

Communications Studies (COMS) 201 - Lecture 02
Introduction to Communication Studies
Fall 2013

**Saturday 1:00 P.M. Class dates: September 14, 21, 28; October 5, 12, 19, 26;
November 2, 16, 23 and 30.**

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Office Hours: Saturdays 16:30 to 17:30 or by appointment

Course Description

A general mapping of the field, with an emphasis on its breadth in the areas of media studies, communication of science and technology, and rhetorical communication. The course also provides a general examination of how Communication Studies emerged during the 20th century and how the field relates to issues of social and cultural change.

Objectives of the Course

To offer students a first approach to the theoretical foundations of communication studies.

To encourage students to develop critical awareness before media strategies and contents.

To help students develop analytical skills necessary for communication research.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted in class as long as they are used EXCLUSIVELY for note taking. Cell phones should be turned off during class.

Textbooks and Readings:

Griffin, E. (2011). *A first look at communication theory* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Narrative and Rhetorical Analysis: October 5 (15%)

Using the ideas from narrative theory and Aristotelian rhetoric, students will analyze a text found in the media. The length of the analysis will be 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted on blackboard.

2. Semiotic Analysis: November 16 (15%)

Students will apply Barthes' semiotic theory to a cultural artifact or event. The goal is to identify a text's meaning and explain how this meaning is produced. The required length of the analysis is 1000 words. Further instructions will be posted on blackboard.

3. Midterm Exam: October 12 (20%)

In-class multiple-choice and short or long answer questions based on the theories and readings discussed from Week 1 to Week 4.

4. Group Seminar Activities (20%)

Students will complete four mandatory group activities in class. Students will have one hour to complete the assignment. Activities will comprise a series of short questions that will require the analysis of a cultural text or media event through the systematic application of the theories studied in class. The four activities planned will be the following:

A symbolic interactionism seminar (Sept. 28)

An agenda-setting seminar (Oct. 19)

A standpoint theory and muted group theory seminar (Nov. 16)

An organizational communication seminar (Nov. 23)

5. Final Exam: TBA (30%)

Analytical questions focusing on the theories presented throughout the entire semester, with an emphasis on the content (lectures, readings, presentations) covered since the midterm.

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

Assignment guidelines will be handed in the first day of class.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or 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.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

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.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although 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. 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 System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99

D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

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 fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

	Saturdays Room PF-110 1:00 to 4:30 P.M
Week 1 Sept 14	Topic: Introduction to course, textbook and projects. What is theory? Interpretivism vs. objectivism; research methods Reading: Chapter 2 Laboratory: Introduction to theoretical analysis
Week 2 Sept 21	Public Rhetoric (Aristotle) Narrative Paradigm (Walter Fisher) Reading: Chapter 22 and 24 Laboratory: Rhetoric and Narrative analysis practice
Week 3 Sept 28	Topic: Symbolic Interactionism (George Mead) Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Charles Berger) Readings: Chapters 5 and 10 Laboratory: Symbolic Interactionism seminar
Week 4 Oct 5	Topic: Historical Perspectives on Media Effects and Uses and Gratifications (Elihu Katz) Cultivation Theory (George Gerbner) Readings: Chapter 28 and 29 Assignment: Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment due Laboratory: midterm practice
Week 5 Oct 12	Midterm (1:00 to 3:00 PM) Break 3:00 to 3:15

	3:15- 4:30 Topic: Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw) Readings: Chapter 30
Week 6 Oct 19	Topic: Media Ecology (Marshall McLuhan; Harold Innis) Reading: Chapter 25 Laboratory: Agenda Setting seminar
Week 7 Oct 26	Topic: General Semantics and Semiotics (Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes) Reading: http://www.afirstlook.com/docs/gensem.pdf Chapter 26 Laboratory: Semiotic analysis practice
Week 8 Nov. 2	Topic: Cultural Studies (Stuart Hall) Reading: Chapter 27 Laboratory: Encoding/Decoding model practice
Week 9 Nov 9	CLASS CANCELLED- READING DAY
Week 10 Nov 16	Topic: What is feminist communication theory? Standpoint Theory (Harding & Wood) Muted Group Theory (Cheris Kramarae) Readings: Chapter 35 & Chapter 36 Assignment: Semiotic Analysis due Laboratory: Standpoint Theory and Muted Group Theory seminar
Week 11 Nov 23	Topic: Cultural Approach to Organizations (Geertz and Pacanowsky) Critical Theory of Communications in Organizations (Stanley Deetz) Readings: Chapter 20 and 21 Laboratory: Organizational communication seminar
Week 12 Nov 30	Topic: Postmodernism Readings: Lectures notes Laboratory: Final review

Deadlines

Assignment	Due date	Weight
Symbolic Interactionism seminar	Sept. 28, 2013	5%
Rhetoric and Narrative Paradigm Assignment	Oct. 5, 2013	15%
Midterm	Oct. 12, 2013	20%
Agenda setting seminar	Oct. 19, 2013	5%
Semiotic Analysis	Nov. 16, 2013	15%
Standpoint theory and Muted Group Theory seminar	Nov. 16, 2013	5%
Organizational communication seminar	Nov. 23, 2013	5%
Final exam	TBA	30%
TOTAL		100%