

Communications (COMS) 381, Lec 01
History of Communications
Fall 2013
Lecture: Monday 12–13:50
Labs: B01 Thurs 9:00–9:50, B02 Thurs 10:00–10:50

Instructor: Dr. Marcia Epstein
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Course Description

A general survey of how various communication systems and practices developed through history, and of the social contexts within which they emerged, transformed, and adapted through time. Within this framework, the course examines major technological developments in the history of human communication and uses theory to understand their origins and impacts on social organization and everyday life. The overall objective is to engage students in disciplined reflection upon communication, both past and present, by examining the historical development of ideas about and practices of communication.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: Communications Studies 201[COMS201].

Note: Credit for both Communications Studies 381 and 380 will not be allowed.

Objectives of the Course

1. To provide an understanding of a range of theoretical and conceptual interpretations of communications history;
2. To explore the relationships among communications, technological development and social dynamics in historical and current context;
- 3.. To introduce students to communications history as a field of study.

Internet and electronic communication device information

No restriction on the use of laptops (ipads, netbooks, etc.) in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance of other students or the instructor. Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

Textbooks and Readings:

David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History, 6th edition* (CH)

Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (OL)

Reading Package (RP)

Assignments and Evaluation

Annotated Bibliography and proposal for research project:	10%	9/30
Portfolio of thematic group process	20%	10/28
Brief report on project in class	P/F	TBA
Research paper	30%	11/18
Tutorial quizzes (2 out of 3: 5% x2)	10%	TBA
Midterm Exam	10%	10/21
Final Exam	10%	12/2
Participation (tutorial discussion, group leadership & activities)	10%	

All assignments must normally be completed in order to pass the course

Guidelines for Assignments

Thematic Groups:

In the first two lectures you will register for groups to explore themes and issues in the history of communications. These explorations will generate your project groups for the bibliography, report and paper. Thematic groups will also continue to meet after

topics are chosen, so that each group can give and receive feedback (communicate!) with other groups. Time will be built into the class schedule for this purpose, and full directions will be given to you in the first week of classes.

Thematic group topic areas:

1 Communication technologies: history of newspapers, radio, TV, or internet

2 Human resources/perspectives: speech, song, dance, the human body as an instrument of communication

3 Narrative, e.g. journalism and storytelling; auditory or print-based.

4 Visual communication: advertising, visual arts, clothing, design

5 "Alternate" communication systems, e.g. Braille, sign languages, new technological solutions

6 Communication among or with animals

7 Restrictions: copyright, censorship, law and social custom, what is not considered fit to print or broadcast and why.

Annotated Bibliography and Proposal for research paper:

You will normally work in groups of 2-3

Requirement: A description of what you plan to investigate, with what sources and methods -- the more detail, the better. Any preliminary theories should be stated, but will not need to be proven (or disproven) at this stage. Annotations should demonstrate your familiarity with your chosen sources: they must include

- *information about the content of each source*
- *the credentials of its author*
- *how it will be useful in your research*
- *complete bibliographic citation (APA or MLA: your choice, but keep them consistent).*

Length: 500-1000 words total.

Research paper

You will normally work in groups of 2-3.

Analysis, with use of course materials and methods, of a means of communication (print, electronic, auditory, visual, tactile, etc.) Your paper must include:

- *a historical approach to the topic*
- *a description of the topic and its significance (historical/cultural/personal/etc.)*
- *mention of any critical theories that are applicable to your approach, derived from coursework or sources*
- *sources you have consulted (with complete bibliographic references, as above).*

A theory or thesis statement will work well for some, but not all, topics. If you have a theory, it is equally acceptable to prove or disprove it: follow the evidence, not the theory.

Your work will be evaluated on: degree of familiarity with the topic and sources, application of course readings, lectures and/or ideas to your topic, coherence, cohesiveness, and accuracy and competence of writing.

Length: 1500–2500 words.

Each group is also responsible for a brief (2–3 minutes) oral summary of their project to the rest of the class - scheduling TBA, probably in tutorials.

Exams and quizzes

Three brief quizzes on familiarity with lecture material and tutorial discussions will be given in tutorials. These will be given point scores, and the top two scores will count toward your final grade. The best way to prepare is to show up for lectures and tutorials and take notes.

Exams on familiarity with assigned readings (Midterm and Final) will be given during lecture time. Prepare by doing the readings and discussing them in tutorials.

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: No

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	Meaning (for papers):
A+	96-100	Professional quality work
A	90-95.99	Outstanding and well expressed
A -	85-89.99	Excellent; needs more attention to detail
B+	80-84.99	Very good; well expressed
B	75-79.99	Good: basic expectations are met
B-	70-74.99	Good: needs more attention
C+	65-69.99	Shows promise; improvements needed
C	60-64.99	Adequate: covers the basics only
C-	55-59.99	Barely adequate
D+	53-54.99	Shows gaps in comprehension
D	50-52.99	Grim: see me immediately
F	0-49	Failing

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

- 1 9 /9 Overview: **Media, Messages, Voices and Images**
Background for Ong readings, themes and issues
Formation of thematic groups

A complete schedule will be provided on Blackboard before classes begin.