

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 371, L01
CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES

Winter 2016

Tues., Jan.12 – Tues., April 12 (excluding Feb. 16 and Feb. 19)

Lecture: T 14:00-15:50, Tutorials: F 12:00-12:50 or 13:00-13:50

Instructor: Dr. Monique M. Solomon
Office: TBA
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L via MyUofC
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-5 pm or by appointment

Course Description

The course introduces students to major theoretical approaches used in communications studies to critique media in society. Students will gain knowledge of these theories, and learn approaches to critically analyze media production and content, and to understand the social and cultural impact of media in society. Areas to be covered include: the economics and politics of the media, media organizations and professionals, media and ideology, social inequality and media representation, active audiences and the construction of meaning, media technology, and media and globalization. The course explores the complementary processes of media production and media consumption, and the ways individuals and institutions are instrumental in shaping the nature and character of mass media.

Additional Information

- Prerequisite: COMS 201

Objectives of the Course

- To provide an introduction to the main theoretical approaches used in critical media studies.
- To facilitate the development of critical awareness about the relationships between media production, content, and audiences.
- To guide students in developing analytical skills necessary for analysis of media texts, practices, and their influence in society.

Textbooks and Readings

Croteau, D. & Hoynes, W. (2014). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* (5th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore, online at CourseSmart.com, and will be on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library Reserve Desk.

Additional readings may be assigned in class.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops and other electronic devices may be used during class for course related work and note taking, but not during student presentations. Cell phones must be turned off for the duration of class. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

When sending email to your instructor(s) include COMS 371 in the subject line, and be sure your name appears somewhere in the email. Please allow up to 48 hours for responses to emails. All electronic communication with your instructor(s) and your fellow students regarding group projects and/or assignments should be addressed and written in a courteous, professional manner.

Email correspondence to your instructor(s) is most useful for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material or assignments please speak with your instructor(s) during office hours.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments for COMS 371 L01 W16	Weight	Due Date
Quiz	10%	February 2
Mid-Term Exam	20%	March 1
Final Exam The quiz and exams test student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The format may include multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer questions. Material is not cumulative. The final exam will include only material covered since the mid-term.	30%	Registrar scheduled
Culture Jam – Group Project The assignment tests your ability to critique and challenge media texts using course concepts. In groups, students will choose a media text (such as a print advertisement, political campaign, or public service campaign), provide a critique of its message and re-create it to alter the meaning. The finished product, along with an analysis of both the original product and the re-created product will be presented in class, and a report handed in. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	30%	Presentation schedule TBA. Report due last day of lecture.
Participation Students are encouraged to take part in discussion, individual and group activities in tutorial and lecture.	10%	Ongoing

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are due in class, in hard copy, on the due date unless you are otherwise instructed. Some assignments may be due via uploads to D2L please follow assignment instructions carefully.

As directed please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor. 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.

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 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.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf .

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

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 the course are graded using a combination of weighted raw scores for each individual assignment. This is converted into a percentage and letter grade for the assignment. All assignments are then weighted based on the percentage value for the course and the scale below is used to calculate 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;	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%

	generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject			
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	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
• Calgary Police Service	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <p>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/</p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</p> <p>403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>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.</p>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A schedule of lectures, readings, and assignments will be posted on D2L.