

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

**Communication Studies (COMS) 435 L01  
Mass Communications and Canadian Society**

**Winter 2016**

**Monday January 11 – Monday April 11 inclusive  
Monday 16:00 – 18:45**

**Instructor:** Gregory Taylor  
**Office:** SS308  
**Office Phone:** (403) 220-6206  
**E-Mail:** gregory.taylor2@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 10 -12:00 or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to theoretical literature on various aspects of the media, including public policy questions such as the concentration of media ownership, Canadian content requirements, censorship, the role of the media during elections, and the problems and opportunities that might be brought by advances in technology. The course draws upon historical and contemporary examples to explore the unique relationship between Canada and the mass media.

**Objectives of the Course**

Through lectures, readings, class discussions, and course assignments, students will:

- Explore a range of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of mass communications and Canadian society.
- Develop critical and analytical skills through the interrogation of texts, media, policies, organizations, corporations, and events.
- Examine the social, political, and economic impacts of contemporary Canadian mass communications upon Canadian populations.

## Textbooks and Readings

David Taras. *Digital Mosaic: Media, Power, and Identity in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 2015

Students are expected to have all readings completed prior to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities. A detailed schedule of readings will be distributed at the first lecture.

Additional required readings to be posted or linked on D2L throughout the semester.

## Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. **iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class.** Please respect the instructor and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Participation	(ongoing)	10%
D2L Short Writing (2 X 10%)	First by Feb 1 Second by April 4	20%
Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	March 7	15%
Midterm (closed book)	March 14	25%
Final Essay	April 11	30%

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

### ***Participation—10%: Due date—ongoing***

Students are expected to not only be in attendance every week, but to contribute significantly to the class discussions via individual comments, group work activities, and short presentations. Oral participation will help solidify concepts.

***Desire2Learn Short Writing Assignment —20% (2 X 10%): Due date—various***

Throughout the course, students will be required to write a total of two (2) responses to a prompted discussion question posted on D2L. The first assignment must be completed **within the first four weeks of class (by Feb 1)**. Students may choose from any of the weeks that prompted discussion questions will be posted. This assignment is about your ideas – therefore the responses are due before the class in which the reading will be discussed. Assignments will not be accepted after the class. The class on April 4 is the final class to submit the second short writing assignment.

Each response must be between 500 and 750 words, equivalent to two (2) or three (3) pages double-spaced. Responses must have a thesis statement, a definitive argument, and conclusion. Responses must demonstrate sound analysis of the ideas from course readings. Other sources may be used if formally cited but are not required.

These assignments are to be uploaded to D2L.

***Essay Proposal and Annotated bibliography —15%: Due date—March 7 (start of class)***

Students must submit a two (2) page (500 word), double-spaced proposal regarding their final essay research project. Essay proposal submissions must include the following: a critical question about the relationship between mass communications and Canadian society; a possible thesis statement; and a rationale as to why you have chosen your critical question. Students may also briefly consider additional arguments for future use (audiences, events, texts, etc.).

In addition to the essay proposal, students must submit a list of eight (8) academic sources from a variety of resources (books, book chapters, journal articles, etc.). Academic sources must come from outside the course syllabus. Each academic source must include a brief annotation *in your own words* of three-to-five (3-5) sentences, as to its importance for your potential final essay research project.

***Midterm—25%: March 14***

A midterm examination will test knowledge on readings up to this point in the course and content presented in lectures. Readings for the week of March 14 will be included. Midterms must be taken in class unless documentation is provided for a legitimate absence. Possible testing formats include short

answers, and/or essay questions. Students will have the first half of class (90 minutes) to write the midterm. The exam is closed book.

***Final Essay—30%: Due date—April 11 (start of class)***

Students will submit a 1750 - 2000 word, six (6) to eight (8) page research essay, excluding bibliography. The final essay must be printed in a double-spaced format (12 font), paginated, and with your name, course & professor, a title and a properly cited bibliography. Essays must have a clear thesis statement to be argued throughout the body of the text. Essays must demonstrate strong research in support of the thesis.

Students will ask one critical question about the relationship between mass communications and Canadian society. As such, each essay must include a critical analysis of a particular development in media and its impact, or potential impact, on Canadian society. The essay should build upon a theme identified in class discussion or in one or more of the articles/works under examination throughout the course. Your point must be unified throughout and introduced by a clear thesis statement in the first introduction.

Students should strengthen and develop their original argument by drawing upon their own experiences while demonstrating clear applications of the resources cited. Sources outside the eight (8) scholarly works may be used to support your thesis but must be from a credible source.

All references must be properly and fully cited in a consistent format (APA or Chicago preferred). Essays must generally follow what was proposed in the preceding essay proposal assignment unless otherwise discussed with the instructor.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Submission of Assignments:** Please hand in your final essay directly to your instructor.

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.

### **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/](http://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](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.
2. 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.
3. 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

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades.

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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

<b>For information about . . .</b>	<b>Visit or contact . . .</b>
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Calgary Police Service</b></li><li>• <b>Emergency Text Messaging</b></li><li>• <b>Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</b></li><li>• <b>Safewalk Program</b></li></ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a>

	If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> • IT help line	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman	<a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a> 403-266-HELP (4357) <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a> 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** to be uploaded to D2L in the first week of classes.