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Phone: 403-220-6856  
Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3 pm; and by appointment

Course Description

Socially organized practices of knowledge play a central role in coordinating human activities in all social domains. In this course, the focus is on authoritative, professional, scientific and administrative practices of knowledge, especially those forms that are mediated by visual, numerical and written modes of representation. We will be reading some theoretical work and a lot of empirical studies (historical and contemporary) that investigate forms and practices of knowledge in different times, settings and discourses. These will be drawn from a range of analytic projects, such as institutional ethnography, Foucauldian studies of governmentality, ethnomethodology, and science and technology studies. As we consider this material, we will – individually and collaboratively – examine text-based knowledge practices that we ourselves participate in. The course will therefore also have a methodological dimension.

What do specific knowledge practices involve? (What are people actually doing? How is this organized?)

What are the interpretive frameworks and classificatory schemes, the modes of vision, methods of calculation, devices, textual procedures, etc. through which specific forms of knowability are produced?

How do specific knowledge practices take shape within extended relations of discourse, coordination and control?

How do these knowledge practices coordinate particular work processes or domains of action?

What are the experiences of the people involved – as creators, users, and objects of knowledge?

How are these ways of knowing worked out, disputed, subverted and changed? Or, how are they framed and operated in ways that make challenge difficult?

Required Readings

A collection of book chapters and journal articles. See list of readings below.
Assignments and Assessment

1. “Thinkwriting” Journal. Most weeks (10/13) you will do one piece of “thinkwriting” in which you consider material from the readings and class discussions in relation to your own experience as a person who participates in socially organized practices of knowledge. In some cases, explicit assignments will be given. Entry length should be approximately 2-4 pages. The journal will be graded in two parts: 5 entries turned in on February 26, and another 5 entries turned in on April 2. (Part I – 15%; Part II – 15%)

2. Presentations on assigned readings. Each student will make an in-class presentation on four of the assigned readings (on separate days, preferably two in each half of the semester). The presentation should briefly summarize the topic, method and argument of the piece, relate it to other readings and course topics, and offer your critical evaluation of it. This presentation should be delivered in an informal, conversational style, bearing in mind that everyone has already read the piece; the objective of your presentation should be to focus and inspire discussion. After your presentation you will give me your outline, notes, or written summary. (5% each; 20% of your final grade)

3. Empirical research project. You will investigate a particular text-mediated (verbal, visual, numerical) practice of knowledge, ethnographically exploring the work processes and/or interpretive schemata through which specific texts are produced or activated. Your research may involve document analysis, an interview, and/or reflection on your own experience. You will have an opportunity to workshop your developing research and analysis at the last class, April 9. Your final papers (20-25 pp.) are due on April 16. This project, and the methodological know-how you need to carry it out, will be discussed in class. (50%)

Thinkwriting entries 30 %
Presentations on readings 20 %
Empirical research paper 50 %

Grading

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>80-84</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>75-79</td>
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<td>70-74</td>
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<td>less than 70</td>
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Official University and Departmental Policies

Emergency Evacuations: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the food court located on the lower level of the Professional Faculties Building.

Ethics in 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.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

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 with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.
Provisional Schedule of Topics and Readings (subject to revision)

January 8  Introduction to course

No readings.

January 15  Theoretical and methodological framing


January 22  History, part 1


January 29  History, part 2


February 5 Classification and categories


February 12 Contemporary practices of counting and economy


TBA

February 26 Contemporary visual practices in institutional work processes


TBA

**March 5**  
**Reading, writing and learning in professional contexts**


**March 12**  
**Institutional ethnography**


TBA

**March 19**  
**Institutional processes from the standpoint of the ruled/excluded**


**March 26  Modes of reasoning in professional contexts**


**April 2  Open session – topic to be determined**

TBA

**April 9  Workshop: research presentations**

No readings