

Communications Studies COMS 435 L01
Mass Communications and Canadian Society
Winter 2014
Monday 4:00 - 6:45 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Linda Vennard
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Office Hours: Mon – 11:00-12:00
Tues – 11:00-12:00

Additional Information

Instructor is also available by appointment.

Course Description

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 are brought by advances in technology.

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 encouraged to bring their laptops, the use of which will be during designated times in class and only for purposes of the class, and otherwise not permitted.
No texting or cell phone use permitted in class.

Textbooks and Readings:

Mass Communication in Canada, by Mike Gasher, David Skinner and Rowland Lorimer (Seventh Edition, 2012: Oxford University Press) ISBN 978-0-19-543383-8
Additional online readings will be assigned.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- Exams (2 x 15%): (February 10 and March 31): 30%
- Annotated Bibliography and Proposal Outline (February 10): 5%
- Research Paper (April 14): 25%
- Small Group Reports and Presentations (3X10%) 30%
- Participation (ongoing): 10%

Exam #1 (15%): On February 10, 2014 will contain multiple choice and/or short answer and/or short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered to that point in the course.

Exam #2 (15%): On March 31, 2014 is noncumulative and will contain multiple choice and/or short answer and/or short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered in class to that point the course (after Exam #1).

Annotated Bibliography and Proposal Outline: (5%): Due February 10, 2014

Students will prepare an Annotated Bibliography (5-6 academic sources) and a 1-2 page Proposal Outline for their research paper (see below).

Research Paper (25%): Due April 14, 2014

Students will prepare a researched essay of 10-12 pages (double-spaced), requiring research into secondary sources. The Instructor will provide a list of suggested topics the first week of class, and invite contributions. The Instructor will provide a final list of topics the second week of class, and Students will select one from the list. All sources must be properly cited, and the research paper must be well organized and edited. Further details will be provided the first day of class.

Small Group Reports (3X10%):

There are three Small Group Report Assignments, all with similar formats. Students will work collaboratively in small groups of four to prepare a written Report (5-7 pages double-spaced) and a short (3-8 minute) presentation for the class on a specific topic. The grade will be a common grade for the group. The Instructor will assign topics in the following themes a minimum two weeks in advance of the due date specified below for each Report:

Report # and Theme	Topic Assigned on:	Report Due on:
Report #1 – Theme: Traditional Media	January 20, 2014	February 3, 2014
Report #2 – Theme: Policy Report	February 10, 2014	March 3, 2014
Report #3 – Theme: Ownership and Next Generation Network Report	March 10, 2014	March 24, 2014

Participation (10%): ongoing

Participation (10%) through regular attendance and participation in class discussion and activities is an essential component of the course. Students are expected to attend classes and participate; “participation” is not only attendance per se but contributing to each others’ learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the 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

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

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.

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/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be handed out on the first day of class.