Communications Studies COMS 591 S20
Senior Seminar in Communication
Canada as a Digital Society
Spring 2013
Saturdays 9:00 – 2:30
(May 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22)

Instructor:	Dr. Linda Vennard
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Office Hours:	Tuesday: 12:00-2:00 or by appointment

Course Description

Theme: Canada as a *Digital Society*

The special topic of this seminar course is: *Canada as a Digital Society*. Within this theme we explore the role of technologies and digitization, and new media in particular, within the broad context of social development in Canada. Technologies and digitization have far reaching implications for Canada's economic, political and business systems, social and cultural organization and values, and individual practices and activities. They also have far reaching implications for communication, and in the course we consider the increased role of visualization and visual communication in the digital environment.

Following a set of overviews on national connectivity and access rooted in the 2010 federal *Digital Economy Strategy* and strategic positioning of ICT (information and communication technologies) as primary drivers of the digital economy in an increasingly globalized world, we will examine content and use through a series of seminars focused on the following thematic areas; each includes a visual communication component:

1. Theme 1: Social Connectivity: Virtual communities, social networking, citizenship, politics and governance - how do Canadians work and relate socially in a *digital society*?

2. Theme 2: Art, Culture and Entertainment: From digital dance to mash-ups and artistic expression – how do Canadians express themselves and play in a *digital society*?

3. Theme 3: Science and Technology: From medical robotics to simulations and the capabilities of molecular computers – how do Canadians create and share scientific and other knowledge in a *digital society*?

4. Theme 4: Public Safety, Critical Infrastructure and National Security: A digital society is possible because of a complex system of technological infrastructures. However, with these come new forms of issues such as cybercrime and critical infrastructure failure. What technological infrastructures is the digital society founded upon, and what measures are in place to protect and develop them and thereby assure the continued functioning of the developing Canadian *digital society*?

Classes will be in a seminar format, and organized around identifying and critically examining key questions and issues in each thematic area related to Canada's transition into a *digital society*. Each thematic area and seminar discussion is organized around specific examples and sets of readings. Students are expected to build on this foundation, expand outward, and contribute their own perspectives and insights to seminars. At times Students will work in small groups to further explore common interests and debate issues.

Since this is a capstone course, it provides an opportunity to apply and integrate what Students have learned in the program in seminar discussions, class activities, and a major research paper.

Objectives of the Course

The course has the following major objectives:

1. To provide Students with an opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills and experiences acquired during the program.
2. To provide Students with the opportunity to create a major research project drawing on course material and personal interests, which Students will present to the class and as a formal research paper.
3. To encourage Students to think and research across disciplinary boundaries.
4. To help prepare Students for the expectations of graduate level study and professional work.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are encouraged to bring their laptops, the use of which will be during designated times in class and only for purposes of the class, and otherwise not permitted.
No texting or cell phone use permitted in class.

Textbooks and Readings:

All readings are online, accessible through Blackboard.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- Take Home Assignments (2 x 15%) (dates and details below):   30%
- Seminar Project (work in pairs, details below)   20%
    - Key Reading Presentation and Summary: 10%
    - Lead Seminar Discussion: 10%
- Individual Research Project: (details below)   40%
    - Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (due June 1):   5%
    - Research Paper (due June 22):   30%
    - Paper Presentation (June 22):   5%
- Participation (ongoing, see below):   10%

About the Take Home Assignments (30%)

Students will receive marks for two (2) of four (4) Take Home Assignments (each worth 15%, for a total of 30%). A Student can elect to do and submit two (2), or can complete and submit three (3), in which case they will receive the highest two (2) marks of those submitted. There are four themes in the course; Students are not permitted to submit an essay for the theme in which they lead a seminar.

The Take Home Assignments involve analyzing and integrating assigned readings, and lecture and seminar material into a four (3) page (double-spaced) essay. The Instructor will assign topics in each theme at the beginning of each thematic section, and a hard copy of the assignments is due at the beginning of each of the following classes. No late assignments will be accepted. Relevant dates are specified below:

Take Home Assignment	Topic Assigned on:	Assignment Due on:
Assignment #1: Theme – Social Connectivity	May 25, 2013	June 1, 2013
Assignment #2: Theme – Art, Culture, Entertainment	June 1, 2013	June 8, 2013
Assignment #3: Theme – Science and Technology	June 8, 2013	June 15, 2013
Assignment #4: Theme – Public Safety, Critical Infrastructure and National Security	June 15, 2013	June 22, 2013

About the Seminar Project (20%)

Students will work in pairs to complete the Seminar Project, which comprises two components:
- Key Reading Presentation and Summary (10%): Students will select from a list of assigned readings, prepare and deliver a 10 minute presentation to the class highlighting the key points of the reading, and submit a two (double-spaced) summary of the reading and their seminar presentation to the Instructor.
- Seminar Discussion Lead (10%): Each pair of Students will then lead a 30 minute seminar discussion on the key concepts in the reading, and raise question and issues for discussion.

Seminar Presentation Sign-Up is first day of class (May 18, 2013).

About the Individual Research Project (40%)

The Individual Research Project comprises 40% of the mark in the course, and comprises the following components:

- Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (5%): due June 1, 2013
    - Students will prepare a 2-3 page Proposal Outline for their research paper (see below) and an Annotated Bibliography (5-6 academic sources).
- Research Paper (30%): due June 22, 2013
    - Students will prepare a researched essay of 12-15 (double spaced) pages on a topic of their choice (to be approved by the Instructor) related to an aspect of Canada as a digital society. All sources must be properly cited, and the research paper well organized and edited. Further details will be provided the first day of class.
- Presentation (5%): June 22, 2013
    - Students will present their Research Paper to the class the last two weeks of class (length estimated to be 10 minutes but will depend on the number of Students registered).

About Participation (10%): ongoing

Participation (10%) through regular attendance and participation in class discussion and activities is an essential component of the course. Students are expected to attend classes and participate; "participation" is not only attendance per se but contributing to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

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

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

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://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: http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	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 (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support) 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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds

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

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be handed out on the first day of class.