

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

2020-2021 MLCS 299 B3: Instagram Culture
(Winter Term)

Note: Remote Delivery

Instructor: Megan Perram
Office: REMOTE
E-mail: mperram@ualberta.ca
Course Website: eClass

Time: TR 9:30-10:50 AM
Place: REMOTE
Office Hours: MW 10-11 AM, or by
appointment on Zoom

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: None.

Technology requirements (minimum): This course requires that you have reliable access to the internet with a computer or other device. You must be able to access Zoom (with a camera and microphone), eClass and Instagram. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Please consult the following page for the minimum technology specifications recommended by the University:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/information-services-and-technology/services/softwarehardware-vendors/technology-requirements.html>.

Group discussion meetings will take place over Zoom. Pre-recorded lectures will be posted to eClass. Partner presentations will be pre-recorded using a technology of your choice.

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:

From intersectionality to algorithms, Critical Media Studies offers tools to question the organization of social relations embedded in the digital media we consume. In this course we will forefront the online social media platform Instagram and trace the relationality of power that emerges from representations of identities and the technological spaces they are born from. We will think critically and expansively about multiple players including the textual and image-based content of popular Instagram influencers and celebrities such as Kylie Jenner, Lil Miquela and other cyborg identities born of corporations, digital surveillance and targeted advertisement to users, and the debate over Instagram caption plagiarism present in the Caroline Calloway scandal. At the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Critically analyze both textual and image-based digital content through Critical Media Analysis
- Contribute distinct questions and perspectives to group discussions which effectively employ course concepts of intersectionality, identity, and authorship
- Effectively present a critical media analyses of Instagram content both orally and in essay format.

Course Format:

The objectives of this course will be learned from a combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning that will take place entirely in eClass and on Zoom.

- Lectures: Each week, a series of short lectures will be posted to eClass by the instructor.
- Partner Presentations: There will be a form posted to eClass at the beginning of term where students can sign up for a weekly partner presentation slot. Students will pre-record partner presentations using a technology of their choice ([Zoom](#) or [Loom](#) work well). The instructor will upload the presentations each week for the class to view.
- Weekly Responses: Students will engage with lectures and course materials on the weekly forum on eClass.
- Group Discussions: Every Thursday during class time, we will meet as a group on Zoom for class discussion. Students will enter into small break-out rooms to discuss a series of questions related to the class readings and lectures. Students are expected to participate using their microphones or the chat function and encouraged to use their camera (not mandatory).

All communication and class announcements will occur via the “announcement” section on eClass, for which students will receive email alerts.

Office hours will be over Zoom and a link will be provided on the eClass.

Texts:

All readings will be posted on the eClass. No textbook purchase is required.

Additional Course Fees

Yes 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

Components of Course Grade:

Participation and Attendance	10%
Weekly eClass Reflections	20%
Midterm Assignment	25%
Partner Presentation	20%
Final Term Paper	25%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Participation and Attendance (10%):

Evaluation will be a consideration of attendance and active participation in the Thursday group discussion meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared (having completed the week’s readings and watched the lectures). Every Thursday during class time, we will meet as a group on Zoom for class discussion. Students will enter into small break-out rooms to discuss a series of questions related to the class readings and lectures. Students are expected to participate using their microphones or the chat function and encouraged to use their camera (not mandatory).

Weekly eClass Reflections (20%):

Each week, students will write a 250-300 word reflection on eClass. Reflections will be in response to weekly questions posted by the instructor. A rubric for reflections will be available on eClass. Reflections must include and critically engage with at least 1 passage from the weekly readings (a sentence in quotes, cited with the page number and author). Students must connect this passage to other readings, themes, or lecture content from that week.

Reflections must be completed by 11:59 PM MST Thursday of each week.

Students must also post a short (1-2 sentence) response to at least one other student’s reflection on eClass each week.

Midterm Assignment (25%):

Students will respond to a series of essay prompts in extended answer format.

The instructor will provide students with four questions. Students will write a response to each question in essay format. The questions will ask you to discuss a specific theme in relation to one or several texts.

Responses must be in paragraph form and approximately 350-500 words. Please use examples from the course readings to support your arguments. You must include at least one direct quote from a course reading in each of the four answers (sentence in quotes, cited with a page number and author). The assignment is open book, meaning you are encouraged to use your notes and course materials.

Each response must have a distinct thesis statement (an argument that you are making, threaded throughout the answer). A marking rubric will be posted to eClass. This assignment must be submitted to eClass on **Thursday, February 12, 2021 at 11:59 PM MST.**

Partner Presentation (20%):

At the beginning of term, students will sign up for a partner presentation (2 students) that will analyze a public Instagram account of your choosing (Please email me at least one week before your presentation to inform me of your choice). In this presentation, students will examine the account's images, captions, relevant history, sociopolitical context, and/or network through a critical media lens and in relation to the topic for that week. Please bring in course readings and/or terms to strengthen your analyses. Presentations should be 15 minutes in length and include active contribution from both members. Please feel free to speak with me if you have any questions or concerns.

Final Term Paper (25%):

Students will write a final research paper that will be a rigorous, extended version of the critical eClass reflections. The instructor will provide students with several question options. Students will be able to choose **one** question to respond to in essay format.

These papers must have a distinct thesis statement (an argument that you are making, threaded throughout the paper). Your paper will incorporate concepts, readings and examples from the class lectures and course readings. Please use examples from the course readings to support your argument. You must include at least **five** short direct quotes from course readings throughout your paper (one sentence in quotes, cited with a page number and author). The paper is open book, meaning you are encouraged to use your notes and course materials. Final papers will be approximately 8 pages (excluding citations or title page), and double spaced.

You may use any citation style you prefer, but please be consistent. A marking rubric will be posted to eClass.

This assignment must be submitted to eClass on **Thursday, April 27, 2021 at 11:59 PM MST.**

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).

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.

Evaluation will be a consideration of attendance and active participation in Thursday group discussion meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared (having completed the week’s readings and watched the lectures).

Policy for Late Assignments:

All assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed-in in time or unexcused late assignments will not be given any marks. Students who consult ***in advance*** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension with no penalty.

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 Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%

<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

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