

**Communications Studies COMS 591 (S01)**  
**Senior Seminar in Communication**  
*Knowledge Mobilization in the Digital Society*  
**Fall 2010**

**Tuesdays, 14:00 – 16:50**  
**CHE 114**

**Instructor:** Dr. David Mitchell  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

On May 18 of this year, the federal government released a consultation paper entitled the *Digital Economy Strategy*. The paper focuses on information and communications technologies (ICT) as the primary drivers of the *digital economy*. The paper reflects the government's *Science and Technology Strategy* of 2007 which prioritizes 4 areas for policy development: ICT, environmental science, natural resources, and health. The decision to strategically position ICT as the central driver of the new economy is not a new one: industrial policy of the 1980s championed the way that numerical technologies could increase productivity and reduce costs in the manufacturing sector; communications policy of the 1990s stressed the importance of broadband networks to enabling the competitiveness of Canadian firms in global markets.

However, over the past decade, ICT policy discussions have moved beyond the original narrow economic focus – to consider the role of these technologies within the broader context of social development – *Canada as a digital society*. In this wider consideration, there has been a focus on the issues of: extending access; addressing the rights of both creators and users; and balancing calls for privacy against those of surveillance. Each of these discussions has focused on the role of expert knowledge – and whether and to what extent such knowledge should remain confined to particular institutional repositories – or whether it should be *mobilized* – that is to say, be made more readily accessible – and thereby useful – to society at large.

### **Objectives of the Course**

Following a set of overviews to both the federal *Digital Economy Strategy* and the literature on *knowledge mobilization* – the seminar will focus critically on the following thematic areas:

- Extending access : to networks, knowledge and remote communities

- Content creation & use: research, arts, cultural/creative industries
- Public safety: emergency systems, privacy, surveillance, cyber crime

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

Please turn off your cell phones during class. Students are welcome to bring laptops and other devices to class so long as these are used to aid student learning. During class it is not acceptable to play games, answer emails, surf the web or engage in other non-class activities.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Course readings will be made available on Blackboard

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

The course will be run on a seminar basis. Each student will be expected to:

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| • read all of the required course materials           |             |
| • take an active role in all discussions              | 25 %        |
| • give one seminar presentation                       | 25 %        |
| • prepare a research paper proposal (due Oct. 26/10)  | 10 %        |
| • prepare a 20-25 page research paper (due Dec. 7/10) | <u>40 %</u> |
| Total:  | 100 %       |

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.

**Registrar-schedule 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

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

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

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.

### **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**

### **Tentative schedule of classes:**

1. Sept. 14: Introduction and organization
2. Sept. 21; Overview of KM and the federal *Digital Economy Strategy*
3. Sept. 28: Access: extending connectivity to communications network
4. Oct. 5: Access: extending public access to knowledge
5. Oct. 12: Access: rural, remote & indigenous communities
6. Oct. 19: Content creation & use: scholarly knowledge
7. Oct. 26: Content: creation & use: arts & culture (**paper proposals due**)
8. Nov. 2: Content creation & use: cultural/creative industries
9. Nov. 9: Content creation & use: social networking
10. Nov. 16: Public safety: disaster & emergency communications
11. Nov. 23: Public safety: cybercrime
12. Nov. 30: Public safety: privacy versus surveillance
13. Dec. 7: Discussion (**research papers due**)