University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 503.07 L01

Advanced Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies: Researching Social Media

FALL 2019: Sept. 10 to Dec. 3 (excluding Nov. 10-16)

Lecture: Tuesdays 3:30PM - 6:15PM

Instructor:	Dr. Maria Bakardjieva
Office:	SS 230
Office Phone:	(403)-220-7300
Email:	bakardji@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 2:00 to 3:00 pm or by appointment.

Course Description
This course will give advanced undergraduate students interested in honing their research skills the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of media theory and methods in designing and implementing a small-scale study focused on topical issues related to social media. Students are expected to enter the course with an idea about a research topic. The lectures and seminars will review the main themes in the academic literature dealing with social media and will guide students through the different stages of their research project design and implementation. Active participation and independent work on the part of students is required. The final product of the course will be a research report summarizing the findings of the individual studies. Public presentations of the research results may be arranged.

Additional Information
The weekly schedule of topics and readings will be announced in the first class meeting and will be posted on D2L. Students should have reliable access to the Internet as well as valid UofC e-mail addresses. The course will involve regular use of D2L for sharing documents and class discussion. Research will be conducted on the Internet during and outside of class time. The use of a laptop in some parts of the class will be necessary. Students are expected to attend all classes on all days of the course (attendance will be taken). Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. Students will typically work in teams. Team contracts will be discussed and completed by members. Individual work on projects is possible under special arrangement.

Objectives of the Course
The objectives of the course are to:
- give undergraduate students hands-on experience in formulating a research topic, applying a research methodology, and completing a research report;
- prepare students for Honours project work (if they wish to pursue an Honours degree);
- give students the opportunity to author a research document as a testament to their research competence;
- offer avenues for presenting students' research to peers and at conferences or public settings;

- highlight the place of research in various professional fields;
- connect students to research teams in the Department of Communication, Media and Film and the university;
- equip students with in-depth critical understanding of social media.

Textbooks and Readings
Required readings will be made available through D2L, the Internet and library databases. As part of the investigation of a chosen topic, students will be expected to purchase or otherwise get access to one book (or e-book) of approximately $40 value. Additional sources will be suggested by the instructor to individual students and research teams depending on their specific interests. Students will need to independently locate and study additional publications (scholarly articles and books) related to their research topics in the process of preparing the literature review constituting a component of their project report.

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices
The class uses D2L for all communication, assignment submission, access to readings, presentations and grades. The use of mobile phones in class is not acceptable except in cases of personal emergency. Laptops, smart phones and tablets can be used for the purposes of in-class course work only. Please refrain from keeping laptops open or attending to other devices during class discussions. Reading and posting on social media during class time is not allowed. Students are not permitted to audio or video-record lectures and class discussions or take pictures during class. All statements and interactions during class time are a matter of group privacy and cannot be publicized.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
Required. No grade	Personal statement of interest: a two-page informal personal statement of research interest/s. To be submitted in written form and presented in class.	Sept. 17
15%	Reading report: an in-class team presentation (20 min each) and student-led discussion (20 min each) based on the respective academic books and articles selected by each team from the reading list provided by the instructor.	Oct. 8
10%	In-class team presentation of research problem (15 minutes). Power-point presentation to be submitted in D2L.	Oct. 15
15%	Team research proposal submission: 6-7 double-spaced pages. The required elements of the proposal are: (1) a clearly formulated research question and explanation of its significance, (2) a brief outline of relevant literature; 3) a methodology; (4) an annotated bibliography and (5) a schedule of research activities.	Oct. 22
Required. No grade	Team final project presentation (in-class). Teams that fail to present their project results in class will see 8 percentage points deducted from the grade for their final research report – see below.	Dec. 3
40%	Final research report: a 30-page double-spaced document (in the case of team work) akin to a scholarly article. It must include all elements of a research article and detail the results of the research project.	Dec. 3
5%	Individual reflective journal (4-6 pages): reflection on the experience of conducting research and the lessons learned	Dec. 10
15%	In-class participation: including discussion and active involvement in project work	

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments
Please include your name and ID number on all assignments. Please submit your assignments electronically through D2L **AND** hand in a copy directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If you are unable to do so, please use the drop box 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. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html. Also see FAQs for Students: https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq

Expectations for Writing
Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale
The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department. of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, each assignment will receive a numeric score adding up to a maximum of 100 for all assignments: e.g. 35 out of 40 where 40 is the percentage weight of the individual assignment in the course total of 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the basis of the percentage scale below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	**A+**	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	**A**	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	**A -**	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	**B+**	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	**B**	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	**B-**	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	**C+**	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	**C**	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	**C-**	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	**D+**	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	**D**	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	**F**	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation
Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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
Although this course requires students to conduct research, it will not be research that involves human subjects. Therefore, no ethics approval for research projects will be needed in most cases. In cases where students choose to conduct surveys, interviews, or observations on human subjects, they will need to apply for ethics approval themselves under the guidance of the instructor.

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal
For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar:* https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html

Student Support Services and Resources
Please visit https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings
TBA