

University of Calgary

Department of Communication and Culture

Communications Studies (COMS) 580 B01

Advanced BCS/BFS Project

Spring 2014

MTWR 15:00 – 17:45

May 14 – June 26, 2014

MB 325 SAIT Campus

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Office Hours: by appointment

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 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. The class will be involved in the grading of the media projects. Students will be asked to complete a grading sheet with comments on each project. Class meetings will include student led discussions of communication, culture and media events and theory.

Additional Information

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

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

All electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, etc.) should be turned off during class unless alternative arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Textbooks and Readings:

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

Recommended reading:

Action Research, 3rd ed., Ernest Stringer, 2007.

Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 3rd 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, Due Dates and Weighting:

In-class Theory Presentation (May 21-29)	10%
Paper Outline (May 26)	5%
Media Project Proposal (May 26)	5%
Mid-term Production Meeting (June 5)	10%
Rough Draft (June 5)	10%
Media Project (June 25)	30%
Research Paper (June 26)	30%

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

Assignments and Evaluation

Each student will prepare an individual 15 to 20 minute **in-class theory presentation** (May 21-29). The presentation will allow them to share with the class a communications, culture, or media theory of their choosing. They will define and contextualize the theory, sharing relevant points with the class, and ultimately lead the class in a discussion about the theory. Applicable and current examples should be included. Students are also encouraged to explain the theory with support of media and/or related tools. Presenters are asked to prepare 3 questions related to their presentation and/or topic for class discussion.

Students will write an advanced 20-page **research paper** (due in-class on June 26) showing their ability to define, integrate and expand on culture and/or communications theories. Although there is a significant amount of latitude in the choice of topics, students are expected to engage in an on-going dialogue with the instructor concerning their research and progress. The paper may be written in an “alternate” style, but only after proper justification, appropriate learning outcomes have been identified, and the approval from the instructor. The paper carries high expectations, and should show a considerable level of research.

The **research paper outline** (due in-class on May 26) is an abstract, with an annotated bibliography of a minimum of 3 sources: one must be on-line; a book; and one journal article. The abstract will cogently describe the subject of your paper in a minimum of 150 words. It should describe your aim in a clear thesis statement and how you will go about making the argument. The annotated bibliography should be included below your abstract. Each source should clearly be relevant to your paper. If your literature review did not supply relevant sources, do not include them. Each annotation of a source should do two things: give the reader an idea of the overall content of the book and its significance, as well as briefly describe the source’s relevance for the paper you are proposing.

The research paper outline should:

1. Be a minimum of 150 words and no more than 200;
2. Include a thesis statement;
3. Convey how you will go about making your argument;
4. Exhibit your knowledge based on your initial research.

The research paper outline annotated bibliography should:

1. Include a minimum of 3 relevant and authoritative sources (one must be from an on-line source; a book; and a journal article.);
2. Include an annotation for each source;
 - i) Convey the overall content of the source;
 - ii) Describe the relevance of the source for the argument you will be making;
3. Be properly formatted as an APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. annotated bibliography.

The **rough draft** (due in-class on June 5) should convey that you are prepared, capable and on track to finish and submit the final paper by the deadline. The draft should include a bibliography of at least 6 specialized sources at this point (i.e. **not** dictionaries, encyclopedias,

or general textbooks). There is no maximum, but no more than half (3) should be on-line specialized sources (i.e. **not** dictionaries, encyclopedias).

Further, students will produce a **media-based group project** (due on June 25) that will demonstrate both scholarly and practical skills. The group project allows students to explore theories and issues and put them into a practical setting. Ultimately, the success of the projects depends on the dialogue created between the group participants and the larger class.

Group project are marked by the class. Grading forms will be filled out by each student (except the group members presenting on that day) for every presentation and will be collected and used to tabulate group marks. Groups do not prepare grading forms for their own presentations. A final mark and report will be prepared by the instructor and given to the group, usually by the next class. The instructor reserves the right to evaluate groups and/or individuals separately.

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 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.

Electronically submitted assignments are not accepted.

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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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:

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: Academic Standing)
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

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.

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/ethics/cfreb>