

**Department of Communication and Culture**  
**Communications Studies (COMS) 601 - Seminar 01**  
**Interdisciplinary Approaches to Communications Studies**

**Fall 2014**  
**Mo 6:00PM - 8:45PM**  
**SS 202**

**Instructor:** Dr. Maria Bakardjieva  
**Office/Phone Number:** SS 230 220-7300  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
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**Website:** [www.ucalgary.ca/~bakardji](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~bakardji)

### **Course Description**

A foundation seminar including the presentation and discussion of a range of topics in the study of communication and culture. Students will receive a broad introduction to a selection of foundational approaches, issues and debates in communication and culture through discussion of a variety of research traditions encompassing interaction, representation, media and society, cultural studies and communication technology.

### **Course Objectives**

- 1) introduce research traditions in Communication Studies
- 2) introduce research areas represented in our program
- 3) initiate students in the process of developing independent research skills and a feasible agenda for communication and culture research

### **Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information**

Please respect other students in your use of electronic communication devices and computers. Laptops in class should be used only for learning purposes. Mobile phones should be turned off or set on "silent" in case you expect an emergency call. The privacy of the classroom will be strictly enforced. Recording and/or publicizing online class readings, lectures, presentations and interactions (except for those of which you are the sole author) in any form is not allowed. The course will make extensive use of the learning platform Desire2Learn (see <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/>).

### **Textbooks/Readings**

There is no required text for the course. Readings will be made available either electronically or in the Reserve Reading Room of the library

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Final grade in the course will be based on the completion of all assignments:

### **Reflexive academic “selfie”, i.e. self-profile (due September 29) - 10%.**

This assignment can be thought of as an intellectual biography or introduction. Outline and reflect on the origins and the trajectory of your interest in Communication Studies. What are the ideas, the life experiences and who are the writers and researchers that brought you to this point in your intellectual development? What is it about the kind of work they do or the topics they work on that appealed to you? How have they shaped your own intellectual engagement? How do you see their work influencing your work in the near future?

Your paper should be approximately 5 typed, double spaced (Times New Roman, 12 p.) pages with appropriate footnotes, citations and references. **Note that APA citation style should be used in all written assignments.**

### **Thesis review & critique (due October 27) - 25%**

This assignment is designed to give you a sense of graduate research conducted in communication and culture at the University of Calgary and elsewhere. Select one or two MA theses or PhD dissertations in an area of your own interest. In 5-7 pages, provide a summary and assessment of the project completed by the research. Your discussion should include a clear statement of their research question and objectives, an overview of the theoretical context in which they framed their question, the choice of methods and style of data analysis. You should conclude with evaluating the merits and accomplishments of the project as well as its limitations and weaknesses. Feel free to discuss any unfulfilled potential or alternative route that could have strengthened the work.

### **Seminar presentation (dates coordinated with weekly topics, to be assigned in class) - 25%**

The due date of this assignment will be based on selecting a reading or author from those assigned in the weekly readings in the course outline. You will provide a broader sense of the historical and intellectual context to the work of the particular author and explain how his or her work represents and advances the research tradition to which it belongs. You should be able to summarize and critically evaluate the work of the chosen author and present this material in class on the relevant week. Note that the focus here is on the author you have chosen. The specific reading included in the course syllabus should be treated as a sample or a stepping stone for introducing the author’s contribution in broader terms.

A detailed, 5-7 page outline should be submitted one week after the presentation. The outline will form the major basis for your grade. The visual slides of your class presentation should be posted in the Presentations folder in D2L.

### **Literature review topic proposal (due October 13) – 5%**

The proposal will be a one-page document that formulates the topic you have chosen for your final assignment (the Literature Review – see below) and explains the importance of this topic to

the field of Communication Studies or to one or more of its specific areas. Your own interest in this topic and how it relates to your Master's thesis research should be also discussed.

### **Literature review (due December 1) - 25%**

The final assignment builds on skills acquired throughout the course. It asks you to (1) select and justify a relevant research topic and (2) develop a substantive literature review on this topic. Students should situate their research topic in the field of Communication Studies showing its significance and its links to central traditions and debates. The literature review should be approximately 8-10 pages and include an annotated bibliography of at least 10 publications (articles and book chapters), not counted in this page number. The bibliography should indicate your familiarity with current journals, databases, dissertation abstracts, citation indices, government documents, and monographs that might be relevant to your topic.

Assignments should be submitted via D2L using the digital Dropbox. A paper copy of the assignment should be submitted to the instructor in class.

### **In class participation (ongoing) – 10%**

Contributing to in-class discussion is essential for this seminar. The evaluation of participation will be done in four categories: 'inadequate' (0 points); 'adequate' (3 points); 'good' (6 points) – student contributed substantive comments, their comments were informed (demonstrated familiarity with course readings) and insightful; 'very good' (8 points) – participation was regular, informed, enthusiastic, original and strongly beneficial to the learning process. In exceptional cases some students may be given 10 points for outstanding participation and contribution to class discussion.

### **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.

**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. **Copies of all assignments should be submitted also through the digital Dropbox in D2L.**

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. 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. [Edit as you wish to reflect your policy]

### **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**

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. 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES</b>	<a href="http://grad.ucalgary.ca/home">http://grad.ucalgary.ca/home</a> or 403-220-4938
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> </ul>	403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911 <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessa">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessa</a>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">ge</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a></p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (<b>220-5333</b>). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a></p>
<p><b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a></p> <p>403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<p><b>GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/">http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/</a></p> <p><a href="http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson">http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson</a> (403) 220-6420 or <a href="mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca">ombuds@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html">http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></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**  
TBA in the first class