

The University of Calgary  
Department of Sociology

SOCI 345: Mass Communication  
Winter 2016

Instructor: Nazario Robles-Bastida  
Office: SS 903  
E-Mail: nroblesb@ucalgary.ca  
Office Hours: Monday 11:00 am-12:00 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 “Convergence Culture”, that is to say, the cultural transformations that are taking place as media converge and change. Looking at current phenomena related to media, this course aims to go beyond the notion of mass communication and introduce the student to 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 New Media in their lives.
2. Grasp the complex relationships between media and popular culture.
3. Understand the factors implicated with the rise and integration of new communications technologies.
4. Explore New Media and some of the cultural transformations related to it.
5. Develop an understanding of “Convergence Culture”.

### **Textbooks**

Required:

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

Recommended:

O'Shaughnessy, Michael and Jane Stadler. (2012). *Media and Society; Fifth Edition* edition. Oxford University Press.

## Evaluation

Assignments (two)	10 %
First Midterm examination (Friday, February 12)	20 %
Second Midterm examination (Wednesday, March 23)	20 %
Final Project (Monday, April 11)	30 %
Final Exam	20 %

**Assignments** are exercises designed to enhance the understanding of the topics discussed on class. They 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).

Both **Midterms examinations and the Final Exam** will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. All of them are non-cumulative.

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 both 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 (5 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

## **Course Overview**

### 1. History, Society and Media

- a. A Brief History of Media: From Pictographs to Periodicals.
- b. A Brief History of Media: Mass Media, Advertising and Beyond.
- c. Welcome to Cyberia: Rise of the Cyberspace.

### 2. Audiences, Popular Culture and Mass Media

- a. Audiences: A Cultural Studies Approach.
- b. Mass Media and Society: Mediation and Representation.
- c. Popular Culture: The Mainstream, the Underground and the Postmodern Sublime.

### 3. Convergence Culture and New Media

- a. Convergence Culture: From Transmedia Storytelling to Knowledge Communities.
- b. Convergence Culture: Media Convergence and Surveillance.
- c. New Media: Democracy, Freedom of Expression and the Question of Copyright in the Age of Convergence.

### 4. Digital Futures

- a. Digital Futures: Simulacra, Simulation and Hyperreality.
- b. Digital Futures: Connected but Alone?
- c. Conclusions: Convergence Culture, Media and the Ghost in the Machine. Presentation of Final Projects.

## **Course Notes:**

### **Grade Reappraisal**

Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

### **Technology Use**

Please note that the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones or other electronic devices for entertainment purposes is **NOT** permitted during lectures.

## **Email**

Feel free to contact me over email. Please include your full name and student ID. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered.

## **Handing in Papers, Assignments**

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **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.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

## **Ethics 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 Faculty 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.

## **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>

## **Deferrals**

When possible, please provide advance notice 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, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment 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](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).

### **Student Representation**

The 2015-16 Students' Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott: email: [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca). The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca), [arts2@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@ucalgary.ca), [arts3@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@ucalgary.ca), and [arts4@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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>

### **Emergency Evacuations**

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Social Science - Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **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.

### **Academic Accommodation**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)