

The University of Western Ontario  
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Click Here to Agree: Media and Information Technology Policy

MIT 3441F Course Outline – Fall 2019

Wednesday, 2:30-5:30 FNB 1200

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Office hours: Tues. 1:00-2:00, Wed. 11:00-12:00, or by appointment. (It helps if you sign up here: <https://tstreete.youcanbook.me/>)

Requisites: restricted to years 3 and 4 FIMS modules. Not open to MIT minor module.<sup>1</sup>

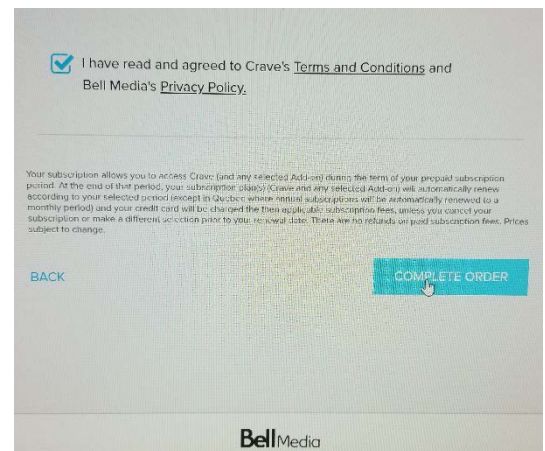


Have you ever wondered what those cryptic symbols and numbers on the back your smartphone or your TV are about? Or have you ever taken a look at the “Terms and Conditions” you agree to when you download some software or subscribe to Crave.ca or Netflix? They may seem unimportant, and they are certainly not alluring, but they are small glimpses into the very large world of media and information technology policy.

Media policy is as important to the media as microchips or rock and roll. The media devices that shape our world would not work without elaborate and constantly changing national and international frameworks of laws, regulations, technical standards, and systems of governance. In other words, without policy, your smartphone would be just a pricey paperweight.

This course provides an introduction to those frameworks, to media and information technology policies, primarily in Canada and the U.S. It will show you an important piece of how the world works, and teach you skills – e.g. how to read and understand legal documents – that will come in handy in your future careers.

Briefly, in this course there will be a midterm and final exam, you will be expected to come to class prepared to participate in discussions of the readings, and you will write a research paper in which you make an argument about a media or information policy issue. (More details about assignments are below.<sup>2</sup>)



<sup>1</sup> Please check to make sure you have the proper requisites. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

<sup>2</sup> Over the years, course outlines have evolved into elaborate contracts between professors and students, with ever more detail about the rules and regulations involved in a course. But course outlines are also what they have always been: windows into a world of thought and ideas. The rules and regulations are here, but this particular outline starts with what the course is about, what kinds of tools and ideas it will show you, and why it might be interesting or important.

This course is designed to teach you *how to read and make sense of* policies. It will not ask you to memorize all there is to media policy. Policies are complex and numerous, and they are constantly changing. It would be impossible to gain mastery over all policies in a single semester. So the course will not just focus on what policies *are*, but on *how* they form, and how to make sense of them as they do.

This is why I chose the two textbooks, [Napoli's Foundations of Communications Policy](#) and [Bredin's Media Policy in Canada](#). Together they should give students tools to help them make sense of both longstanding and new policies, and they teach principles that can be applied to contemporary issues, even those not covered in the texts. The two texts are different not only in that Napoli's covers the U.S. and Bredin's covers Canada, but also in that Napoli focuses on underlying principles and ideas, whereas Bredin focuses more on reading and analyzing specific policy documents. To understand media policies, it helps to do both.

Here's a **snapshot, an at-a-glance overview**, of the course:

Week	Theme	Readings	Assignments
1 Sept. 11	What is media policy?		
2 Sept. 18	Goals and Rationales of media policy	Napoli Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-28), Bredin Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-62)	
3 Sept. 25	Freedom of Speech and the politics of free communication	Napoli Ch. 3 (pp. 29-62), Bredin Ch. 3 (pp. 63-98)	
4 Oct. 2	Public interest and public ownership	Napoli Ch. 4 (pp. 63-96), Bredin Ch. 5 (pp. 119-162)	
5 Oct. 9	Diversity and competition	Napoli Ch. 6 and 7 (pp. 125-176), Bredin Ch. 6 (pp. 163-190)	
6 Oct. 16			Midterm Exam
7 Oct. 23	Universality and localism	Napoli Ch. 8 and 9 (pp. 177-224), Bredin Ch. 7 (pp. 191-208)	Paper proposal due
8 Oct. 30	Policymaking Processes	Napoli Ch. 10 and 11 (pp. 225-274), Bredin Ch. 4 (pp. 97-118)	
<b>Nov. 6 Fall Reading Week</b>			
9 Nov. 13	Subsidies and Market Failure	Pickard, "Confronting Market Failure: Past Lessons toward Public Policy Interventions" 2016; Bredin Ch. 8 (pp. 209-232)	Rough draft due
10 Nov. 20	Public-Private Initiatives	Bredin Ch. 9 (pp. 233-270)	
11 Nov. 27	Globalization	Bredin Ch. 10 (pp. 271-302); Haggart, Blayne, and Natasha Tusikov. " <a href="#">It's Time for a New Way to Regulate Social Media Platforms.</a> " <i>The Conversation</i> .	
12 Dec. 4	Review for final exam		Final draft due

## Learning Outcomes

Like most college courses, this one is designed to help you learn to think critically, read complicated material, analyze it, and write about it with clarity and sophistication. More specifically, this course is designed to help you:

- Understand the major themes, issues, and controversies that shape media policy in Canada and the U.S.;
- Make sense of and critically analyze complex media policy documents;
- Construct a coherent policy argument rooted in an understanding of current policies; and,
- Understand how policy shapes media in general.

## How the class works

**Attendance** in class will count for 5% of your grade (and will take into account university policy about absences<sup>3</sup>). You will be expected to come to class having read the assignments for that week and prepared to talk about them. I will occasionally lecture on the materials, but in-class discussion will be an important tool for learning. The readings are sometimes challenging, so you won't be expected to have fully mastered all the readings by the beginning of class, but you should have thought about them, flagged the parts you don't understand, and come to class ready to ask questions. (To paraphrase Francis Bacon, you learn more from being clearly wrong than from being vaguely confused.<sup>4</sup>)

There will be a **mid-term examination** (20% of your grade) on Oct. 16 and a **final examination** (30%) at the assigned time during finals week. Both exams will require you to write short (about two to five sentences) answers to questions about the course materials, including readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. There may be some questions on parts of the readings that were not fully covered in class.<sup>5</sup>

Each student will write a **research paper** of at least 2500 words (not including references) on a contemporary media policy issue. The paper should address at least two critical and/or analytical works on the topic, from at least two different policy positions. It should also use at least three original policy documents. It should make an *argument* about the issue in question. A one page proposal for the paper is due no later than before class on Oct. 23; it will be ungraded, but it may be turned back for revision before it is approved. A rough draft of the paper (20% of your grade) is due no later than before class on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>, and the final draft (25%) is due no later than Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>. Assignments should be emailed to me as a pdf.

## Grading

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<sup>3</sup> In April 2019, the UWO Faculty Senate passed a policy allowing students in undergraduate programs to self-report up to 2 short (48 hours or less) absences for work worth 30% or less of their final grade. If the student has already self-reported absences, or if the duration of an absence is more than 48 hours or the work missed greater than 30%, the student will be required to file appropriate documentation with Academic Counselling in order to receive academic consideration. Students are not allowed to self-report absences during official exam periods. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours following an absence in order to set up a time to discuss next steps for completing the work.

<sup>4</sup> The exact quote is "Truth emerges more readily from error than from confusion." Francis Bacon was an early modern English philosopher who gets credit for articulating some of the key principles of the scientific method.

<sup>5</sup> Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. This year, the date by which students are to have received at least 15% of their grade in a first semester course is November 9, 2019. Students can find details about this academic policy here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/evaluation\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf). Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Grades give you some feedback to help you learn, and the act of reading and evaluating assignments gives me some feedback about how well I am communicating to you. I encourage you to come talk to me during office hours about how you did on your assignments; direct discussion is often more helpful to learning than just looking at a grade.

I will explain in detail how I evaluate particular assignments in class and in handouts. A grading rubric, however, in any of your classes, is not a substitute for the expert judgment of your highly trained instructors.

For exams, I generally grade on curves. The mid-term and final exams will involve short answers to questions; for each question, the possible scores are 0, 1, 2, or 3. Zero means you communicated nothing showing you knew the answer to the question. One means you communicated something indicating you knew something about the question, but your answer is incomplete or not very coherent. A 2 shows that you understand the answer to the question pretty well, and are able to explain it clearly. A 3 means you truly hit the nail on the head, and provided an exceptionally precise, accurate, and/or particularly astute answer to the question.

### **Weekly themes and readings: detailed list**

Most of the readings are in the textbooks: Philip M. [Napoli, \*Foundations of Communications Policy: Principles and Process in the Regulation of Electronic Media\*](#), (Cresskill, N.J: Hampton Press, 2001); and [Bredin, Marian. \*Media Policy in Canada: Sources for Critical Analysis\*](#) (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Pub Co, 2013).

There are a couple of readings on contemporary issues linked below. Also, we may occasionally discuss current, unfolding news stories about media policy issues; if so, articles or excerpts may be handed out in class for discussion.

## 1 Sept. 11, What is media policy?

- Discussion with handouts with brief excerpts from media policy documents.

## 2 Sept. 18, Goals and Rationales of media policy

- Napoli Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-28)
  - Ch. 1 Introduction: Plan of the Book.
  - Ch. 2 Foundation Principles and Communications Policymaking: The Unique Nature of Communications Regulation
    - The Extended Potential Influence of Communications Policy Decisions; Communications Regulation as Both Economic and Social Regulation; The "Mixed" Nature of Individual Policy Decisions; Policy Principles and Policy Analysis; A Model of the Foundation Principles.
- Bredin Chapter 1 \* Rationales for Media Policy: Culture or Commerce?  
Critical Analysis John A. Foote, 'Federal Cultural Policy in Canada:
- Bredin Chapter 2 Historical Perspectives on Canada's Media Policy Primary Sources: Fifty Years of Cultural and Media Policy
  - Policy Source 1 Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences 1949-1951 (Massey Commission), Chapter 18 'Radio Broadcasting.'

### 3 Sept. 25, Freedom of Speech and the politics of free communication

- Napoli Ch. 3 (pp. 29-62), **The First Amendment:**  
Functions of the First Amendment; The Liberty/Self-Fulfillment Function; The Advancement of Knowledge/Discovery of Truth Function; The Enhancing the Democratic Process Function; The Checking Government Power Function; The Community Stability Function; The Self-Realization/Autonomy of Consciousness Function; Observations; Individual Versus Collective Approaches to the First Amendment; The Individualists Interpretation of the First Amendment; The Collectivist Interpretation of the First Amendment; The First Amendment and Communications Policymaking; Toward a New First Amendment Balancing Test. ;
- Bredin Ch. 3 (pp. 63-98), **Policy Objectives and Implementation**  
Critical Analysis Peter Grant and Chris Wood, 'Creative Clusters,' from Blockbusters and Trade Wars.  
Primary Sources:  
Federal Media Policy Domains Policy Source 3 Broadcasting Act 1.991, Section 3 (1) 5 (1&2), 10 (1&2).  
Policy Source 4 Department of Canadian Heritage. Sharing Canadian Stories: Cultural Diversity at Home and in the World.

### 4 Oct. 2, Public interest and public ownership,

- Napoli Ch. 4 (pp. 63-96),  
Ch. 4 The Public Interest: Origins of the Phrase  
Levels of Public Interest; The Public Interest at the Conceptual Level; The Public Interest at the Applicational Level. ;  
Ch. 5 The Marketplace of Ideas  
Origins of the Metaphor; The Marketplace of Ideas Metaphor in FCC Decision Making; Methodology; Results.
- Bredin Ch. 5 (pp. 119-162), **Public Interest, Public Service, and Public Ownership of Media**  
Critical Analysis  
Nordicity Group, Analysis of Government Support for Public Broadcasting and Culture in Canada.  
Primary Sources: Media in the Public Interest  
Policy Source 7 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Public Broadcasting in Canada: Time for Approach. Submission to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.  
Policy Source 8 National Film Board of Canada, Emerging and Digital Media: Opportunities a Challenges, Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

## 5 Oct. 9, Diversity and competition

- Napoli Ch. 6 and 7 (pp. 125-176)

Ch. 6 Diversity: The Marketplace of Ideas and Diversity

**The Dimensions of Diversity; Source Diversity; Content Diversity; Exposure Diversity.**

Ch. 7 Competition

Geographic Markets; Product Markets; Assessing Competition in Media Markets; Competition Measures; Competition Assessments - Multiple Techniques - Diverse Results.

- Bredin Ch. 6 (pp. 163-190), Regulating Shelf Space for Canadian Content

Critical Analysis

Robert Babe, 'Regulation or Incentives' from Canadian Broadcasting, the Challenge of Change.

Primary Sources:

Quotas and Spending Requirements for Canadian Programming

Policy Source 9 CRTC, Commercial Radio Policy 2006.

Policy Source 10 CRTC. A Group-Based Approach to the Licensing of Private Television Services 2010.

## 6 Oct. 16, Midterm Exam

## 7 Oct. 23, Universality and localism

- Napoli Ch. 8 and 9 (pp. 177-224), Ch. 8 Universal Service: Three Components of the Universal Service Principle

The Universal Service Policy Imperative; Universal Services; The Means of Providing Universal Service. ; Ch. 9 Localism: Rationales for Localism; Political Rationales for Localism Policies; Cultural Rationales for Localism Policies; The Localism Principle in Practice; Local Programming as Point of Origin; Moving Beyond the Point of Origin; Discussion; Reconceptualizing Localism in the New Media Environment; Localism and Community.

- Bredin Ch. 7 (pp. 191-208), Protecting Media Industries and Ownership Restrictions 191

Primary Sources:

Protecting Canadian Periodicals

Policy Source 11 Department of Canadian Heritage, Backgrounder, Canada- US Agreement on Magazines, Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act.

Policy Source 12 Department of Canadian Heritage. 'Perspective: Publishing' in Intersections: Updates from the Cultural Landscape.

### **Paper proposal due**

## 8 Oct. 30, Policymaking Processes

- Napoli Ch. 10 and 11 (pp. 225-274),

Ch. 10 Linking Principles with Process - the Dynamics of Communications Policymaking

The Communications Policymaking Process - a Principal-Agent Perspective; Private Sector Tier; Judicial Tier; Political Tier; Bureaucratic Tier; Integrating Process and Policy.

Ch. 11 The Federal Communications Commission and the Limitations of Communications Policy Analysis:

""Private Sector"" Stakeholder Monitoring and FCC Decision Making -a Case Study of Broadcast Policymaking; Methodology; Results; The Analytical Capacity Within the FCC; Policy Analysis Within the Federal Government; Policy Analysis Within the Federal Communications Commission.

- Bredin Ch. 4 (pp. 97-118), Interest Groups and Stakeholders in the Policy Process

Critical Analysis

Robert Hackett and Steve Anderson, 'Democratizing Communication Policy in Canada: A Social Movement Perspective.' Canadian Journal of Communication.

Primary Sources: Who Cares About Media Policy?

Policy Source 5 Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the Mandate and Funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Policy Source 6 Canadian Media Production Association. Remarks to House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Study on The Impacts of Private Television Ownership Changes.

## Nov. 6, Reading Week

### 9 Nov. 13, Subsidies and Market Failure

- Pickard, Victor. "Confronting Market Failure: Past Lessons toward Public Policy Interventions." In *The Communication Crisis in America, and How to Fix It*, 127–142. Springer, 2016;
- Bredin Ch. 8 (pp. 209-232), Using Direct Subsidies to Address Market Failure

Primary Sources:

Grants for Writers, Books and Publishing.

Policy Source 13 Canada Council for the Arts, The Evolution of the Canada Council's Support of the Arts.

Policy Source 14 Department of Canadian Heritage, Summative Evaluation of the Book Publishing Industry Development Program.

### **Rough draft due**

### 10 Nov. 20, Public-Private Initiatives

- Bredin Ch. 9 (pp. 233-270), Supporting Canadian Content through Public-Private Funding

Critical Analysis Robert Wright, 'Gimme Shelter: Cultural Protectionism and the Canadian Recording Industry' from *Virtual Sovereignty: Nationalism, Culture, and the Canadian Question*.

Primary Sources: Public-private Support for the Music Industry Policy

Source 15 Canada Music Fund, *From Creators to Audience: New Policy Directions for Canadian Sound Recording*

Policy Source 16 FACTOR, *The FACTOR Story*.

## 11 Nov. 27, Globalization

- Bredin Ch. 10 (pp. 271-302) *Domestic Media Subsidies, Globalization and New Technologies*

Critical Analysis

Peter Grant and Chris Wood, 'Subsidies,' from *Blockbusters and Trade Wars* Primary Sources: Tax Incentives and Subsidies for Film, TV a Digital Media.

Policy Source 17 Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit, CPTC Program Guidelines, Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office.

Policy Source 18 Overview of Canada Media Fund

- Haggart, Blayne, and Natasha Tusikov. "It's Time for a New Way to Regulate Social Media Platforms." *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/its-time-for-a-new-way-to-regulate-social-media-platforms-109413>.

12 Dec. 4, Review for final exam, Final draft due



## **Class Expectations and Academic Integrity**

The main thing you should try to do in this class (and probably all your classes) is, to the best of your ability, act **professionally**. This does not mean dressing a certain way or acting like someone you've seen on TV. Rather, it means **doing your absolute best to be reliable and effective in a way that treats others around you with respect**. This means things like meeting deadlines, but also showing your instructor and the others around you that you are doing your best to do your part, and thinking about the good of the whole group. For example, if you find that a link to a reading doesn't work, contact me to let me know; don't try to use it as an excuse not to do the reading. I and everyone else in the class will be grateful you took a little bit of time to help us all out. Similarly, in class discussions, it is fine if you disagree with something somebody said, but if you do so, do it with respect, with thoughtfulness and taking care to make sure you understand the other person's point of view.

**Sharing your notes with other students** in the class during the semester is fine, as long as you do not charge for them. I do not give permission for you to sell notes to other students, online or otherwise, or to upload notes to open websites like notehall.com or sharenotes.com.

**Laptops and cell phones** can be handy, and in some circumstances, they are necessary. They also can be incredibly distracting, for oneself and others. There is growing evidence that many students who take notes on paper and read paper books learn more than students who read and write electronically. (There are of course, exceptions.) So I recommend sticking with paper notebooks during class unless you have a specific reason for working on a laptop.

If you do need to use a device, please turn off all sound notifications before you enter the classroom. If you must, it is OK to use your devices for course-related activities such as taking notes, researching lecture topics, and viewing documents in OWL. You are not permitted to use these devices for any non-course-related activities during class. During activities that do not require these devices, such as group discussions, you will be asked to close or put them away. Do not take photos of the class PowerPoints; they will be available for you to download through OWL. Please ask me if you wish to make an audio recording of class lecture material; it should be for educational purposes only, and if other students object to their voices being recorded during discussion or to pictures being taken, we will honor their wishes. If you have concerns or comments about how the use of laptops or mobile devices is affecting your learning during the course, please talk to me about it.

UWO has an office of "**Academic Integrity**" and a set of strict policies to go with it (see below). But I think that just listing the rules does not always help folks understand what's really at stake.

Academic integrity is about much more than just not cheating in the obvious ways, like paying someone else to write your research paper for you or copying stuff and pretending it's your own. **It's about respect for the many-centuries-old disciplined human conversation we call scholarship**, and learning how to helpfully take part in that conversation.

By taking a class, you are joining a team, a community. To feel part of that community of scholarship, you need to learn how it works and do your fair share within it. Learning how to, say, do a proper citation or write a good summary of a scholarly article is like learning to take care of a sick roommate, or making dinner for a group of your friends, or doing your best for your team. In the end, you don't do scholarly things because the law says you have to, but because it's satisfying and makes it better for everybody if you do, and helps maintain your friendships, your connections to the conversation. Scholarly rules are not just an arcane set of hoops for students to jump through. Following them helps make you part of a community, a team.

So think of cheating on a term paper as more like stealing from your best friend than it is like skipping out on a study hall in high school; it poisons your relationships to people and activities you care about. And cultivate an enthusiasm for the scholarly worlds your classes expose you to; talking about ideas with friends is just as important (and can be just as fun) as talking about, say, GOT. You just have to get in the right frame of mind.

### **Accommodations**

In general, if you are sick or otherwise unable to attend a class due to circumstances beyond your control, I am willing to meet with you later or otherwise work out a way for you to make up the work, especially if you let me know promptly: before class or at least the day of class if at all possible is appreciated. If you are having trouble keeping up with course work, I will be more accommodating the sooner you contact me. If you come to me the day of the mid-term to say you don't think you are prepared, or two days after the rough draft is due to ask for more time, I will be much less flexible than if you come to me a week or two beforehand. (See the statement about being professional above.) Without prior arrangements, late rough drafts will lose a half-letter-grade per day. (I'm told that Western allows no flexibility for final papers not turned in by the last day of classes.)

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is 48 hours or less and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic\\_Consideration\\_for\\_absences.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf) are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last longer than 48 hours, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation.

### **General Advice for writing academic papers**

1) Making a scholarly point or argument is not exactly the same as expressing an opinion. We all have lots of opinions that come from our preferences, experiences, values, and so forth. In scholarship, however, **the point is not to express your opinion, but to offer a reasoned, logical, well-supported argument that addresses counterarguments and provides substantial evidence.** Everyone has opinions, but scholarly arguments are

something presented by experts, by people who have done the work of mastering an area of thought and who present the results of their expertise. **Your goal over the course of semester is to become an *expert* on the topic you are researching.**

2) In this and in all your courses, **carefully read and follow instructions, in detail and to the letter.** These days, we're all bombarded with all kinds of complicated stuff all the time: legal boilerplate, advertising, etc. etc. It's understandably hard to figure out what deserves to be read very carefully and what should just be skimmed or deleted. ***The stuff your professors give you on course outlines and handouts should be read carefully.*** It's not fluff. It is typically very carefully thought out with you in mind. Your professors generally take you seriously, so it's worth your while to take them seriously. If there's something that's unclear or that you don't understand, don't just let it breeze by; ask for clarification.

3) When in doubt, **cite all ideas and facts that come from other sources** (not just direct quotes) in the body of your writing. It should be absolutely, completely clear which ideas are yours alone and which came from somewhere else, and where exactly ideas and facts come from — down to the page. Not doing this can get you accused of plagiarism, which is very serious, but more importantly it's part of the ethic of scholarly interaction. It's being a team player in the process of reason and truth-telling.

4) Include a bibliography (or list of works cited) at the end of your paper, which lists all sources alphabetically by first author's last name. Use a standard system of citation.

5) For journal articles, include author's name(s), title of the article, title of the journal, date, volume #, issue #, and page numbers. Do NOT include the university, publisher, or online database name; these do not help. If you can't find a date, **do not write N.D.**; either there is a date of publication somewhere, or the piece is not peer reviewed and should not be included in your paper. Do not say "web"; that's pretty self-evident these days. And **do not include URLs** (web addresses) unless it is short and an open link, that is, not via one of the library databases.

6) For **scholarly books** that are not edited collections, include author's name(s), title of the book, publisher, and date. In references to books in the body of your paper, always include a page number.

7) For scholarly books that are **edited collections**, where each chapter is written by a separate author, citations should be for the individual chapters, not for the whole books. Look up how to properly list a chapter in an edited collection in the [style guides](#).

8) Paragraphs: generally, a paragraph should be shorter than a single page. Paragraphs represent the basic unit of composition: **one idea, one paragraph.** However, to present a clear, **unified train of thought** to your readers, you must make sure **each paragraph follows the one before it and leads to the one after it** through clear, logical transitions. Keep in mind that adequate transitions cannot simply be added to the essay without planning. Without a good reason for the sequence of your paragraphs, no transition will help you.

9) **Revise, revise, revise.** When working on your final draft, do not just open up your original document, look at your professor's marginal comments and then go through and fix each small thing they flagged. Marginal comments point to problems that are typical, but not to all the problems. Read the comments as *suggestions* for

how to improve your writing generally, and then set out to thoroughly revise your paper to make it better. Put yourself into it, and plan to make several passes through the paper, making it slightly better each time you go through it. In some cases, you are best off opening up a completely new, blank document, and writing a completely new version of your paper, and only once you've done that go back to your draft and see if there are things that can be brought in by cutting and pasting.

### ***Land Acknowledgement***

*Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).*

# NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Fall 2019

## Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/rights\\_responsibilities.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html)

## Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

## Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

## Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the

semester, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

## Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

## Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

**Elective courses and 4<sup>th</sup> year seminars have no recommended course averages.**

## Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

## SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca)

Student Development Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca)

Psychological Services:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych)

Services for Students with

Disabilities:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

Accessibility

Information:

[www.accessibility.uwo.ca](http://www.accessibility.uwo.ca)

∟ Writing Support

Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing)

Learning Skills Services:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning)

Indigenous Services:

<http://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

∟

International and Exchange Student

Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/int](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/int)

Career Centre at Western:

[www.success.uwo.ca/careers/](http://www.success.uwo.ca/careers/)

## Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

### Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

#### 90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

#### 80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

#### 75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

#### 70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

#### 60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

#### 50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

#### Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

## Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

### Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

### Stages in the Appeals Process:

**The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor.** For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

**If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee.** Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.**

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

### **If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:**

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.**

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.