

# CMST 245 – MEDIA COMMUNICATION AND CRITICISM

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South Seattle College

## INSTRUCTOR INFO

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**Instructor:** Rebecca Lea McCarthy, PhD

**Email:** [Rebecca.mccarthy@seattlecolleges.edu](mailto:Rebecca.mccarthy@seattlecolleges.edu)

**Office and Office Hours:** Your instructor is an adjunct (part-time) employee of SSC and so she does not hold formal office hours. Students are welcome to make a virtual appointment (chat or phone) as long as the appointment is set ahead of time: 24-hours notice for a virtual meeting. Please keep in mind that I live in Hawai'i and so it will be impossible to meet with you on campus. But we can meet online or via a phone call.

## COURSE INFORMATION

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**Credit:** 5

**Course Prerequisite:** English 101

**Location:** Fully online. Once students have registered and the new term has begun, students can access their course by going to [SSCC Canvas page](#), logging in, and searching for the course under "Courses and Groups."

**Days:**

- Students can access this course 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
- However, your instructor is only available Monday-Friday, between 9AM and 4PM - Hawaiian Time - or noon - 7pm Seattle Time.
- Finally, all due dates and times for assignments are in Pacific Northwest time.

## TOOLS AND ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE COURSE

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**Required Text:**

- [\*Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication\*](#). This is an Open Resource Text, that is free online and PDF copies of chapters are available in the class.
- Other readings available in the class

**Required Technology:** This is a fully online course, so you will need access to reliable Internet and computer access. With this in mind, it is the student's responsibility to find and maintain reliable access to the Internet and a computer. If the student falls behind because of lack of access to the Internet or



a computer, a penalty on all late work will be applied. The only exceptions to this rule are natural disasters and/ or emergency situations (you lose electricity because of a storm, there is a death in the family, and so on).

- I highly suggest that each student have a “plan B” in case there is a problem with access to the technology needed to take and complete an online course. Further, consider using good virus protection software to protect your computer, and to avoid inadvertently affecting any papers you might submit to your professor or classmates.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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CMST 245, Media Communication and Criticism, examines contemporary perspectives on the transformation of political and social justice issues and rhetoric as a result of computer media based communication: the internet, social media, smartphones, and other modes of connectivity. This class will examine closely how digital, online, and new media has displaced traditional media, changing how everyday people, impact political and social justice campaigns and issues through the use of new and social media, the internet, and computer information systems.

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

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At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- Communication – Read and listen actively to learn and communicate. Speak and write effectively for personal, academic and career purposes.
- Human Relations - Use social interactive skills to work in groups effectively. Recognize the diversity of cultural influences and values.
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving – Think critically in evaluating information, solving problems and making decisions.
- Technology - Select and use appropriate technological tools for personal, academic and career tasks.
- Personal Responsibility - Be motivated and able to continue learning and adapt to change. Value one’s own skills, abilities, ideas and art. Take pride in one’s work. Be aware of civic and environmental issues.
- Information Literacy - Access and evaluate information from a variety of sources and contexts, including technology. Use information to achieve personal, academic, and career goals, as well as to participate in a democratic society.

## **COLLEGE LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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### **Communication**

- Read and listen actively to learn and communicate.
- Speak and write effectively for academic and career purposes.

### **Computation**

- Use arithmetic and other basic mathematical operations as required by program of study

- Apply quantitative skills for academic and career purposes.

## Human Relations

- Use social interactive skills to work in groups effectively.
- Have knowledge of the diverse cultures represented in our multicultural society.

## Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving

- Think critically in evaluating information, solving problems and making decisions.

## Technology

- Select and use appropriate technological tools for academic and career tasks.

## Personal Responsibility

- Uphold the highest standard of academic honesty and integrity.
- Respect the rights of others in the classroom, online and in all other school activities.
- Attend class regularly, complete assignments on time and effectively participate in classroom and online discussions, group work and other class-related projects and activities.
- Abide by appropriate safety rules in laboratories, shops and classrooms.

## Information Literacy

- Independently access, evaluate and select information from a variety of appropriate sources.
- Have knowledge about legal and ethical issues related to the use of information.
- Use information effectively and ethically for a specific purpose.

## CANVAS

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You will want to use **Firefox, Chrome or Safari** as your browser when using Canvas. Internet Explorer is not supported by Canvas!

- **URL:** go to <https://southseattle.instructure.com>
- Seattle College **Canvas** Student "**Username**" = Student Identification Number (SID) Ex: 925123456 (no hyphens or spaces).
- Seattle College **Canvas** Student "**Password**" = 1st (6) letters of last name (lowercase - ignore punctuation and spaces - repeat until you have 6 letters).
- Examples:
  - Ex 1: Jill Who-Needsit = **whonee** (drop hyphens)
  - Ex 2: Sam Jameson = **jameso** (only first 6 letters)
  - Ex 3: Mildred Sing Song = **singso** (no spaces)

- Ex 4: Lily Sand = **sandsa** (repeat last name till you have 6 letters)
- Ex 5: Lang Fa = **fafafa** (repeat last name till you have 6 letters)

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

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### Grades:

The following explanation is an agreement of sorts between you and me, and also reflects the reality that writing students who focus less on grades and more on developing their writing skills actually do just that: they generally make significant improvements when the writing process is where their energy goes. In other words, my hope is that the grading policy of this class will lead you to develop as excellent communicators by encouraging you to fully focus on the process of empathetic communication.

*This grade policy is also one that values perceived effort.* While I obviously will not be sitting by your side, watching you work, I will consider how much you work and participate and how thoroughly you engage in the text, your classmates, and myself when assigning the final grade. In other words, rather than evaluate your work mostly on "correctness," your grade for this class will largely be determined by your efforts.

Toward that end, the default grade for this class is in the "B" range. **To earn a "B," you agree to do the following:**

- Do all that is asked in each assignment in the manner and spirit asked by engaging with the assignments and your classmates
- Show effort to address the assignment specifics in terms of details and meeting the minimum length, following details, citing correctly, and making the adjustments that your instructor has suggested. So, I should not have to tell you to fix the form of your citations more than twice, for example.
- Submit your work on time
- Miss no assignments

Students who exceed the expectations by writing more than the minimum will qualify for a higher grade.

**To qualify for an "A," you agree to:**

- Do all that is required for a "B"
- Engage in the discussions and applying knowledge assignments that demonstrates a desire to learn and to apply the concepts and ideas we are studying.
- Participate more than 2 days each week in the discussions.
- Respond to all your professor's follow up questions.

**To earn a grade lower than a "B,"**

- Skip assignments
- Not reading the feedback your instructor offers, and not applying changes requested by your instructor.
- Turn in assignments late ("late" is defined as having missed the very specific deadlines; Canvas is not flexible, which means when an assignment is due at 11:59 p.m., Canvas closes the submission site at exactly that time--not 1 second later!
- Decide to do assignments at the last minute, forgetting to edit your papers, forgetting to demonstrate knowledge of the text and communication theory, or having sloppy citations and written work.

- Be unable to write in English with reasonable clarity--your reader needs to be able to understand your ideas. "Reasonable" does not mean that the responsibility for making sense of your writing is 100% on you nor that correctness is the basis for your grade; readers ALWAYS play a role in meaning-making of texts. However, readers do need to find that your ideas are clear enough in order to make sense of what you write.

Your grade will be based on the following:

*Table 1: Assignments, Point Values, and Percentage*

Assignment Type	Percentage of Grade
<b>Participation/Discussion</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Beginning and End of term challenges</b>	<b>10%</b>
Connection Quests	30%
<b>Group Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Please note that I follow [the standard grading system laid out by South Seattle College](#).

#### GRADES and CREDITS

##### Standard Grading System

The Seattle Colleges use a numerical grading system. Numerical grades may be considered equivalent to letter grades as follows:

LETTER GRADE	NUMERIC GRADE	LETTER GRADE	NUMERIC GRADE
A	4.0 - 3.9	C	2.1 - 1.9
A -	3.8 - 3.5	C -	1.8 - 1.5
B +	3.4 - 3.2	D +	1.4 - 1.2
B	3.1 - 2.9	D	1.1 - 1.0
B -	2.8 - 2.5	F	0.0
C +	2.4 - 2.2		

Many programs and individual course sequences require a minimum of a 2.0 grade in order to pursue additional courses or studies. Be sure to know the specific requirements for your courses, program or college-transfer major. Consult with your advisor or counselor.

Grade-point average (GPA) is determined by dividing total points earned by total credit hours attempted.

Letter	Percent	GPA	Letter	Percent	GPA	Letter	Percent	GPA
A+	100 - 98	4.0	B-	82	2.7	D+	69	1.4
A	96-97	3.9	B-	81	2.6	D+	68	1.3
A-	95	3.8	B-	80	2.5	D+	67	1.2
A-	93-94	3.7	C+	79	2.4	D	66	1.0
A-	92	3.6	C+	78	2.3	F	64 and below	0.0
A-	90 - 91	3.5	C+	77	2.2			
B+	89	3.4	C	76	2.1			
B+	88	3.3	C	75	2.0			
B+	87	3.2	C	74	1.9			
B	86	3.1	C-	73	1.8			
B	85	3.0	C-	72	1.7			
B	84	2.9	C-	71	1.6			
B-	83	2.8	C-	70	1.5			

Table 2 Letter Grade, Percentage and GPA Chart

## Readings

- Although students are not formally graded on the readings, success of other assignments and in the course depends on these readings.
- Each week you will be asked to conduct textbook readings, as well as reading from outside sources--please note that projects and discussions rely heavily on the reading being completed.
- Reading competition is assessed through your discussion posts, with the expectation you quote and refer to your required readings.

## Video Viewing and listening to Online Lectures

- Although students are not formally graded on the audio lectures or video viewings, success of other assignments and in the course depends on these readings.
- Students are asked on to view videos via YouTube or Google Video, and to listen to weekly pre-recorded audio lectures. Some of your discussion posts are dependent on viewing the assigned videos.

## Beginning and end of term challenges

- These are tasks that will help us have a good term. Tasks include going over our settings in Canvas, coming up with a plan “B” should internet or our computers fail us, taking a syllabus quiz, checking our work and the gradebook at the end of the term to make sure all is in order, and filling out the student evaluation.

## Connection Challenges

### *Week 1-2: Understanding Media Terms and Concepts*

- Getting important media communication terms and ideas in your back pocket

### *Week 6: Fake News*

- Understanding what fake news is and how it impacts our world.

### *Week 8: Interactivity and the internet*

- How we interact on line in relation to democracy and democratic deliberation.

### *Week 9: Identification and division in advertisements:*

- *Examine how advertisements target us as consumers*

### *Week 11: Review and Reflect*

- *Fully exploring a topic that interested you the most throughout the course.*

## Group Project

- There is one group project in this class and it will run from week 3 to week 5.

## Village Chats

- Weekly Discussion Posts (*Each discussion thread is worth 5 points*): A large portion of your grade is based on participation in weekly discussions.
- Discussions are student lead and student interactive. Your instructor is reading all posts, but she rotates whom she will actively participate with each week. Your instructor divides the student population of the course into thirds will rotate to each section every week. This process helps me to fairly interact with all my students in each class I teach.
- Every week you will be required to participate in 1 and occasionally 2 discussion threads. Each thread will require the student to offer an initial post answering the questions posed (by Wednesday of the week), as well as replying to two of your classmates.
- Most weeks, you will be asked to do no more than 1 discussion thread.
- *Read carefully*, below are my core discussion post philosophy, exceptions, and grading considerations!

### Discussion Expectations

- Post an initial post (your first post) answering all the questions asked in the forum's directions (100-150 words) by Tuesday.
- Make 2 reply posts (50 words each that extends and promotes conversation) by Sunday.
- Students are asked to post/ participate on at least 2 *days* out of the week. *For example:* Wednesday [initial post], Thursday [response], Saturday [response].
- The 2 day requirement holds for **EACH** discussion thread required: So if there are 2 discussion threads required for the week, students must post on 2 separate days for Each required thread.
- It is expected that students will respond to their instructor's questions if she emails about a post.
- Responding to questions asked of you by a classmate counts as a response, and when you respond to a classmate's initial post, that too counts as 1 response.
- In each required initial post, *students are required to quote or paraphrase from the Textbook reading* of that week, in order to earn full points. This helps students learn correct quoting form, and it also demonstrates a deeper understanding of the assigned readings/text.
- Students are always welcome to post more than 3 times! The more you engage, the more you will get out of this work :)

## COURSE EXTRA CREDIT

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Every term, students ask me for extra credit opportunities because assignments were not completed or as a result of low grades. Although extra credit is often offered in High School, it is rarely offered in college or university classes. I do not believe in extra credit because it becomes a way to avoiding work, with people often rationalizing that there is an “out” through the use of extra credit. If a student missed work because of a legitimate reason, and that student has spoken to their instructor about the problem, arrangements can be made to make up the work, and so extra credit is not needed.

***Please do not ask me to give you an extra credit assignment. I will not accommodate this request.***

Occasionally, an additional educational experience presents itself, allowing me to bring in contemporary and relevant information into the classroom. When that occurs, I will often an extra credit opportunity the entire class.

## WHEN I GRADE YOUR WORK

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I grade work 1 to 5 days *after the assignment was due* - I always try to get it done sooner rather than later, but please give me up to 5 days before emailing, as I have many students and it takes time to review and offer feedback on assignments. So, if the assignment is due and considered complete by Sunday at midnight, you will have your grade for that assignment by Tuesday at Midnight. If I cannot grade in this time frame, I will send out an email informing everyone of the scheduled change.



## PARTICIPATION, ABSENCES AND LATE WORK

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### Participation

Online attendance is expected, needed, and required. *Students are expected to participate online AT LEAST 2 different days each week.* Just like with face-2-face classes, 5 credit course requires approximately 8-9 hours worth your time and effort each week. Normally this translates into 3 hours in class and 5 hours preparing and studying for the course. This time commitment is approximate, and it depends very much on the student's commitment, prior knowledge about the topic, and academic skills.

### 2 Day Excused Absences per academic Year - Reasons of Faith or Conscience

Students are entitled to two days of excused absences per academic year for reasons of faith or conscience or for organized activities conducted by a religious organization. These absences will not affect your grade, but it is your responsibility to inform your instructor about the planned absence and to make arrangements to complete the coursework for those days. *You must request the excused absence two weeks' prior to the date of the absence.* If you wish to request an absence for reasons of faith or conscience, you may obtain a form and guidelines for completing the form from the Academic Program office.

### Class Policies: Late work and such

- Life happens, and we all have to prioritize our time. Please remember that if you have an emergency, feel free to contact me as soon as possible and we can make arrangements regarding late work. But generally, here is the policy for late work.
- Unless we have an arrangement because of an emergency you experienced and you have contacted me before or days after the assignment was due, students have ONLY 2 weeks to turn in late work. However, for every week that work is late, the overall grade you received will be lowered by 10%. So if the work is late one week, the work will lose 10% of the overall grade earned. If the work is two weeks late, it will be 20%, and if it's three weeks late, you're at 30%.
- If you get your late work in by the end of the unit (meaning your work was late but submitted before the week was up) only 1-2 points will be deducted as detailed in the grading rubric. Once we start the new week/unit, your work is considered a week late.
- **What to do if you expect to be absent:** Unless it is an unseen emergency, you must give me prior notification of your intention to be absent or late on an assignment (24 hours please) and also provide appropriate documentation that supports the reason for the absence. Work missed must be made up in a timely fashion (defined as 5 days after the missed assignment).
- **Active Military and Veteran Learners:** Although due dates for assignments in this course are set, exceptions can be made with your instructor on a case-by-case basis. If you are expecting to be deployed, or your duties severely interfere with your ability to meet set deadlines for assignments in this class, please contact your instructor so that alternative arrangements can be

made for course completion.

- **Vacations during your course:** Going on vacation?? Good for you! However, this course does not stop, and due dates will not be extended to accommodate your vacation. My advice? Work ahead and plan ahead. Have a game plan to make sure all work due during your vacation time is submitted in time.

#### *Late Work Schedule:*

- Late work for unit 1 - Until the close of unit 3
- Late work for unit 2 - until the close of unit 4
- Late work for unit 3 - until the close of unit 5
- Late work for unit 4 - until the close of unit 6
- Late work for unit 5 - until the close of unit 7
- Late work for unit 6 - until the close of unit 8 (The is the last week for summer term)
- Late work for unit 7 - Until the close of unit 9
- Late work for unit 8 - Until the close of unit 10
- Late work for Unit 9 - Until the close of Unit 10
- Late work for unit 10 - Until the close of Unit 10
- **I do NOT accept late work after the close of class**

## **PLAGIARISM POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS**

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Plagiarism, in words or ideas, will not be tolerated - if I catch it, the consequences of plagiarism will commence (please see below). There is no such thing as accidental plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and is a form of stealing. If you are worried that you might be plagiarizing, please come ask me and I will help guide you in your work. But educate yourself on it as this is your responsibility! Although we will discuss this issue in class, you might wish to visit: <http://www.plagiarism.org>, an excellent site to help you understand what plagiarism is, and why it is wrong to steal the intellectual property of another.

### **Plagiarism checkers you can use to help you avoid plagiarizing:**

- [The Plagiarism checker](#)
- [Grammarly. This is a great program to help with writing. Free and paid subscriptions.](#)

### **Consequences of plagiarism:**

- **Strike 1:** The student is informed of the incident, and we discuss this problem, where the student can go to educate one's self about plagiarism, and the assignment receives 0.
- **Strike 2:** The student is informed of the incident and we discuss the problem again. The student is also asked to write a short paper on what is and is not plagiarism. The assignment receives a 0.
- **Strike 3:** The student is informed of the incident and we discuss the problem. The student cannot make up the assignment and will receive a 0. The student is officially reported to the

## KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

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If you have any questions about the class, assignments, the work we are doing, or so on, ask me. If you feel like you don't understand an assignment or the learning material, or if you are struggling with the work, it is important that you communicate this to me so that I can help you. If your life has given you a lot of lemons and you are overwhelmed, contact me. I am here to help all students, and I ask you for the opportunity to do this effectively.

- Please, respond to me if I email /reach out to you personally. This is a communication class and good communication is a multi-transactional process. Not responding to my outreach attempts gives me the message that you are not interested in this class or in the fact I have reached out to you. Please take the time to practice good communication skills.

### The best way to get a hold of your professor and email expectations

- **Email:** Email me anytime *through Canvas!* I work hard at answering all emails within 24 hours on weekdays, and 48 hours over the weekends (like many of us, I try to take time off, and so I will not likely respond to weekend emails from work).
- **Twitter:** Send me a **twitter** "tweet" @rebaenrose.
- **Text Message** me if there is truly an emergency: 206-501-6703. Tell me your name and class you are in, then the message! **Example:** "Rebecca McCarthy, CMST 101, where do I find the reading assignment for this week?"
- **Help pages on communication via Canvas tools - click on links for access:**
  - [Course Activity Stream](#)
  - [Accessing your inbox in Canvas](#)
  - [How is my inbox conversations organized?](#)
  - [Announcements vs discussions](#)

## DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES, DIVERSITY, CAMPUS RESOURCES

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### Documented Disabilities

If you are as a student in need of special accommodations under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, please make sure to talk with me, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### Diversity in the Classroom

We all have biases; this is human nature and social conditioning. However, discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, political orientation, or age will not be tolerated. Discrimination on the basis of belief or disbelief in evolution will not be tolerated. We are all interconnected creatures in life and in this class – respect for our fellow humans is not only kind, but

also vital.

## Campus Resources

### *Writing Center and the "Wall":*

The Writing Center, located in LIB 205, is an excellent resource for all writers on campus, from all courses and disciplines. Trained tutors will help you think through and develop your ideas and essays. It is not an editing service.

- [The Wall \(Writing and Learning Lab\)](#)
- [Writing Center at SSCC](#)

### *Tutoring Center:*

The Tutoring Center is located in RSB 12. Tutors may be available for your use with my recommendation. Expect a tutor to provide similar help as in the Writing Center. A tutor may also provide instruction in grammar and punctuation, but a tutor is not a personal editor who will make corrections for you. If such correcting does occur, it is a disservice to you. Like plagiarism, such "help" will only postpone the day you are forced to learn for yourself.

- [Tutoring Center at SSCC](#)
- [Online Tutoring at SSCC](#)

### *CLIC:*

CLIC is another service for eligible students. Located in RS 66, CLIC provides assistance in all subjects, including writing.

- [CLIC \(Collaborative Learning and Instruction Center\)](#)

### *Computer Labs:*

There are computers at various locations on campus, including the Library and Writing Center. If you do not have a computer or printer of your own, arrange to use these public resources before an assignment is due.

- [Computer Labs](#)

### *Other Important Campus Resources:*

- [MAST \(Math and Science Tutoring Center\)](#)
- [MALL \(Math and Learning Lab\)](#)
- [SSCC Library](#)

### *Other Needs:*

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share, please talk to me during the first week of the quarter.

### *Veterans Services at SSCC:*

[The Veterans center](#) provides assistance regarding veteran-entitled benefits, such as, preparing VA application forms and documentation required by the Department of Veterans Affairs. We also provide assistance in documenting military training for college credit.

### *Campus emergencies*

If you want to know whether or not the campus has closed due to snow, ice, or any other reason, you can:

- [Check the South Seattle College website](#)
- [Check The School Report](#)
- Call the school's main number 206-764-5300 for a recorded message
- [Sign up for instant text and/or email messages](#)