

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**COMS 615 (S01): Research Methods**  
**FALL 2022: September 6 to December 7 (excluding Nov. 6-12)**  
**Seminar: W 2PM – 4:45PM**

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY**

**Note:** This course will be delivered in-person. If you are unable to participate in-class owing to time differences or geographical location, please arrange to take this course in a future term

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Jessalynn Keller
<b>Office:</b>	SS 304
<b>Email:</b>	Jessalynn.keller@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Thursdays 10A – 12PM in-person, you must book an appointment through <a href="mailto:keller-jessalynn.youcanbook.me">keller-jessalynn.youcanbook.me</a>

### **Course Description**

This course serves as a foundational survey of qualitative research methods used for the study of media and communication. Throughout the course students will learn various approaches to research media texts, audiences, industries, and platforms, in addition to learning the intellectual history of such approaches. Attention to ethics, care, and power will undergird the course, as we interrogate the ways in which research can produce knowledge with emancipatory possibilities for communities.

### **Additional Information**

1. The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline.
2. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.
3. While the university has made the decision not to mandate masks this academic year, I encourage students to take health precautions necessary to stay safe. Masks are certainly welcome in the classroom and students should stay home if sick (we can make alternative arrangements to ensure you stay up-to-date with course materials).

### **Objectives of the Course**

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

- Understand the historical and intellectual trajectory of major media and communication studies research methods, including ethical considerations
- Generate and apply research questions to various media contexts
- Articulate a research plan with a detailed methodological framework
- Conduct independent media studies research using a variety of methods

## Textbooks and Readings

### Required:

Kackman, Micheal and Mary Celeste Kearney. 2018. *The Craft of Criticism: Critical Media Studies in Practice*. New York: Routledge. [available at U of C bookstore or Amazon, \$78]

All other readings will be available on D2L.

## Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete 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), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online courses only).

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 IT support services. See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

## Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops and other communication technologies may be used during seminar for note-taking purposes.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
5% (Pass/Fail)	<b>Completion of U of C TCPS2 CORE Tutorial (online)</b>  In preparation for our discussion about research ethics, you'll be responsible for completing the U of C research ethics training, which is an online tutorial created in accordance with the Canadian Tri-Council Research Agencies. The tutorial has eight modules and will take between two and three hours to complete. Please email a screen shot of your completion certificate to Jessalynn in order to receive credit.	Sept. 28
15%	<b>Participation</b>  The success of a graduate seminar is determined by the active participation of students in discussions and in-class activities/assignments. Therefore, I ask that you	Ongoing

	arrive at class having read the required reading and prepared with ideas to contribute. I expect quality insights that advance the discussion and encourage you to bring questions to pose to your classmates.	
20%	<p><b>Seminar leadership (10%) and response paper (10%)</b></p> <p>Students will “lead” 60-75 minutes (approximately half) of one seminar period. Students should limit summarizing the readings and instead focus on presenting a critical response and provocative discussion questions. Further information about this assignment will be provided in class.</p> <p>Additionally, students will prepare a critical response (3 – 4 pages) to the readings they are assigned to present to the class. The paper is due at the start of the assigned class. Further information about the expectations for this paper will be provided in class.</p>	As assigned
25%	<p><b>Midterm book review (20%) and informal presentation (5%)</b></p> <p>Students will choose one academic book to “review” in a short paper (3-4 pages) focusing on the methodological approach employed by the author. The goal of this assignment is to see how methodology and methods shape research. Your review may consider questions such as: What is the author’s research question(s)? How did they determine the methodological scope of the project? What methods are used by the author? Why? What ethical concerns are at stake? During class on Nov.2 students will each informally present their review to the class (5 minutes) as a way to “mind map” the methodological scope of media and communications studies as an interdisciplinary field.</p> <p>Further information about this assignment will be provided in class.</p>	Nov. 2
35%	<p><b>Final Paper: Media Artifact Study</b></p> <p>You will choose a media artifact that you’re interested in studying and write three research questions that may be used to analyze this artifact. Then, in an approximately 15 – 20 page paper, you’ll survey three research approaches (corresponding to each research question) that may be used to study your chosen media artifact. Each approach may include multiple methods that we have studied over the course of the semester. The purpose of this final assignment is to demonstrate your ability to write research questions, articulate the relationship between research questions and methods, and scaffold an appropriate methodological design.</p> <p>Further information about this assignment will be provided in class.</p>	Dec. 7

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam in the evening, but there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

**Note:** You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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 recording 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/](http://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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

### **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**

Work in this course will be graded using [choose one] letter grades, GPA values (using any value on the 0 to 4.0 scale, including, e.g., 3.2 or 2.8). The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	4.00	Excellent performance
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass
C+	2.30	All grades of "C+" or lower 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	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

## 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](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

## Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copy-right 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 deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

### **Student Support Services and Resources**

Please see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

### **Recommended Texts**

There are many fantastic resources for doing media studies research. Here are some suggestions beyond the required readings from top scholars in the field. Special thanks to the following people for their suggestions: Dr. Alex Cho (University of California – Santa Barbara), Dr. Alison Harvey (Glendon College), and Dr. Annie Rudd (University of Calgary).

Acker, Joan, Barry, Kate, & Esseveld, Johanna. 1991. "Objectivity and Truth: Problems in Doing Feminist Research," in *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, ed. Mary Margaret Fonow. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Artz, Lillian, Meer, Talia, Galgut, Hayley & Müller, Alex. 2017. "Participation in Practice: A Case Study of a Collaborative Project on Sexual Offences in South Africa." *Feminist Review* 115 (1): 79-96.

Arvin, Maile, Tuck, Eve & Morrill, Angie. 2013. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25(1): 8-34.

Cahill, Caitlin. 2007. "Repositioning Ethical Commitments: Participatory Action Research as a Relational Praxis of Social Change." *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies* 6(3): 360-373.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2005. "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies." In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna E. Lincoln, Eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 507-535.

Cho, A., Herrera, R. G., Chaidez, L., & Uriostegui, A. 2019. The "Comadre" Project: An Asset-Based Design Approach to Connecting Low-Income Latinx Families to Out-of-School Learning Opportunities. *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 607:1–607:14. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300837>

Dever, Maryanne. 2017. "Archives and New Modes of Feminist Research." *Australian Feminist Studies* 32 (91-92): 1-4. [other great papers in this special issue]

Gillies, Val & Alldred, Pam. 2012. "The Ethics of Intention: Research as a Political Tool." In *Ethics in Qualitative Research, Second edition*, edited by Tina Miller, Maxine Birch, Melanie, Mauthner & Julie Jessop. SAGE: 43-60.

Gunaratnam, Yasmin & Hamilton, Carrie. 2017. "The Wherewithal of Feminist Methods." *Feminist Review* 115(1): 1-12.

Hannell, Briony. 2020. "Fan studies and/as feminist methodology." *Transformative Works and Culture* 33. <https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/1689>.

Jeppesen, Sandra., Hounslow, Toni., Khan, Sharmeen. & Petrick, Kamilla. 2017. "Media Action Research Group: toward an antiauthoritarian profeminist media research methodology." *Feminist Media Studies* 17(6): 1056-1072.

Keller, Jessalynn, Morgan Blue, Mary Celeste Kearney, Kirsten Pike and Sarah Projansky. 2015. Mapping New Methodological Approaches to Girls' Media Studies. *Journal of Children and Media* 9 (4): 528-535.

Lassiter, L. E. 2005. *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. University Of Chicago Press.

Leurs, Koen. 2017. "Feminist Data Studies: Using Digital Methods for Ethical, Reflexive, and Situated Socio-Cultural Research." *Feminist Review*, 115, pp. 130-154.

Levitas, Ruth. 2013. *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Mayer, Vicky. 2001. When the Camera Won't Focus: Tensions in Media Ethnography. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1 (3): 307- 322.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books and University of Otago Press.

Wilkinson, Sue. 1999. "Focus Groups: A Feminist Method." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 23(2): 221-244.

## **Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**

Week 1            Wednesday, September 7: Introduction to course

**No reading – come prepared to discuss your research interests**

Week 2            Wednesday, September 14: What is Research?

**Read:**

Mary Celeste Kearney – Introduction, or How to Cook an Artichoke

Jane Agee – Developing Qualitative Research Questions: A Reflective Process

Eve Tuck – Decolonizing Methodologies 15 Years Later

**How-to resources (please skim):**

<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/questions.htm>

Week 3            Wednesday, September 21: The Politics of Knowledge Production

**Read:**

Donna Haraway – Situated Knowledges

Patricia Hill Collins – Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology

Sara Ahmed – Feminist Shelters

Week 4            Wednesday, September 28: Research Ethics: Care & Community

**Read:**

Kim TallBear – Standing With and Speaking as Faith: A Feminist-Indigenous Approach to Inquiry

Mary Elizabeth Luka and Mélanie Millette – (Re)framing Big Data: Activating Situated Knowledges and a Feminist Ethics of Care in Social Media Research

Annette Markham – Fabrication as Ethical Practice

Week 5            Wednesday, October 5: Studying Texts

**Read:**

Rosalind Gill – Discourse

Jason Mittell – Narrative



Amanda Ann Klein -- Genre

Megan Henesy – “Leaving my Girlhood Behind:” Woke Witches and Feminist Liminality in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*

Week 6            Wednesday, October 12: Studying Audiences

**Read:**

Matt Hills -- Audiences

Janice Radway – Women Read the Romance

Vicki Mayer – Research Beyond the Pale: Whiteness in Audience Studies and Media Ethnography

Kristen Warner – ABC’s *Scandal* and Black Women’s Fandom

Week 7            Wednesday, October 19: Ethnography and Participatory Methods

**Read:**

Jessa Lingel and Mary Gray – Ethnography

Rachel O’Neill – Pursing “Wellness”: Considerations for Media Studies

S. Craig Watkins et al – Appendix: Design of the Study and The Mobile Paradox

Virginia Eubanks – Double-Bound: Putting the Power Back into Participatory Research

**Recommended:**

Alex Cho -- <https://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2013/07/25/geography-of-learning/>

Week 8            Wednesday, October 26: Data Analysis Using Qualitative Software

**Read:**

No reading – please use reading time to read book for review paper

Hands-on workshop on NVivo with librarian Paul Pival – meet in library

Week 9            Wednesday, November 2: Mapping the Methodological Field (Book Review Presentations)

**Read:**

No reading – please use reading time to complete your book review

Five minute presentations on book review, focusing on methods

Week 10           Wednesday, November 9: NO CLASS – READING BREAK

**No reading.**

Week 11           Wednesday, November 16: Studying Media Industries

**Read:**

Timothy Havens -- Production

Timothy Havens, Amanda Lotz, and Serra Tinic – Critical Media Industry Studies: A Research Approach

Natalie Wreyford and Shelley Cobb – Data and Responsibility: Toward a Feminist Methodology for Producing Historical Data on Women in the Contemporary UK Film Industry

Week 12      Wednesday, November 23: Studying Film

**Read:**

TBD

Week 13      Wednesday, November 30: Historiography and the Archive

**Read:**

Michael Kackman – History and Historiography

Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook – Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory

Catherine Martin – Archival Research as Feminist Practice

**How-to resources (please skim):**

<https://stuartshrader.com/advice-graduate-students-embarking-archival-research>

<https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/professional-life/resources-for-graduate-students/graduate-school-from-start-to-finish/aha-guide-to-archival-research>

<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>

Week 14      Wednesday, December 7: Emergent Media Trends: Culture, Apps, Design, Power

**Read:**

Andre Brock Jr – Critical Technoculture Discourse Analysis

Ben Light, Jean Burgess and Stefanie Duguay – The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps

Rena Bivens – The Gender Binary Will Not Be Deprogrammed

Sasha Costanza-Chock – Design Justice: Towards an Intersectional Feminist Framework for Design Theory and Practice

<b>FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE Friday, December 9, 2022 AT 12 NOON</b>
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