

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

**COURSE NUMBER & SECTION** COMS 401 L02  
**COURSE NAME** Special Topics in COMS: Surveillance

**TERM & YEAR** Fall 2018

**Start & end dates (& dates excluded)**

Sept 12 – Dec 5 (excluding Nov 14)

**Lectures, days, and time; Tutorials, days, and time**

Wednesdays 12:00-14:45

**Instructor:** Mélanie Hogan  
**Office:** SS 310  
**Office Phone:** 403 220 3248  
**E-Mail:** mhogan@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** Wed 3-5pm, by appointment

**Course Description**

Special Topics in COMS: Critical study of contemporary topics or issues related to communications media, technology, culture, or discourse. This theme of this special topics course is *surveillance*. This course looks at what surveillance is and does, how it functions in various contexts and locations, and who is responsible for its deployments and conceptualizations. Areas covered in this class include biometrics, data tracking, surveillance-capitalism, security concerns, and anti-surveillance activism. Readings for the class draw from the humanities, social sciences and science and technology studies. We will watch films and look at current-day news events and examples in the popular media.

**Objectives of the Course**

- to demonstrate an ability to read and interpret texts in the field
- to describe how communication plays a significant role in the framing and discussion of surveillance in a Canadian and global context
- to produce written and oral discourse appropriate to the field
- to further develop your analytical, writing, and communication skills
- to work cooperatively in groups and become familiar with methods of peer evaluation
- to analyze and critique surveillance technologies as social entities

**Textbooks and Readings**

See D2L for PDFs and links.

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

No cell phones allowed during class. If you'd like to take notes on an electronic device, bring in your laptop or tablet. Stay off Facebook and all social media, games, and texting, etc., during class. (You can check your cell phone during break, or step outside the class to make urgent calls.) For these reasons, and to help you be less distracted and retain more, take notes by hand.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
15%	Readings discussion: In groups (determined in the first two weeks of class) you will lead a discussion on the week's readings. You will find important concepts in the readings and discuss their wider applications. Prepare questions for peer discussion.	Weekly
30%	In-class oral and written response: you will respond to questions based on films, discussions and/or readings. This will normally take 20-30 minutes and the length of written responses will vary from a few sentences to a few pages. Each one is worth 10% and there will be 4 of these during the term and the lowest grade is dropped/top 3 counted. If you're absent the day of the in-class response, you get 0. No exceptions.	Sept 26, Oct 3, Oct 10, Nov 7
20%	Midterm: This will be a closed book in-class midterm. It will take (max) 2 hours and will cover everything up to this point. You will not have access to your notes or readings. The midterm will be a mix of multiple choice questions and short essay questions based on the readings, films, and in-class discussions.	Oct 24
35%	Final papers (2500 words, 25%) and presentations (7 minutes each, 10%): You will write a research paper applying key concepts covered in class to a topic of your choosing (that pertains to surveillance). Details in class.	Presentations: (10%) Nov 21, 28  Papers: (25%) Dec 12

**Weekly topics:**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	
Week 1: Intro to Surveillance	Sept 12	Read the syllabus in detail Check D2L for readings and assignments
Week 2: Critical Surveillance Studies	Sept 19	
Week 3: The Panopticon and the Power of the Gaze	Sept 26	In-class response 10%
Week 4: Biometrics & Self-Tracking Art	Oct 3	In-class response 10%
Week 5: Technosocial Imaginaries of Surveillance & Surveillance Capitalism	Oct 10	In-class response 10%
Week 6: Policing Difference	Oct 17	
Week 7:	Oct 24	MIDTERM 20%
Week 8: Security Theater & Military- Big Tech Convergences	Oct 31	
Week 9: Watching / Seeing	Nov 7	Guest lecture by Dr. Susan Cahill (Surveillance and Art). You will be asked to curate an exhibit in class.  In-class response 10%
Break	Nov 14	
Week 10:	Nov 21	Presentations (7 minutes each) 10%
Week 11:	Nov 28	Presentations (7 minutes each) 10%
Week 12: Academic Activism	Dec 5	Final Papers (25%) → hard copy and D2L

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

**Submission of Assignments:** Please hand in your essays in hard copy directly to me and via D2L. Use 12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, default margins.

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 also upload a copy to D2L.

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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

**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.

### **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>

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

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentages are used for all written assignments.

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

### 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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### 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>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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 . . .
<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/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</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/student">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/student</a> <a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/student">S</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></p> <p><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></p> <p><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>