

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Communication and Media Studies COMS401.47 L02

Constructing the Celebrity

Fall 2016

Thursday, Sept 15 – Thursday, Dec 8
(no class on Thursday, Nov 10 for Reading Break)

Th 14:00–16:45

Instructor: Christine Mains
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Office Phone: n/a
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Thurs 12:30-13:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on the ways in which celebrity image is constructed and communicated through the collaboration of the gossip industry (tabloids, paparazzi, and gossip blogs) and the culture industry (including studio representatives, media and celebrities themselves).

Objectives of the Course

- familiarize students with the experience of learning how to closely read, critically evaluate, and creatively explore popular culture and new media
- strengthen abilities to discuss and present insights gained in the course in both written and presentation formats

Textbooks and Readings

There is no required textbook to purchase for this course. A schedule of assigned readings is posted at the end of the course outline; details and links to required readings are posted to D2L in the Contents area. Please review the reading schedule weekly and complete all assigned readings before the start of class in order to participate fully in class discussion and activities.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students may use laptops to take notes and refer to assigned readings, but not to do any other personal work (such as Facebook or checking email); laptop use must not distract other students. Cellphones must be turned to silent and should not be used during class time.

Assignments and Evaluation

In-class Tasks	weekly throughout term	15%
Essay #1	Oct. 21	15%
Group Presentation	assigned date	15%
Essay #2	Dec. 11	25%
Final Exam	TBA	30%

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. See the Grading Rubrics on D2L for each assignment.

Essay #1: This essay of ~1000 words is an analysis of the image of a celebrity (chosen by the student) using terms and concepts discussed in class. The essay will be evaluated on content and form, grammar and expression, and citation of sources.

Presentation (Group): Each group will present (~20 min. per group) to the entire class a brief summary of key concepts from the day's assigned readings, illustrated by examples provided by the group members. The group will also be expected to generate questions for a Q&A period following the presentation. All members of the group will share the same grade, unless there is compelling evidence to do otherwise based on instructor observation and peer reports.

Essay #2: This essay of ~1800 words is a case study involving research into and analysis of the production, consumption, and deployment of a constructed celebrity (chosen by the student) using terms and concepts discussed in class. The essay will be evaluated on content and form, grammar and expression, and citation of sources.

In-class Tasks: Each week, students will be required to participate in various in-class activities involving writing (both group and individual) and discussion of the assigned readings. Preparation for this work requires both regular attendance and completion of assigned readings in advance.

Final Exam: The closed-book exam will include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions, as well as a short essay component requiring analysis of a provided case study using course terms and concepts.

Submission of Assignments

All written assignments will be submitted and returned through Dropbox on D2L. No assignments will be submitted in hardcopy, whether handed to the instructor, dropped at the main office, or slid under office doors, nor will assignments be accepted through email attachment. Assignments must be submitted in .doc or .docx format, not .pages.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment, and to check email regularly for notices of missing assignments, and to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in the file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of written assignments.)

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>

Late Assignments

Assignments are due through Dropbox on the stated due date. Assignments may be submitted after the deadline only with the emailed permission of the instructor, and may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late at the discretion of the instructor.

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. 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. All assignments will be graded using letter grades. Each In-class Task will be graded as complete/incomplete; at the end of term, a percentage of completed tasks against the total number of tasks assigned will be determined and a final letter grade will be reported based on the below chart. The final exam has two components: the essay portion will be graded using letter grades; the short answer portions will be graded using points. The grades for the components will be averaged to report a final letter grade for the Final Exam assignment.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media, and Film.

- In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to corresponding GPA values (column 1) multiplied by the weighting of the assignment. *For example: an assignment weighted 20% that receives a letter grade of B+ will be converted to 0.66.*
- Weighted GPA equivalents are totaled together and (after any applicable rounding-up) converted to the letter grade corresponding to that total (column 3). *For example, if all weighted GPA equivalents total 3.73, the final letter grade reported is A-; if all weighted GPA equivalents total 2.92, the final letter grade reported is B.*

In this calculation, the percentages listed in columns 4 and 5 are provided for informational purposes only.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF 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%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** 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.

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>

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.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. 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>

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

Please complete all of the assigned readings before the class discussion, in order to participate fully in class discussion and activities. More details about each reading and how to access the material is posted to D2L: Readings are organized by discussion date.

Discussion	Readings	Due Dates
Sept. 15	Introduction to the Course	
Sept. 22	De Cordova, "The Emergence of the Star System in America" Cashmore, "Celebrity in the Twenty-First Century"	
Sept. 29	Van Krieken, "Celebrity as a Social Form"	
Oct. 6	Dyer, "Introduction to Heavenly Bodies" Petersen, "Angelina Jolie's Perfect Game"	
Oct. 13	Turner, "The Economy of Celebrity" King, "Stardom, Celebrity, and the Money Form"	
Oct. 20	Slide, "Gossip, Scandal, and Innuendo" Petersen, "Smut Goes Corporate"	Essay Due Oct. 21
Oct. 27	McNamara, "The Paparazzi Industry" Murray, "Stalking the Paparazzi"	
Nov. 3	Meyer, "The Challenge of Cultural Elites" Markham, "Celebrity Advocacy and Public Engagement"	
Nov. 10	NO CLASS. READING BREAK.	
Nov. 17	Ferris and Harris, "The Dynamics of Fan-Celebrity Encounters" Markham and boyd, "To See and Be Seen"	
Nov. 24	Monroe, "The Killer Crush" Piper, "Real Body, Fake Person"	
Dec. 1	Furedi, "Celebrity Culture" McDonnell, "Just Like Us?"	
Dec. 8	No assigned readings. Peer Review Workshop, Exam Review	Research Essay Due Dec. 11
Dec. 12-22	Final Exam.	TBA