

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

**Communication Studies (COMS) 401.41, Lecture L07**  
**Historical and Critical Roots of Transmedia in Germany**

**Spring 2016**

**Class dates/Lectures, days and times: May 6 - June 4, 2016**

**Instructor:** Kerry McArthur  
**Office Location:** SS 307  
**E-Mail:** kjmcarth@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Upon request

### **Course Description**

The course explores the evolving concept of transmedia, drawing on the 19th-century notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total work of art) to explain the contemporary phenomenon of media storyworlds unfolding collaboratively through producer/audience networks. Comparisons will be made between North American examples of transmedia and culturally idiosyncratic examples of this media form in Germany, with reference to German advertising, film and television paradigms and Berlin's annual *transmediale* festival. Critical examination of transmedia in the contrasting North American and European contexts will evaluate issues around story branding and fan cultures. Engagement with German media professors and production students at the University of Art, Berlin and Freie Universität will enhance student awareness and appreciation of culture and media production in Berlin.

### **Additional Information**

- The course takes a seminar format in which students lead the discussion and engage with the assigned readings.
- This is a reading-, viewing- and writing-intensive course.

### **Objectives of the Course**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the phenomenon of transmedia in a German context, with study of Berlin-based "total media" experiences and lectures/exercises with local practitioners and academics. By the end of the course, you will be:

- Knowledgeable about the social and media theory that informs the study of transmedia;
- Attuned to transmedia production and audience reception issues within the media industries in German and North American contexts;
- Equipped to read more deeply into debates, both public and personally observed, on the transmedia industry;
- Comfortable using academic, policy and media sources to present the results of your thinking and research.

## **Textbooks and readings**

**Required textbook:** No required textbook, but a series of online scholarly articles from the University of Calgary library website (see *Readings* below).

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

Cellphones will be silenced for the duration of the class. Laptops and tablets may be used *only* for taking notes.

When contacting the instructor by e-mail, use the tag “COMS 401” in your subject line.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

You will be graded on four components:

1. *Pre-session open book quiz* (15%): held in class in Calgary end of April, 2016 (date TBA)
2. *In-class presentation* (25%): in Berlin, throughout
3. *Journal* (25%): weekly, in Berlin
4. *Research project* (35%): due late June 2016 (exact date TBA)

1. *Pre-session open book quiz* (15%): Following a full-day session at the end of April at the University of Calgary campus (in which initial concepts will be discussed), students will be quizzed on their knowledge and insights into the readings described in Schedule A (below).

2. *In-class presentation* (25%): Working in groups of three, students will present summaries of their assigned readings to the class (in Berlin). Groups will be responsible for preparing a Powerpoint slide deck with accompanying video/audio clips, then leading their classmates in a wrap-up discussion.

3. *Journal* (25%): Each student will keep a weekly journal (four complete entries) with observations and reflections upon the readings/presentations in class.

4. *Research project* (35%): The research project in late June 2016 (exact date TBA) will challenge the student to compare and critique the theoretical models examined throughout the course, and to apply these to a transmedia project of his/her choice. The project will primarily comprise a paper of 8 to 10 pages (not including the References section); students must discuss their selected topic with the instructor before proceeding to the research and writing stages.

## **Registrar-scheduled final examination: No**

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

**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.

### **Student Accommodations:**

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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- 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 another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### **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 System & Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**Grade Scale** Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

<b>Grade Point Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Department grade scale equivalents</b>	<b>Letter grade % equivalent for calculations</b>
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>		<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>		<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333 <b>403-266-1234</b> <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> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk</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>• Student Services Mobile App</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>

<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><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></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a>  <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>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.</p>

**SCHEDULE A: PRE-SESSION READINGS**

Students are responsible for reading the following two articles *before* the pre-session class on the UofC campus in late April (date TBA); you will be quizzed on your knowledge of these at the end of the class.

1. Jenkins, H. (2007, March 22). Transmedia storytelling 101. (Web log article). Retrieved from [http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia\\_storytelling\\_101.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html)
2. Jenkins, H. (1992). "Get a life!": Fans, poachers, nomads. In *Textual poachers: television fans & participatory culture*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Online book available through University of Calgary library)

**SCHEDULE B: GERMANY RESIDENCE READINGS**

The following articles can be found in the University of Calgary library; the articles may be read before or during our residency in Berlin. Students will present in groups on these readings during our Berlin stay.

1. **Transmedia, Gesamtkunstwerk and Spectacle:** Rossol, N. (2010). Performing the Nation: Sports, Spectacles, and Aesthetics in Germany, 1926-1936, *Central European History*, 43(4), pp. 616-638.
2. **Transmedia in Europe:** Ibrus, I. & Ojamaa, M. (2014). What Is the Cultural Function and Value of European Transmedia Independents?, *International Journal of Communication*, 8, pp. 2283–2300.
3. **Transmedia and Branding:** Clarke, M.J. (2014) Branded Worlds and Contracting Galaxies: The Case of Star Wars Galaxies, *Games and Culture*, 9(3), pp. 203-224.
4. **Transmedia and "Advertainment":** Atkinson, S. (2014). The Performative Functions of Dramatic Communities: Conceptualizing Audience Engagement in Transmedia Fiction, *International Journal of Communication*, 8, pp. 2201–2219.

5. **Transmedia and Images of National Film:** Ghellal, S., Morrison, A.J., Hassenzahl, M. & Schaufler, B. (2014). The Remediation of Nosferatu, *Proceedings of the Conference on Designing Interactive Systems: Processes, Practices, Methods, and Techniques, DIS.*, pp. 617-626.
6. **Transmedia and Fan fiction:** Thomas, B. (2011). What is fan fiction, and why are people saying such nice things about it?, *StoryWorlds: A journal of narrative studies*, 3, pp. 1-24.
7. **Transmedia and TV:** Nesselhauf, J. & Schleich, M. (2015). A Stream of Medial Consciousness. Transmedia Storytelling in Contemporary German Quality Television, Special Issue *Media Convergence and Transmedial Worlds* (Part 2), 21, pp. 50-62.
8. **Transmedia and Narrative:** Abba, T. (2009). Hybrid stories: Examining the future of transmedia narrative, *Science Fiction Film and Television* 2(1), pp. 59–76.