

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 717 (Political Economy of Communication)

Winter 2022 Jan 10, 2022 - Apr 12, 2022 (excluding Feb. 20-26)

Seminar: W 2:00 to 4:45 pm

SS 202

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

Instructor:	Dr. Gregory Taylor
Email:	gregory.taylor2@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Thursday 2:00 – 4:00 pm. Please email to set appointment.
Office	SS 308

Course Description

The political economy of communications looks at the central role of economic and political power over our access to information. The class will explore the ideas of scholars past and present, many of them Canadian, who made key contributions to establishing this field of study, setting out its parameters and theories. The course will be conducted as a seminar where students prepare, present, discuss and debate ideas and positions based upon in-depth readings of selected texts.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on D2L.

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, students should be able to...

- comprehend and assess significant ideas, approaches and methods that have had decisive influences on the study of communication phenomena from a political economy perspective.
- demonstrate a theoretical and methodological grounding in concepts that are essential for understanding the logic, development, and practices of the communication industries.

- relate historic theories of political economy to current issues in communication studies.
- develop critical reading, analytical and debating skills.

Textbooks and Readings

There is no required text for the course. Readings and/or links will be posted on D2L. If a reading is not provided or linked, please try the library and online sources before writing to the course instructor.

Students are expected to have all readings completed prior to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

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.

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

Electronic devices are permitted for note taking only. Smartphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class.

Please respect the instructor and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

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
2 X 10 = 20 % Numeric grade	Short Writing Assignment: Students will be required to write an early response to a course reading. The first assignment must be completed within any of the first five weeks of class (by Feb 9). This assignment is about your reflections on the reading – therefore the response is due before the class in which the reading will be discussed. Assignments will not be accepted after the class. Analysis of the reading is primary, however,	Feb 9 and March 23

	<p>students should strengthen and develop their response by drawing upon their own experiences while demonstrating clear knowledge of the work cited. What is the author's main point? What is your response?</p> <p>The class on March 23 is the final class to submit the second short writing assignment. Each response must be between 800 and 1000 words. Responses must critically interrogate the text and analyze its implications. Avoid excessive summary. Responses must demonstrate sound analysis of the ideas from assigned readings and include specific quotes. Other sources may be used if formally cited but are not required. This assignment is to be uploaded to D2L.</p>	
15% Numeric grade	<p>Participation grades will be awarded on the basis of active involvement in class discussions and activities. In order to receive participation grades, students are expected to be in attendance for class, contribute to the discussions, and demonstrate a sound knowledge of required readings.</p>	ongoing
25% Numeric grade	<p>Debate</p> <p>An in-class debate will be held on March 16. Students will be assigned groups of 2-3 and will represent a side in some of the more public theoretical debates in the area of political economy in the last decades.</p> <p>Students will expected to present a side using the argument of the author they represent, as well as drawing upon further academic writings and examples from the world of communication in the time since the original debate was held. Teams will also be expected to respond to points raised by the other team.</p>	March 16
Essay Proposal (10%) numeric grade	<p>Term Paper proposal</p> <p>Students must submit a two (2) page (500 word), double-spaced proposal regarding their final essay research project. Essay proposal submissions must include the following: a working title; a critical question about the relationship between contemporary mass communications and political economy; a possible thesis statement; and a rationale as to why you have chosen your critical question. Why is this area of research significant?</p> <p>Marks will be awarded for clarity of proposal and its relevance to the greater themes studied in the class. (5 marks)</p> <p>In addition to the essay proposal, students must submit a list of eight (8) academic sources from a variety of resources (books, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) from outside the course</p>	March 9 (2 pm)

	<p>syllabus. Sources that are not academic (ie news stories) may be used but only as an addition to the eight academic sources. Each academic source must include a brief annotation in your own words of three-to-five (3-5) sentences, as to its importance for your potential final essay research project. (5 marks)</p>	
<p>Term Paper (30%) (Letter grade)</p>	<p>Students will submit a 2500-word (eight to ten page) research essay, excluding bibliography. The final essay must be printed in a double-spaced format (12 font), paginated, and with your name, course & professor, a title and a properly cited bibliography.</p> <p>Essays must have a clear thesis statement to be argued throughout the body of the text. Papers must demonstrate strong research in support of the thesis.</p> <p>Students will ask one critical question about the relationship between political economy and a specific current international issue in communications.</p> <p>The essay should build upon a theme identified in class discussion or in one or more of the articles/works under examination throughout the course, however the focus of the paper must be the student's own perspective. The overall point must be unified throughout and introduced by a clear thesis statement in the first paragraph.</p> <p>Students should strengthen and develop their original argument while demonstrating clear applications of the resources cited. Sources outside the ten (10) scholarly works required may be used to support your thesis but must be from a credible source.</p> <p>All references must be properly and fully cited in a consistent format (APA or Chicago preferred).</p> <p>Essays must generally follow what was proposed in the preceding essay proposal assignment unless otherwise discussed with the instructor.</p>	<p>April 6</p>

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 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/. 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

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, letter grades will be used for the term paper, while percentage or numerical grades will be used for short writing, quizzes, and participation grades.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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 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/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Students should refer to the schedule posted on D2L under course content.