

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies (COMS) 580 B01

Advanced BCS/BFS Project

Spring 2015

MTWR 15:00 – 17:45

May 14 – June 25

TBA SAIT Campus

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

COMS 580 is a full course. During the semester, teams will produce a media-based project while at the same time teams or individuals will complete a research essay. The first week of the class will be devoted to group formation, discussion of group process, elaboration of media and critical research projects, discussion of relevant topics, research methodologies, and issues surrounding format and writing. Both the project and the paper will be presented to the class at the end of the semester. Student input will be taken into account in the instructor's determination of the final grade for the media projects. Students will be asked to complete a comment sheet for each project. Class meetings will include student led discussions of communication, culture and media events and theory.

Additional Information

Due to the nature of team projects students should anticipate costs of approximately \$50-\$100 for recording media, equipment rentals and services.

Objectives of the Course

The course will help the student to:

1. Integrate theoretical research and practical experience in media production.
2. Increase understanding of theoretical constructs, methodological approaches and research skills while reflecting upon their value in application to specific productions.
3. Exchange ideas and experiences that will broaden understanding of the field of media production.

Textbooks and Readings

No textbook required. Readings may be assigned according to the project.

Recommended reading:

Action Research, 3rd ed., Ernest Stringer, 2007.

Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 3rd ed., John Creswell, 2009

Theories of communication, culture and media are foundational for this course. Students should already be aware of a wide range of theories from previous studies. At a minimum, you should have a good working knowledge of:

Interpersonal and Behavioral theories such as Classical Rhetoric, Social Identity, Expectancy Value, Symbolic Interactionism, Uncertainty Reduction, Cognitive Dissonance, Theories of Attachment and Transportation, Cognitive Psychology, Social Psychology in Virtual Communities, and Captology.

Mass Media / Media in Culture theories that include Agenda Setting, Framing, Cultivation Theory, Dependency Theory, Gatekeeping, Hypodermic Needle, Spiral of Silence, Uses and Gratification, Media Ethics, Subliminal Communication, Theories of Propaganda, and Theories of Persuasion.

Language / Linguistic theories including, Language Expectancy Theory, Semiotics and Semantics.

The above list is not exhaustive, and the placement of specific theories in the above categories is typical, not absolute. Students are encouraged to use any other theories relevant to their work.

Internet and electronic communication device information

All electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, etc.) should be turned off during class unless alternative arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Assignments, Due Dates and Weighting

In-class Theory Presentation (May 19-27)	10%
Paper Outline (May 25)	5%
Media Project Proposal (May 25)	5%
Mid-term Production Meeting (June 8)	10%
Rough Draft (June 8)	10%
Media Project (June 24)	30%
Research Paper (June 25)	30%

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

Each student will prepare an individual 15 to 20 minute in-class theory presentation (May 19-27). The presentation will allow the student to share with the class a communications, culture, or media theory of their choosing. They will define and contextualize the theory, sharing relevant points with the class, and ultimately lead the class in a discussion about the theory. Applicable and current examples should be included. Students are also encouraged to explain the theory with support of media and/or related tools. Presenters are asked to prepare 3 questions related to their presentation and/or topic for class discussion.

Students will write an advanced 20-page **research paper** (due in-class on June 25) showing their ability to define, integrate and expand on culture and/or communications theories. Although there is a significant amount of latitude in the choice of topics, students are expected to engage in an on-going dialogue with the instructor concerning their research and progress. The paper may be written in an “alternate” style, but only after proper justification, appropriate learning outcomes have been identified, and the approval from the instructor. The paper carries high expectations, and should show a considerable level of research.

The **research paper outline** (due in-class on May 25) is an abstract, with an annotated bibliography of a minimum of 3 sources: one must be on-line; a book; and one journal article. The abstract will cogently describe the subject of your paper in a minimum of 150 words. It should describe your aim in a clear thesis statement and how you will go about making the argument. The annotated bibliography should be included below your abstract. Each source should clearly be relevant to your paper. If your literature review did not supply relevant sources, do not include them. Each annotation of a source should do two things: give the reader an idea of the overall content of the book or article and its significance, as well as briefly describe the source’s relevance for the paper you are proposing.

The research paper outline should:

1. Be a minimum of 150 words and no more than 200;
2. Include a thesis statement;
3. Convey how you will go about making your argument;
4. Exhibit your knowledge based on your initial research.

The research paper outline annotated bibliography should:

1. Include a minimum of 3 relevant and authoritative sources (one must be from an on-line source; a book; and a journal article.);
2. Include an annotation for each source;
 - i) Convey the overall content of the source;
 - ii) Describe the relevance of the source for the argument you will be making;
3. Be properly formatted as an APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. annotated bibliography.

The **rough draft** (due in-class on June 8) should convey that you are prepared, capable and on track to finish and submit the final paper by the deadline. The draft should include a bibliography of at least 6 specialized sources at this point (i.e. **not** dictionaries, encyclopedias, or general

textbooks). There is no maximum, but no more than half (3) are on-line specialized sources (i.e. **not** dictionaries, encyclopedias). The rough drafts will be peer reviewed.

Further, students will produce a **media-based group project** (due on June 24) that will demonstrate both scholarly and practical skills. The group project allows students to explore theories and issues and put them into a practical setting. Ultimately, the success of the projects depends on the dialogue created between the group participants and the larger class.

Group projects are peer reviewed. Comment forms will be filled out by each student (except the group members presenting on that day) for every presentation and will be collected and used to tabulate group marks. Groups do not prepare comment forms for their own presentations. A final mark and report will be prepared by the instructor and given to the group, usually by the next class. The instructor reserves the right to evaluate groups and/or individuals separately.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your 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.

Electronically submitted assignments are not accepted.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments

Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor.

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.

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 & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

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 <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. 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/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@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/safewalk
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	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 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus <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

Determined by group and semester requirements.