

University of Calgary  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
COMS 502 (L01): Political Economy of Communication  
**WINTER 2021: 12 January to 13 April (excluding February 16<sup>th</sup>)**  
**Lecture: Tu 3:30 to 6:15 PM**

**All lectures will be delivered in synchronous Zoom sessions on Tuesdays**

**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. All sessions for this course will be delivered synchronously, hosted on the Zoom 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.

<b>Instructor:</b>	Richard Hawkins
<b>Email:</b>	rhawkins@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays 10:00 – 12:00 (open Zoom office hours). 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**

This is a participatory seminar, not a lecture course. It is heavily oriented to student discussions, presentations and work in small groups. All students will be expected to participate fully. Students who may be uncomfortable participating in this way may have difficulty completing the requirements satisfactorily and may wish to seek alternatives.

## Objectives of the Course

- 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 are available online on D2L. A reading list with persistent links will be posted on D2L as Term commences. Copyright cleared PDFs will be posted on D2L.

### ***The roots of communication studies in classical political economy (A)***

Boulakia, J-D C. (1971) Ibn Khaldun: A Fourteenth-Century Economist, *Journal of Political Economy*, 79 (5) 1105-1118.

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

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 Chapters 2,3 and 4.

### ***The roots of communication studies in classical political economy (B)***

Mill, J. S. (1859/2001) *On Liberty*, Kitchener: Batoche Books. Chapter 2, On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion.

Marshall, A. (1898) *Principles of Economics*, Volume I, London: MacMillan. Chapter 1, Introduction.

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

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

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

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

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.

### ***Media, economic power and dependency***

Innis, H.A. (1951/1984) *The Bias Of communication*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapter 2, The Bias of Communication.

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

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

Hills, J. (1994) Dependency Theory and its relevance today: international institutions in telecommunications and structural power, *Review of International Studies*, 20 (2) 169-186.

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

Hayek, 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.

Mansell, R. (1993) *The New Telecommunications: A Political Economy of Network Evolution*, London: Sage. Chapter 2, The Intelligent Network.

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

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

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.

Schiller, H. (1991) Not yet the post-Imperialist era, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8 (1), 13-28.

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

Gandy, O. (2000) Exploring identity and identification in cyberspace, *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy*, 14 (2), 1085-1112.

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

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

Garnham, N. (2005) From cultural to creative industries, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11 (1) 15-29.

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

Towse, R. (2010) Creativity, Copyright and the Creative Industries Paradigm, *Kyklos*, 63 (3), 461-478.

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

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.

Cohen, N. (2008) The Valorization of Surveillance: Towards a Political Economy of Facebook, *Democratic Communique* 22 (1), 5-22.

## Learning Technologies Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online 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	Assignments	Due
30%	Panel expositions and discussions (2 @ 15% each)	As scheduled
30%	Critical journals (2 @ 15% each) (each 5-6 pages)	Feb.2 and Mar. 2
5%	Term paper abstract (2-3 pages including bibliography)	Mar. 9
30%	Term paper (10-12 pages excluding bibliography)	April 13
5%	Term paper Snapshot Presentation (5 minutes)	April 13

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

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

Each student will present two panels during the term, each worth 15% of the final course grade.

Students will choose panels at the beginning of the Term. Each student in a panel will be assigned one of the readings listed for that theme, and prepare a 10-15 minute critical exposition of that reading for presentation in class. Some of the longer readings may be assigned to two or more students and must be coordinated by the presenter so as to avoid duplication.

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.

Students will be expected to explain and comment critically on each of these five ideas. These will then be opened up for discussion/debate by the rest of the panel and to interventions from the class, as well as to questions from 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.

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

**Term Paper abstract:** (2-3 pages including bibliography)

- 5% of final grade
- Due March 9

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

A **Term Paper Checkup session** is scheduled for March 16 for the purpose of discussing the abstracts and making suggestions for completing term papers. Students will be scheduled to appear in small groups, but all students are welcome to sit in to as much of the session as they wish. *This is an ungraded assignment, but students who do not participate, except if excused for legitimate reasons, will be docked 5% of the final cumulative course grade.*

**Critical journals:**

- 30% of final grade
- two submissions per student (15% each)
- Journal One due Feb 2
- 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 about 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:**

- 30% of final grade
- Due April 13 (upload before class)

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.

### ***Term paper snapshot presentation***

- 5% of final grade (The full mark will be awarded to everyone who presents.)
- In class 13 April

On the final day of class each student will present a short synopsis of their term papers. **This must be no longer than 5 Minutes.**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropboxes. A separate dropbox will be set up for each assignment.

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.

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**

Late delivery of assignments is discouraged, except in the case of genuine emergency or illness. In such event the instructor must be notified in reasonable time either before or after the emergency or illness.

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. Assignments delivered more than five calendar days late will not be marked and a grade of zero will be entered for the assignment.

### **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, each assignment will be given a numeric grade (e.g. 14/20 for an assignment worth 20% of the course grade). Within the score ranges indicated in the Department Guidelines below, final grades will be entered as letter grades corresponding to the cumulative score for all assignments (e.g. a final cumulative grade of 80 would be entered as a final grade of B+).

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](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://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](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.

This course does not require research with human subjects. However, if students wish to undertake or participate in such work for their Capstone projects (for example in research involving surveys, interviews, or observations), you must obtain ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. Consult your instructor before even considering research of this nature. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Be aware that under the ethics guidelines even the reporting of casual encounters or conversations in written academic work can in some cases be deemed data from research with human subjects. Avoid such issues and consult the instructor if you have any questions.

**Warning: Assignments containing elements that clearly require ethics approval under the guidelines, but for which no ethics certificate has been issued, will not be accepted or marked.**

### **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**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Tu Jan 12	Course Introduction and organization	N/A
2	Tu Jan 19	The roots of communication studies in classical political economy (A)	Khaldoun (Boulakia 1971) Smith (Fleischhacker 2009) Marx (Giddens 1971)
3	Tu Jan 26	The roots of communication studies in classical political economy (B)	Mill (1859) Marshall (1898) Veblen (1899)
4	Tu Feb 2	Persuasion, propaganda and mass culture  <b>Journal One due</b>	Bernays (1928) Adorno & Hockheimer (1973) Smythe (1981) Leiss, Klein & Jhally (1986)
5	Tu Feb 9	Media, economic power and dependency	Innis (1951) McLuhan (1960) Smythe (1957) Hills (1994)
<b>Feb 14 -21 Reading week</b>			
6	Tu Feb 23	<b>Mid-Term Review</b>	
7	Tu Mar 2	The post industrialists  <b>Journal Two Due</b>	Hayek (1945) Machlup (1962) Bell (Duff 1998) Drucker (1993)
8	Tu Mar 9	The regulators  <b>Term paper Abstract due</b>	Trebing (1969) Gabel (1968) Melody (1987) Mansell (1993)
9	Tu Mar 16	<b>Term Paper Checkup</b> (scheduled group appointments)	
10	Tu Mar 23	The media industry perspective	Wasko (1982) Murdock (1982) Schiller (1991) Mosco (1983) Gandy (2000)
11	Tu Mar 30	The production of culture perspective	Garnham (2001) Williams (1974) Garnham (2005) Towse (2010)
12	Tu Ap 6	Political economy and the new media	Gordon (2000) Castells (2007) Cohen (2010) Garnham (2011)
13	Tu Ap 13	<b>Final snapshot presentations</b> <b>TERM PAPERS DUE</b>	