

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies (COMS) 591 – Seminar 01
Senior Seminar in Communication

Winter 2019

Start & end dates

Monday January 14 – Monday April 8 (excluding February 18)

Lectures, days, and time; Tutorials, days, and time

M 12:00-14:45 Tutorial

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 – 11:00; Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00, or by appointment

Course Description

This Capstone Seminar is an opportunity for students to review, synthesize, and integrate the knowledge they have gained during their undergraduate studies in the Department of Communication Media and Film.

The seminar will be oriented towards individual Capstone Projects that demonstrate the intellectual capabilities gained by the student over a full course of undergraduate study. Each project will consist of a Capstone Paper on a contemporary topic or issue chosen by the student, along with a class presentation and discussion.

The seminar will focus on the thematic question “*Is communication technology out of control?*”. This central theme will be explored in **three modules**. The first two will be dedicated to reviewing and organizing key concepts, and to honing and practicing organizational, critical thinking, and discussion skills. This will involve working in small study groups. The final module will consist of Term Project preparation and presentation.

Objectives of the Course

- to conduct a critical review and evaluation of key concepts, issues, and debates within the field of communication studies;
- to provide students with an opportunity to synthesize ideas from their undergraduate studies and apply them to a topic of relevance to communication in contemporary society.

Textbooks and Readings

Leiss, William (1990) *Under Technology's Thumb*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press

Available in the bookstore.

Internet and electronic communication device information

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 email, surf the web, or engage in other non-class activities. Cell phone use is not permitted at any time. Inappropriate use of technology not only affects you, but it also distracts other students and undermines our goal of creating a respectful learning environment.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assignments	Due
20%	Collective Book Review	As scheduled
30%	Study group seminar	As scheduled
40%	Final Project Paper	Due final day of class (April 8)
10%	Final Project Presentation	As scheduled

As appropriate to a Capstone Seminar, students are expected to demonstrate that over a three-to-four-year course of study they have learned to engage critically and in depth with texts, theories, argumentation and evidence. To assist students in meeting this challenge, the seminar will proceed through **three modules**. Each module will involve progressively more individual input and will be graded accordingly.

Module One: Collective Book Review (20%)

In Module One, working in small groups, students will contribute to a collective review of “*Under Technology's Thumb*”, the core text as assigned by the instructor. This text explores some key ideas, issues and perspectives on the role of technology in contemporary life. Its purpose is to provide a framework within which students can begin collecting and organizing ideas and concepts from their studies in the Communication Media and Film curricula that relate to the thematic question.

All students in the seminar will be expected to read the entire book over the course of this module. Working in small study groups (2-3 participants), students will prepare seminars based on individual Chapters in the assigned book.

The exercise will involve advance preparation and coordination, which students can organize in any way they choose. However, the exercise will follow a fixed format:

- Each individual group member will be responsible for preparing and delivering a brief (5-7 minute) exposition of an idea, theory, debate etc. taken from the Chapter assigned for that week. Each group must coordinate these expositions internally to prevent duplication.

- The group will then engage in debate and discussion prompted by questions or interventions either from the instructor or from other students in the class.
- Each group will prepare a short (1-2 page) summary of the points covered in their session. This must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the session.

Module Two: Study Group Seminars (30%)

In Module Two, again working in small groups, students will prepare seminars similar in form to Module One, but focused on an issue identified by the students themselves that is related to the central theme of the course.

The seminars will be based upon readings chosen by the students that contain ideas and perspectives that they regard to be relevant to both the theme and to the chosen issue. It is expected that these supporting readings will be drawn broadly from the CMF curricula.

The exercise will involve advance preparation and coordination, which students can organize in any way they choose. However, the exercise will follow a fixed format:

- Groups will select a theme and/or issue by consensus and elect one member of the group to explain this briefly at the beginning of the seminar.
- Each individual group member will be responsible for preparing and delivering a brief (5-7 minute) exposition of a specific idea, theory, debate etc., taken from a text of her/his own choosing, and explain how it is relevant to the theme or context chosen by the group.
- The sessions will conclude with debate and discussion prompted by questions or interventions either from the instructor or from other students in the class.
- Each group will prepare a short (3-4 page) summary of the points covered in their session, along with a bibliography. This must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the session.

For Modules One and Two, each group will be given one common grade for the whole assignment. Both assignments will be assessed on the following criteria:

- understanding of the key concepts (30%)
- clarity of presentation (10%)
- critical perspective and awareness of contemporary relevance (30%)
- response to questions (20%)
- summary note (10%)

Except where excused for legitimate reasons, failure to present in a scheduled group exercise in either Module, or failure to participate in a group, will result in loss of the grade for this assignment for the individual concerned. The rest of the group will receive a grade.

Module Three: Capstone paper and presentation

(40% for the paper – 10% for the presentation)

All papers must be turned in by the end of class on 8 April.

Working independently, students will undertake Final Projects on topics of their own choosing. Papers should be oriented broadly to the central theme of the course, but can employ any approach and perspective that interests the student, and be supported by any literature that is appropriate to that approach and perspective provided it is grounded in a coherent domain within the various CMF curricula.

Projects will be written up in fully referenced Capstone papers. Indicative length: 2500 words (excluding bibliography). These projects will also be presented to the class and discussed (ca 15 minute presentations).

Assessment criteria for the Capstone Project will mirror those of the two preceding Modules. Capstone papers and presentations should reflect an in-depth understanding of chosen concepts, theories and evidence as drawn from the CMF literatures, also demonstrating critical awareness of their strengths, weaknesses and limitations as applied to the theme, and to the chosen topic or issue. Papers and presentations are expected to reflect a level of understanding and capability commensurate with three-to-four years of undergraduate study.

Students should begin developing their projects early in the Term and carry development through to the end of Term. Students are encouraged to consult the instructor about projects at interval throughout the Term.

A Final Project Clinic has been scheduled for 18 March – students will be assigned individual appointments. The purpose is to ensure that projects are mature enough to submit and present. ***The clinic is not graded, but attendance is compulsory. Except for legitimate reasons, failure to attend will be penalized by the loss of 5% of the overall grade.***

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: (choose ONE of the following & delete the other two statements)

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

Submission of Assignments: 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

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.

Student Accommodations and Deferrals:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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 for 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, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that when accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>
- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using a combination of percentage and letter grades. Each assignment will receive a percentage grade along with an indication of which letter grade would be awarded.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

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%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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. 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>. If you have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library), at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

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 (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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

This course does not require research involving human subjects

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising
CAMPUS SECURITY & Safewalk Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing Support Services• Events & Info for Students	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faculty of Arts Reps• Student Ombuds	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Services• Mental Health Services• Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE• Online resources and tips	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus

If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Mo Jan 14	Introduction and organization	N/A
Module One – Collective Book Review			
2	Mo Jan 21	Core Reading Seminar – Group A	Chapter 1
		Core Reading Seminar – Group B	Chapter 2
		Core Reading Seminar – Group C	Chapter 3
3	Mo Jan 28	Core Reading Seminar – Group D	Chapter 4
		Core Reading Seminar – Group E	Chapter 5
4	Mo Feb 4	Core Reading Seminar – Group F	Chapter 6
		Core Reading Seminar – Group G	Chapter 7
5	Mo Feb 11	Core Reading Seminar – Group H	Chapter 8
		Core Reading Seminar – Group I	Chapter 9
		Core Reading Seminar – Group J	Chapter 10
6	Feb 17-24	NO CLASS (Reading week)	
Module Two: Study Group Seminar			
7	Mo Feb 25	Group Presentation – 1	Student selected readings Presentation Reports due on presentation day
		Group Presentation – 2	
8	Mo Mar 4	Group Presentation – 3	
		Group Presentation – 4	
9	Mo Mar 11	Group Presentation – 5	
		Group Presentation – 6	
Module Three: Capstone Project			
10	Mo Mar 18	Final Project Clinic	Individually scheduled
11	Mo Mar 25	Final Project Presentations	As scheduled
12	Mo Ap 1	Final Project Presentations	As scheduled
13	Wed Ap 8	Final Project Presentations All Term Papers Due in Class	As scheduled