

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 631 (L01): Social and Media Activism

FALL 2022: September 12 to December 5 (excluding Oct. 10 and Nov. 6-12)

Lecture: M 14:00 to 16:45

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY

Note: This course will be delivered in a synchronous mode in-person. In rare circumstances, some classes may be taught online by mutual agreement between instructor and students. 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.

Instructor:	Maria Bakardjieva
Office:	SS 224
Phone:	(403)-220-7300 office
Email:	bakardji@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	<i>Monday 13:00-14:00 or by appointment in-person or by Zoom</i>

Course Description

This course introduces students to literatures examining the role of communication media in the activities of social movements, activist organizations and in the performance of active citizenship in democratic societies. The required readings will equip students with a conceptual map integrating ideas and insights from several areas including social movement studies, citizenship studies, political communication and studies of digital media. The course will discuss theoretical and practical questions concerning the ways ordinary citizens and activist organizations have appropriated the affordances of various communication technologies and have integrated them into their struggles for making their voices heard, for highlighting social problems and achieving influence over institutional political decisions and policy-making. Students will have the opportunity to apply the conceptual frameworks proposed in the literature to the analysis of cases exemplifying the media practices of selected organizations, groups and movements. A critical reflection on the social consequences and limitations of the modes of citizen engagement facilitated by the current media environment will be encouraged and pursued throughout the class discussions and course assignments.

The course will be organized as a seminar combining brief lectures with comprehensive individual and group presentations by students and class discussion. Students are expected to read the assigned readings each week before class, post responses to the readings, and be prepared to participate in critical discussion of the material.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on D2L at the start of the term. The classes will be held in a synchronous fashion in person. In rare circumstances, some

classes may be held by Zoom by explicit agreement between instructor and students. 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, learners will acquire a sophisticated vocabulary and an advanced set of perspectives for researching, evaluating and mobilizing the application of various communication media for supporting active citizenship and participatory democracy.

Textbooks and Readings

Readings and links to readings will be posted online on the D2L site. The following books will be offered as optional for the group book review (see the list of assignments below). Students are encouraged to find information and rank their choices before the start of the semester.

Cammaerts, Bart (2018). *The Circulation of Anti-Austerity Protest*. Palgrave Macmillan. (full text will be available via D2L)

Costley White, Khadijah (2018). *The Branding of Right-Wing Activism : the News Media and the Tea Party*. Oxford University Press (full text is available via University of Calgary Library)

Gerbaudo, Paolo. (2012) *Tweets and the Streets : Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. Pluto Press. (full text is available via University of Calgary Library)

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

The class uses D2L for all communication, assignment submission, access to readings, presentations and grades. The use of mobile phones in class is not acceptable except in cases of personal emergency. Please notify the instructor before class if you expect urgent calls. Laptops can be used for note-taking and reference only. No social media use or web browsing is allowed in class. Please refrain from keeping laptops open during discussions. Students are not permitted to audio-record lectures and class discussion or take pictures during class. Statements and interaction during class time are a matter of group privacy and cannot be publicized.

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
16%	Read all required readings and post a minimum of seven responses to the readings assigned for the respective week in the D2L discussion forum	By 12 am on the day of the class
14%	Take an active role in seminar discussions	
25%	Give one seminar presentation (approx. 45 min.) post presentation slides and notes in D2L discussion forum	Individually scheduled
10%	Prepare in writing and present in class a group book review	TBA
3%	Prepare a research paper proposal	Oct. 24
32%	Prepare a research paper (15-20 pages typed, double spaced: submit via D2L Dropbox)	Dec. 12 by 4:30 pm
Pass/fail	Present research paper draft in class (upload presentation slides --up to 6 slides-- on the D2L discussion board) (5 points will be subtracted from final paper grade if fail)	Dec. 5 by 12 am

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.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments in class or by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox or discussion forum as instructed. 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 a 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. 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

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 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>

Any research related to this course will draw on information accessible in the public domain and will not involve human subjects. Note that you are not allowed to approach human subjects for the purposes of any of your assignments without receiving permission from your instructor and ethics clearance from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB).

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.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

TBA in the first week of classes.