

Communications Studies COMS 591 S20
Senior Seminar in Communication
The Communicative Possibilities of the Franchise
Spring 2011

Saturdays 13:00-17:30. Class dates: May 7, 14, 21, 28, June 4, 11, 18

Instructor: Brenda McDermott
Office Location: SS 209
E-Mail: bemcderm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: Blackboard
By appointment as to allow the maximum availability and least amount of waiting.
Office Hours: Brenda McDermott will generally be available before and after class.

Course Description

Social and cultural experiences are increasingly mediated through franchise experiences. This course engages in the ways in which the franchise communicates notions of familiarity and repetition shifting the development of social and cultural experiences in the globalized market of brands. This course examines the concept of the franchise from the constructs of food, media, and increasingly the experience of public spaces. It will also include questions of resistance and the counter movement of looking for authentic experiences of the local and unique.

Objectives of the Course

This course introduces students to the theoretical literature on various aspects and expressions of the franchise, including those of branding, copyright, and convergence. Students will examine the social and cultural implications of the franchise's movement toward familiarity and repetition. Students will explore how franchise and corporate practices communicate social and cultural values. Students will be expected to integrate their understanding of communication theory, history, and methodology gained throughout the COMS degree program. Students will produce a research project that enables them to apply their knowledge and skills.

Textbooks and Readings

Course readings are available in PDF format through Blackboard. There may be some delay in the posting all readings, and past readings may need to be removed to make room for new ones. However, readings will be available at least two weeks before and two weeks after the lecture for which they are assigned. Students are expected to keep

copies of all the readings for the entire term. The instructor will not redistribute or re-post readings that have been taken off Blackboard.

The *APA concise style guide* (2009) is highly recommended, as students are expected to have a mastery of this citation style.

Assignments and Evaluation

Informed Class Discussion	Throughout Term	15%
Short Writing Assignment	May 14 in-class	15%
Presentation and Written Summary	Scheduled during the first class	25%
Paper Proposal	Due May 21 in-class	10%
Research Paper	Due June 18 in-class	35%
Total		100%

A detailed assignment description and marking schema (when appropriate) will be posted on blackboard before the first day of classes.

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

These will be available via Blackboard before the first day of class.

As this is a seven week course, please be prepared for a full first class. It is to your benefit to read the first week's readings posted on Blackboard before the beginning of the course.