

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 381 L01
Communications History

Fall 2015

Mon, Sept. 14 – Mon, Dec. 7 (excluding Oct. 12, Nov. 11-15)

Lectures: M 12:00-1:50

Tutorial: F 9:00-9:50am OR 10:00-10:50am

Instructor: Samantha C. Thrift
Office: SS 210
Office Phone: 403-220-5320
E-Mail: samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: W 11:00am - 1:00pm (or by appointment)

Course Description

This course provides 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.

Additional Information

This is a reading and writing intensive course.
Students must register in either Lab 01 or Lab 02.

Please note: **There are no tutorials on September 11th. Our first class will be Monday, September 14th.**

Prerequisite or co-requisite: COMS 201.

Restriction: Credit for both COMS 381 and COMS 380 is not allowed.

Textbooks and Readings

Crowley, David and Paul Heyer, eds. Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society, 6th ed. Montreal: Allyn & Bacon, 2011.

Any additional readings will be made available via the COMS 381 D2L course website.

Internet and electronic communication device information

The in-class use of computers for activities other than note taking purposes will not be tolerated. Therefore, cell phones and other electronic communication devices must be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time. If you engage in non-course related online activity during class, the professor will confiscate the device for the duration of that class.

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 number (COMS 381) and a clear statement of purpose in the subject line. If you do not include the course number in your email's subject line, your email may get lost in your instructor's overflowing inbox and go unread! Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with course instructors (including your T.A.).

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

I will return 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: I do not accept email submissions of work.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Quiz 1	15%	October 2 (Tutorial)
Quiz 2	15%	November 6 (Tutorial)
Creative Research Proposal	10%	October 26
Creative Research Essay	25%	November 23
Creative Research Presentation	10%	TBD
Final Exam	25%	Registrar Scheduled

Tutorials take place Friday mornings, and they are not optional. These meetings provide an opportunity for you to discuss course material in detail, to develop effective writing strategies, and to work on group assignments. It is essential that you come to every tutorial with a copy of your readings.

Quizzes will consist of short-essay questions on specific aspects of the readings.

The **Creative Research Project** is the major writing assignment for COMS 381. In small groups (of 2-3), you will select a project from a list provided by the instructor. The project consists of a research component, a creative component, and an in-class presentation. You will be able to work on this project during tutorial sessions, so partner with people in the same section.

This is a preliminary list of project topics:

- Live tweet an historical event
- Storyboard the invention of a communication technology
- Cave paint a timeline of the electromechanical age of information technologies
- Illuminate the manuscript of the course text book (ex. a chapter)

The **proposal** will be a brief outline of your project (about 500 words or so). It must include evidence of preliminary research (including actually having read some of the material), and a sense of your approach to the topic. A reference list is required. While you can utilize some non-academic sources (ex. Wikipedia, online encyclopedias, news reports), your proposal must primarily rely on information and ideas presented in chapters of *Communication in History*.

The **essay** will be a 2000-2500 word analysis of the project. The essay should include three things:

1. Comparative analysis of the two relevant technologies
 - Keeping in mind historical context (ancient or modern), identify and discuss the social, political, and epistemological effects of the different technologies under study.
 - Ex. Live tweet Titanic sinking = radio and Twitter as news sources
 - Sources: textbook, academic articles, primary research (ex. news clippings, documentaries)
2. Method
 - Describe the approach your group took in order to ensure the project was successful – that is, educational as well as creative.
 - For example, what historical information did you choose to include or exclude? Whose perspectives are represented (and why)? Where did you get your information from (and why)?
3. Project Reflection
 - Discuss the experience of conducting this project: the good, bad, and ugly. For instance, what can we learn from putting temporally removed media in close proximity? Were there any unexpected revelations? Or did surprising information surface? How did your project enhance your knowledge about these technologies and their social, epistemological, philosophical effects?

You will create and deliver a **presentation** of your Creative Research Project to the class. The presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length and highlight what you learned most from the project, as well as the creative work itself.

The **final exam** will cover material from the entire course. Details about content and form will be provided in class. The final exam is scheduled by the university and is beyond the control of your professor. Ensure you are available for the entire exam period. Only students with a valid medical reason (with documentation) will be permitted to write at an alternate time.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

All assignments and exams weighted more than 20% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

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 picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. 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/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

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.

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 14 days after the start of the course.

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.

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 preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
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 (3rd 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 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly• Safewalk Program	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints

	If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support • IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus 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 Lectures and Readings

The Schedule of Readings will be posted to D2L before the first class.