

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

**Communication Studies (COMS) 413 – L01**  
**Advanced Research Methods**

**Fall 2018**

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

Mo., Sept 10 – Mo., Dec 3 10 (excluding Mo., Oct 8 and Nov 12)

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

Mo. 2:00-4:45

**Instructor:** Richard Hawkins  
**Office:** SS 306  
**Office Phone:** 403 220 6548  
**E-Mail:** rhawkins@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Monday 11:00 – 12:00, Tuesday 10:00 – 11:00 or by appointment

**Course Description**

*The normal pre-requisite for this course is successful completion of COMS 313 (Research Methods). Students who have not completed COMS 313 may register in 413 with the permission of the instructor.*

Building on the overview of basic research approaches and techniques in the social sciences and humanities as covered in COMS 313, this course will introduce students to the process of designing an actual research project as they might be expected to undertake in an advanced university course, an Honors Program, or in their professional careers.

As an advanced course, COMS 413 goes beyond “Methods” as such and introduces students to the theory and practice of “Methodology”. A method is a technique for making and interpreting observations about the world in which we live. Methodology involves the systematic analysis and selection of methods as appropriate to specific research topics, theories, questions and hypotheses, and to the learning goals of the researcher.

Research is a strategy for learning and a process of discovery. It begins with the identification of questions – what the researcher wants to know – as derived from rigorous assessment of what is already known about a given phenomenon. Investigative techniques must be chosen such that they are consistent with the requirements of the research question and that accord with clearly defined theories as to how observations from research can be constructed into new knowledge.

Research professionals know from experience that the ultimate quality of a research outcome is usually determined by the thoroughness of thinking and planning at the front end of the process:

- identifying the extent of existing knowledge,
- defining uncertainties and gaps,

- developing questions and hypotheses,
- researching and selecting investigative and analytical techniques that are supported by theory relevant to the questions and hypotheses,
- setting out schedules, strategies and budgets for the completion of research projects.

Through guided discussions, workshops and seminars, this course will give students hands-on experience with Methodology as a practice. The course will follow the same steps that a professional researcher would take when approaching any new research undertaking. The outcome will be a detailed research proposal that could be deployed in an actual research setting. Students considering a Honors degree, or graduate study could use this proposal as the basis for their Honors projects, or in statements of interest for graduate school applications.

The research project in COMS 413 consists of three modules, each with its own deliverable (described below in “assignments and evaluation”):

**Module One: Theory and practice** – research leading to development of a “Topic Summary”

**Module Two: Developing the question** – research leading to an essay on the “state-of-the-question”

**Module Three: Defining the project** – preparation of a formal “Research Proposal”

Most sessions will be conducted in two simultaneous streams. A “theory” stream will use a textbook to collect and review basic research theories, approaches and techniques in the social sciences as covered in COMS 313. This stream will employ guided discussion of issues raised in the text. The other stream will be devoted entirely to “practice” – hands-on workshops and seminars enabling students to discuss and refine their deliverables for the three modules.

### **Objectives of the Course**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- assess critically the capabilities and limitations of specific methods, processes and strategies in the design and execution of research projects;
- assess critically the close links between theory and practice in research;
- select methods systematically that are appropriate to achieving specific knowledge goals;
- scope-out, design, formulate and carry out significant research projects in the communications field.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

Required Text:

Bouma, G. D., R. Ling and L. Wilkinson (2016) *The Research Process*, Third Canadian Edition, Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada.

### Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to bring laptops and other devices to class so long as these are used to aid student learning. During class, it is not acceptable to play games, answer email, surf the web, or engage in other non-class activities. Cell phone use is not permitted at any time. Inappropriate use of technology not only affects you, but it also distracts other students and undermines our goal of creating a respectful learning environment.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assignments	Due
15%	Topic summary (3-4 pages), plus in class presentation (ca 5 minutes)	Oct 1
10%	State of the question essay – in-class workshop presentation (10 minutes)	Nov 5
40%	State of the Question Essay (12 pages)	Nov 19
25%	Research Proposal (10 pages)	Dec 3
10%	Research proposal in-class presentation (10 minutes)	Dec 3

### Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

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

The course has three modules, each oriented to specific deliverables:

- **Module One Deliverables: Topic summary, plus in class presentation, (due in class Oct 1)** Students will prepare a 3 to 4 page exposition of a chosen topic for research as developed in Module One. This will be presented briefly in class on the due date. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)
- **Module Two Deliverables:**
  - **State of the Question Essay, in-class workshop presentation (Nov 5)** Students will present a brief (10 minute) exposition of their progress in preparing the state of the question essay.
  - **State of the Question Essay (Due in class Nov 19)** Students will prepare a 12 page (maximum) double spaced paper in the style of a bibliographical essay that sets out a thorough review of the state of published knowledge in the academic literature on the research topic they have developed in Module One. The essay will conclude with the statement of the research questions and/or hypotheses that will be carried over into Module Three. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)
- **Module Three: Deliverable: Research Proposal, plus in-class presentation (both due in class Dec 3)** Drawing upon the Module One and Two deliverables, students will prepare a 10 page formal research proposal according to a format as would be required by a funding agency or research client. Development of the

proposal will require systematic, theoretically-grounded selection and justification of an approach and method (or methods) that are appropriate to the topic and the research questions. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)

**IMPORTANT:** The seminar method requires active participation by all students in all sessions throughout the Term. This is not an option. A check-in sheet will be distributed each week. Except for legitimate reasons – illness, emergencies or special circumstances of which the instructor is notified – participants who are absent for more than three sessions will lose 10% of their final grade.

Except where excused for legitimate reasons, failure to present a scheduled seminar discussion will result in loss of the grade for that assignment.

Detailed instructions for each of the assignments will be provided on the first day of class.

**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. If extenuating circumstances, assignments may be submitted to the instructor by email, provided the instructor is notified and permission is granted beforehand.

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.

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Grades for presentations will be reported as whole point scores (e.g. 7/10)

Grades for written work will be reported as decimalized point scores (e.g. 20.5/30).

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>

This course does not require research with human subjects.

## 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>

<p><b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Calgary Police Service</b></li> <li>• <b>Emergency Text Messaging</b></li> <li>• <b>Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</b></li> <li>• <b>Safewalk Program</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b></p> <p><b>403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a></p> <p>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></p>
<p><b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IT help line</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a></p> <p>403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing Support Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Services Mobile App</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faculty of Arts Reps</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Ombudsman</b></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>• <b>Counselling Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Health Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</b></li> <li>• <b>Online resources and tips</b></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>

## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Stream One: Theory</b>	<b>Stream Two: Practice</b>
1	Mo Sept 10	Course Introduction and organization	N/A
<b><i>Module One: Theory and practice</i></b>			
2	Mo Sept 17	Text 1, 2	Topic Workshop
3	Mo Sept 24	Text 3, 4	Topic Workshop
<b><i>Module Two: Researching the question</i></b>			
4	Mo Oct 1	Text 5, 6	<b>(Topic summaries due) Topic Presentations</b>
5	Mo Oct 8	Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)	
6	Mo Oct 15	Text 7, 8	Research progress workshop
7	Mo Oct 22	Text 9, 10	Research progress workshop
8	Mo Oct 29	Text 11	Research progress workshop
9	Mo Nov 5	<b>State of the question workshop presentations</b>	
10	<b>Nov 11 – 18 Reading week</b>		
<b><i>Module Three: Defining the project</i></b>			
11	Mo Nov 19	Text 12, 13 <b>(State of the question essays due)</b>	Proposal workshop
12	Mo Nov 26	Text 14	Proposal workshop
13	Mo Dec 3	<b>(Proposals Due) Proposal Presentations</b>	