

Department of Communication and Culture
Communications Studies (COMS) 603 - Seminar 01
Media Studies
Fall 2011
Monday 13:00-15:50 SS 315

Instructor: Dr. Charles Tepperman
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Course Description

This seminar explores theories and perspectives in the study of media production, industries, genres, and reception. Drawing on important theoretical texts in media studies, the course will use the topic of amateur media (and particularly film) as a way to focus our investigation; despite their well-chronicled history as a popular, commercial medium, motion pictures were understood from their invention as an amateur medium as well. Juxtaposing amateur activities with professional/industry counterparts, we will examine the rise of amateur movies, home movies, and movie clubs; we will also situate developments in motion pictures alongside amateur activities in still photography, radio, theatre, as well as more recent online (blogs) and digital (Second Life) DIY activities.

Course Objectives

The course objectives are:

- 1) To introduce a range of historical, theoretical and analytic tools that are productive for a consideration of media, and amateur media in particular.
- 2) To guide students in researching and writing on their particular areas of interest within media studies.
- 3) To allow students to develop skills in evaluating and applying theoretical and historical approaches to their own particular areas of interest.

Textbooks/Readings

Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords (Revised Edition), Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Douglas Kellner, eds. (Blackwell, 2006)

Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film, Patricia R. Zimmermann (Indiana UP, 1995)

Additional readings available online or via blackboard.

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation 10% - ongoing.

Student participation is absolutely central to a seminar. For each student this requires regular attendance, reading all of the assigned material and taking an active role in discussion of this material with your classmates and the instructor.

Seminar Presentation on assigned readings (45 minutes to 1 hour) 30% - Sept. 19 – Nov. 28.

Each student will be expected present on and lead class discussion on one of the assigned readings during the term. In addition to providing a close reading of the article, the presenter should thoroughly research the reading and be able to present at least some of its scholarly and theoretical context. The use of specific media examples for analysis and illustration is encouraged but the presentation will be substantially oral.

Term Paper Proposal (2-3 pages double-spaced) 10% - Nov. 14.

Research Presentation (15 minutes) 5% - Nov. 28 and Dec. 5.

Term Paper (20 pages double-spaced) 45% - Dec. 12.

Each student will develop a research topic relating to media studies as the focus of their term work in the course. The proposal should articulate a provisional research question; include a brief overview of the topic; and provide a preliminary bibliography of five to ten sources. The research presentations will take place over the last two classes. Each student will have 15 minutes to present orally on their research over the term and to answer questions on the topic from the rest of the class. Final papers are due the Monday after the end of classes. Papers must follow Chicago Manual of Style formatting for footnotes, etc.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your papers directly to your 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's- scheduled exam: 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. You will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up any assignments or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments 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 Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4	Outstanding
A	4	Excellent – superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3	Satisfactory performance
Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.		
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise. Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.		
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program recommends otherwise.
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	
F	0.0	

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 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 Graduate Calendar at the following link:

<http://grad.ucalgary.ca/files/grad/UC%20Graduate%20Calendar%202010-2011%20July%206-10.pdf>

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

www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su

Graduate Students' Association

For details on the Graduate Students' Association, please see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman, please see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/services/ombudsperson.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly Points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and assembly points, please 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 (ie. surveys, interviews, observation) as a 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:

Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB)

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

Reading List and Schedule of Lectures

Will be posted on Blackboard.