentations). In ca 1.5- 2 pages per reading, similarly to the seminar expositions, students will outline key concepts and issues that arise from the papers. Journals should comment critically on the readings – discussing possible origins, strengths and weaknesses, agreements and disagreements, consequences and so forth. Journals will be assessed on the strength of this commentary.

**Term Paper:**

- Due April 6 **uploaded to D2L dropbox**

Term papers provide the student with the opportunity to apply some of the ideas about the political economy of communication that were explored in the seminars to specific topics and issues of their own choosing. Papers should demonstrate how the concepts and approaches taken by political economists could be used to interpret, analyze and contribute to solutions regarding a significant problem in the contemporary communications milieu as chosen by the student. Students may elect to investigate these issues from an overall political economy perspective, or from the perspective of an individual scholar or school of thought.

**IMPORTANT:** The seminar method requires active participation by all students in all sessions throughout the Term. This is not an option. A check-in sheet will be distributed each week. Except for legitimate reasons – illness, emergencies or special circumstances of which the instructor is notified – participants who are absent for more than three sessions will lose 10% of their final grade.

**Submission of Assignments**

Assignments are due on or before the date specified. Late submission is discouraged. Deferments will be granted only in the case of legitimate illness or emergency.

**Assignments due after March 15 should be uploaded to the designated dropbox in D2L.**

Please hand in your term papers directly to your instructor. If this is not possible, 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. The

Final take home exam is to be delivered to a D2L Drop Box. Details will be provided as required.

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. 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.

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

### **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/](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. 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, final grades are reported as letter grades. Each assignment will be marked in percentage (out of 100). Each assignment will be weighted according to its allocated percentage of the final grade.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding performance	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent performance	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>	Approaching excellent performance	<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>	Exceeding good performance	<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good performance	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>	Approaching good performance	<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory performance	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	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, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](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](http://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](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca) or by calling 403-220.5555.

## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Mo Jan 13	Course Introduction and organization	N/A
2	Mo Jan 20	The roots of communication studies in classical political economy	Fleischacker, Ruskin, Giddens, Veblen (1), Veblen (2)
3	Mo Jan 27	Persuasion, propaganda and mass culture	Adorno & Horkheimer, Bernays, Smythe, Leiss
4	Mo Feb 3	The communication infrastructure, economic power and dependency <b>Journal One due (Weeks 2-5)</b>	Innis (1), Innis (2) Smythe, McLuhan
5	Mo Feb 10	The post industrialists	Hayak, Machlup, Drucker, Duff, Lamberton
6	Mo Feb 16 -22	<b>Reading week</b>	
7	Mo Feb 24	Mid Term Review	
8	Mo Mar 2	The regulators <b>Journal Two (Weeks 7-12) due</b>	Melody (1), Melody (2) Trebing, Gabel, Babe
9	Mo Mar 9	The media industry perspective	Schiller (1), Murdock, Mosco (1), Mosco (2), Wasko
10	Mo Mar 16	Term paper check-up (scheduled group appointments) <b>Abstract due</b>	
11	Mo Mar 23	The production of culture perspective	Williams, Garnham (1), Garnham (2), Schiller (2)
12	Mo Mar 30	Political economy and the new media	Mansell (1), Mansell (2), Garnham (3), Gordon, Castells
13	Mo Ap 6	Wrap up-what we learned <b>Term Papers due</b>	N/A