University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 601 (S01): Interdisciplinary Approaches to Communication Studies

FALL 2020: September 10 to December 3 (excluding November 12)

Seminar: R 13:30-16:15
(Seminars will be in synchronous Zoom sessions)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:

This Fall 2020 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:	Tamara Shepherd
Email:	tamara.shepherd@ucalgary.ca -- emails will be responded to within 24 hours, M-F
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesdays & Thursdays, 11:00-12:00 (by appointment, on Zoom)

Course Description
Communication studies is an interdisciplinary field concerned with how messages are created, transmitted, and understood. There are hundreds of competing approaches to questions under this broad umbrella, divided into sub-fields that sometimes disagree and sometimes overlap. In this course, we will work toward mapping these sub-fields according to the interests of students in the class. Students will be steering the direction of the course, with the guidance of the instructor, to help them locate their own research interests within the diverse theories, problematics, and approaches of communication studies.

In the process of encouraging students to situate themselves within specific sub-fields, the course also considers the demands of graduate education. What does it mean to be a graduate student? We will explore this question by building up the reading, writing, analytical, presentation, and professional skills concomitant to membership within a scholarly community. As part of this community, students will be expected to develop their critical capacities as contributors to the production of knowledge within and beyond academia.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline, with further information and pdf files of the readings posted on D2L. The seminars will be held synchronously on Zoom. Because this is a seminar course, students are active participants in building the course and the learning experience for yourselves and your peers. You will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the required readings, listen attentively, and engage with others' presentations.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By taking this course, students will:
- explore and situate themselves within sub-fields of communication studies
- develop key reading, writing, analytical, presentation, and professional skills
- relate scholarly approaches to the history of ideas and contemporary social life

Textbooks and Readings

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings will be posted to D2L.

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.

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

Synchronous zoom class sessions will be recorded 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.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15% (5% each)	**Reading response papers x 3** Before class, submit a **2-3 page (600-900 word)** response to the readings. You can choose one or more of the assigned or supplementary readings to write about. Your response should show evidence that you: a) understand and can paraphrase the author's main argument(s); and b) have developed a critique. The critique doesn't have to be critical or negative. It can be an application of the approach to a real-world example or news story. It can be an assessment of the author's contribution to a sub-field of communications and media studies. It can be a comparative	Sept. 24, Oct. 1 & Oct. 8

	analysis of two or more of the readings. What's important about the critique is that you demonstrate your own thinking and analysis in relation to the reading. Finally, each reading response paper should end with a properly formatted reference list and a set of 3 discussion questions. These questions will be used to facilitate class discussion each week. Reading responses will be reviewed by your peers – students will be asked to read and comment on each other's responses with constructive suggestions for improvement.	
20%	**Annotated bibliography** One of the first steps in researching a topic is to read widely; creating an annotated bibliography is essential for managing the reading process. For this assignment, students will consult with the instructor to create an annotated bibliography of **3 books and 10 articles (MA), or 5 books and 15 articles (PhD)**. This means starting with a general topic of study or sub-field, and choosing a list of sources that you believe reflect the most significant contributions to that area. **For each source, write 1-2 paragraphs (150-300 words)** that summarize the author's main argument and (depending on the source) describe: the methodology used; the main findings; the structure of the article/book; a particular detail you found useful; an element you found problematic or lacking. Basically you are adding your own take on each source. Sources should be listed alphabetically, according to a recognized formatting style.	Oct. 29
10%	**Journal presentation (5 minutes)** For this assignment, students will choose a particular scholarly journal to present to the class (ideally, one chosen from the sources in the annotated bibliography). The 5-minute presentation should offer a critical account of how the journal frames its sub-field, an assessment of the types of articles it publishes, and an interrogation of its publishing practices. For example, describe the journal's relation to academic associations (is there a particular association that supports the publication of the journal? How has this shaped the character of research it represents?), the makeup and changes in its editorial board (who are the key players? Over time, how have changes in the board influenced the journal?), its status as a scholarly or commercial venture (is the journal funded by a community of scholars or is it a niche product of a commercial publisher? Does that make any difference?), the quality of debates associated with it, and its overall contribution to the field.	Nov. 5
15%	**Conference paper (4-5 pages)** The class will hold a workshop-style virtual conference, with 4-5 page (1000-1500 word) papers organized within panels. Each panel session will be structured as a Q&A with each author about their papers, and students will be expected to read the other papers on their panel and give each other feedback. Individual conference papers can be organized in a number of ways: as an initial sketch of the literature review; as a summary of the annotated bibliography that helps inform the literature review; or as an extension of the journal presentation that compares one journal to others. The goal of this conference paper is to build on the previous assignments and prepare students for writing the final paper by sharing and workshopping their ideas with the class. It will also give students practice for future conferences. Students will be required to submit their paper via the discussion board on D2L by midnight on Monday, November 23.	Nov. 23

40%	**Literature review paper**	Dec. 3
	A literature review demands careful consideration of the key texts in a particular sub-field or topic area. For this assignment, students will write a literature review of **12-20 pages (3600-6000 words)** that either: a) offers an account of a specific sub-field; or b) positions a specific thesis topic or research question among sub-fields. Ideally, the literature review will build on both the annotated bibliography and journal presentation assignments, by integrating the sources mentioned there into a narrative. The goal is not only to summarize the contributions of each source to the sub-field or topic area, but to place different authors in dialogue with each other. By relating texts in this way, you should be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the existing literature. Elements in a literature review might include: major debates or controversies in your sub-field; key findings that have shaped the area; typical research methods used; formative theoretical frameworks; and recent research trends. Throughout this assignment, work to position yourself as a scholar and/or set up the context for your own thesis topic and research questions.	

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. 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 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, assignments will be graded using letter grades.
The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4	Outstanding
A	4	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.3	All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
C	2	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1	
F	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. 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://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

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 (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.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. 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 Seminar Topics and Readings

1	Sept 10	**Intro**	Share your research interests
	Reading:	Peters (1999), *Speaking into the Air*, pp. 1-10.	
2	Sept 17	**SSHRC workshop**	Bring a draft proposal idea
	Readings:	Farrelly (2012), "Tips to Get a SSHRC Graduate Grant" Arnatt (2017), successful SSHRC Program of Study	
3	Sept 24	**Overview of the field**	Reading response 1 due
	Readings:	Katz (1987), "Communications research since Lazarsfeld" Zelizer (2016), "Communication in the Fan of Disciplines" Wang (2011), "Beyond De-Westernizing Communication Research"	
4	Oct 1	**Canadian context**	Reading response 2 due
	Readings:	Babe (2000), "Foundations of Canadian Communication Thought" Fouts (2000), "The CCA and the CJC" Robinson (2000), "Remembering our Past" Hirji et al. (2020), "On the Margins of the Margins"	
5	Oct 8	**Politics in research**	Reading response 3 due
	Readings:	Hall (1992), "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" Pillow (2003), "Confession, Catharsis, or Cure?" + one more reading to be chosen from a list on D2L	
6	**Oct 15**	**How to use the library**	Choose a topic/research area for your annotated bibliography
7	**Oct 22**	**Scholarly publishing**	
	Reading: Listening:	Pooley (2015), "Sinking the Flagship" *New Media & Society* (2015), podcast #4	
8	**Oct 29**	**Public intellectual**	Annotated bibliography due
	Reading:	A blog post of your choice from the LSE Impact Blog	

9	Nov 5	**Journals**	Journal presentations
10	Nov 12	**NO CLASS: Fall Break**	
11	Nov 19	**Literature reviews**	
	Readings:	Boczkowski & Lievrouw (2008), "Bridging STS and Communication Studies" Dorchak Rowe (2016), "Chapter 1: Cyberfeminism and Fan Studies"	
12	Nov 26	**Virtual conference**	Paper due Mon. Nov 23
	Reading:	The other papers on your conference panel	
13	Dec 3	**Advice & humour**	Final lit review paper due
	Reading:	PhD Comics – choose a comic to share with the class	