

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture

COMS 435

Mass Communications and Canadian Society

Fall 2014

Monday, Sept 8 – Friday, Dec 5 (excluding Nov. 8-11)

Lectures W 12:00-14:45

Instructor: Dr. Samantha Thrift
Office: SS 210
Office Phone: 403-220-5320
E-Mail: samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: W 15:00-17:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description

This course investigates key issues in Canadian mass communications from a variety of perspectives, including the social history of mass media in Canada, public policy and politics, and popular culture. We will explore themes and issues, such as the relationship between mass communication and democracy, the role of media in politics, language and media messages, cultural industries, media ownership and new media. To this end, students will examine the development and role of major cultural institutions, such as the CBC and the NFB, and their granting bodies; how these institutions function in relation to other social organizations; issues and debates over media representations of “Canada” and “Canadianness”; as well as alternative media and media activism in Canada.

Additional Information

This is a seminar style course, emphasizing student participation and discussion.
Prerequisite: COMS 201 or a Major or Minor in either Canadian Studies or Film Studies.

Objectives

- ♦ To encourage students to think critically about the complex relationships between media, culture, and Canadian nationhood;
- ♦ To provide students the critical and theoretical vocabulary to discuss issues of identity, cultural hybridity, cultural ownership, and democratic participation.

Textbooks and Readings

A digital coursepack has been prepared and will be made available on the D2L course website.

Internet and electronic communication device information

The in-class use of computers for activities other than note taking purposes will not be tolerated. Therefore, cell phones and other electronic communication devices must be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time. If you engage in non-course related online activity during class, the professor will confiscate the device for the duration of that class.

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course number (COMS 435) and a clear statement of purpose in the subject line. If you do not include the course number in your email's subject line, your email may get lost in your instructor's overflowing inbox and go unread! Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with course instructors.

Email correspondence is most useful for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material or assignments please visit me during office hours.

I will return emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read or replied to until the next working day.

NOTE: I do not accept email submissions of work.

Assignments and Evaluation

Course work will be evaluated as follows:

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Participation & Attendance	15%	All Lectures
Critical Responses (2x5%)	10%	Student choice
Class Facilitation	20%	Schedule TBA
Canadian, Eh? Assignment	25%	November 5
Take-home Final Exam	30%	December 10

Participation & Attendance (15%)

One purpose of a seminar like this is to teach students to form their own ideas and share them with their peers. The very work of the course consists of engaging in a discussion of ideas. Your participation entails coming to class having carefully read the day's assigned texts; being ready and willing to discuss issues raised in the readings; offering your informed, critical responses; listening to your classmates' remarks attentively and responding in a respectful and constructive manner.

All students are expected to attend class. Class attendance will be taken at five different times throughout the semester. If you miss a day when attendance has been taken, you will receive a 0 for that day.

If you have a medical note for the day missed, you may submit detailed readings notes for that day's assigned readings to receive partial marks.

Class Facilitation (20%)

In addition to your regular attendance and participation in class, you and a partner will take the lead in our class discussion for approximately 45 minutes. In pairs, you will introduce a topic relating to that day's assigned readings, making clear links to important passages in the texts. You will also have prepared 3-4 discussion questions to create conversation about the ideas, themes, and critical concepts found in the readings.

Your moderation will be evaluated on the clarity of your introductory remarks, the relevance of your examples and remarks to the day's readings, and your ability to create and sustain substantive discussion with your peers. You must also provide a draft copy of your introductory remarks (notes are fine) and your discussion questions to the instructor **by noon the Tuesday before class**.

In order to facilitate discussion, your 3-4 questions may focus on the ideas from the day's reading (ex. you can ask your classmates to do a close reading of particular textual passages), but your presentation should also provide new and interesting examples that invite theorizing.

As facilitators, your role is to moderate and direct the discussion, which includes listening to your classmates' responses, ensuring equitable participation from all class members, drawing connections between individual responses when appropriate, and maintaining focus on the materials at hand. Also, your facilitation must not dramatically exceed or fall short of time expectations.

Note: Although it is the responsibility of the facilitators to begin and direct discussion, there is a responsibility on all class members to assist them in their task by engaging with the material under study in a knowledgeable and thoughtful manner.

Students will sign up for Class Facilitation on the second day of class.

Critical Responses (10%) (2 x 5%)

For this assignment, you will prepare a typed response to that day's assigned reading(s). Your critical response should accurately summarize the author's (or authors') thesis and should move beyond summary or personal reaction (liked/didn't like) to offer some analysis of the reading(s). Some analytical moves you might make include:

- Exploring how you might apply or adapt a concept from the reading to an example not addressed in the reading;
- Critiquing the limitations of a reading (pedagogically; epistemologically; ideologically);
- Asking questions about aspects of a reading that you found confusing;
- Placing two readings in conversation (noting points of connection and disconnection, attempting synthesis);
- Extending the argument of the reading (teasing out possible implications that are implicit or unstated).

Each response should be 500-750 words (2-3 pages). Your submission must be typed, double-spaced, use 12-point font (Times New Roman), and use standard, 1" margins. You must also use proper citation practices (ex. attributing concepts to authors, reference page numbers for quotations, include a works cited list).

The critical responses are due at any point during the semester, however students cannot submit a response for the readings being done for their own class facilitation.

Canadian, Eh? Assignment (25%) Due: Nov. 6

Part 1: Listening Diary

Students must listen to CBC talk radio every day for two weeks. Create a listening diary to record instances when CBC programming describes Canadian identity or "Canadianness." Your observations should include, for example, the values, characteristics, or features described as "Canadian"; the context (eg. an advertisement; the topic of a particular show; a passing joke); the demographic targeted (why would that matter?); satirical or sincere content. This is just a start and you can add more categories, as you see fit. The more detailed your listening diary, the more information you have to fuel your analysis.

Part 2: Analysis

Students will write an analysis examining issues of nationhood, imagined community, and the CBC-mediated representation of "Canadianness" based on both class materials (i.e., lectures, readings, screenings, discussions) and the listening diary. The analysis must incorporate the theoretical vocabularies and critical frameworks addressed throughout the course. The 6-8 page essay must include a one-page bibliography of at least 4 academic sources (including two course readings). The final submission must also include a copy of the listening diary.

Final Essay (30%) Due: December 10

Students will develop a topic for the final research essay (10-12 pages, double-spaced). The final essay will address themes and issues addressed throughout the semester in lecture, readings, screenings, and class discussions, and should include a bibliography (with at least three course readings). Further details will be provided in class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams weighted more than 20% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

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.

Late work will not be accepted one week past the original deadline without appropriate documentation (i.e., doctor's note). Late work will not receive written feedback.

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 14 days after the start of the course.

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 & Dept of Communication and Culture Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in Communication and Culture:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department 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	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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . 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 (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/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@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 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds

<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</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 Lectures and Readings

The Schedule of Readings will be posted to D2L before the first class.