

**Communications Studies (COMS) 580 B20**  
**Advanced BCS/BFS Project**  
**Spring 2011**  
**MTWR 15:30 – 18:15**  
**May 11, 2011 – June 24, 2011**  
**SAIT Campus (H101)**

**Instructor:** Steve Olson  
**Office Location:** L-117 Senator Burns  
**Office Phone:** 403-284-7100  
**E-Mail:** [Steve.olson@sait.ca](mailto:Steve.olson@sait.ca)  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Additional Information**

Due to the nature of team projects students should anticipate costs of approximately \$50-\$100 for recording media, equipment rentals and services.

**Course Description**

COMS 580 is a full course. During the semester, teams will produce a media-based project while at the same time teams or individuals will complete a critical research essay. The first week of the class will be devoted to group formation, discussion of group process, elaboration of media and critical research projects, discussion of relevant topics, research methodologies, and issues surrounding format and writing. Both the project and the paper will be presented to the class at the end of the semester. Class meetings will include student led discussions of communication, culture and media events and theory.

**Objectives of the Course**

The course will help the student to: 1. Integrate theoretical research and practical experience in media production. 2. Increase understanding of theoretical constructs, methodological approaches and research skills while reflecting upon their value in application to specific productions. 3. Exchange ideas and experiences that will broaden understanding of the field of media production.

## **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Electronic devices are welcome and encouraged in this course. It is asked, however, that you respect those around you. Inappropriate images and/or language will not be tolerated. Cell phones and other communication devices should be set to vibrate. You are not to answer or place calls in the classroom, but are allowed to conduct such activities in the hallway. Please be aware that the classroom we are in is PC equipped. If you want to use a Mac product with the in-class projector, you will need to supply your own conversion cables.

## **Textbooks and Readings:**

No textbook required. Readings may be assigned according to the project.

Recommended reading:

*Action Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Ernest Stringer, 2007.

*Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., John Creswell, 2009

Theories of communication, culture and media are foundational for this course. Students should already be aware of a wide range of theories from previous studies. At a minimum, you should have a good working knowledge of:

- Interpersonal and Behavioral theories such as, Classical Rhetoric, Social Identity, Expectancy Value, Symbolic Interactionism, Uncertainty Reduction, Cognitive Dissonance, Theories of Attachment and Transportation, Cognitive Psychology, Social Psychology in Virtual Communities, and Captology.
- Mass Media / Media in Culture theories that include, Agenda Setting, Framing, Cultivation Theory, Dependency Theory, Gatekeeping, Hypodermic Needle, Spiral of Silence, Uses and Gratification, Media Ethics, Subliminal Communication, Theories of Propaganda, and Theories of Persuasion.
- Language / Linguistic theories including, Language Expectancy Theory, Semiotics and Semantics.

The above list is not exhaustive, and the placement of specific theories in the above categories is typical, not absolute. Students are encouraged to use any other theories relevant to their work.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Paper Outline	5%
Class Discussion	10%
Rough Draft	10%
Research Paper	30%
Project Proposal (group)	5%
Mid Term Report (group)	5%
Media Project (group)	35%

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.

You may also place hardcopies of papers / projects directly in the mail-slot in Room L-117, Senator Burns Building, SAIT Campus. That mailbox is cleared daily.

Electronic submission of assignments is encouraged.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

## 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](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

In this class, you will receive grades in the 4-point scale (2.7, 3.0, 3.3) *rather than* percentages. Sometimes you may receive grade points between letter grades. 3.5 is the mathematical mid-point between a B+ (3.3) and an A- (3.7) and 3.15 is the mid-point between a B (3.0) and a B+ (3.3), etc.

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: (Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see <a href="#">U of C Calendar: Academic Standing</a> )
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	0

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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

SAIT Safewalk is available 6pm – 11pm Monday to Friday call 403-284-SAFE (7233). For an escort outside of these times please call SAIT Campus Security at 403-210-HELP (4357).

## 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

Week 1, Overview, group formation, topics, discussion of theories, etc.

Week 2, NOTE: No class on Monday, May 23, due to Victoria Day. **Project proposal and paper outline are BOTH due Tuesday!** Class Discussion begins (schedule to be announced), group meetings (planning and process).

Week 3, Class Discussion 1, con't. Wednesday and Thursday set aside time for Mid-term meetings (group) and individual consultations, re: paper.

Week 4, Monday, Rough Draft of paper due! Note: this is an “annotated draft”, as will be defined in class.

Week 5, Class Discussion 2, con't. As much class time as possible will be devoted to the finishing of both project and paper.

Week 6, Monday, final work period. Projects due Tuesday and Wednesday. Paper due Thursday. Note, you will “present” your paper to the class with a short 5-minute “overview” of your topic, your findings, and relevant theories.

**Specific readings are attached to individual projects / papers.**