

Media Studies 200: An Introduction to Media Studies

Intended for 63 undergraduate students

Spring 2024 at the University of Victoria

[lək^wəŋən](#) and [WSÁNEĆ](#) territories

M and Th, 10 - 11:20am

Taught by [Jentery Sayers](#) (he / him)

Office hours: M, 11:30am - 12:30pm, in CLE D331

jentery@uvic.ca

This syllabus is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

Contents:

- [Territory Acknowledgement](#)
- [Description](#)
- [Goals](#)
- [About Me](#)
- [Materials](#)
- [Assignments](#)
- [Workload](#)
- [Schedule](#)
- [Policies](#)

Territory Acknowledgement

As a researcher and instructor at the University of Victoria, I acknowledge and respect the [lək^wəŋən](#) peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and [WSÁNEĆ](#) peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. I'm a settler scholar at UVic, and I arrived here as an uninvited guest in July 2011.

In this [video](#), Songhees Elder Elmer George welcomes visitors to the traditional lands of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and [WSÁNEĆ](#) people in [lək^wəŋən](#) and English. The acknowledgement in this video was prepared in consultation with local Indigenous communities.

The fact that we're gathering at UVic to study media is a product of colonization and injustice upon local lands, waters, and people. I continue to learn about those injustices, and I will make no assumptions about your knowledge or experiences of them. As part of this course, I invite ongoing dialogue about territory acknowledgements as well as how UVic students, faculty, and staff are building good relations and fostering reciprocity.

I've learned a lot about territory acknowledgements from the Native Students Union's [webpage](#) and this August 2019 [episode](#) of *U in the Ring*: "With Knowledge Comes Responsibility: Territory Acknowledgements," featuring Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, Maggie Easton, Steven Farina, Robbie Lewis, Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas, and Kolin Sutherland-Wilson. I welcome your recommendations, too.

Description

This course “surveys the cultural and material roles media play around the world in the 21st century. Emphasis on building a common vocabulary for studying media as well as understanding how audio, images, video, and text mediate people’s relation to culture.” See [MDIA200 - Media in the 21st Century](#) in UVic’s academic calendar.

This course counts toward UVic’s [Media Studies](#) certificate, which requires 10.5 units of coursework.

Goals

I designed this course for you to:

1. Build a vocabulary for understanding media. This means you’ll develop a language for attending to the particulars of audio, images, text, video, and interfaces.
2. Learn a variety of techniques for engaging media today. This means we’ll not only discuss but also practice different approaches to examining and experiencing audio, images, text, video, and interfaces in the 21st century.
3. Account for context and culture in the analysis of media across the globe. This means we’ll consider how, where, when, by whom, for whom, and under what assumptions media are made, interpreted, and circulated.
4. Respond regularly and actively to classroom activities and lectures about media. This means you’ll complete four worksheets to demonstrate what you’re learning.
5. Reflect on your learning and communicate its applications to the study and production of media today. This reflection will take the form of a portfolio, which will be your final project in this course.

I will assume you’ve no experience in Media Studies, and I will focus on critical approaches to media as they apply to content production. I will not teach film. For that, I recommend [Film Studies](#). I also won’t teach technical or professional practices related to media. For that, I recommend [Professional Communication](#).

About Me

My name is Jentery Sayers (he / him). I skip a syllable and say it in two: “JEN-tree.” You can call me Jentery, Doctor Sayers, or Professor Sayers.

I spend 11.67% of the day looking for my glasses, and I enjoy writing about games and media. I grew up in Richmond, Virginia and went to Virginia Commonwealth University for my BA and BS degrees. Then I moved to Seattle, where I received an MA and PhD in English from the University of Washington. I now teach courses for UVic Media Studies and English, and I’m the acting director of the Media Studies program. I like to play TTRPGs, drums, guitar, and soccer in my spare time.

You can email me at jentery@uvic.ca or find me in Clearihue D331. I do my best to maintain an [online portfolio](#) of my work.

Materials

You do *not* need to purchase a textbook or any primary sources for this course, but you will need access to a computer, the internet (including Brightspace), a camera, and a microphone. Most of the primary sources are publicly available online. I will provide you with PDF copies of them when they are not.

I will also provide you with handouts and slides each week to define key terms in Media Studies, enhance your learning, point you to additional resources, and help you complete assignments.

Primary Sources: We'll study the following primary sources this term:

- The [Instagram Egg](#) (2019), by world_record_egg
- The Flash animation, [THE MOOD OF THE MOMENT](#) (2007), by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries
- The browser game, [Secrets Agent](#) (2014), by Marina Kittaka
- The dramatic podcast, [Within the Wires](#) (2016), by Janina Matthewson, Jeffrey Cranor, Mary Epworth, and Night Vale
- The browser game, [Hair Nah](#) (2017), by Momo Pixel
- The comic, "[Translated, From the Japanese](#)" (2015), by Adrian Tomine
- The stop-motion animation, [Biidaaban \(The Dawn Comes\)](#) (2018), by Amanda Strong, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Bracken Hanuse Corlett
- The video game, [Umurangi Generation](#) (2020), by Origame Digital and Naphtali Faulkner
- The audio story, "[Being Siri](#)" (2017), by Erin Anderson
- The photo story, "[Fighting for Food Sovereignty Amid Worsening Wildfires](#)" (2023), by Steph Kwetásel'wet Wood
- A [Twitch](#) livestream of your choice

If this amount of content ends up being too much for the term, then we'll cut material or some of it will become optional.

Handouts: I will circulate handouts in Brightspace each week. They will include concise overviews of key themes and terms to help you prepare for upcoming class sessions.

Slide Decks: I will create an HTML slide deck for almost every class session. A link to the slide deck will be available in the pertinent Brightspace module immediately before class begins. This way, you can access my slides during and after class.

Brightspace: I'll use the course Brightspace to:

- Circulate a class announcement each *Wednesday* to help you plan for what's next,

- Provide you with copies of my slides, handouts, and assigned materials,
- Point you to other assigned materials available online,
- Accept all your assignments (please don't submit anything to me by email),
- Comment on those assignments, and
- Mark those assignments according to rubrics I'll provide.

Assignments

There are no exams, quizzes, presentations, group projects, or participation marks in this course.

I am asking you to complete five assignments this term.

1. **Worksheet 1:** 20% of your final grade; covers material from Weeks 1-3 (due by Thursday, February 1st at 10am)
2. **Worksheet 2:** 20% of your final grade; covers material from Weeks 4-6 (due by Thursday, February 15th at 10am)
3. **Worksheet 3:** 20% of your final grade; covers material from Weeks 6-9 (due by Thursday, March 14th at 10am)
4. **Worksheet 4:** 15% of your final grade; covers material from Weeks 10-12 (due by Thursday, April 4th at 10am)
5. **Portfolio:** 25% of your final grade (due by Thursday, April 18th at 10am)

Worksheets: The worksheets will ask you to use particular Media Studies techniques to apply what you're learning in class. I will distribute each worksheet about three or four weeks before it's due via Brightspace. A worksheet will never contain more than five prompts, and I will encourage you to use class time to draft your responses to those prompts.

Portfolio: You'll conclude the course by producing a portfolio that documents what you learned in this course, reflects on it, and communicates its significance to other students at UVic.

Brightspace: Please use Brightspace to submit all your work. You need not purchase any software to use Brightspace, but you will need your UVic NetLink ID, access to the internet, and a computer. I cannot accept assignments by email. Thank you for understanding.

Feedback: I will provide brief and focused feedback on worksheets according to their rubrics. Please email me or schedule an appointment (F2F or Zoom) to discuss any feedback I provide. Please also note that I'm teaching this course while parenting, serving on multiple committees, conducting research, writing a book, and directing UVic's Media Studies program. I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays. Thanks in advance for your patience.

Workload

The most important thing to know about this course is that *I'll opt for care in every instance*. If the workload becomes too much, or we're juggling more than we should, then we'll cut material. I planned for the maximum in advance, under the assumption that we won't get to everything. And that's totally fine.

I suggest dedicating *3 to 5 hours of study and practice* to MDIA 200 each week in addition to our weekly meetings on Monday and Thursday. Of course, 3 to 5 hours per week is only a guideline. You may find that you need more or less time depending on the activity, your preferences, and your familiarity with the work and materials involved.

I will give you time during class to draft responses to prompts in your worksheets; however, you will need more time (between classes) to develop and refine your work, hence the recommended 3 to 5 hours per week.

Schedule

Here's the schedule for the term. It's subject to change. In fact, I'm 97.56% certain there will be changes. I will use a Brightspace announcement to notify you at least two weeks in advance of those changes, and I will never use schedule changes to increase your workload (e.g., add an assignment or reading).

All materials for this course are available via Brightspace. Please study them before the date they're assigned. This way, we can make the most of our time together.

If you miss a class session, or you simply want a review, then I recommend checking Brightspace to view the slide deck for that session and touching base with a peer to see if they're willing to share their notes for that day.

M Jan 8: Hello!

We'll introduce ourselves, and I'll provide an overview of the course.

Th Jan 11: The Content Industry

Before class, please:

1. Read the course outline, including the schedule and policies.
2. Read the handout titled, "The Content Industry."
3. Read the prompt for [Worksheet 1](#).

M Jan 15: Acts and Senses of Communication

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, "Acts of Communication" and "Senses of Communication."
2. Email me any questions or concerns you have about Worksheet 1.

Th Jan 18: Means, Levels, and Forms of Communication

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, “Means of Communication,” “Levels of Communication,” and “Forms of Communication.”
2. Email me if you’re having any trouble accessing the slide decks for class sessions.

Note that Sunday, January 21st is the last day for a 100% reduction of second-term fees for standard courses.

M Jan 22: Models of Communication

Before class, please:

1. Read the handout titled, “Models of Communication.”
2. Email me any questions or concerns you have about how I’ll assess your response to Worksheet 1.

Note that Wednesday, January 24th is the last day for adding courses that begin in the second term.

Th Jan 25: Codes and Miscommunication

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, “Semiotic Codes” and “Miscommunication.”
2. Read the prompt for [Worksheet 2](#).
3. Note that today is the last session covered by Worksheet 1, which is due by Thursday, February 1st at 10am.

M Jan 29: Images

Before class, please:

1. Read Adrian Tomine’s “Translated, From the Japanese” (PDF in Brightspace) and the handout for it. Content warning: conflict between parents, bad dad, and themes of assimilation and leaving home.
2. Read the handout titled, “Images.”
3. Email me any questions or concerns you have about Worksheet 2.

Note that Wednesday, January 31st is the last day for paying second-term fees without penalty.

Th Feb 1: Text

Before class, please:

1. Submit your response to Worksheet 1.

2. Watch Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries' *THE MOOD OF THE MOMENT* and read the handout for it. Content warning: flashing text and images; heteronormative romantic or sexual advances.
3. Read the handout titled, "Text."

M Feb 5: Audio

Before class, please:

1. Listen to Episode 1, Season 1 of Janina Matthewson, Jeffrey Cranor, Mary Epworth, and Night Vale's *Within the Wires* and read the handout for it. Content warning: bugs (including bug abuse), gaslighting, stalking, medical setting, and themes related to mental health and pathologization.
2. Read the handout titled, "Audio."

Th Feb 8: Video

Before class, please:

1. Watch Amanda Strong, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Bracken Hanuse Corlett's *Biidaaban (The Dawn Comes)* and read the handout for it. Content warning: settler colonialism (including physical and psychological violence), surveillance, and some horror motifs (especially in the lighting and music).
2. Read the handout titled, "Video."

Note that Sunday, February 11th is the last day for a 50% reduction of tuition fees for standard courses.

M Feb 12: Interfaces

Before class, please:

1. Play Momo Pixel's *Hair Nah* and read the handout for it. Content warning (as per Momo Pixel): "micro-aggression of assumed authority and ownership of black bodies."
2. Read the handout titled, "Interfaces."
3. Note that today is the last session covered by Worksheet 2, which is due by Thursday, February 15th at 10am.

Th Feb 15: Uses and Effects

Before class, please:

1. Submit your response to Worksheet 2.
2. Read the handout titled, "Uses and Effects."
3. Read the prompt for [Worksheet 3](#).

M Feb 19 and Th Feb 22: Reading Break

Monday, February 19th through Friday, February 23rd is Reading Break for all faculties.

M Feb 26: Ownership, Amplification, and Accountability

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, "Ownership Effects," "Two-Step Flow," and "Media Accountability."
2. Email me any questions or concerns you have about Worksheet 3.

Th Feb 29: Representation and Intersectionality

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, "Representation" and "Intersectionality."
2. Read the prompt for the [Portfolio](#).

Note that today is the last day for withdrawing from full-year and second-term courses without penalty of failure.

M Mar 4: Access and Trust

Before class, please:

1. Read the handouts titled, "Access" and "Trust."
2. Select a Twitch streamer to watch for Thursday's meeting.
3. Read the prompt for [Worksheet 4](#).

Th Mar 7: Drama and Impression

Before class, please:

1. Watch a Twitch streamer for 30 minutes at least and take notes, including screen caps.
2. Read the handouts titled, "Media Dramaturgy" and "Impressions Management."
3. Note that today is the last session covered by Worksheet 3, which is due by Thursday, March 14th at 10am.

M Mar 11: Narrative and Storytelling

Before class, please:

1. Watch or play Origame Digital and Naphtali Faulkner's [Umurangi Generation](#) for 60 minutes at least.
2. Read the handouts titled, "Linear Narratives," "Nonlinear Narratives," and "Emergent Narratives."

Th Mar 14: Play and Procedure

Before class, please:

1. Submit your response to Worksheet 3.
2. Read the handouts titled, "Play" and "Procedure."
3. Email me any questions or concerns you have about Worksheet 4 or the Portfolio.

M Mar 18: Discourse and Persuasion

Before class, please:

1. Read Steph Kwetásel'wet Wood's "[Fighting for Food Sovereignty Amid Worsening Wildfires.](#)"
2. Read the handouts titled, "Discourse" and "Persuasion."

Th Mar 21: Affect and Experience

Before class, please:

1. Review the primary sources we studied this term and do your best to recall your experiences of them.
2. Read the handouts titled, "Affect" and "Experience Design."

M Mar 25: Platforms and Preservation

Before class, please:

1. Listen to Erin Anderson's "[Being Siri.](#)"
2. Read the handout titled, "Preservation."
3. Note that today is the last session covered by Worksheet 4, which is due by Thursday, April 4th at 10am.

Th Mar 28: Review

You don't need to do anything to prepare for today's meeting.

Note that UVic is closed on Friday, March 29th for Good Friday.

M April 1: No Class

UVic is closed on Monday, April 1st for Easter Monday.

Th Apr 4: Workshop Your Portfolio

Before class, please:

1. Submit your response to Worksheet 4.
2. Gather material for your Portfolio, which you'll workshop during class.

M Apr 8: Last Class!

We'll recap the course and complete course experience surveys.

Th Apr 18: Portfolio

Please submit your portfolio by 10am today. I hope you've a wonderful summer!

Policies

Here are the policies for this course. Please let me know if anything is unclear, ignorant, or mistaken. I'll correct it.

Prerequisites

Academic Writing Requirement satisfied.

Media Studies Certificate

This course counts toward UVic's [Media Studies certificate](#).

Assessment and Feedback

Two of the four Worksheets as well as the Portfolio are required to pass this course. Failure to complete these three assignments will result in a failing N grade (calculated as a 0 for your GPA).

I will use UVic's [official grading system](#) to produce rubrics to assess your work. I will not post marks publicly or outside my office, and I do not use plagiarism or AI detection software.

All assignments should be submitted via Brightspace. I cannot accept Worksheets or the Portfolio via email.

I will use Brightspace to provide feedback on your work. If you ever want additional feedback, then feel free to ask me. I can provide it in person, via Zoom, or by email.

Throughout the term, I'll request feedback from you on how the course is going. I'll also ask you to complete Course Experience Surveys at the end of the term.

Late Submissions and Extensions

I've a 24-hour grace period (no questions asked, no email required, and no penalties) for every Worksheet in this course. This means that I will not penalize you for submitting any Worksheet by Friday at 10am (one day after it's due via Brightspace). A late penalty of 5 points per business day will apply after 24 hours. I do not consider weekends or holidays to be business days.

I will not accept Worksheets more than two weeks after they are due and cannot accept the Portfolio more than a week after it is due.

Please email me if you need an extension for any assignment, and we can discuss possibilities on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation

There is no participation or attendance mark in this course; however, it is driven by class discussion and workshops, which are difficult to record or “capture.”

I will assume you are attending each class meeting. If you are unable to attend a particular meeting, then please email me in advance and coordinate with a peer to get notes and the like from the session(s) you’ll miss.

You do not need to provide me with documentation for an absence.

Communications and Office Hours

The best way to communicate with me is by email (jentery@uvic.ca) or during office hours, which are Monday, 11:30am - 12:30pm, in CLE D331. I can also make an appointment to meet with you in person or via Zoom.

I respond to email between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Learning Climate

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. We are expected to adhere to [UVic’s equity and human rights policies](#) and the [Tri-Faculty Code of Professional Behaviour](#). You should alert me immediately if you have any questions about these policies and their application, or if you have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

Academic Integrity

We are expected to adhere to [UVic’s academic integrity policy](#) and be aware of the policies for the evaluation of student work. Violations of the integrity policy may result in a failing grade for the given assignment and may additionally result in a failing grade for the course. By taking this course, you agree that all submitted assignments may be subject to an originality review. I do not use software to detect plagiarism or AI in essays, exams, or any other assignments.

I also recommend the [Libraries’ plagiarism guide](#) for learning more about academic integrity. You are of course always welcome to talk to me, too.

Copyright

All course materials, including my slides, handouts, and lectures, are made available for educational purposes and the exclusive use of students in this course. The material is protected under copyright law even if it is not marked as such, and the syllabus is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#). Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires written permission, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations

may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

Online Conduct

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

Please be advised that, by logging into UVic's learning systems and interacting with online resources, you are engaging in a university activity. All interactions within this environment are subject to the university's expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy. To report concerns about online student conduct, email onlineconduct@uvic.ca.

Accessibility

If you have a disability or health consideration that may require supports, please feel free to approach me and/or the [Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\)](#) as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate supports. I will never ask you to disclose a diagnosis, health consideration, or disability to me, and I know that access needs are social, cultural, and structural issues that aren't always addressed, or adequately addressed, by institutions such as the academy.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I aim to create an inclusive learning environment that attends to difference and honours each of you, including your experiences at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, power, and class. I want to be a resource for you, and I continue to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion. If something is said in class (by anyone, including me) that makes you feel uncomfortable, then don't hesitate to talk with me. If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your university records, then let me know, and I'll correct the documents provided to me. If your performance in the class is being impeded by your experiences outside of class, then keep me posted, and we'll make adjustments. I also welcome any suggestions to improve the quality of the course and its culture and materials, and I will make available mechanisms for anonymous feedback since you may prefer them.

The following student groups may be relevant to your life as a student here at UVic:

- [The Native Students Union](#) "is an organization run for and by Indigenous students at UVic. Since circa 1969, Indigenous students have been coming together to form community, support each other, advocate for Indigenous rights and wellbeing, and just exist together at the institution. The NSU runs events and programs, manages a student space with services, and advocates for Indigenous student success and

wellness at UVic. The NSU Council leads the NSU in running and developing these services.”

- [The Students of Colour Collective](#) “are a Collective of self-identified people of colour at the University of Victoria. Anyone identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Person of Colour) is welcome to use our lounge and access our resources. SOCC exists to create space that fosters community building, and facilitates networking and gatherings for self-identified BIPOC folks. Our work centres on art, awareness, education, action, advocacy, and support. Every student of colour is welcome to get in touch and find out how to get involved.”
- [The Society for Students with a Disability \(SSD\)](#) “is a post-secondary student advocacy group under the University of Victoria Students’ Union which promotes the full participation and inclusion of students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities at the University of Victoria. The SSD aims to support students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities; in particular, we support students to reduce barriers in the social, emotional, and educational domains of student life.”
- [The Gender Empowerment Centre \(GEM\)](#) “is an inclusive space, focused on the needs of self-identified women, non-binary, trans and gender non-conforming folks to organize, network, access resources, attend workshops and events, study, and relax. Our space is open to both University of Victoria students and community members.”
- [UVic Pride Collective](#) “is committed to practicing decolonization, deinstitutionalization and radical acceptance. We believe that actualizing Queer liberation is possible through the relationships we nurture and build with each other. Community care is revolutionary, and our intersectional programming reflects that sentiment. The Collective is proudly run by a variety of UVSS staff, work study students, student volunteers, and more.”

Language for this policy was drawn from the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University and the work of Monica Linden in particular.

Basic Needs

I want you to thrive in this course and everywhere else. Please let me know as early as possible if you have any concerns or if you require any supports to succeed. I’ll do my best to help. If, for instance, you need to cover gaps in care, then please don’t hesitate to bring your children to class meetings. Babies who are nursing are always welcome, as I do not want you to choose between feeding your child and continuing your education.

UVic takes student mental health very seriously, with a [website](#) full of resources. They offer services such as assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills concerns. Services for students also include crisis and emergency mental health consultation, confidential assessment, and counselling services (individual and small group). Many of these programs are connected with [Student Wellness](#), which you may contact by phone.

The [Student Affairs website](#) lists several policies, knowledge of which may make your life at UVic safer and easier. Only some of them are directly related to this course, but they're still important.

Language for this policy was drawn from the work of Richard Pickard at UVic.

Many thanks to everyone in [UVic's Praxis Studio](#) for their support and suggestions for this course. Some material in this outline was informed by the Media Texthack Team's [Media Studies 101](#) project.

This syllabus is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).