



COURSE OUTLINE		
TERM: Fall 2026	COURSE NO: CMNS 235	
INSTRUCTOR:	COURSE TITLE: News and Democracies	
OFFICE: LOCAL: E-MAIL: @capilanou.ca	SECTION NO(S):	CREDITS: 3.0
OFFICE HOURS:		
COURSE WEBSITE:		

Capilano University is named after Chief Joe Capilano (1854–1910), an important leader of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation of the Coast Salish Peoples. We respectfully acknowledge that our campuses are located on the unceded territories of the səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), shíshálh (Sechelt), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

COURSE FORMAT

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities for a 15-week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams. May be delivered in online or mixed-mode format.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

9 credits of 100-level or higher coursework including CMNS 100 or ENGL 100

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the students to the news media environment and its role in social practices in democratic contexts. We assess the social, political, professional, economic, and technological forces that influence different practices of existing and emerging news media in building and maintaining a democratic communication environment in Canada and abroad. Students are expected to engage in monitoring various types of media platforms and practices throughout the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND/OR RESOURCES

Specific texts, resources and technology may vary depending on the term and instructor. The course may make use of an assigned textbook, instructor-prepared courseware or readings made available as Open Educational Resources (OER).

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Identify and describe the role of news media in shaping democratic societies in Canada and globally.

- Explain how professional, political, economic, and technological forces shape media practices and institutions across different democratic contexts.
- Evaluate how various forms of power and ideology influence news content and media representation.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to understand the intersections of media, society, and democratic communication across local and global perspectives.
- Assess the democratic function of news media and its significance in fostering informed civic participation.

COURSE CONTENT

Weeks	Topics
1	Introduction
2	Newspaper story types and conventions
3	History of news in Canada: Best and Worst
4	History of news in Canada: Best and Worst part 2
5	Libel and Ethics
6	Objectivity and Independence: concepts and examples
7	Deconstructing examples of news bias
8	Partner Presentations
9	Midterm
10	Past value, digital futures
11	Technologies and News Production
12	Public Engagement and Democracies
13	The Future of Journalism & Critical Issues in Contemporary Journalism
14 & 15	Final exam period

EVALUATION PROFILE

Media Diary	Log and analyze your media use over 48 hours.	15%
News Analysis (Group)	Analyze a recent news coverage across different media platforms/vehicles and point out specificities of the news content and its possible impacts on the audience.	10%
Rewriting Biased Content (Group)	Analyze bias in a recent news story.	10%
Technology and News	Short exploratory essay in which students will report their experience with the different news consumption process based on the different technologies of news production/consumption.	15%
Critical reading of News Outlets (Group)	Short position essay that explores the structural factors of different news media producers.	10%

Final Essay	Individuals will write an assignment, in the style of popular media, on a subject chosen from the list developed in class. The subject cannot be the same as your partner's presentation.	20%
Self-assessment	Guided self-assessment based on course engagement and competencies development.	10%
Professionalism and Participation	This includes engaging in thoughtful and collegial discussions in class, arriving on time, refraining from using electronic devices unless instructed to do so, and submitting assignments on time in APA format. Students with Exceptional circumstances or documentation from Accessibility Services will be accommodated accordingly.	10%
Total		100%

GRADING PROFILE

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72	C- = 60-62	

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete "I" are assigned only in exceptional circumstances when a student requests extra time to complete their coursework. Such agreements are made only at the request of the student, who is responsible to determine from the instructor the outstanding requirements of the course.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date listed. If you anticipate handing in an assignment late, please consult with your instructor beforehand.

Missed Exams/Quizzes/Labs etc.

Make-up exams, quizzes and/or tests are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crises. Some missed labs or other activities may not be able to be accommodated. Please consult with your instructor.

Accommodations can be made to honour community needs and traditional practices.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes and associated activities.

English Usage

Students are expected to proofread all written work for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Instructors may deduct marks for incorrect grammar and spelling in written assignments.

Electronic Devices

Students may use electronic devices during class for note taking only.

On-line Communication

Outside of the classroom, instructors will (if necessary) communicate with students using either their official Capilano University email or eLearn; please check both regularly. Official communication between Capilano University and students is delivered to students' Capilano University email addresses only.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONAL DETAILS**Tools for Success**

Many services are available to support student success for Capilano University students. A central navigation point for all services can be found at: <https://www.capilanou.ca/student-services/>

Capilano University Security: download the [CapU Mobile Safety App](#)

Policy Statement (S2009-06)

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Academic Integrity, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Academic Integrity (S2017-05)

Any instance of academic dishonesty or breach of the standards of academic integrity is serious and students will be held accountable for their actions, whether acting alone or in a group. See policy and procedures S2017-05 Academic Integrity for more information:

<https://www.capilanou.ca/about-capu/governance/policies/>

Violations of academic integrity, including dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or other academic performances, are prohibited and will be handled in accordance with the Student Academic Integrity Procedures.

Academic dishonesty is any act that breaches one or more of the principles of academic integrity. Acts of academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to the following types:

Cheating: Using or providing unauthorized aids, assistance or materials while preparing or completing assessments, or when completing practical work (in clinical, practicum, or lab settings), including but not limited to the following:

- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another during an assessment;
- Communicating work to another student during an examination;
- Using unauthorized aids, notes, or electronic devices or means during an examination;
- Unauthorized possession of an assessment or answer key; and/or,

- Submitting of a substantially similar assessment by two or more students, except in the case where such submission is specifically authorized by the instructor.

Fraud: Creation or use of falsified documents.

Misuse or misrepresentation of sources: Presenting source material in such a way as to distort its original purpose or implication(s); misattributing words, ideas, etc. to someone other than the original source; misrepresenting or manipulating research findings or data; and/or suppressing aspects of findings or data in order to present conclusions in a light other than the research, taken as a whole, would support.

Plagiarism: Presenting or submitting, as one's own work, the research, words, ideas, artistic imagery, arguments, calculations, illustrations, or diagrams of another person or persons without explicit or accurate citation or credit.

Self-Plagiarism: Submitting one's own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructors, or re-submitting work, in whole or in part, for which credit has already been granted without permission of the instructors.

Prohibited Conduct: The following are examples of other conduct specifically prohibited:

- Taking unauthorized possession of the work of another student (for example, intercepting and removing such work from a photocopier or printer, or collecting the graded work of another student from a stack of papers);
- Falsifying one's own and/or other students' attendance in a course;
- Impersonating or allowing the impersonation of an individual;
- Modifying a graded assessment then submitting it for re-grading; or,
- Assisting or attempting to assist another person to commit any breach of academic integrity.

Sexual Violence and Misconduct

All Members of the University Community have the right to work, teach and study in an environment that is free from all forms of sexual violence and misconduct. Policy B401 defines sexual assault as follows:

Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact that occurs without ongoing and freely given consent, including the threat of sexual contact without consent. Sexual assault can be committed by a stranger, someone known to the survivor or an intimate partner.

Safety and security at the University are a priority and any form of sexual violence and misconduct will not be tolerated or condoned. The University expects all Students and Members of the University Community to abide by all laws and University policies, including B.401 Sexual Violence Policy and B.401.1 Sexual Violence Procedure (found on Policy page <https://www.capilanou.ca/about-capu/governance/policies/>)

Emergencies: Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the emergency policies where appropriate and the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.