

**The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

***FIMS 9336 – Information and Media Policy for Social Justice*
Wednesdays, 1:30-4:20, FNB 4130**

**Course Outline – Winter 2023
DRAFT: 7.9.22**

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Alissa Centivany
Office: FNB 4093
Office Hours: by appt.
Email: acentiva@uwo.ca
Phone: 519.661.2111 ex. 88510
Name: Dr. Joanna Redden

Office: FNB 4077
Office Hours: by appt.
Email: jredden2@uwo.ca
Phone: 519. 661.2111 ex. x88476
Name: Dr. Tom Streeter

Office: FNB 4091
Office Hours: by appt.
Email: tstreet2@uwo.ca
Phone: 519. 661.2111 ex.x84347

Course Description

This course is about how to do things with ideas in ways that make a difference. Largely based on real-world case studies, the course provides students with an understanding of how to conduct and mobilize research and communication processes for policy development and intervention. The course provides practical training in how to conduct policy analysis, access grey literature and conduct document analysis, draw on policy traditions and learn from previous experiences. Students will engage in projects and exercises focused on contemporary policy issues, sometimes working in groups. Outcomes might include policy recommendations, white papers, op eds, and contributions to ongoing policymaking efforts.

Much of the material will focus on Canadian case studies, though there will be room for discussions of policy issues and trends from around the world, which are becoming increasingly inseparable from local policy issues. Students will develop skills in policy analysis and research through a mixture of seminars and practicums; the latter which will engage policymakers, policy activists, and ongoing policy interventions.

Perhaps more than other graduate seminars, class topics and readings may need to be changed during the semester, for three reasons: 1) the subject matter is a moving target, and current events may require small additions or changes; 2) we are hoping to have guest lectures from various experts, but as these are scheduled, some adjustments may be necessary to fit; and 3) this course is a first-time experiment. We can assure you there will be no dramatic changes in the volume of assignments, readings, or other requirements.

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the FIMS programs, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to take this course from course instructors as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and critically assess key media and information policy-related principles, concepts, theories, and/or philosophies (historical and/or contemporary, Western and/or non-Western, derived from philosophy, law, etc.) (program-level learning outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, 5);
2. Cultivate leadership potential by recognizing, analyzing, and considering strategies to address the complex nature of media and information policy issues (program-level learning outcome 2, 3, 5, 7, 9);
3. Apply analytic frameworks across multiple scales (e.g. self, group) and diverse contexts (e.g. geographic, cultural, institutional, and governmental) (program-level learning outcome 1, 2, 3, 5, 8);
4. Understand different strategies and tactics for policy intervention and how and why different stakeholders might adopt various strategies and tactics how professional codes of ethics relate to ethical principles, concepts, issues, and/or philosophies underpinning the preservation and communication of information via emerging technologies (program-level learning outcome 1, 3, 5, 7);
5. Communicate policy issues and analysis clearly, concisely, and persuasively, using both written (e.g. case studies, briefs) and verbal (e.g. presentations) methods (program-level learning outcome 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9)
6. Draw upon experience working as part of a team. The ability to work as part of a team effectively involves developing a range of skills that can only be learned through practice. This course provides an important experiential learning opportunity for students to develop and practice teamwork skills.

Course website: <https://owl.uwo.ca>. **The courses you're registered for should appear as soon as you log in.**

Course Materials

All required readings are available online [via OWL, Western Libraries or the World Wide Web] or are on reserve in GRC.

Course Policies

Email correspondence: Please include "Information Policy FIMS9336" in the subject line for all emails related to this course! *Please CC all of the co-instructors on your communications.* Barring unforeseen issues, we will respond to all emails within 48 hours.

Respect and collegiality: We are committed to the idea of the classroom as a place for respectful engagement across difference, and a chance to learn from colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and value systems. (This is especially important in a class built substantially around questions of policymaking and social justice!) Students are expected to act collegially and professionally at all times.

Attendance & Participation: Attendance at and timely arrival to all classes is required and will be monitored each class. See the MLIS Student Handbook for details. Students needing to negotiate legitimate absences need to inform the instructor in advance in order to arrange for make-up work. In case of emergency absences, students must contact the instructor as soon as possible afterwards. Students should expect absence or lateness without permission or legitimate explanation to be reflected in their participation grade. Each student is permitted one unexplained, unexcused absence. While using this "free pass" will not reduce your participation grade it might negatively impact your understanding of key concepts and expectations that were covered that day so please make arrangements with a colleague to get notes, etc. MLIS guidelines for participation are available at http://intra.fims.uwo.ca/students/handbooks/mlis/mlis-handbook-04.htm#P251_25303

Academic Integrity: 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_grad.pdf

Assignment submission: Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the beginning of class in the week they are due per the course syllabus. Please make sure that all written assignments are clearly labelled with the course name and number, assignment title, instructors' names, your name and date. While there is no official style manual for this

course, please make sure that you choose and consistently use a style that is appropriate to the assignments required in this course. Poor grammar, style or spelling will result in a lower grade. Except in cases of excused absences, late assignments will be reduced at the rate of 5% per day or part thereof. Assignments that are 7 or more days late will not be accepted.

Grade Guidelines: For the grading guidelines, please see the FIMS student handbook

Academic Accommodation: Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Western University and FIMS policies on accommodation are as follows:

Medical Accommodation: For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or **assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For **work worth less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Compassionate Accommodation: Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.), or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

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. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo> Further specific information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Other support services on campus:

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca
Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych
Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd
Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing
Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning
Indigenous Services: www.indigenous.uwo.ca/
International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int
Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/
Office of the Ombudsperson: <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

Methods of Evaluation

- | | |
|---|-----|
| ● Policy Foundations Essay | 20% |
| ● Research Project | 55% |
| - Topic selection and brief proposal | 10% |
| - Research project plan and first draft | 20% |
| - Final project | 25% |
| ● Project presentation | 15% |
| ● Participation | 10% |

Policy Foundations Essay – 20% - due week 4

Students will complete one essay synthesizing the literature and discussions on policy foundations (2 single spaced pages). A specific prompt for the assignment will be provided as the date approaches.

Research Project – 55%

Working in groups, you will conduct an original research project on a contemporaneous media or information policy issues of your choosing. Ideally, you should engage with a topic that is interesting and relevant to your experience and/or your current or future professional work. I encourage you to begin this project ASAP, brainstorm topics, and schedule a meeting(s) with me to discuss your chosen topic and research approach in advance. I encourage you to consider how you might use this work beyond the classroom by presenting it at a conference or other public forum or through publication. The main deliverables for this assignment are as follows:

- *Milestones:*
 - I. *Topic selection and brief proposal:* In no more than one page, tell me what you're interested in studying, why it's important, what specific research question you hope to answer, and how you will go about gathering and analyzing the data necessary to answer it. This is a starting off point; it doesn't need to be perfect. After submitting your proposal we will have a one-on-one meeting to discuss ideas and potential modifications.
 - II. *Research project plan and first draft:* You will prepare a research plan, outlining each of the elements and contributions of the final project, and assigning tasks to each group member based on a skills assessment and negotiation, and a first draft of your paper which will then be shared for peer-review.

Submit via email attachment, .doc or .odt file, to me and your peer-reviewers (who will be assigned to you).

III. *Peer review*: Provide feedback on other students’ drafts. I will group students into peer review groups based on enrolment. Send your peer reviews to the author and the instructor.

- *Presentation*: Due in our last two classes
- *Final Paper*: The final report (10 single-spaced pages excluding references saved in .doc or .odt format) is due by 11:55pm on April 14, 2022.

Participation – 10%

Your participation grade will be determined by your contribution to the learning of the class, your performance in weekly in-class workshops, your contributions to class discussions, and the quality of your engagement with guest speakers. The evaluation will be based not only on how frequently you speak in class, but more importantly, by the quality of what you say, how well you listen and respond to others, and your contributions to workshop activities and guest speaker discussions.

High-quality contributions include: starting a class discussion with sound analysis, synthesizing class discussions, summarizing and moving class discussions ahead, giving constructive criticisms or building on others’ ideas, substantiating one’s views persuasively and logically, responding to others’ critiques with reasoned rebuttal, graceful acceptance of new ideas, presenting well thought-out analyses and policy recommendations, volunteering for special role-playing or presentations, recalling and sharing relevant experiences, being respectful and non-judgmental towards your classmates’ opinions, asking thoughtful questions during lectures and peer presentations. Respect for the course and each other are essential.

Some contribution/partial credit: attending class and participating but contributions do not meet the threshold of “high-quality” as described above.

Unsatisfactory contributions include: being absent from class without excuse, attending class but not participating in plenary or group discussions, being unprepared for class, seeming to have not read the assigned readings, using technology for activities unrelated to class, offering poorly thought-out analyses or policy recommendations, personally criticizing classmates or demeaning the perspectives of others, being close-minded, disrespectful, or otherwise disruptive. These behaviors will lead to negative contribution grades.

Topics and Weekly Schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Workshop Topic	Due
1	Jan. 11	Introduction & Overview	Teambuilding and Working Together	
2	Jan. 18	Foundations Pt. 1	Research Skills: Research Diary	
3	Jan. 25	Foundations Pt. 2	Research Skills: Identifying policy problem and strategizing together	Milestone 1
4	Feb. 1	Skills-based policy work	Outputs, key milestones, timeline, dividing tasks	Foundations Essay
5	Feb. 8	AC: Case study 1(a) - Instructor	Team updates and planning	
6	Feb. 15	AC: Case study 1(b) - Guest	Team presentations on project plans and progress and peer feedback (learning from trial and error)	

	Feb. 20	READING WEEK		
7	March 1	JR: Case study 2(a) - AI, Facial Recognition and mobilization in the U.S.	Team meetings: Project development	Milestone 2
8	Mar. 8	JR: Case study 2(b) - AI Policy in Canada: Predictive Policing	Workshop: Communicating to target and engage	
9	Mar. 15	TS: Case study 3(a) - recent developments in Canadian platform regulation	Team meetings: Projects and presentation planning	Milestone 3 due
10	Mar. 22	TS: Case study 3(b) - Guest	Team meetings: Projects and presentation planning	
11	Mar. 29	Case study review and discussion	Team meetings: Presentation practice runs	
12	Apr. 5	Course review	Team meetings: Presentation practice runs	
13	Apr. 12	Final Presentations		Final presentations

Sample readings:

- Benjamin, R. (2022) *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Buolamwini, J. and Gebru, T. (2018) "Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification," *Proceedings of Machine Learning Research*, 81(1), pp. 1-15
- Brodie, J. (ed.) (2018) *Contemporary Inequalities and Social Justice in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Collins, P. (2019) *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, Durham NC: Duke University Press.
- Couldry, N. (2015) *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*, London: Sage.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989) "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1(8), pp. 139-167.
- Fenton, N. (2016) *Digital Political Radical*, Cambridge: Polity.
- McKelvey, F. and MacDonald, M. (2019) "Artificial Intelligence Policy Innovations at the Canadian Federal Government," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 44(2): 43-50.
- Picard, R. and Pickard, V. (2017) *Essential Principles for Contemporary Media and Communications Policymaking*, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Prince, M. (2018) "Canada: Social Justice and Social Policy in a Liberal Welfare State," *Handbook on Global Social Justice*, G. Craig (ed.), Northampton MA: Edward Elgar Publishing Inc., p. 93-104.
- Richardson, R. and A. Kak (2021) "Suspect Development Systems: Databasing Marginality and Enforcing Discipline," *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, Vol. 55, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3868392
- Streeter, T. (1996) *Inside the Beltway as an Interpretive Community: The Politics of Policy*, *Selling the Air: A Critique of the Policy of Commercial Broadcasting in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Young, I. M. (2011) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.