

University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 201 (L01): Introduction to Communication and Media Studies

WINTER 2020: January 13 to April 15 (excluding Feb. 16-22)

Lecture: Wednesdays 14:00 to 15:50

Lab 1 F 9:00–9:50; Lab 2 F 10:00 –10:50; Lab 3 F 11:00-11:50; Lab 4 12:00-12:50;

Lab 5 13:00-13:50; Lab 6 14:00-14:50

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Samantha Thrift
<b>Office:</b>	SS 210 <b>In-person office hours cancelled until further notice. Contact via email.</b>
<b>Office Phone:</b>	(403)- 220-5320
<b>Email:</b>	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L available through MyUofC portal
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays 1:00 to 2:30 pm or by appointment

### 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

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

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. 2019. *A First Look at Communication Theory* (10<sup>th</sup> edition). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.

Students may use either the print or electronic version of the textbook. Information for purchasing the e-book will be available on D2L.

Copies of the course text are also available on library reserves at the TFDL. Check the University bookstore for used print copies for a reduced cost.

### **Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices**

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.

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.

Email inquiries will be responded to on a first-come, first-serve basis. If deemed appropriate by the course instructor, a virtual meeting (via Zoom or Skype) can be held with the student to address the issue.

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

Online submission of work is now standard, and specific methods of submission have been identified by your professor. Please review those instructions below ("Assignments and Evaluation").

## 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.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	<p><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!</p> <p><b>UPDATE:</b>  <b>Tutorial Participation</b> will be assessed via online participation. Your T.A. will communicate specific expectations regarding online participation to your individual sections.</p> <p><b>Tutorial Presentations:</b> upload your presentation PPT slides to the appropriate Discussion section. You should ensure that your slides are detailed (ex. add an additional slide or two based on your speaking notes, where necessary) or upload your speaking notes with the slides. <i>OPTIONAL:</i> You are also welcome to upload a video version of your presentation or a PPT presentation with voice-over narration.</p> <p><b>Assessment of Tutorial Presentations:</b> In light of the online presentation format, the rubric for tutorial presentations has been modified. The new rubric has been posted to your tutorial's module.</p>	Weekly
15%	<p><b>Test 1</b> 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 and 13 will be covered on Test 1.</p>	Feb. 14 (in tutorial)
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>	Mar. 11 (in class)
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> <p><b>UPDATE:</b>  <b>Research Essays</b> will be submitted via D2L Dropbox on April 3<sup>rd</sup> (5pm).</p>	Mar. 27 <b>April 3</b> (in tutorial)

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.</p> <p><b>UPDATE:</b> The final exam will be administered online via D2L. The exam will be open book. The exam writing time has also been extended to 24 hours (from 2 hours) to accommodate students who are now located across different time zones.</p> <p>The final exam is no longer cumulative - it will cover only content from the most recent chapters covered in the course: Ch. 27, 29, 30, 32 and 33. There will be 40 multiple choice questions.</p> <p>The instructor will work with SAS to ensure registered students will continue to receive approved accommodations.</p> <p>If you anticipate not having online access, please contact Dr. Thrift by April 8.</p>	<p>April 22-23 (24 hours access)</p> <p>Wednesday, April 22 (2pm) to Thursday, April 23 (2pm)</p>
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**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** Yes **No**

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

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.

Lecture content will continued be posted to D2L, and will be posted at the start of regularly scheduled class time. Your instructor will work to ensure that course materials are as comprehensible as possible given the transition to the online format, including more detailed slides and/or voice-over narration of slides.

**Submission of Assignments**

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and hand in your essays directly to your instructor or tutor. If you are unable to do so, please use the drop box 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. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**. Please note that instructors may use audio or video

recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Assignments submitted one week or more after the due date will not be accepted, unless accommodations have been arranged with the instructor.

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For 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 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 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, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

### **Expectations for Writing**

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

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

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, 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*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

\* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to [https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm\\_source=ssc&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_campaign=redirect](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect)

## Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright ([www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf)) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

### **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 obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

### **Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal**

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

### **Student Support Services and Resources**

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at [itsupport@ucalgary.ca](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca) or by calling 403-220.5555.

### **Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Jan 15	<b>Course Introduction</b>	

Jan 22	<b>Theory Foundations</b> Launching Your Study Talk About Theory Weighing the Words	Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Jan 29	<b>Interpersonal Communication</b> Symbolic Interactionism Coordinated Management of Meaning	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
Feb 5	<b>Relationship Maintenance</b> Media Multiplexity  Library Research Tutorial (Susan Beatty)	Chapter 13
Feb 12	<b>Rhetoric I</b> Aristotle  <b>Test Review</b> (Ch. 1-3, 5, 6, 13)	Chapter 22  <b>Test 1 (in Tutorial, Feb. 14)</b>
Feb 19	<b>Reading Break (No Class)</b>	No Tutorials
Feb 26	<b>Rhetoric II</b> Dramatism Narrative Paradigm	Chapter 23 Chapter 24
Mar 4	<b>Mass Communication</b> Media Ecology Semiotics	Chapter 25 Chapter 26
Mar 11	<b>Test 2 (2:00-2:50)</b> Essay Discussion	
Mar 18	<b>Media Effects</b> Cultivation Theory Agenda-Setting Theory	Chapter 29 Chapter 30
Mar 25	<b>Cultural Studies</b> Cultural Studies	Term Paper Due (in tutorial) Chapter 27
Apr 1	<b>Critical Cultural Theory I</b> Standpoint Theory Muted Group Theory	<b>Term Paper Due</b> <b>(Apr. 3 via D2L Dropbox)</b> Chapter 32



		Chapter 33
Apr 8	<b>Critical Cultural Theory II</b> Screening <i>TBA</i> <b>Cancelled</b>	
Apr 15	<b>Final Exam Review</b> Final exam review will take place online in tutorial sections. T.A.s will be in touch with their individual sections about the final exam review.	