

Media Studies 200: Intro to Media Studies

Intended for 70 undergraduate students

Spring 2025 at the University of Victoria

[ləkʷəŋən](#) and [WSÁNEĆ](#) territories

M and Th, 10 - 11:20am | 1.5 units | prereq: AWR

Taught by [Jentery Sayers](#) (he / him) | jentery@uvic.ca

Office hours: M and Th, 12-1pm, in CLE D331

Teaching assistant (marking): Maya Linsley (she / any)

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Contents:

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

Territory Acknowledgement

As a researcher and instructor at the University of Victoria, I acknowledge and respect the [Ləkʷəŋən](#) (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the [Ləkʷəŋən](#) 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 [ləkʷəŋən](#) 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 and how UVic students, faculty, and staff are building good relations and fostering reciprocity.

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.” For more information, see “[MDIA200 - Media in the 21st Century](#)” in UVic’s academic calendar.

The course counts toward UVic’s new [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 we’ll identify the particulars of audio, images, text, video, and interfaces as they pertain to content creation.
2. Practice techniques for engaging media. This means we’ll experiment with different critical approaches to media 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 directly 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 creation. I will not teach film. For that, I recommend [Film Studies](#). I also won’t teach technical or professional communication. For that, I recommend [Professional Communication](#).

About Us

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 12.67% 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 direct the Media Studies program. I like to play TTRPGs, drums, guitar, and soccer in my spare time. I also do my best to maintain a [portfolio](#) of my work.

You can email me at jentery@uvic.ca or find me in Clearihue D331. My office hours are Monday and Thursday, 12-1pm, in CLE D331. I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays.

Hi! I'm Maya, your TA (marking) for the term (she/any). I'm an English MA student and a recent grad from UVic's Honours English BA.

There was a time when I, too, spent 12.67% of the day looking for my glasses, but now I can't look for anything if they're not on my face. I partly attribute my rapidly deteriorating eyesight to the amount of time I've spent reading fanfiction on my phone. Alas, it will never get better, as my area of research is fan studies.

Although I will not be attending MDIA 200 this term, I will be marking some of your assignments. You can email me at mlinsley@uvic.ca.

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.

Handouts: I produce my own handouts for this course and will circulate them in Brightspace. They include concise overviews of key themes and terms to help you prepare for upcoming class sessions. You can think of them as an alternative to a Media Studies textbook.

Slide Decks: I will create HTML slide decks for most class sessions and link to them in Brightspace immediately before class begins. This way, you can access my slides during and after class.

Primary Sources: My slide decks will frequently contain primary sources or links to them. We'll discuss these primary sources in class to apply what you're learning from the weekly handouts. Examples of primary sources we'll likely study this term include 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; and the photo story, "[Fighting for Food Sovereignty Amid Worsening Wildfires](#)" (2023), by Steph Kwetásel'wet Wood.

Content Warnings: I'll include content warnings for materials, including primary sources, before I share or screen them in class.

Recordings: I do not plan to record our class sessions; however, you are welcome to record audio for private access, study, and note-taking.

Brightspace: I'll use the course Brightspace to:

- Circulate a class announcement each week (usually on Mondays) to help you plan for what's next,
- Share weekly handouts, my slides, and any primary sources we study in class,
- Point you to resources available online,
- Accept all your assignments (please don't submit anything to me by email), and
- Comment on those assignments and mark them.

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 (due by Monday, January 27th, at 10am).
2. **Worksheet 2:** 20% of your final grade (due by Thursday, February 13th, at 10am).
3. **Worksheet 3:** 20% of your final grade (due by Monday, March 17th, at 10am).
4. **Worksheet 4:** 15% of your final grade (due by Thursday, April 3rd, at 10am).
5. **Portfolio:** 25% of your final grade (due Monday, April 14th, at 10am).

Worksheets: The worksheets will ask you to apply what you're learning in class through a combination of media (audio, images, text, and video). A worksheet will never contain more than five prompts, and I will encourage you to use class time to draft your brief responses to them. I will circulate each worksheet well before it's due, and I'll review each prompt in class to ensure it's clear.

Portfolio: You'll conclude MDIA 200 by producing a portfolio that documents what you learned in this course, reflects on that learning, and communicates its significance to someone in particular (e.g., a professor, student, friend, or family member).

Brightspace: Please use Brightspace to submit all your work this term. You do not need to 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.

Feedback: We will provide brief and focused feedback on worksheets according to grading rubrics. Please email me (Jentery, not Maya) or schedule an appointment (F2F or Zoom) to discuss my feedback. Again, I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays. Thanks in advance for your patience.

Workshop: Worksheet 4 will ask you to register for a workshop in UVic Libraries, attend it, and document what you did and learned. I will circulate a signup sheet for the workshops in January.

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 we won't get to everything. And that's totally fine.

I suggest dedicating *3 to 5 hours* 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 materials and work involved.

I will give you some time during class to draft responses to the 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 97.39% certain it will change. 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 (including the handouts) for this course are available in Brightspace. Please study them before the date they're assigned. This way, we can make the most of our time together in class.

All meetings are scheduled to occur in person (face-to-face). 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.

M 6 January: Hello!

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

After class, please read:

1. The course outline, including the schedule and policies, and
2. The "Content Industry" handout.

Please email me if you're on the waitlist for this course and have questions or concerns.

MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION

This module begins on Thursday, January 9th, and ends on Monday, January 20th.

Th 9 January: Communication, Part 1

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Acts of Communication" and
2. "Senses of Communication."

Please email me if you have any trouble accessing my slide decks in Brightspace.

M 13 January: Communication, Part 2

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Means of Communication" and
2. "Levels of Communication."

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 1.

Th 16 January: Communication, Part 3

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Forms of Communication" and
2. "Models of Communication."

Sunday, January 19th is the last day for a 100% reduction of tuition fees for standard second-term courses.

M 20 January: Communication, Part 4

Before class, please read the "Miscommunication" handout.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 1, which is due by Monday, January 27th, at 10am.

MODULE 2: MEDIA

This module begins on Thursday, January 23rd, and ends on Monday, February 10th.

Th 23 January: Media, Part 1

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Understanding Media" and
2. "Paradigms of Media."

Please let me know if you've any questions or concerns about registering for a workshop in UVic Libraries.

M 27 January: Media, Part 2

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Images" and
2. "Comics."

Worksheet 1 is due today by 10am.

Th 30 January: Media, Part 3

Before class, please read the "Text" handout.

Tomorrow (January 31st) is the last day to pay second-term fees without penalty.

M 3 February: Media, Part 4

Before class, please read the "Audio" handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 2.

Th 6 February: Media, Part 5

Before class, please read the "Video" handout.

Sunday, February 9th, is the last day for a 50% reduction of tuition fees for standard courses.

M 10 February: Media, Part 6

Before class, please read the "Interfaces" handout.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 2, which is due by Thursday, February 13th, at 10am.

Th 13 February: Review

We'll review the first two modules and discuss their application in your everyday life.

Worksheet 2 is due today by 10am.

17-21 February: Reading Break

No class.

MODULE 3: APPROACHES

This module begins on Monday, February 24th, and ends on Thursday, March 27th.

M 24 February: Approaches, Part 1

Before class, please read the "Effects" handout.

Effects will address affect, cognition, and behaviour.

Th 27 February: Approaches, Part 2

Before class, please read the “Ownership” handout.

Ownership will address monopolies, regulation, and public, commercial, and independent media.

Tomorrow (February 28th) is the last day to withdraw from second-term courses without penalty of failure.

M 3 March: Approaches, Part 3

Before class, please read the “Culture” handout.

Culture will address habits, values, and community.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 3.

Th 6 March: Approaches, Part 4

Before class, please read the “Aesthetics” handout.

Aesthetics will address composition, design, and experience.

M 10 March: Approaches, Part 5

Before class, please read the “Meaning” handout.

Meaning will address semiotics, discourse, and encoding/decoding.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 3, which is due by Monday, March 17th, at 10am.

Th 13 March: Approaches, Part 6

Before class, please read the “Persuasion” handout.

Persuasion will address rhetoric, propaganda, and disinformation.

M 17 March: Approaches, Part 7

Before class, please read the “Representation” handout.

Representation will address power, identity, stereotypes, and intersectionality.

Worksheet 3 is due today by 10am.

Th 20 March: Approaches, Part 8

Before class, please read the “Narrative” handout.

Narrative will address genre, story, plot, and emergence.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the Portfolio.

M 24 March: Approaches, Part 9

Before class, please read the “Fandom” handout.

Fandom will address participation, toxicity, and transformative work.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 4.

Th 27 March: Approaches, Part 10

Before class, please read the “Preservation” handout.

Preservation will address collection, migration, and emulation.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 4, which is due by Thursday, April 3rd, at 10am.

M 31 March: Review

Before class, please read the “Before you Make a Thing” handout.

We’ll review the third module and discuss its application in your everyday life.

Th 3 April: Last Session!

We’ll wrap up the class and complete course experience surveys.

Worksheet 4 is due today by 10am.

M 14 April: Portfolio

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

Resources

Here are some resources for the course and your studies at UVic.

UVic Learn Anywhere

[UVic Learn Anywhere](#) is where you can find articles, tip sheets, and video tutorials to develop the learning skills you need for academic success at UVic.

UVic Libraries

Everyone at the [University of Victoria Libraries](#) is committed to the success of UVic’s students and faculty. The library’s foundational role in acquiring and preserving research resources is critical in the complex digital environment of 21st-century scholarship. Their

expert staff are increasingly working within disciplines, across disciplines, and beyond traditional boundaries, as they navigate this exciting landscape with students, faculty, and researchers. They welcome the wider public into their physical spaces and actively seek partnerships with local and regional organizations to support and enhance the rich arts, culture, and learning opportunities in UVic's communities.

Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE)

The [Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement](#) serves as a hub for cultural, academic, and community connections. Whether you are a student seeking guidance, a community looking to collaborate, or an individual interested in learning more about Indigenous initiatives at UVic, IACE is here to support you on your journey. They work closely with Indigenous students, staff, faculty, Elders, and community to create opportunities for meaningful engagement, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and voices are woven into the fabric of their work.

Centre for Academic Communication (CAC)

The [Centre for Academic Communication](#) offers online and in-person one-on-one tutorials, workshops, and more. As a priority, they actively coach students on academic integrity, including preventing accidental plagiarism. Their free services are available to all UVic students. They are here to support students with time management and planning for a successful semester. They also coach students on reading, writing, speaking, understanding academic expectations, and other aspects of academic communication. They can support you in creating academic posters, blogposts, PowerPoint slides, and e-portfolios.

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

[Community-Engaged Learning](#) is a rewarding way to apply your studies to real-life projects in the community. This type of learning is a partnership between UVic students, faculty, campus partners, and the community beyond campus. It's a way to gain meaningful hands-on experience that supports and honours the community and strengthens your academic experience.

Academic Concessions and Accommodations

If your academic courses are affected by illness, accident, or family affliction, you may wish to request an [academic concession](#). Are you a student with a learning disability, ADHD, mental health issue, or long-term recurring physical or sensory disability? Do you have chronic health issues? If you do, UVic provides academic accommodations to address barriers to your education.

Student Wellness

Their [team of practitioners](#) offers a variety of services to support students' mental, physical, and spiritual health. You can make a same-day or pre-booked appointment with a counsellor, nurse, physician, or spiritual care provider.

Ombudsperson

The [ombuds office](#) is an independent, impartial, and confidential resource for undergraduate and graduate students and other members of the University of Victoria community. The ombudsperson helps resolve student problems or disputes fairly.

Student Groups

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

- [The Native Students Union](#),
- [The Students of Colour Collective](#),
- [The Society for Students with a Disability \(SSD\)](#),
- [The Gender Empowerment Centre \(GEM\)](#), and
- [UVSS Pride Collective](#).

Policies

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

Media Studies Certificate

This course counts toward UVic's [Media Studies certificate](#). In fact, it's required for the certificate.

Communications and Office Hours

The best way to communicate with me is by email (jentery@uvic.ca) or during office hours, which are Monday and Thursday, 12-1pm, 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.

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. Note that Maya and I will mark assignments in this course.

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. A late penalty of five points per business day will apply after 24 hours. Weekends and holidays do not count as business days.

I will not accept worksheets more than two weeks after they are due and cannot accept the portfolio after Thursday, April 17th at 5pm.

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, every class session will rely heavily on discussion and interaction.

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.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

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 EDI. 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 I will make available mechanisms for anonymous feedback since you may prefer them.

Information for All Students

This [page](#) contains a list of important UVic policies.

Creating a Respectful, Inclusive, and Productive Learning Environment

UVic is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment across all modalities of learning and teaching. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations. Instructors or students who have unresolved questions or concerns about a particular learning environment should bring them to the Chair or Director of the unit concerned (or Dean, in the case of undepartmentalized faculties).

Accessibility

UVic commits to addressing and removing barriers that hinder full and equal participation of people with disabilities. UVic's [Accessibility Plan](#) includes guiding principles and existing resources. It summarizes consultations, barriers, and priorities for the next three years to address those barriers.

Equity Action Plan

The [Equity Action Plan](#)'s goals provide UVic with strategic direction to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to create the conditions in which everyone feels a sense of belonging: as connected and respected parts of the university community.

Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response

UVic's [Sexualized Violence Resource Office](#) in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) offers information on how to start the conversation about consent, where to get support on and off campus, and the options available under UVic's Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy.

Accommodation of Religious Observance

UVic recognizes its obligation to make reasonable accommodation for students whose observance of holy days might conflict with the academic requirements of a course or program. Students are permitted to absent themselves from classes, seminars, or workshops for the purposes of religious or spiritual observance. In the case of compulsory classes or course events, students will normally be required to provide reasonable notice to their instructors of their intended absence from the class or event for reasons of religious or spiritual observance. In consultation with the student, the instructor will determine an appropriate means of accommodation. The instructor may choose to reschedule classes or provide individual assistance. Where a student's participation in a class event is subject to grading, every reasonable effort will be made to allow the student to make up for the missed class through alternative assignments or in subsequent classes. Students who require a rescheduled examination must give reasonable notice to their instructors. If a final exam cannot be rescheduled within the regular exam period, students may request an academic concession.

Student Conduct

UVic is committed to promoting a safe, respectful and supportive learning, living, and working environment. As part of the university community, each student is responsible for their personal conduct as it affects the university community, university activities, and the university's property. [The Office of Student Life](#) works directly with the university community to review and help resolve non-academic student conduct concerns. They administer the university's Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy and serve as a supportive resource to the university community.

Non-Academic Student Conduct

UVic's [Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy](#) (AC1300) clarifies what non-academic student misconduct is; details how the university responds to non-academic misconduct allegations; outlines the review and investigation processes; describes possible outcomes and ensures that when misconduct is found to have occurred, any sanctions that are applied are fair and consistent; and, explains how to appeal a decision that has been made under the policy.

Academic Integrity

[Academic integrity](#) requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members, and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification, or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community. This policy is designed to ensure that the university's standards are upheld in a fair and transparent fashion.

Students are responsible for the entire content and form of their work. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit students from developing their academic skills through the exchange of ideas and the utilization of resources available at the university to support learning (e.g., The Centre for Academic Communication). Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes a violation of academic integrity in a particular instance should consult their course instructor.

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).

Generative AI

UVic encourages innovative teaching practices and supports instructors who may like to adopt new pedagogical approaches and learning technologies. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a form of machine learning with the capabilities to produce text, images, video, music, code, etc. UVic does not have a general ban on the use of GAITs, including ChatGPT. Instead, UVic embraces the appropriate and ethical use of GAITs in learning and teaching. The university recognizes potential concerns associated with the use of GAITs, including potential biases in the algorithms and the possibility that GenAI might be used in ways that violate academic integrity principles and intellectual property rights. Faculty and instructors are best positioned to make decisions about the use of GAITs in their courses. UVic offers [guidelines](#) to support faculty, instructors, and students in the responsible, effective, and ethical use of artificial intelligence tools. These guidelines also support principles of academic integrity and help to prepare students for a future where the use of GAITs continues to evolve.

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.

Some material in this outline was informed by the Media Texthack Team's [Media Studies 101](#) project.

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