

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2020-2021 MLCS 640-B1: Media and Cultural Studies Methodology
(Winter Term)**

Note: Remote Delivery

Instructor: Dr. Florian Mundhenke
Office: REMOTE
E-mail: mundhenk@ualberta.ca
Personal Website: <https://apps.ualberta.ca/directory/person/mundhenk>
Course Website: eClass

Time: T 14:00-16:50 (to be arranged)
Place: REMOTE
Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom or Google Meet

Course Prerequisite: consent of department

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Technology requirements (minimum):

Computer with online access and camera/microphone, Zoom access, PDF reader, free media player (e.g. VLC)

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Experiential Learning Component

this course has a significant experiential learning component (15% or more of the course grade)

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students’ Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

In finding and designing a MA or a PhD project, methods are often the “elephant in the room,” the topic we are reluctant to discuss. Methods are not only

fundamental to the design of every academic project, but they are also crucial for its success. Often, an innovative method or the combination of different methods, sets an exceptional thesis, article, or book apart from the pack. In this seminar, we will focus on identifying and selecting the methods within Cultural and Media Studies that are relevant for the projects of the participants. We will embark on an overview of selected methods from hermeneutics and semiotics to methods of ethnographic research, to discourse analysis, and deconstruction. Moreover, there will be a focus on methods of media analysis (film, television, digital media) like film analysis and methods from Image Studies. Special emphasis will be given to the interplay and integration of different theories and methods within individual approaches. Students will build their own archive of materials, case studies and theoretical texts relevant to their own research projects, present their planned projects in class, and develop a corpus of methods.

Course Format: Since this course is aimed at advanced students, the focus will be on re-reading and comparing texts and build together a fitting methodology for every participant's project. Students are asked to present the texts they like to discuss, participate in discussions, and present a tentative approach at the end (that can be part of a MA or PhD project).

Texts:

Required:

Michael Kackman, Mary Celeste Kearney (eds.): *The Craft of Criticism. Critical Media Studies in Practice*. New York: Routledge 2018 (eBook)

Ryan, Michael, Melissa Lenos: *An Introduction to Film Analysis. Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film*. 2nd Revised Edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic USA 2020 (eBook)

Additional:

Michael Pickering (ed.): *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP 2008 (eBook, eClass)

All other required reading will be distributed through eClass
Individual recommended reading will be assigned

Additional Course Fees

Yes x No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: January 11, 2021

Add/Delete Date: January 22, 2021

50% Withdrawal Date: February 10, 2021

Winter Term Reading Week: February 16-19, 2021

Withdrawal Date: April 9, 2021

Last Day of Class: April 16, 2021

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): NA

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Attendance, Participation, Preparation, Reading Introductions	10%
Presentation about a method/text with questions for discussion (TBA)	20%
Leading a Session	10%
Presentation of a project and its methodology (TBA)	20%
Final Essay (due Apr 23, 2021)	40%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Attendance, Participation, Preparation, Reading Introductions: Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. Students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of class work and assignments – that means: going online prepared, reading all texts carefully in advance, doing written or oral homework diligently, participating in group work, and contributing meaningfully to online discussions.

Presentation about a method/text with questions for discussion: Each student will present the context of one method and will prepare 3-5 questions for a critical evaluation of the text in one online discussion. Presentations will be arranged at the beginning of the course.

Leading a Session: Each student will take on the responsibility for setting up one class this term, from the pedagogical design and the definition of the concrete learning outcomes to leading the classroom discussion. Students will present an outline to me two weeks in advance of the date they are responsible for.

Presentation of a project and its methodology: Each student is going to apply one (or more if applicable) method/s to an existing or developing project in Media and Cultural Studies. The presentation will present the project, will make a statement about the usefulness of the method/s, and will say something about possible outcomes.

Final Essay: The final essay of approximately 30 pages is a reflection on the learning outcomes of the course, it summarizes the results from the discussions of the methods and details the approach chosen for the student’s research project. The essay is due Apr 23.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the

context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Those enrolled in a class will be fully informed:

- I. That the lecture or discussion is being recorded. Students will be asked to ensure that no other people are in the student's camera/recording view and that there is nothing identifiable or sensitive in that view (personal belongings, records, medications, etc.) prior to the class recording starting. Students can turn off their computer's camera or microphone if they are uncomfortable with being recorded.
- II. Why the recording is being made and any additional uses (beyond sharing with the students in the course) that will be made of the recording.
- III. Who will have access to the recording and how it will be disseminated (through eclass, google drive, zoom cloud drive, etc.). And
- IV. How long this access will be provided and when the recordings will be destroyed or otherwise deleted.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the "attendance and participation" component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, attendance, preparation, and regular participation go hand in hand; students will not only be expected to attend each session, but they are expected to come prepared for the day's lesson and participate in that day's lesson. There will be regular online discussions, and the success of the course is dependent on informed and lively discussions driven by student engagement. It is therefore vital that each student completes the required readings, film screenings, or written exercises assigned for the scheduled class. Attendance, preparation, and regular participation will count for 10% of the overall grade for the course.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be

granted an extension. Otherwise, late assignments with no prior arrangement will receive a 5%-per-class-day penalty for each subsequent class-day of lateness

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Graduate Grading Scale”

A+	97-100	Excellent
A	93-96	Excellent
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Good
B	79-86	Good
B-	74-78	Satisfactory
C+	68-73	Satisfactory
C	63-67	Failure
C-	58-62	Failure
D+	54-57	Failure
D-	50-53	Failure
F	00-49	Failure

Copyright: Dr. Florian Mundhenke, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta 2020-2021