

Communications Studies (COMS) 435 – Lecture 01
Mass Communications and Canadian Society
Fall 2013
Wed. 12 – 2:45 pm

Instructor: Ms. Fiona MacGregor
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Office Hours: Wed. 10:30 – 11:30 am or by appointment

Course Description (from the Calendar): This course introduces students to theoretical literature on various aspects of the media, including public policy questions such as the concentration of media ownership, Canadian content requirements, censorship, the role of the media during elections, and the problems and opportunities that might be brought by advances in technology.

Some questions we will explore in this course are:

The U.N. has declared the 'right to communicate' a basic human right but what do we mean by communicate and what happens to this right when mass communication, national politics and the desire for profit are thrown into the mix? Is the historical need for a Government funded Canadian identity and culture, via media like the CBC, now out of date? And with changes in digital technology what does this mean for the way we produce, distribute and interpret our information? What happens to those who cannot afford access to technology in an age of neoliberal economics? And, if democracy is founded on our responsibility as citizens to be informed about issues what happens when that information is controlled by an oligarchy of for-profit media corporations? Are government regulatory bodies such as the CRTC will needed in an era of free-market economics? Can we still maintain a level of truthful reporting in conjunction with journalistic ethical standards or will the proliferation of celebrity gossip and reality television continue to grow exponentially? Where will we find out what is really going on - do we now need to rely on alternative media and social justice movements using instantaneous technology such as social media? Will the instantaneous proliferation of information and downloading of entertainment mean that Canadian culture will slowly disappear into the cultural manifest destiny of the United States? Will our culture or even the ownership rights of artists disappear or will we create artistic niches we never leave? This course will explore *whether we are citizens or consumers in relation to Mass Communication in Canada.*

Prerequisite: COMS 201 or Canadian Studies Major or Minor status.

Objectives of the Course

- To examine the organization and economics of the media and cultural industries in Canada, including the historical development of mass media.
- To develop an appreciation of the role of these industries in the wider social and political context of Canada's national sovereignty and identity.
- To examine the major institutions of mass communication in Canada, including major cultural industries, and the ways in which mass media is produced distributed, consumed and governed in this country.
- To examine the problems and opportunities associated with advances in technology, including the Internet and social networking, in various dimensions of Canadian society.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are allowed laptops in class as long as they are not distracting to other people. Other than class related use, please turn cell phones off or leave the class to use them.

Students are encouraged to bring their cell phones or laptops to class as we will be using them as part of lectures with Top Hat Monocle software.

3 ways for students to access the course



You can text: +1 (647) 931-6504
Course URL: tophat.com/e/186364

Textbooks and Readings:

Gasher, M. , Skinner,D., & Lorimer, R. (2012). Mass Communication in Canada.
MUST BE 7th Edition

Shade, L. R. (2014). Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication
MUST BE 4th EDITION (Also available as an ebook).
<http://www.nelsonbrain.com/shop/isbn/978-0-17-654826-1>

Assignments and Evaluation (detailed assignment information will be available on blackboard)

- Exam (15 %) **Oct. 2nd** - will consist of a combination of short answers and an essay question on all course materials up to this date.
- Major Research Essay (40 % of total grade) Please hand in hard copies only
 - Part A - Research Question/Essay Proposal – 1-2 pages typed double spaced (5%) **Due Oct 9th**
 - Part B - Annotated Bibliography (APA format, min. 5 academic, approx. 3 pages) (5%) **Due Oct 16th**
 - Part C – Paper Outline - Theoretical Influences, arguments and evidence (2 -3 pages) (5%) **Due Oct 30th**
 - Part D - Essay (25 %) 10 -12 pages (2500 – 3000 words) typed double spaced (APA referencing)
 - Option 1 **Due Nov 20th** – comments back,
 - Option 2 **Due Nov 27th** – no comments back
- Weekly Online Reflection (10%) (ongoing)
- “Mass” communicated presentation (10%) – topics will be given out in class for various dates in the second half of the course.
- Take home Final Exam (25%) Due (tentative Dec. 11th) Two short (4 5- pages EACH/ 1000-1250 word count) cumulative essays based on course material (no additional research is required).

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: 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.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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. Please contact the instructor if there are extenuating circumstances.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although 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. 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

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

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 fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfieb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Available on Blackboard the first day of classes