

Communications Studies (COMS) 481- Lecture 01
Advanced Topics in New Media & Society
Winter 2012
Monday 9:00-11:50

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Course Description

This course examines the nature, origins and social implications of new media with a focus on the Internet. Evolving forms of interpersonal, group and public communication based on the Internet will be assessed in terms of the role they play in identity formation, cultural belonging, learning, political participation, commerce and work. Students will be introduced to theoretical frameworks that encourage critical engagement with the dynamic changes in the contemporary media environment. They will conduct research focused on particular new media such as online discussion forums and communities, blogs, social networking sites, citizen journalism sites, etc. The convergence between old and new media and the resultant challenges and opportunities will receive special attention including issues of political economy, copyright, production and use practices.

Additional Information

Students should have reliable access to the Internet as well as valid UofC e-mail addresses. The course will involve regular use of Blackboard. Ideas will be shared and discussions carried out through online forums and where appropriate, blogs and web pages.

Objectives of the Course

The overall objective of the course is to provide a solid basis of knowledge and critical skills that would allow students to reflexively navigate the new media as users, researchers and creators. Such a basis is a necessary condition for the successful performance of every communication practitioner.

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of laptops, iPods, cell phones and other electronic devices is not allowed during class. Students are encouraged to take notes by pen. The visual slides of lectures and student presentations will be posted on Blackboard. Cell phones should be turned off or on 'silent' if you expect an urgent call.

Textbooks and Readings

Required readings will be made available through Blackboard, the Internet or library databases. Additional sources will be suggested by the instructor to individual students and working groups depending on their specific interests.

Assignments and Evaluation

- 2 in-class tests (40% - 20% each)
- Research paper (25%)
- Reading presentation (10%)
- Research assignment and presentation (15%)
- Participation (10 %)

In-class tests will be a mix of multiple-choice, short-answer and/or short essay-type questions to be completed within a scheduled class period (40 minutes). *Closed book.*
Dates: February 27 and April 2

The research paper (8 pages double-spaced, 12 p, Times New Roman) should focus on a new-media development or issue related to the themes, perspectives and debates covered in the course. It should be based on literary sources identified by the student and should present a critical examination and/or argument concerning the topic. Paper topics should be selected in consultation with the instructor. Deadline for submitting paper topics with research questions and 100 words abstract is **Monday, February 13, 2012** (submit through the Blackboard Digital Dropbox and bring a paper copy to class). Paper due date: **Friday, April 13.**

Reading presentations will be focused on selected assigned texts. Students will work in pairs to prepare an outline of the readings and critical discussion of their ideas complemented by students' own examples and material from additional sources. The presentations will also include discussion questions to involve the class. Scheduled throughout the semester.

Research assignment and in-class presentations include: Independent research addressing selected phenomena or issues that expand and enrich the course content and its presentation to the class according to the schedule (to be announced). Research topics have to be approved by instructor. Students will work in teams. The use of creative visualization is encouraged. Notes and visuals should be submitted to the instructor on the day of presentation and posted in the designated online space.

Participation includes:

Contributing to in-class discussion each week or posting responses and comments to the readings or to the class discussion in the designated Blackboard discussion forum. Online responses will only be counted when they address the topics and readings of the week in which they are posted. The evaluation of participation will be done in four categories: '*inadequate*' (0 points), '*adequate*' (3 points), '*good*' (6 points) – student contributed a substantive comment in at least 50% of the weeks, comment was informed (demonstrated familiarity with course readings) and insightful, '*very good*' (9 points) – participation was regular, informed, enthusiastic, original and strongly beneficial to the learning process. In exceptional cases some students may be given 10 points for outstanding participation and contribution to class discussion.

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://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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) 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/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

To be provided through Blackboard on the first day of classes.