

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture**

**Communications Studies COMS 591-S02
Senior Seminar in Communication:
Issues and Topics in Professional Communication**

Fall 2014

**Mon., Sept. 8 to Mon., Dec. 1 (excluding Oct. 13 & Nov. 10)
Monday 2:00 - 4:45 in SA 243**

Instructor: Dr. Mark Wolfe
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Office Phone: 403-85-5770
E-Mail: mwolfe@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:45

Course Description

This senior undergraduate course uses a seminar format based on close reading of course materials to critically examine current issues and topics in professional communication. Topics include contemporary approaches to communications education, the evolving role of communication in leadership and professional environments, and examination of the dynamics of social media and emerging information infrastructures in shaping overall communications research and practice domains.

Objectives of the Course

To provide students with theoretical, critical and practical perspectives on the growing strategic importance of professional communication; to underscore the value of a purely academic education in this field; to help prepare students to articulate that value in both workplaces and the world.

Textbooks and Readings

Articles TBA will be downloaded from U of C library. Other readings supplied via D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are allowed but students camped behind them and never/rarely contributing to class discussion are apt to perform poorly in the assignments and participation grading.

Assignments and Evaluation

- October 6th in-class group assignment 15%
- Student lecture (verbal presentation) 25%
- November 17 In-class mid-term 25%
- Final research topic (presentation and/or paper) 35% (total)
 - Nov. 3 – final group project proposal due (10%)
 - Dec. 1 – final project papers or presentations (25%)

Assignments to be submitted via email or D2L in WORD or Pages format only – **(no PDFs)** – before midnight on the scheduled due dates, unless otherwise indicated (see for example In-class group assignment, below). You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.

NAMING CONVENTION: All submissions must use the following naming convention: lastnameAssign.doc. Example: wolfeProposal.doc. If submitting a group assignment, one student submits with their last name **but the submission includes the names of all group members.**

In-class group assignment (15%) – On October 6th, students will spend the entire class time working in small groups on an assignment that will require them to leverage the learning from course readings and lectures in September. Assignment questions and directions for completing the assignment will be released at the beginning of the class on October 6th and will be due by the end of the class on October 6th. Students will be able to bring notes, readings and will be encouraged to access regular online resources to complete the assignment that will be submitted via D2L Drop Box.

Student lecture (25%) -- Working in groups of 2 or 3, students early in the term will sign up to lead class discussion of a topic to be determined in collaboration with the instructor. Topics with a purely research or academic focus will be provided, but students will be encouraged to propose suitable topics reflecting their own experience in communications and non-communications workplaces. The lecture will augment an assigned reading with critical assessment of ideas and themes at play. Using a PowerPoint or other media to formalize the response is acceptable. Students particularly self-conscious about language abilities or speaking in public need to approach the instructor for guidance.

Final group project proposal (10%) – Comprising two or three pages, the proposal identifies the topic and uses course readings/themes to explain: why it's relevant; what the specific interest or angle taken to explore it will be; what other literature has been consulted to frame and deepen understanding of the topic; and how the group will tackle the project, including rules of engagement for completing the work (who will do what) and resolving any conflicts that arise between group members and/or their expectations. The final group project proposal is due November 3.

In-class mid-term exam (25%) – This essay-format examination will be held on November 17 and cover course themes and discussions up to November 10. This is actually a combined take-home and in-class exam wherein study questions released to students one week before the exam are studied and then answered closed-book and in-class on the 17th. Students will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

Final group project (25%) – Students will work individually (research papers) or in groups (presentations) to complete a final project for submission by December 1. Final projects will be a deeper dive on a trend, technology, or some issue having an impact on how communications is perceived, practiced and valued in today's world and/or workplaces.

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments: Please submit assignments as described above. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and **follow the naming convention** for all files submitted electronically. 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/secretariat/privacy>

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 & Dept of Communication and Culture Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in Communication and Culture:

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. The University of Calgary stipulates that **more than four words of your own (previous essays in other courses) or someone else's work that is used in direct or in-direct quotation without attribution** constitutes plagiarism. 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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . 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/research/research-ethics>

If this course requires (or allows) students to conduct (or act as participants in) primary research involving surveys, interviews, or observations, state that here, describe the nature of students' participation, and indicate whether you have received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee or if you expect students to apply for ethics approval themselves. **NOTE: If you have not received course-based ethics approval and do not expect your students to apply on their own for research ethics clearance, then your course outline should not include any assignments requiring surveys, interviews, or other research with people.** (One approved exception is for usability studies in COMS 363 in which students may conduct anonymous online usability surveys to get their classmates' opinions on the usability of a website. [Delete this paragraph if your course will not require research with people.]

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging 	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>sage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <p>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/</p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</p> <p>403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <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

To be posted to D2L.