

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 581 (L01): Senior Project in BCMS & BFS

SPRING 2021: May 5 – June 17 (excluding May 24)

Lecture: Thursdays (10:00-11:15am)

(Lectures will be synchronous. Labs will be asynchronous.)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR SPRING 2021:

This Spring 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 to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a 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.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor:	Dr. Samantha Thrift
Email:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Thursdays, 11:15am-12:15pm (or by appt.)

Course Description

An advanced research and experiential project incorporating academic research and media production. The project will be produced in a medium appropriate to the student's specialization: print, radio, television, video, film or digital media.

Additional Information

This course supports students' development and execution of a media-based research-creation project. Research-creation provides an academic framework for undergraduates interested in producing work that combines theoretical/conceptual inquiry with media-based practice. This semester, student projects will be oriented around the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on individual lives. Students will explore storytelling as a research method as they create "pandemic profiles" that document the personal narrative of an individual impacted by COVID-19. As storytellers, students will be invited to think critically and creatively about the form and function of storytelling as a method of capturing the lived, everyday experience of COVID as well as why vernacular accounts of the pandemic have significance.

Synchronous Zoom classes will be held Thursdays (10:00-11:15am). Zoom classes will include a combination of lecture, group discussion, progress reports, and peer review/project consultation.

Labs will be asynchronous to allow students independent work time to progress their research, course assignments, and media projects.

The weekly schedule of topics and activities can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Integrate research and applied practice 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. Collaborate and share ideas and experiences during the creation process in ways that broaden understanding of the field of media production and research-creation.
4. Design, plan, and execute a media-based project.

Textbooks and Readings

Required readings and video screenings will be posted on D2L.

Students may also be required to read scholarly materials related to their individual projects.

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

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) 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.

Email

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 581) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread. Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with the instructor.

Email is most useful for specific inquiries. If you have more detailed questions about the course material, assignments, or grades, please schedule an appointment to speak with the instructor (via Zoom) during office hours. The instructor will respond to emails during the week, usually on

a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read (or replied to) until the next working day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
15%	<p>Pandemic Profile Proposal</p> <p>Students will submit a 3-4 page written proposal that provides a detailed description of a media-based “pandemic profile” of an individual. The proposal will include a detailed timeline to project completion. The proposal must also include appropriate ethics documentation. More details provided in class.</p>	May 13
25%	<p>Work-in-Progress (WiP) Report (10%) & Project Draft (15%)</p> <p>Students will prepare and submit a project status report. The format of the WiP report can be chosen by the student – whether written, video, PPT – so long as it may be uploaded to the D2L Discussion forum for peer feedback.</p> <p>The WiP report should briefly discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the profile subject; ii. the media format of the pandemic profile (and rationale for that format); iii. progress-to-date (i.e., what has been accomplished, challenges/successes, next steps); <p>This submission must also include a draft of the media project and 1-2 peer review questions. The WiP submission is an opportunity to solicit feedback from each other, so providing 1-2 specific questions about your project will help guide your peers’ commentary and constructive critique of your work to date.</p>	May 27
15%	<p>Peer Review</p> <p>Students have an opportunity to participate in peer review of each other’s projects based on the WiP/Draft Project submission. As a reviewer, each student is invited to provide thoughtful and constructive commentary in response to their peers’ questions about their draft projects.</p> <p>The goal is to foster collaborative brainstorming and problem-solving by encouraging each student to comment on several other projects. Therefore, students will receive up to 3 points for each comment made to a different project (to a maximum of 15 points).</p>	June 3
25%	<p>Pandemic Profile Final Submission</p> <p>The final version of students’ “pandemic profiles” will be submitted via D2L Discussion forum (as a file or link to external media source, as appropriate).</p>	June 17
20%	<p>Pandemic Profile Reflection</p> <p>In this assignment, students are asked to write a 4-6 page critical reflection about the pandemic profile project. The reflection should identify and discuss what has been learned through the process of developing and executing this media project and about storytelling as method.</p>	June 17
3%	<p>Bonus: Map Post</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to earn a bonus 3% on their final grade if they upload their pandemic profile to an interactive map. Please note: this may involve some reformatting of the pandemic profile for successful uploading to the map platform.</p>	June 17

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.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). 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 (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

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

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/. 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, letter grades will be used for all assignments except the peer review and map post. Grades for the peer review commenting and the map post will be calculated as point scores.

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

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd 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 (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.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 or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Course Topics and Activities

Date	Topic	Important Dates & Deadlines
May 6	Course Introduction: Project Overview & Ethics	
May 13	Storytelling as method & interviewing	Proposals due (May 13)
May 20	Individual Project Consultation (opt.) Story Capture & Project Development	Proposal Returned (May 18)
May 27	WiP Discussion & Feedback	WiP Submissions due (May 27) Peer Review Begins (May 27)
June 3	What is a Critical Reflection?	Complete Peer Review (June 3)
June 10	Individual Project Work	
June 17	Final Projects: Debrief	Projects & Critical Reflections due (June 17) Bonus Map Post due (June 17)