

The University of Calgary
Department of Sociology

SOCI 345: Mass Communication
Spring 2017

Instructor: Nazario Robles

Office: SS 903

E-Mail: nroblesb@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-1:00 pm; by appointment.

Course Description

This course offers a critical, theoretically-informed look at what it means to live in a society in which the forms and content of mass media/mass communication and our uses of them shape our lives in significant ways. In particular, it constitutes an exploration of New Media and “Convergence Culture”, that is to say, the cultural transformations that are taking place as media converge and consumers change into active users of content. Looking at current phenomena related to new forms of media, this course aims to go beyond the notion of mass communication and introduce the student to the ways in which contemporary societies and individuals communicate their thoughts, dreams and fears.

Course Objectives

This course will provide the students with the opportunity to:

1. Examine the role of mass media and New Media in their lives.
2. Grasp the complex relationships between media and popular culture.
3. Understand the factors implicated with the rise and integration of new communications technologies.
4. Explore New Media and some of the cultural transformations related to it.
5. Develop an understanding of “Convergence Culture”.

Textbooks

Required:

Jenkins, Henry. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Evaluation

Class Activities and Assignments	30 %
Midterm examination (Thursday, June 8)	30 %
Final Project (Thursday, June 22)	30 %
Final Exam (Tuesday, June 27)	10 %

Class Activities and Assignments are team exercises designed to enhance the understanding of the topics discussed in class. They will not be accepted after their due dates unless a documented reason for not submitting them is provided (acceptable reasons: illness, family affliction, religious observance).

The **Midterm examination and the Final Exam** will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. They are non-cumulative.

The **Final Project** will be a paper in which the students will present their research, analysis and comparison of the different ways in which a social movement – the Student Movement in Quebec, the Occupy Movement or the Arab Spring, for example - is covered by both commercial media and alternative media such as blogs. In teams of four or five persons, the students will gather information from different sources and, using concepts learned in the course, will conduct a content analysis of this information.

Grading

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following schedule:

Number Grade Letter Grade

95-100	A+
90-94	A
85-89	A-
80-84	B+
75-79	B
70-74	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
55-59	D+
50-54	D
49 or less	F

Course Overview

1. History, Society and Media

- a. A Brief History of Media: From Pictographs to Periodicals.
- b. A Brief History of Media: Mass Media, Advertising and Beyond.
- c. Welcome to Cyberia: Rise of the Cyberspace.

2. Audiences, Popular Culture and Mass Media

- a. Audiences: A Cultural Studies Approach.
- b. Mass Media and Society: Mediation and Representation.
- c. Popular Culture: The Mainstream, the Underground and the Postmodern Sublime.

3. Convergence Culture and New Media

- a. Convergence Culture: From Transmedia Storytelling to Knowledge Communities.
- b. Convergence Culture: Media Convergence and Surveillance.
- c. New Media: Democracy, Freedom of Expression and the Question of Copyright in the Age of Convergence.

4. Digital Futures

- a. Digital Futures: Simulacra, Simulation and Hyperreality.
- b. Digital Futures: Connected but Alone?
- c. Conclusions: Convergence Culture, Media and the Ghost in the Machine.

Course Notes:

Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date of the return of the exam, students seeking reappraisal may submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of the mark. The instructor will reconsider the assigned grade and book a time to meet with the student. A re-assessed grade may be increased, decreased, or remain the same.

Technology Use

Electronic devices are common in Canadian classrooms. While they can be very effective in assisting students in the learning process, they can also be very distracting if not used properly. Students are encouraged to reflect on how their use of electronic devices affects their learning and how it affects others around them.

Email

Electronic mail is a convenient way for students to communicate with professors. If not used properly, however, email use can become problematic. Before sending an email, please attempt to obtain

information from the course outline. Please email me for administrative purposes only, for example, to set up an appointment. Please do not use email as a substitute for an office visit. Questions regarding course content, student challenges, grades, or other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Ethics Research

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2.html>

Deferrals

When possible, please provide advance notice if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/winter-2017-deferred-application-form.pdf>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at

https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Student Representation

The 2015-16 Students' Union VP Academic is Tina Miller: email: suvpaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, and arts4@su.ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at **Education Block - Food Court**. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/building-evacuation/assembly-points>

Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (MC 293, phone 403-220-8237) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf. Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.