

**Communications Studies (COMS) 591 - Seminar 02**  
**Senior Seminar in Communication**  
**Winter 2012**  
**Thursday 14:00 – 16:50**

**Instructor:** Geoff Cragg  
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**Office Hours:** TBA

**Course Description**

The special topic of this section is persuasion. We will focus on persuasion in five modes of communication: linguistic, visual, musical, socio-gestural, and logical-mathematical.

**Objectives of the Course**

The course has the following major objectives:

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

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

Use of cellphones is not permitted during class. You are welcome to use laptops, but only for course-related work or note-taking, and not during presentations. Please show professional courtesy to fellow students at all times.

**Textbooks and Readings:**

You will require the following texts for this seminar:

Cialdini, *Influence: Science and Practice*

Book of readings for this course

Both texts may be found at the Bookstore; used copies of Cialdini should be available.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	Length	Value
Group Presentation on assigned readings	Feb 2- Mar 8	50 minutes	20%

Each group will discuss readings focusing on a specific mode of persuasion. In addition to explaining and illustrating the major points of the readings, the group will also critique them, identifying their problems or weaknesses, as well as evaluating their usefulness in understanding persuasion. Presenters are welcome to use notes, but may not use full scripts.

Proposal and Bibliography for presentation	Feb 16	2-3 pages	5%
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This assignment is closely linked to the individual presentation and term paper. For this assignment, you will propose a topic relating to a specific type of persuasive communication operating in one of the major modes of persuasion. For example, you might want to examine protest music during the 1960's counterculture, or conflicting narratives concerning global warming. Your proposal should clearly articulate the research question(s) you hope to answer, as well as the goal of the presentation. In addition to the proposal, you will include an annotated bibliography with a minimum of five sources.

Individual presentation	Mar 15-Apr 5	15 minutes	20%
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For this assignment, you will create a presentation to the class on the topic you described in the proposal. You will be evaluated on the clarity of the theoretical background you provide, your analysis of primary material, the strength of your thesis and your delivery of the presentation. You are welcome to use whatever media will be helpful but you are cautioned not to over-rely on PowerPoint.

Research paper, based on presentation	Apr 12	10-12 pages	30%
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In this research-based essay, you are essentially developing and refining the material you presented earlier. You should employ a minimum of five sources outside the course readings. You may use either APA or MLA format. You will be evaluated on the thoughtfulness of your research, the strength of your thesis, and the quality of your paper's organization and editing.

Take-home Final Exam	Apr 20	10 pages	25%
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For this assignment, you will create an essay which addresses one of the questions created by our seminar group, a question which allows you to draw on material from the

entire course. It is not intended to require additional outside research; you should refer to course readings and discussion, as well as relevant materials you have encountered from your term paper project. Please use APA or MLA documentation format. You will be evaluated on the clarity of your argument, your understanding of the sources you employ, and the quality of the paper's organization and editing.

Please note that you must submit all assignments to pass the course and that you are required to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Please hand in your essays directly to me 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. If you realize that submitting an assignment on time will be difficult, please contact me immediately so that we may discuss alternative arrangements.

### **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](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

### **Grading System**

In this class, you will receive grades in the 4-point scale (2.7, 3.0, 3.3) *rather than* percentages. Sometimes you may receive grade points between letter grades. 3.5 is the mathematical mid-point between a B+ (3.3) and an A- (3.7) and 3.15 is the mid-point between a B (3.0) and a B+ (3.3), etc.

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:  
(Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: <a href="#">Academic Standing</a> )
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	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. 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 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ualgary.ca](http://efwr.ualgary.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**

This will be handed out in class.