

**Communications Studies COMS 471 Lecture 01**  
**Audience & Reception**  
**Fall 2012**  
**Fridays 12:00 - 14:50 (Noon to 2.50pm)**

**Instructor:** S. Cassandra Dam,  
**Office**  
**Location:** SS 337  
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**Office Hours:** 11:00-12:00 Fridays or by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course approaches the communications process from the point of view of the audience. Students will be introduced to the history of media research dealing with the public and the audience, and consider the changes in theoretical and research paradigms from administrative approaches to those paradigms centred on fan practices and subcultures. Topics may include public opinion, uses and gratifications, reception theory, constructivism, shopping, consumption and subjectivity, fan cultures, experiential marketing, and culture jamming.

### **Objectives of the Course**

Students should through this course be able to understand the rationales for qualitative and quantitative research focused on media audiences, become familiar with historical changes in the role and practice of audiences and an awareness of changes in how the audience's role has been understood in Communications Studies, as well as the ability to conceptualize an audience-centred research project.

### **Additional Information**

Some assignments in this course may require research involving human subjects. Students should be aware of information contained in the notes on "Ethics" below. Some course content may contain material that is sexually explicit, violent or otherwise offensive. If you have concerns about this please make them known to the instructor in advance. Lecture notes will not be made available for electronic distribution: it is the student's responsibility to make notes on lecture material during the lecture. Use of recording technologies in class is prohibited. Laptops may be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. No cell phone use is permitted.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Brooker, W., & Jermyn, D. (Eds.). (2002). *The Audience Studies Reader* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Other course readings will be available via a document with digital links available on Blackboard two weeks prior to class beginning. Students are expected to keep copies of the readings for the entire term. The instructor does not redistribute or re-post readings that have been taken off Blackboard.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Weekly reading responses	Submitted on October 5 and again on the last day of class	20%
Midterm Exams	2 in-class exams worth 10% each Oct 19 & Nov 16	20%
Collaborative Paper Proposal with annotated bibliography	Oct 12 in-class	5%
Collaborative Research Paper	December 7 in-class	30%
Final Exam	By Registrar	25%
Total		100%

**Weekly Reading Responses (20%):** Students prepare weekly responses to selective required readings to ensure that course material is being comprehended and prepare for class discussion. These reading responses also help to practice with summarizing others' ideas, an important skill in academic discourse. Responses are submitted on October 5 and again on the last day of class. Each submission is worth 10% for a total of 20%.

**Exam #1 (10%):** On October 19, 2012 contains short answer and short essay questions. It covers the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered to that point in the course.

**Exam #2 (10%):** On November 16, 2012 is noncumulative and contains short answer and short essay questions. It covers 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).

**Collaborative Annotated Bibliography and Proposal Outline: (5%):** Due October 12, 2012. In small groups (of 3-4 students) students prepare a collaborative Annotated Bibliography (min. 3 academic sources per team member) and a 500-750 word Proposal Outline for their group research paper (see below) and must include any ethics paperwork required. Note: Groups will be formed on September 28, 2012, and new groups or changes to groups will not be allowed after October 5, 2012. These groups will work collaboratively on this assignment and the Research Paper.

**Collaborative Research Paper (30%):** Due December 7, 2012

In the same small groups, as above students, collaboratively prepare a researched paper of 2500-3000 words, about audience reception research & theories discussed in class. Students may conduct primary research in the form of surveys, interviews

or small-scale field observation but they are also expected to go beyond the readings covered in the course material in order to develop a fuller understanding of a particular audience reception theory. All sources must be properly cited using APA format, and the research paper must be well organized and edited. Note: Each group member will peer review the other members of the group on their contributions to the group assignments. In consultation with the group individual marks may be adjusted.

**Final Exam (25%):** Registrar Scheduled

The final exam is cumulative, and comprises of both short answer questions and shorter style essay questions.

Please note: Detailed descriptions of the requirements and expectations for each assignment will be developed in class and then posted on the course's Blackboard site. All assignments are expected to follow APA format and citation requirements. All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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: Yes**

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://www.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:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) 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.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **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/cfreh>

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

Will be posted on blackboard two weeks prior to the start of course.