

The University of Calgary
Department of Sociology

SOCI 345: Mass Communication
Summer 2014

Instructor: Nazario Robles Bastida, PhD Candidate

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:00 pm; Thursday 3:00-4:00 pm; by appointment.

Course Description

This course offers a critical, theoretically-informed look at what it means to live in a society in which the forms and content of mass media/mass communication and our uses of them shape our lives in significant ways. In particular, it constitutes an exploration of New Media and its “Convergence Culture”, that is to say, the cultural transformations that are taking place as media converge and change. Looking at the Web 2.0, transmedia storytelling and other phenomena associated with New Media, this course aims to go beyond the notion of mass communication and introduce the student into the new ways in which societies and individuals are interacting with media.

Course Objectives

This course will provide the students with the opportunity to:

1. Examine the role of mass media and particularly New Media in their lives.
2. Understand the factors implicated with the rise and integration of new communications technologies.
3. Grasp the complex relationships between media and popular culture.
4. Explore New Media and some of the cultural transformations related to it.
5. Develop an understanding of “Convergence Culture”.

Textbooks

Jenkins, Henry. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Hirst, Martin, John Harrison and Patricia Mazepa. (2014). *Communication and new media: from broadcast to narrowcast*. Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Evaluation

Assignments (one per week)	40 %
Midterm take-home examination (July 27)	25 %
Final Project (August 14)	35 %

Assignments will not be accepted after their due dates unless a documented reason for not submitting them is provided (acceptable reasons: illness, family affliction, religious observance).

The **Midterm take-home examination** will consist of five essay-type questions and will cover the first part of the course.

The **Final Project** will be a paper in which the students will present their research, analysis and comparison of the different ways in which a social movement –the Student Movement in Quebec, the Occupy Movement or the Arab Spring, for example- is covered by the commercial media and alternative media such as blogs. In teams of four persons, the students will gather information from different sources and, using concepts learned in the course, will conduct a content analysis of this information. In addition to the paper, the teams will also present the results of their research to their classmates. The weighting of the Final Project is composed of: Paper (25 percentage points) and Presentation (10 percentage points).

Grading

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following schedule:

Number Grade Letter Grade

95-100	A+
90-94	A
85-89	A-
80-84	B+
75-79	B
70-74	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
55-59	D+
50-54	D
49 or less	F

Week-by-Week Overview

Session 1 (July 3):

Introduction: Media Convergence, Cyberspace and the Ghost in the Machine.

Session 2 (July 8):

A Brief History of Mass Media.

Session 3 (July 10):

A Brief History of Mass Media.

Session 4 (July 15):

Audiences: A Cultural Studies Approach.

- Session 5 (July 17):
Welcome to Cyberia: Rise of the Cyberspace.
- Session 6 (July 22):
Convergence Culture: From Transmedia Storytelling to Knowledge Communities.
- Session 7 (July 24):
Convergence Culture: Media Convergence and Surveillance.
- Session 8 (July 29):
Democracy and New Media.
- Session 9 (July 31):
The Question of Copyright in the Age of Convergence.
- Session 10 (August 5):
Simulacra and Simulation: Baudrillard and Hyperreality.
- Session 11 (August 7):
Digital Futures: Connected but Alone?
- Session 12 (August 12):
Conclusions: Convergence Culture, New Media and Digital Surveillance.
Presentation of Final Projects.
- Session 13 (August 14):
Presentation of Final Projects.

Course Notes:

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. Academic Misconduct: Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>
3. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

4. Ethical Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.
5. Deferrals: If possible, please provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology. Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Sp_Su_DFE_App.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

6. Student Representation: The 2014-15 Students' Union VP Academic's email is: Hana Kadri suypaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>
7. Emergency Evacuation: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Professional Faculties - Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for your other classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

8. Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

9. Academic Accommodation: Students who require academic accommodation, must register with Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Disability Resource Centre) at MC 452 (or phone 403-220-8237). Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.