University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 581 L01
Senior Project in BCMS/BFS
Winter 2019

Monday, Jan. 14 – Monday, April 08 (excluding Feb. 18)

Lecture M 12:00-12:50
Lab M 13:00-14:50

Instructor:	Dr. S. Thrift
Office:	SS 210
Office Phone:	403-220-5320
E-Mail:	samantha.thrift@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Th 10:00-11:30 (or by app't.)

Course Description
An advanced research and experiential project incorporating academic research and media production. The project will be produced in a medium appropriate to the student's specialization: print, radio, television, video, film or digital media.

Additional Information
This course supports students' development of individual (or paired) research-creation projects. Research-creation provides an academic framework for undergraduates interested in producing critically informed work in a variety of media or art forms. In COMS 581, students will work either individually or in pairs to produce a media project that is strongly informed by or engages with communication, media and/or film theory. Students' final projects will be presented to the class and invited guests at an end of semester showcase.

This course may not be repeated for credit.

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 and research-creation.

Textbooks and Readings

No textbook is required. Two required readings have been posted on D2L, and additional readings may be assigned according to the project.

Theories of communication, culture and media are foundational for this course. Students should already be aware of a wide range of theories from their previous studies, including interpersonal theories of communication (ex. symbolic interactionism), theories of rhetoric (ex. Aristotelian, narrative paradigm, dramatism), theories of mass media (ex. propaganda and persuasion, agenda-setting, cultivation theory), and critical/cultural theories of identity and representation (ex. semiotics, cultural studies, feminist/queer/critical race theory).

The above list is not exhaustive, and students are encouraged to utilize any other theories most relevant to their work.

Internet and electronic communication device information

When corresponding with the instructor via email, students should include the course name (ex. Senior Project or COMS 581) in the subject line. If you do not include the course name in your email's subject line, your message may get overlooked in the instructor's inbox and go unread. Please maintain a respectful tone in your correspondence with the instructor.

Email is most useful for short, specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material, assignments, or grades, visit the instructor during office hours.

The instructor will respond to emails during the week, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read (or replied to) until the next working day.

NOTE: Email submissions of work will NOT be accepted unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
5%	Research-Creation Presentation	January 28
15%	Project Proposal	February 4
25%	Research Essay	February 25
10%	Work in Progress Presentation	March 11
15%	Final Project Presentation	March 25 & April 1
25%	Final Project & Reflection	April 1
5%	Showcase (Prep & Participation)	April 1-8

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.

Research-Creation Presentation (5%)

In small groups (3-4), students will research and identify existing research-creation projects carried out by scholars in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Create a short list of 5 projects that most interest you – post this short list (with links and a 1-2 sentence description of each project) to the D2L discussion page. Class time will be given for this during the lab on January 21st.

Then, in consultation with your group members, select <u>one</u> project from that short list and create a 5-10 minute presentation about that research-creation project, providing information about the creator(s), the different media/artistic/performance elements involved, and how this project created new knowledge or practice(s). The goal is for us, as a class, to become familiar with the breadth of format and conceptual issues that have been taken up in research-creation by scholars. The presentations will take place on January 28th.

Students are encouraged to include appropriate supporting media in their presentations and must submit a <u>written synopsis</u> (or outline version) of their presentation, including a properly formatted <u>bibliography</u> (APA or MLA citation), in class on January 28th.

Media Project Proposal (15%)

Students will develop and submit a 4-5 page proposal that identifies the theoretical and mediated elements of their research-creation project. The proposal must convincingly describe how this project will examine, explore, and/or answer a central problem or question through the choice of theory and creative medium (or media). Therefore, a relevant theory must be identified and coherently summarized within the proposal, demonstrating the student's comprehension of its key concepts and arguments. The proposal must include substantial reference to four <u>relevant</u> academic sources, indicating that the student has begun the research process and is making informed choices about the conceptual framework for the proposed project.

The project may be undertaken individually or in pairs. The proposal is due February 4th.

Example formats for the research-creation projects include (but are not limited to):

- photography (exhibit; curations);
- interactive mapping (archival practice; data mapping);
- video essay;
- crafting/zine creation;
- multi-media memoir;
- digital storytelling;
- podcasting;
- sound art;
- re-imagining clothing/fashion as social critique.

Research Essay (25%)

The research essay (7-10 pages) expands on the theoretical and conceptual framework articulated in the project proposal. The research essay must demonstrate the student's understanding of the bigger issues being addressed in their project, through clear, articulate discussion of the chosen theory and related case studies. The essay will also draw parallels

with the student's proposed media project, so as to indicate the student's comprehension of how these conceptual issues will work in practical application. Students will conduct additional research for this assignment, which must reference 6 relevant scholarly sources (ex. theory, case studies). The essay must include a bibliography (MLA or APA), and is due on February 25th.

NB: A third of a letter grade will be deducted from the overall essay score for each missing source.

Work in Progress Presentation (10%)

Students will prepare a project status report to be presented in small groups on March 11th. The WiP presentation should include a visual component – whether text, image, or video based – to be shared with your peers using the available collaboration carts in the learning studio. Each student's presentation should take approximately 10-15 minutes, including time for feedback and discussion. The WiP presentation must also be uploaded to the COMS 581 D2L dropbox by noon of March 11th.

Final Project Presentation (15%)

Students will prepare and deliver 10-20 minute in-class presentations on their final projects. The presentation should include demonstration/performance of the creative element of their work (ex. playing a video, allowing time for viewer interaction with visual works) as well as discussion of the theoretical/conceptual knowledge engaged by (or in) the project: how is theory present within this creative work? The presentation must also include elements of critical reflection, in which the student addresses how the research-creation process contributed to their own learning process.

Presentations are scheduled for March 25th and April 1st. Student sign-up will take place the first week of class.

Final Project & Reflection (25%)

Students will submit their final projects and accompanying written reflections (5-6 pages) on April 1st. Submission method (ex. dropbox, USB, hard copy) will be project specific.

Showcase: Preparation and Participation (5%)

Students are expected to actively participate in the end of semester showcase of their research-creation projects. The showcase will take place on April 8th (last day of class).

April 1 (2.5%): Students will assist in the showcase by finalizing the presentation of their individual projects, by organizing the exhibit layout, and by creating brief remarks to describe their own works to invited guests.

April 8 (2.5%): Students are expected to arrive on time, assist with the set-up and dismantling of the showcase, and be informative and courteous hosts to attendees.

Please note that students may earn a 1% bonus on their final grade, if a friend or family member attends the showcase and completes a comment card.

Submission of Assignments: 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act.* For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

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. Assignments submitted seven days or more late without documentation will not be accepted for grading.

Student Accommodations and Deferrals:
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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 for 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, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html

- FAQs for Students at https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq

Note that when accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar:*

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html

- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale
Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentage grades will be used for essays and final project submissions, while raw point scores will be used for presentations and showcase participation.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table 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%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. 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 support services in the Student

Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

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 at https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436. Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/ If you have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at 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, including surveys, interviews, or observations, as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics

Note: If your project requires you to involve human subjects (i.e., interviews, observations), OR to use/analyze data which is not publicly accessible without login or special permission from individuals or organizations (i.e., privacy-protected social media, or internal organizational documents), you must first obtain Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee approval.

- Do not recruit any participants or contact organizations until you obtain approval. Guidelines and forms are at: http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics under "Individual Student Research"
- First, complete the Government of Canada Tri-Council Agency online training program at http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/
- By the February 4th deadline, submit your ethics application to the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. Seek the guidance of your thesis supervisor and

obtain their approval of your application. Include the Tri-Council certificate of completion in your application.

- After submitting the application to the Faculty of Arts, be prepared to submit revisions requested by the committee; the review may take several weeks to process.

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising
CAMPUS SECURITY **& Safewalk Program** - **Calgary Police Service** - **Emergency Text Messaging** - Emergency Evacuation & Assembly	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
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support - **IT help line**	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE - **Writing Support Services** - **Events & Info for Students**	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS - **Faculty of Arts Reps** - **Student Ombuds**	 https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE - **Health Services** - **Mental Health Services** - **Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE** - **Online resources and tips**	**403-210-9355** (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus 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.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Meeting Dates	Lectures & Activities	Work Due
Jan. 14	Course Overview & Introductions	
Jan. 21	What is research-creation? In small groups, research and identify one research-creation project; prepare 5-10 minute presentation for next week.	Have read assigned articles.
Jan. 28	R-C presentations. Small group discussion/development of student projects.	Deliver R-C presentations.
Feb. 4	Selecting theory for a research-creation.	Submit project proposals. Ethics application due (if nec.)
Feb. 11	Writing the research essay. Proposals returned.	
Feb. 18	Reading Break (No Class)	
Feb. 25	Guest Lecture (TBD)	Submit research essays.
Mar. 4	What are critical reflections?	
Mar. 11	Work-in-Progress Presentations	Deliver WiP Presentations
Mar. 18	Individual consultations/Work time	
Mar. 25	Project Presentations	Final Project Presentations
Apr. 1	Project Presentations & Showcase Preparation	Final Project Presentations Final Projects & Reflection
Apr. 8	Showcase	Showcase Participation