

**COMS 301—Core Concepts in Critical Theory**  
Department of Art History & Communication Studies  
McGill University  
Fall 2020

Prof. Darin Barney  
Class sessions: T/Th 10:05-11:25  
Remote office hours: Th 12:30-14:30  
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## **Course Delivery Guide**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this course will be delivered exclusively remotely for the duration of the term. This guide sets out the mode of delivery for the course – a Course Syllabus and additional material indicating weekly topics and readings, course requirements, grading expectations, etc., will be available on the COMS 301 MyCourses site in the first week of the course.

The terms of this guide are subject to modification as conditions change, in order to provide flexibility and to optimize course delivery. Course requirements set out in the Course Syllabus will not be subject to modification.

## **General**

Primary platforms for course delivery will be MyCourses, Zoom and email.

In all cases, use of the video function in Zoom will be optional and at students' discretion. Student audio will be muted during real-time lecture sessions and enabled during real-time group discussion sessions.

All course documentation will be available on the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

All course readings will be available on the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

## **Class sessions**

Class sessions will be delivered as follows (all times EST):

- Tuesday sessions (10:05-11:35 am)

Lectures will be delivered in real-time during class period via Zoom. The sessions will be divided into 25-minute segments, with 5-minute rest periods between.

Lectures will be recorded and available to all students on the COMS 301 MyCourses site promptly following the class period, and posted until the end of the course. Slides displayed during lecture will also be available on the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

- Thursday sessions (10:05-11:35 am)

**\*\*\*There will be lecture sessions on Thursday, Sept. 3 and Thursday Sept. 10\*\*\***

- Commencing Sept. 17, Thursday sessions will be organized as follows:
  - Six (6) sessions will be devoted to small group discussions via Zoom, moderated by the professor and the TA. These will be 25-minute sessions, held during class-time (10:05-10:30 am; 10:35-11:00 am; 11:00-11:25 am). These will not be recorded. There will be six groups (maximum 17 per group); students will sign up for a group during the second week of class, via the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

\*\*\*For students unable to take part in a discussion group during the scheduled period, a moderated discussion board ("Group 7") will be open on the COMS 301 MyCourses site from 9:00 am Wednesday to 4 pm Friday of the corresponding week\*\*\*

- Five (5) sessions will be devoted to tests. Test questions will be posted on the COMS 301 MyCourses site for 24 hours starting at 9:00 am on scheduled Thursdays. Students may commence their test at any time during that period, and will have 90 minutes to complete and submit their tests on the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

Weekly scheduling of group discussion and test sessions will be indicated on the Course Syllabus. Assignment of credit for group discussions and tests is described below.

## **Engagement, Feedback and Contact**

A "Course Matters" discussion board will be open on the COMS 301 MyCourses site, and monitored regularly by the professor and TA. Students are encouraged to post questions concerning course organization, course material and requirements, and peer assistance in this space, so that other students might benefit from replies.

Students will also be permitted to ask questions during Zoom lectures using the chat function. These questions will be collected at intervals, and addressed selectively either during lecture, in discussion groups, or on the "Course Matters" discussion board.

As indicated above, scheduled group discussions and "Group 7" discussion board will be moderated by the professor and TA, and will provide regular opportunities for engagement and feedback.

Feedback on tests will be provided via a grading rubric, global feedback in class, and brief individual commentary via the COMS 301 MyCourses site.

The professor and TA will hold weekly scheduled office hours via Zoom. Schedule for office hours will be announced in the Course Syllabus. No appointment will be necessary – students will enter the Zoom waiting room during the scheduled period and be seen in order of arrival. Students unable to attend office hours during scheduled time may make alternative arrangements by email.

The professor and TA will respond to email from students during regular business hours, in a timely fashion. Response times may vary.

## **Course requirements and assessment**

Credit for course requirements will be distributed as follows

- Group engagement – 20% (6 sessions x 3.35%)
- Tests – 40% (5 tests x 10% each; lowest-scoring test dropped)
- Final exam – 40%

*Group engagement:* students will receive 3.35% (per week) for attendance at scheduled small group discussions OR contribution to “Group 7” discussion board (e.g., a question, a brief comment or reflection, a response to a peer, etc.)

*Tests:* students will complete five (5) tests, each worth 10% of the final grade. The lowest-scoring test will be dropped. Test Guidelines and Grading Rubric will be posted on the COMS 301 MyCourses site and discussed during the first week of class.

*Final Exam:* a take-home examination conducted remotely during the final exam period. Time-limit and submission window will be generous to accommodate differential circumstances and competing demands.

## **Accommodations**

The Course Syllabus indicates general and broad support for students requiring accommodations due to special circumstances, challenges or disabilities. Additionally, students for whom the means of delivery set out in this guide pose unforeseen difficulties are encouraged to contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

## **Code of Conduct**

All learning environments require courtesy, mutual respect and patience between teachers and students, and between students and their peers. The Course Syllabus contains a “Nondiscrimination Statement” and a “Statement on Academic Integrity” that affirm the university Code of Student Conduct and set out further expectations concerning our responsibilities and commitments to each other in the classroom. All students in COMS 301 are expected to adhere to these statements.

Teaching and learning via remote means present additional challenges and responsibilities for maintaining a safe, inclusive and fair learning environment for everyone. It is presumed that teachers and students enrolled in COMS 301 commit to the following:

- I will not share my login or password information, or share or provide access to course platforms and materials, with any third parties or individuals.
- I will not distribute course materials (including lecture recordings and interactions with peers) without the express permission of the author and/or participants.
- I will not copy, store or share images, recordings, identifying information or contact details of any course participants.
- At all times, I will respect the privacy, safety and well-being of course participants.
- I will refrain from initiating or sharing disrespectful, demeaning, lewd, aggressive, disruptive, abusive, bullying or otherwise inappropriate images, sound or text via any course platforms.

Failure to adhere to these commitments will be subject to the McGill Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.