

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

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401 L03

Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies:

Countercultural Communication

Spring 2017

Mon. May 15 – Mon. June 26 (excluding May 22nd)

Lectures: MW 12:00pm–2:45pm

Instructor: Dr. Rhon Teruelle

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Office Hours: Mondays 10am – 11am, Wednesdays 10am-11am, by appointment

Course Description

This course explores the complex relationships between communication practices and countercultural movements. Through an analysis of the anti-war, hippy, and protest media of the 60s, the Black Panthers, punk rock music and culture from the 70s and 80s, and more recent subversive practices such as memes, culture jamming, video games, graffiti, comic books, cosplay, and even body modification, the course will examine the emergence, popularity, and significance of a variety of countercultures through a cultural, social, and economic lens.

Objectives of the Course

This course will:

- provide students with a critical and theoretical vocabulary related to countercultures;
- introduce a range of theoretical perspectives on countercultures at a senior level;
- promote critical thinking, reading, and writing;
- encourage development of advanced critical media analysis;
- allow opportunities to practice oral presentation skills;
- foster skills in analysis and synthesis;
- promote self-reflection and analysis, as well as expanded cultural knowledge;
- provide opportunities to practice and develop written and oral language skills;
- encourage the development of a pedagogical community through group work and discussion;
- develop advanced research skills in the production of a paper on a topic related to the course.

Textbooks and Readings

There is no required text for this course. Instead, all of the weekly readings will be available through *Desire2Learn*.

Tip: Students should print out **all** materials at the outset of the class to ensure their availability throughout the term. It is advisable to read all materials in hard-copy form. Why? Check out: Jabr, Ferris. 2014. "The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: Why Paper Still Beats Screens," *Scientific American*, 309(5).

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of internet and electronic devices (laptops, cell phones etc.) during class time is allowable providing 1) the use of the electronic device is specific to the course (no games, Pokemon catching, Facebooking, Twittering, etc.) 2) the use of the electronic device does not interrupt the class nor impede student learning. All cell phones must be turned off or put on vibrate prior to the beginning of each class.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	Attendance and Participation	Ongoing
20%	Major Paper Proposal	May 24
10%	Short Synopsis	June 7
30%	Major Paper	June 21
30%	Final Project and Presentation	June 26

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

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%):

Ongoing Part of what we will attempt to accomplish in this class is to build an intellectual and pedagogical community. It is very difficult to do so, particularly in the context of student presentations, if people do not attend class. This is your (significantly large) incentive to make an appearance in every class, to listen attentively, and to participate in class discussions. Simply showing up for class will not earn you participation marks in this class.

Remember: Being part of an intellectual community requires that you attend class regularly, read required readings in advance and with care, and involve yourself in discussions in ways that will help you and other students to learn. It means being prepared for each and every class and being respectful and attentive to others.

MAJOR PAPER PROPOSAL (20%):

Due: May 24, 2017, in class. A proposal of no more than three pages outlining the research you will pursue for your major project. You must include a paragraph including the following:

1. a clear outline of your topic and its parameters;
2. a clear statement regarding how your topic relates to the overarching theme or themes of this course;
3. questions you will explore in this research;
4. a general statement regarding why you have selected this topic;
5. any questions you have about the topic that you would like input for, including suggestions for further reading, or

any other areas you would like me to help you problem-solve. In addition, you must also provide an annotated bibliography containing at least 6 academic/scholarly sources. This assignment should be submitted in the form of a hard copy in class on the date it is due.

SHORT SYNOPSIS (10%):

Due: June 7, 2017, in class. A synopsis of no more than three pages based on Lucie Edwardson's talk and presentation. More specifically, you are to explain and critique why a smaller local media news source such as Calgary's Metro News should or should not be considered countercultural. You will state a claim and support this with no less than 4 scholarly sources. Only two of your four sources may come from material that is covered in our course. This assignment should be submitted in the form of a hard copy in class on the date it is due.

MAJOR PAPER (30%):

Due: June 21, 2017, in class. This will take the form of a formal essay eight (8) to (10) pages in length with a bibliography containing a minimum of eight (8) sources from scholarly books or journals. If you choose to cite online sources (apart from academic, peer-reviewed e-journals), these must be in addition to the eight (8) text-based sources. You will be expected to choose your own topic. Papers may be as creative as you wish, provided they address the issues raised in this course. I know that you will bring diverse experiences and perspectives to this class and I am prepared to entertain any ideas you may have. Start thinking early about what topic you would like to explore. Each student should come see me during office hours at some stage in the term in order to discuss projects. This is a way of ensuring that you are on the right track. I can also help you problem-solve, to carve out a project that is neither too small nor too large, and to find resources connected to the work you wish to pursue. I can also help you to locate a topic that is appropriate to a third-year course in Communication Studies. Papers must be submitted to me in the form of a hard copy on the date that it is due.

PRESENTATION (30%):

Due: June 26, 2017, in class. Each student will be expected to give a presentation as part of a group. There are to be no more than FOUR individuals per group! You will be required to present orally on a film or documentary of your choice that relates to a particular counterculture. Illuminate your work with critical insights gained from the readings, from your preparation for your major project, from other courses, or even from your own cultural consumption. Each presentation will be a maximum of 7 minutes in length and conclude in a way that opens a 3 minute discussion for the class (times are subject to change depending on the number of groups). Presenters should be prepared to lead the discussion that follows. Grades will be based on content, presentation style, and discussion.

Tips: Give the kind of presentation to which you would like to listen. You may be as creative as you wish, provided you fulfil the requirements of this assignment. However, there must be a "resource" aspect to each presentation, meaning that you must bring in examples to illustrate and help explain key concepts or ideas. The format of the presentation beyond this will be up to you. *Every student should come see me for guidance in the preparation of the presentation. Come to my office hours or make an appointment.*

GROUND RULES:

I am more than willing to entertain questions or concerns during class, and will also be available to provide individual guidance and advice during my office hours. If you need to meet with me outside my office hours, you must set up an appointment. It is best to do so by email. Be sure to identify the course (COMS401) in the subject area of your message.

Given the nature of this course, I would encourage you to consider going “old school” with your notes for this course. This class will be interactive and discussion driven, therefore you need to pay attention differently than in most of your other classes as you will need to be ready and able to participate in discussion at all times. Also, since we are a small class, any off-task moments will be especially disruptive.

A great deal of research has been conducted on how electronic devices have affected learning.

Reasons why taking hand-written notes is tied to improved learning may be found in the following articles:

Meyer, Robinson. 2014. “To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand,” *The Atlantic*, May 1. < <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>> Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Association for Psychological Science. 2014. “To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand.” May 22. < <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand.html>> Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Where does the policy come from? When it boils down to it, this policy is derived from a strong desire to promote your learning and the learning of the students around you. You may think that your own use of electronic devices doesn't distract you, and it may well not, but it **does** distract others even when you think it doesn't, as studies have shown:

Montgomery, Marc. 2013. “New Study Shows Computers in Class Distract Both Users and Non-Users,” *Radio Canada International*, August 20. < <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2013/08/20/new-study-shows-computers-in-class-distract-both-users-and-non-users/>>. Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Sana, Faria, Weston, Tina, and Cepeda, Nicholas J. 2012. “Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers,” *Computers and Education*, 62: 24- 31.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to me, in class, on the day that it is due. 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 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/secretariat/privacy>

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.

You are responsible for ensuring that you attend your presentation. If you do not present with your group and do not have supporting documentation from a physician for your absence, you will be assigned a zero (0) for this section of your course. You may not change your presentation topic after you have signed up.

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/.

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. 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. All assignments will be graded using percentages which will then be converted into letter grades.

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, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF 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	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.

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 (e.g., 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 . . .
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE 	403-266-HELP (4357)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online resources and tips 	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 Lecture Topics and Readings

Class 1. Introduction to the course

May 15

Introduction, course framework, expectations, ground rules, syllabus and assignments, definitions, etc.

Class 2. Defining culture and countercultures. What is culture? What is a counterculture?

May 17

Required reading:

Grossberg, L. (2013). Culture. *Rethinking Marxism*, 25(4), 456-462.

Goggin, G. (2013). Youth culture and mobiles. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 1(1), 83-88.

Wood, J. (2003). Hell's Angels and the Illusion of the Counterculture. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 37(2), 336-351.

May 22

Holiday – NO CLASS

Class 3. The Sixties: The Vietnam anti-war movement and alternative societies.

May 24 - Due in class: MAJOR PAPER PROPOSAL (20%)

Required reading:

Hall, M. K. (2004). The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement. *OAH Magazine of History*, 18(5), 13-17.

McAdam, D. and Su, Y. (2002). The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973. *American Sociological Review*, 67(5), 696-721.

Farber, D. (2013). Building the counterculture, creating right livelihoods: the counterculture at work. *The Sixties*, 6(1), 1-24.

Optional reading:

McMillian, J. (2011). *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Class 4. Lucie Edwardson's Presentation – Is Calgary's Metro News Countercultural?

May 29

Required reading: NONE. *However, attendance in lecture is mandatory as you will be writing a paper on the topic that will be presented during this class*****

Class 5. The Sixties: Black Panthers, The Hippies and Protest Music.

*****There is NO lecture today*****

May 31

Required reading:

Roman, M. (2016). The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 5(1), 7-32.

Shipley, M. (2013). Hippies and the Mystic Way: Dropping Out, Unitive Experiences, and Communal Utopianism. *Utopian Studies*, 24(2), 232-263.

Rodnitzky, J. (1999). The sixties between the microgrooves: Using folk and protest music to understand American history, 1963–1973. *Popular Music and Society*, 23(4), 105-122.

Optional reading:

Hilliard, D. (2010). *Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Miller, T. S. (2012). *The Hippies and American Values*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press.

Class 6. The British Punk Rock Explosion: Never mind the bollocks.

June 5

Required reading:

Ross, P. G. (1996). An organizational analysis of the emergence, development, and mainstreaming of British punk rock music. *Popular Music and Society*, 20(1), 155-173.

Simonelli, D. (2002). Anarchy, Pop and Violence: Punk Rock Subculture and the Rhetoric of Class, 1976-78. *Contemporary British History*, 16(2), 121-144.

Optional reading:

Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Marcus, Greil. (1989). *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Class 7. Graffiti and Culture Jamming: Art, anti-advertisements and the Yes Men.

June 7 - Due in class: SHORT SYNOPSIS (10%)

Required reading:

Rabine, L. W. (2014). "These walls belong to everybody." The graffiti art movement in Dakar. *African Studies Quarterly*, 14(3), 89-112.

Harold, C. (2004). Pranking rhetoric: "Culture jamming" as media activism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(3), 189-211.

Optional reading:

Thompson, M. (2009). *Temptis: American Graffiti*. New York, NY: Parkstone International.

Sandlin, J. A. and Milam, J. L. (2008). Mixing pop (culture) and politics: Cultural resistance, culture-jamming, and anti-consumption as critical public pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(3), 323-350.

Class 8. Video Game Counterculture: Play to be different.

June 12

Required reading:

Shaw, A. (2010). What is video game culture? Cultural studies and game studies. *Games and Culture*, 5(4), 403-424.

Braithwaite, A. (2014). 'Seriously, get out': Feminists on the forums and the War(craft) on women. *New Media & Society*, 16(5), 703-718.

Teruelle, R. (2011). Stealing the age of innocence: A critique of the commodification of children's culture through an analysis of NeoPets. *Teaching & Learning*, 6(1), 53-61.

Optional reading:

Brand, S. (1972). Spacewar. *Rolling Stone*, December 7, 1972, 50-58.

Class 9. Hip Hop and Gangsta Rap: Fight the power.

June 14

Required reading:

Dimitriadis, G. (1996). Hip Hop: From live performance to mediated narrative. *Popular Music*, 15(2), 179-194.

Kurin, C. E. (2005). Gangstas, thugs, and hustlas: Identity and the code of the street in rap music. *Social Problems*, 52(3), 360-378.

Stanford, K. L. (2011). Keepin' it real in Hip Hop politics: A political perspective of Tupac Shakur. *Journal of Black Studies*, 42(1), 3-22.

Optional reading:

Rose, T. (2008). *The hip hop wars: What we talk about when we talk hip hop – and why it matters*. New York, NY: BasicCivitas.

Class 10. Comic books, Anime and Cosplay: Fun and games.

June 19

Required reading:

Ioannidou, E. (2013). Adapting Superhero Comics for the Big Screen: Subculture for the Masses. *Adaptation*, 6(2), 230-238.

Zanghellini, A. (2009). 'Boys love' in anime and manga: Japanese subcultural production and its end users. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 23(3), 279-294.

Peirson-Smith, A. (2013). Fashioning the fantastical self: An examination of the Cosplay dress-up phenomenon in southeast Asia. *The Journal of Dress, Body, and Culture*, 17(1), 77-111.

Class 11. Body Modification: Tattoos, piercings, and body alterations.

June 21 – Due in class: MAJOR PAPER (30%)

Required reading:

Perper, M., Aldahan, A. S., Tsatalis, J. P. and Nouri, K. (2017). Modifications of body surface: Piercings, tattoos, and scarification. *International Journal of Dermatology*, 56(3), 351-353.

Hill, B. M., Ogletree, S. M. and McCrary, K. M. (2016). Body modifications in college students: Considering gender, self-esteem, body appreciation, and reasons for tattoos. *College Student Journal*, 50(2), 246-252.

Roberts, D. (2015). Modified People: Indicators of a body modification subculture in a post-subculture world. *Sociology*, 49(6), 1096-1112.

Class 12. Wrapping up.

June 26 – Due in class: PRESENTATION (30%)

All students will present in-class on this day