

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

**Communications Studies (COMS) 591 – Seminar 01**  
**Senior Seminar in Communication**

**Winter 2016**

**Tues., Jan. 12 – Tues., Apr. 12, 2016 (excluding Feb. 16)**

**Tu 15:30-18:15**

Instructor: Dr. Tania S. Smith

Office Location: Social Sciences (SS) 302

Office Phone: 403-220-7774

Email: [smit@ucalgary.ca](mailto:smit@ucalgary.ca) -- please put "591" in the subject line.

Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal

Office Hours: View calendar at <http://ucalgary.ca/smit/about/appointment-calendar>  
and email the instructor to request an appointment.

### **Course Description**

With reference to a special topic, this course explores the variety of ways in which communication builds social and cultural values. Students will undertake a major project that will integrate their understanding of communication theory, history and methodology. See individual course outlines for current topics. Course Hours: 3 units; H(3S-0)  
Prerequisite(s): Communications Studies 369, 371, 381, and Communication and Culture 313 or Communications Studies 313 and admission to the BA with a Major in Communications Studies.

### **Additional information**

The special topic for Winter 2016 S01 is "Communication and Biography across Time, Cultures and Media." The class will read a recent biography of Cicero to understand how the work was constructed and to understand how Cicero developed and performed as a communicator. In light of this text and other course readings on online communication, students will analyze short, online biographies of other communicators. Students will also compose autobiographical narratives of their own development as communicators during postsecondary studies as they build further skills and knowledge as communicators in the online world.

Students will sign up for a free blog on WordPress.com and post selected course assignments as blog posts. The instructor will be co-admin of each blog, and all student blogs will have a similar theme and structure. Students' blogs will be public, yet sheltered from search engines. After the course is over, students are free to delete or move their blog, or make it fully public.

## Objectives of the Course

- To integrate communication knowledge and skills gained from formal and informal learning throughout one's postsecondary degree
- To understand theories, methods, and aims of auto/biography across time, cultures, and media
- To analyze auto/biographies of communicators, using a biography of Cicero as our main sample
- To learn how to design and write auto/biographical online communication on a semi-public blog
- To build communication skills and understanding through presentations, draft reviews, revision and reflection.

## Internet and electronic communication device information

During student presentations, all electronic devices must be put away and laptop screens must be closed. At other times, students may use electronic devices for course-related functions only. Show professional courtesy and attentiveness to the instructor and fellow students by using technology silently and discreetly, minimizing distraction.

## Required Textbooks and Readings

- **Fishwick, M. (2006). *Cicero, classicism, and popular culture*.** New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 978 0 7890 2592 0 (Approx. cost: \$70; less for E-book)
- **Other free online required readings on auto/biography and online communication.** (TBA)

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Blog post collection (2) **40%**

- **Collection #1 – Worth 15%. 1500 words. Draft: Fri, Feb. 12 Final: Wed, Mar. 2**
- **Collection #2 – Worth 25%. 2500 words. Draft: Fri, April 1 Final: Wed, April 13**

At the middle and end of term, students will post collections of auto/biography themed blog posts on their own COMS 591 WordPress.com blog, with a backup version of each collection submitted to D2L. Each collection must cover all course objectives, and course texts and concepts must be cited in addition to other sources. Each post must include images or media whose content, origin, authorship, and citation meet course and university copyright guidelines. The design and structure of the blog and each post is part of the assignment score.

### Reading Reflection portfolios (2) **20%** **Wed. Feb. 10** **Wed. Mar. 23**

1200-1500 words per portfolio. Students will draft reflections during class time each week based on passages from assigned readings. Each portfolio includes answers drafted to date. At least two of these reflections will appear in their original form, in an annotated form showing edits and comments, and their clean final version (only the final versions count in the word count). These versions are integrated within a narrative of one's process.

### Group Activity portfolio (1) **10%** **Wed. Apr. 13**

Total length of the portfolio depends on group size. At the end of term, one group-authored portfolio demonstrates collaborative learning processes and outcomes from in-class activities. Each student participates actively in at least 8 in-class group activities during term and will select 2 activities to feature and write about in their group's portfolio. Each portfolio includes a 500-word group-authored reflective memo, an additional 700 words of text per group member, images of in-class group work, and a table of activities, participants, and roles.

**Biography Analysis Group Presentation (1)****15%****As scheduled**

Each group of 2-3 students will give a 15 minute analysis of a short, public, online biography that informs us of the subject's development and performance as a communicator and analyzes the biography's media and cultural contexts, communication strategies, and potential impacts.

**Autobiography Presentation (1)****15%****As scheduled**

One individual 12-minute presentation of one's own development and performance as a communicator during one's postsecondary studies, covering both informal and formal (course-based) learning and performance.

**NOTE 1:** All assignments weighted 15% or more must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

**NOTE 2:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a backup copy of each submitted assignment.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Assignment submission**

**Do NOT email assignments to the instructor.** All assignments must be submitted electronically to their designated areas on one's COMS 591 WordPress.com blog and/or Desire2Learn.

**Blog post collections must also be copied into a .docx or PDF file and submitted to Desire2Learn** by the deadline. This is necessary since blog posts can be revised at any time and others may have access to edit blog content. Blog assignments will be marked in PDF format and returned privately via D2L.

**Presentation slides**, when used, should be brought to class on a memory stick as a backup, as well as posted on D2L before class begins. Ensure that all media you rely on is available even without Internet, and make backup plans (i.e. verbal summaries and descriptions of videos or audio) in case technology does not work. Converting slides to PDF is highly recommended in case your file is not compatible with the version on the classroom computer (TIP: convert PPT files to PDF at <http://www.freepdfconvert.com/>).

**File format requirements:** Submit files in .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx, or PDF format. Use the following file name formats, with hyphens (-) instead of spaces:

- 591-ReadingReflectionPortfolio-Lastname-Firstname.docx
- 591-BioPresentation-Lastname1-Lastname2-Lastname3.ppt
- 591-LabPortfolio-Groupname.docx

**Verify your submission manually:** Immediately after submitting an assignment to D2L, download and re-open your file(s) from the link provided. Desire2Learn receipts and emails cannot verify your file's contents. If a corrupted, empty or incorrect file is uploaded, you may receive a zero (0) or a late penalty.

**Emergency submission methods**

- **Option 1:** If it is not possible to access D2L, email your file as an attachment to [upload.COMS\\_46.ru6ssfs9oh@u.box.com](mailto:upload.COMS_46.ru6ssfs9oh@u.box.com) (a secure folder on the instructor's Box.com account). Email your instructor to inform her you have sent it there. As soon as possible, submit it normally on Desire2Learn with a comment explaining your earlier submission method.

- **Option 2:** If Internet access is unavailable, print your assignment and submit it in paper. 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. As soon as possible, submit it on Desire2Learn with a comment explaining your earlier submission method.

## Policy for Late Assignments

**Written assignments** are due via Desire2Learn by 11:59 PM on their deadline date.

**Presentation materials** are due on D2L discussion before class begins on the presentation date.

**For all written assignments worth 10% or more each, a 24-hour grace period** until 11:59 PM the next day is permitted for unanticipated technical difficulties, short-term illness, or scheduling challenges. If the assignment is submitted late but within the grace period, no excuse is required and no penalties will apply. However, this is not an extension: after the grace period, late penalties count from the original deadline, starting with 2 days late.

**Late written assignments** may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g. A- to B+) for each day late, including weekend days.

**Late presentations** may be penalized with the loss of a grade (A- to B+) for each *available class day* it has been delayed because you were unavailable. If for any reason you cannot meet your presentation's scheduled time, you are responsible for notifying the instructor and rescheduling it as soon as possible.

**Verifiable documentation** is normally required to waive or reduce late penalties.

## 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

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using

- letter grades
- percentage grades
- raw scores (e.g., a score out of 15 for an assignment worth 15 /100 of the final grade)
- GPA values (using any value on the 0 to 4.0 scale, including, e.g., 3.2 or 2.8)
- a combination of the above. Assignments will be given a letter grade and/or percentage equivalent based on the table below.

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	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%

	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 (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**

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<p><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></p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (<b>220-5333</b>). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a></p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<p><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></p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<p><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></p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><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></p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><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></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

The course schedule will be provided on Desire2Learn.