

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

**COMS 201 L01**

Introduction to Communication and Media Studies

Winter 2019

Jan. 10 – April 12 (excluding Feb. 17-23)

Lecture: Th 12:30-2:20

Tutorials: F 10:00-10:50 or 11:00-11:50

**Instructor:** Dr. S. Thrift  
**Office:** SS 210  
**Office Phone:** 403-220-5320  
**E-Mail:** samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** Th 10:00-11:30 (and by appt.)

**Course Description**

In this course we will explore the question of what we are doing when we “communicate”. Are we simply transmitting information? Are we creating meaning? Are we participating in a social process? Are we persuading others? Are we supporting the social status quo? Are we voicing challenges to the ‘system’? Incorporating examples from popular culture, COMS 201 will facilitate your finding an answer to these questions for yourself.

**Additional Information**

Students must register in a Lab section. Labs (i.e., tutorials) are not considered optional; they are an integral part of the course and attendance and active participation are expected. It is essential that you come to every tutorial with a copy of your readings.

Please be aware that much of this course deals with the artifacts, experiences, and products of popular culture. As such, some of the material we study may involve coarse language, sexuality and violence. If this is a problem for you, please see the instructor or your TA.

**Objectives of the Course**

Through readings, lectures, written assignments and group discussions and activities, Coms 201 will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of communications. Recognizing that communication is integral to all human activities and interactions, this course explores elements of communication studies that appeal to scholars from a variety of academic disciplines.

Through an overview of the key concepts, methodological traditions, and major theoretical currents of the field, Students will have an opportunity to experience the cutting-edge diversity that defines communication studies. In addition, the course will seek to introduce Students to the activity of scholarly communication itself by covering some of the basic

principles of academic research: finding and using sources, developing original arguments based partly on those of others, and writing papers in the genre of academic research.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

Griffin, Em, Andrew Ledbetter, and Glenn Sparks. 2018. *A First Look at Communication Theory* (10<sup>th</sup> edition). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. Mobile phones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class, unless directed by the instructor. Please respect the professor, teaching assistants and your fellow students. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

Therefore, cell phones and other electronic communication devices should be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time.

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

### **Email**

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (COMS 201) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread. Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with the instructor.

Email is most useful for short, specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material, assignments, or grades, visit the instructor during office hours.

The instructor will respond to emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read (or replied to) until the next working day.

NOTE: Email submissions of work will NOT be accepted unless otherwise specified.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

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

<b>Weight</b>	<b>Course components</b>	<b>Due</b>
10%	<b>Participation</b> grades will be awarded on the basis of your active involvement in tutorial discussions and activities. Details of required tutorial activities will be provided in a Tutorial Outline, which will be posted to D2L. In order to receive participation grades, you are expected to be in attendance for tutorials, contribute to the discussions, and complete required group work and presentations. Each week, pairs of students will give presentations on key aspects of the week's readings. More details to come!	Weekly

15%	<p><b>Test 1</b> (Feb. 8, in tutorial) will be composed of multiple-choice questions designed to provide early feedback on your comprehension of the course material so far. It will be useful preparation for Test 2.</p> <p>Chapters 1-3, 5, 6, 11 and 13 will be covered on Test 1.</p>	Feb. 8
20%	<p><b>Test 2</b> will be composed of multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Chapters 22-26 will be covered on Test 2.</p>	March 14
25%	<p>The <b>Research Essay</b> for this course gives you an opportunity to combine out-of-class research with the topics explored in lectures and discussions. You will be given a choice of several essay topics, and expected to write a 1500-1750 word research paper on that topic. More information on the term paper will be provided in class and on D2L.</p>	April 4
30%	<p>The <b>Final Exam</b> (registrar scheduled) will be multiple choice style questions. You will be responsible for all material covered in the assigned textbook readings and additional required readings posted on D2L, as well as the content of lectures and tutorial discussions.</p>	TBA

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** Yes

Please note that tests and examinations will only be deferred in the case of documented illness, bereavement, or varsity team travel. **Tests and exams will not be rescheduled due to travel and vacation plans, work obligations, or other scheduling conflicts.**

Lecture slides, when used, will be posted to D2L after the lecture.

**Submission of Assignments:** 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. 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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

**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 and Deferrals:

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.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or for another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>
- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

### Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentage scores will be used for grading tests, essays, and tutorial presentations. 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, the calculated percentage grade will be translated to the corresponding letter grade according to the Department of CMF grade scale equivalents (ex. a calculated percentage score of 84% will receive a final letter grade of B+)

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations**
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding performance	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent performance	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>	Approaching excellent performance	<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>	Exceeding good performance	<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good performance	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>	Approaching good performance	<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%

<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory performance	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0 - 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.

### 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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### 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 at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>. If you have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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, including surveys, interviews, or observations, as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve 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 . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising">https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY &amp; Safewalk Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> 403-266-1234 <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>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Events &amp; Info for Students</li> </ul>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombuds</li> </ul>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Mental Health Services</li> <li>• Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</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 Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 10	<b>Course Introduction</b>	
Jan 17	<b>Theory Foundations</b> Launching Your Study Talk About Theory Weighing the Words	Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Jan 24	<b>Interpersonal Communication</b> Symbolic Interactionism Coordinated Management of Meaning	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
Jan 31	<b>Relationship Maintenance</b> Relational Dialectics Media Multiplexity	Chapter 11 Chapter 13
Feb 7	<b>Rhetoric I</b> Aristotle  <b>Test Review</b> (Ch. 1-3, 5, 6, 11, 13)	Chapter 22  <b>Test 1 (in Tutorial, Feb. 8)</b>
Feb 14	<b>Rhetoric II</b> Dramatism Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23 Chapter 24
Feb 21	<b>Reading Break (No Class)</b>	
Feb 28	<b>Mass Communication</b> Media Ecology Semiotics	Chapter 25 Chapter 26
Mar 7	<b>Media Effects</b> Cultivation Theory Agenda-Setting Theory	<b>Test 2 Review</b> (Ch. 22-26) Chapter 29 Chapter 30
Mar 14	<b>Test 2</b> (12:00-1:00) Discussion of Term Paper Guidelines	

Mar 21	<b>Cultural Studies</b> Cultural Studies	Chapter 27
Mar 28	<b>Critical Cultural Theory I</b> Standpoint Muted Group Theory	Chapter 32 Chapter 33
Apr 4	<b>Critical Cultural Theory II</b> Screening <i>TBA</i>	<b>Term Paper Due (in class)</b>
Apr 11	<b>Final Exam Review</b>	