

**Department of Sociology
University of Calgary**

**SOCI 345
Sociology of Mass Communication
Winter 2012**

Instructor: Dr. Liza McCoy

Office: SS 934

Email: mccoym@ucalgary.ca

Phone: 403-220-6856

Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3:00 pm; Thursdays 11 am-12:00 pm; and by appointment

Description of Course:

What does it mean to live in a society in which so much of what we do and know is mediated by the technologies and content of mass communication? This course takes a sociological approach to the study of mass communication as a coordinative process in modern society. Starting from our own experience, as people who participate in mass communication, we will look back to the history and theories of “mass society,” investigate the social organization of contemporary mass communication as a domain of policy and practice in Canada, and explore the varied ways people use the resources and technologies of mass media. Throughout the course we will consider the ways that mass communication interpenetrates, represents, and shapes various domains of social practice, such as families, gender, racialization/ethnicity, sport, deviance and social control, health and illness, work, and the economy.

Textbook:

Rowland Lorimer, Mike Gasher and David Skinner, *Mass Communication in Canada*, 6th ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Assignments and Assessment:

Midterm (February 28)	30 %
Final exam (date TBA)	40 %
Essay 1 (due January 31)	5 %
Essay 2 (due March 27)	25 %

The *midterm* and *final exams* will involve a combination of fixed choice, short answer and essay questions. They will be based on readings, lectures, films and class discussions. Some parts of the final exam are cumulative.

Topics for the short *essays* will be given in class. Resources for the essays include your own experience, course materials, and available mass media content. Essay 1 should be around 2 double-spaced pages or 500-600 words. Essay 2 should be between 3-4 double-spaced pages or 800-1000 words.

Grading:

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

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

Instructor's Policies

Classroom atmosphere: Stimulating discussion thrives in an atmosphere of mutual respect. My goal is an environment in which everyone feels inspired and safe to participate in discussions. Every person in the class has a role to play in creating and maintaining that environment.

Courtesy: Please make this class and the other people in it your priority during the time the class is in session. That means not reading or sending text messages and email, surfing the Internet, checking Facebook or engaging in other forms of electronic distraction during lectures and discussions. People who continuously show disrespect in this way will be asked to leave.

Late assignments: A late penalty (maximum 5% per day late) will be deducted from the grade on any assignments handed in after the due date/time.

Plagiarism: In accordance with University policy, I report all cases of plagiarism, including the unintentional kind. Make sure you know what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid it. Visit the Student Success Centre in MacEwan Hall for more information.

Rounding: If your percentage grade falls on the cusp between two letter grades, I will look at your grades and your participation in class discussions over the semester in order to decide whether to round your final grade up to the higher letter grade. My decision on this matter is not open to negotiation or persuasion.

Official University and Departmental Policies

Emergency Evacuations: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the food court located on the lower level of the Professional Faculties Building.

Exam Policies: If at all possible, you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination 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 physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams 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 Sociology Department.

Deferred Final Exam Application:

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:

http://ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.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

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.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).

Ethics in 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 Departmental 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: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

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 with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.

Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.

Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

Schedule (Topics and assigned chapters are subject to change)

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1 January 10	Introduction to course Sociological foundations and framework	
Week 2 January 17	Mass communication in society Sociological foundations/frame, continued	Ch. 2
Week 3 January 24	History of mass communication Theories of mass society	Ch. 3
Week 4 January 31	Mass media representations <i>Essay 1 due</i>	Ch. 4
Week 5 February 7	Activating mass media content Theories about effects and audiences	Ch. 5
Week 6 February 14	Continuation of previous topics Preparation for midterm exam	No new reading
Reading Week		
Week 7 February 28	<i>Midterm</i> Essay guidelines given out	
Week 8 March 6	Law, policy and culture industries	Chs. 6 and 7
Week 9 March 13	Culture industries and ownership	Chs. 7 and 8
Week 10 March 20	Social organization of “news” Social problems in the media	Ch. 9
Week 11 March 27	Continuation of previous topics <i>Essay 2 due</i>	No new reading
Week 12 April 3	Internet connections	Ch. 10
Week 13 April 10	Mass communication and global society Review for final exam	Ch. 11

Registrar controlled final – 2 hours – date to be announced.