

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communication and Culture CMCL 503 L01
Contours of Contemporary Culture
Fall 2015

Tuesday Sept. 8 – Tuesday Dec. 8

Tuesdays 12:30 – 15:15

Instructor: Dr. Marcia Epstein
Office: SS 316
Office Phone: 403-220-4848
E-Mail: epstein@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: Refer to D2L
Office Hours: T/Th by appointment

Course Description

A critical and inter-disciplinary examination, via classic texts, of how modernity has been transformed within the framework of an evolving global culture. Focus will be on major ideas, principles, and their implications within the time-frame of the early twentieth to early twenty-first centuries. Emphasis is placed primarily on Western writings, but inter-cultural perspectives will be included in lectures and discussions.

Additional Information

This is a reading-heavy course in which active participation is an absolute requirement. Students will be challenged to keep up with readings in order to engage in class discussion. Clear guidelines and grading criteria are provided for all assignments and class participation components.

Attendance in class is advisable, since discussion of readings in class will provide significant content. If you need to be absent, ask a classmate to provide you with notes: cooperation and sharing are encouraged.

Objectives of the Course

- To enrich students' intellectual perspective on how the events and factors at play in the 20th century have shaped the world we now experience in the 21st.
- To develop skills in the interpretation of inter-cultural texts, and in writing and presentation.

Textbooks and Readings

D. S. Gochberg, ed., *Classics of Western Thought*, Vol. III (from CMCL 303 & 501)
D. S. Gochberg, ed. *Classics of Western Thought*, Vol. IV, The Twentieth Century.
O. Hallman, ed. *Traversing Philosophical Boundaries*
A. Huxley, *Island* (novel)

Internet and electronic communication device information

Phones and pagers must be turned off during class unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional, or responsible for the care of a family member. Computers are welcome as long as they are used appropriately. Research and note-taking* are appropriate during class; social sites, Twitter, games, YouTube and e-mail are not.

*Be aware that recent research shows that taking lecture notes on a keyboard produces results that are inferior to handwriting:

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/?WT.mc_id=SA_MB_20140604

and

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>

Assignments and Evaluation (see instructions below):

Group project proposal	20%	Oct. 6
Journal on readings	20%	Nov. 3
Group project (presentation or paper)	25%	Nov. 10, 17, 24
Final Exam	25%	Registrar scheduled
Participation: in class and/or D2L, and Mini-Seminar presentation	10%	See instructions below

-All assignments must normally be completed in order to pass the course.

-Exams (closed-book) will consist of a combination of short-answer questions and speculative essay questions.

-You will be graded on the results of your work. Hard work merits an A only when it produces outstanding results.

-All work will be evaluated for accuracy of content and expression, attention to detail, logical coherence, depth of understanding, and evidence of familiarity with assigned readings and discussions.

Instructions for assignments

Journal

Journal entries are reflections and commentaries on assigned readings and thematic questions. A set of brief essays (1-2 pages each) commenting on *at least* four assigned readings is required; two entries will be evaluated (students may choose which two they wish to have evaluated). These will be written outside of class. Evaluation will be based on coherence, relevance, depth of understanding, and rhetorical and writing skills demonstrated.

Group Projects:

Groups for projects will focus on solving a problem associated with one of the following themes:

- *Potential effects of Climate Change in Canada*
- *Aboriginal rights and cultural perspectives*
- *“Terrorism” and Bill C-51 – legal, ethical and /or media issues*
- *Media coverage of the Federal Election on October 19th.*

This assignment is an exercise in speculative thinking as well as research. The proposed problem will be based in real issues. The proposed solution does not need to be definitive; it can be possible or theoretical, local or national or international. It should be based in readings from the Heritage (CMCL) courses and library databases, in evaluation of broadcast and electronic media, in identification of cultural assumptions, and in real-world statistics.

Group project proposal

Groups of 3 or 4 members are acceptable; individual projects are normally not.

The proposal must identify the problem being addressed and use course readings and themes to explain why the topic is relevant; what the specific interest or angle taken to explore it will be; what other literature has been consulted to frame and deepen understanding of the problem (**annotated bibliography**); how the group will tackle the project (**methodology**), including rules of engagement for completing the work (who will do what) and resolving any conflicts that arise among group members.

Length: avg. 4-5 pages double spaced

The **annotated bibliography** will consist of *at least four* written and/or recorded sources that will enable you to start your work, cited with correct bibliographic format (APA or MLA: be consistent) and annotated with concise descriptions of each source, the author's or artist's background, and how the source will be useful to your project. Annotations are usually sufficient at 1 or 2 paragraphs.

Group project

Each group will complete a final project for submission by prior arrangement, between November 10 and 24. Instructions for determining deadlines will be explained in class. Projects can take many forms, as long as emphasis on the quality of the thinking and analysis relating to the topic is maintained. Projects may include skits, videos, debates, panel discussions, mock UN reports, or formal papers.

Length for papers (non-performative):: Depends on topic and size of group: avg. 10-12 pages double-spaced. *All pages must be numbered and fastened together. All group members' names, in alphabetical order by surname, must be on the title page along with a title that describes the topic: “Group Project” is not an acceptable title.*

Performative projects, such as skits and videos, will get class time for presentations. These must be accompanied by a document to submit for evaluation::

- a script and/or storyboard, or a *detailed* outline of contents with indication of where audiovisual content fits;
- a bibliography of all written and “clipped” sources;
- a statement from each group member of what you learned from doing the project.

All pages must be numbered and fastened together/ kept in the same file. All group members' names, in alphabetical order by surname, must be on the title page along with a title that describes the topic: "Group Project" is not an acceptable title. Submission of scripts may be in hard copy or electronic, depending on content and prior arrangement. For submission rules see above.

Timing for presentations will be determined when the number of them is known.

Participation:

Mini-Seminar Presentation. Each week, one discussion group (5-8 people) will present brief observations and reflections on the readings for that day to the rest of the class for 10-15 minutes after the lecture, and will then divide to lead discussion groups.

Evaluation will be based on coherence, relevance, depth of understanding, and communication skills.

A sign-up sheet will be posted on D2L in the week before classes start.

Everyone signed up for a given day will need to check in with the others about how to present your material.

Full instructions will be given on the first day of class.

This assignment will count for the Participation score.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox. Some assignments may be submitted electronically, with prior arrangement.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

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.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using raw scores (e.g., a score out of 15 for an assignment worth 15 /100 of the final grade)

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

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.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

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 (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A complete schedule will be posted on D2L before classes start.

*Readings should be completed **before** the class in which they are assigned.*

Unit 1 – Realities and Illusions

9/8 Overview: *Where are we, and how did we get here?*

Identification of themes and issues, expectations

Excerpts from subversive films!

Thematic question: What will be better in the future?

9/15 The World Wars: Cultural Significance

CWT 3 -- Modern poetry (McCrae, Sassoon, Owen, Goll); Hitler

Reflections on the Concept of Evil:

CWT 4 Bettelheim; Arendt

Thematic question: What is evil? How do you know, and what can you do to stop it?

9/22 Existentialism as Liberation:

CWT 3 Sartre; CWT 4 de Beauvoir; Fanon .

Project planning

Thematic question: Are you an Existentialist? Why or why not?