

MIT 2200F **MAPPING MEDIA THEORY AND CRITICISM**

Fall 2019

Lecture: Wednesday 2:30-4:30 HSB 40



Alison Hearn (ahearn2@uwo.ca)

FIMS Nursing Building 4032

Office Hours: Tues 3-4 p.m.

Or by appointment

Teaching Assistants

Course Description

This course is designed to provide MIT students with a background in the theoretical traditions that inform scholarship in media and cultural studies. These traditions include: culturalism, critical theory, structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, Marxism, medium theory, psychoanalysis, feminism, critical race studies, queer theory, posthumanism and socio-technical analysis. We will engage key theoretical topics, including the meaning of culture, the nature of language and the sign, ideology, subjectivity, gender, sexuality, race, and the implications of digital technology. Throughout, we will attempt to capture the excitement and commitment of scholars and others engaging these various approaches to understanding culture, media, technology and everyday life.

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Familiarize you with many of the major intellectual developments in the humanities and social sciences of the past century
- Give you the tools to understand the intersection of these ideas with scholarship in media and cultural studies
- Sharpen your skills in reading and thinking critically
- Sharpen your skills in communicating your ideas verbally and in writing
- Encourage you to become an active participant in ongoing theoretical debates

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Required Texts

Antony Easthope and Kate McGowan (eds.), *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, (2nd edition) Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (CCTR)

John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, (8th edition) England: Pearson Educational, 2009 (CTPC).

Articles available on OWL and online.

Requirements

Midterm examination (15%): An in-class exam to be administered on **Oct. 23**. The exam will consist of a combination of the following types of questions: matching, short answer, and essays. Except in those limited cases where medical or compassionate accommodation is appropriate, you must write the exam during the scheduled time. Note that you will have 1 hour and 50 minutes (i.e., a normal class period) to write the exam.

Final examination (30%): To be scheduled by the Registrar. 1 page cheat sheet allowed. You will be asked to answer three essay questions out of four. Except in those limited cases where medical or compassionate accommodation is appropriate, you must write the exam during the scheduled time. You will have three hours to write the exam.

Three short writing assignments (15% each – 45% total) **HARD COPIES (No OWL submissions)** are due in lecture **Oct. 9, November 13,** and **December 4**. The first assignment, due in lecture on **October 9**, will ask you to write a summary and short discussion or critique (1250 words TOTAL) of one article from a specific list of course readings identified in class. The second assignment, due in lecture on **November 13**, will ask you to write a brief 1000 word answer to a question posed by me (Alison Hearn) based on course concepts and handed out in class on October 30. For the last assignment you must write a short piece of cultural criticism (1250 words) about an aspect of our mediated culture (for ex: Instagram, twitter, reality television, a music video, smart phones) using one of the theoretical perspectives covered in the class. This will be due in lecture **December 4**. More details about these assignments can be found on OWL.

Participation and Attendance at Tutorial (10%): This grade is determined by your faithful attendance at tutorial and the level of your engagement and involvement while in the class. Your T.A. will explain his/her expectations around tutorial participation in your first meeting.

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Information and Logistics



Attendance at lectures and tutorials: While you are not graded on attendance at lecture, **consistent attendance at lectures and tutorials is crucial**, as ideas and examples discussed in class will appear on exams. Lectures and tutorials will proceed on the assumption that you have read the material before coming to class. You should bring your copies of the reading to each class meeting.

Attendance at tutorials is not specifically required, but 10% of your grade will be based on the quality and consistency of your participation in tutorial. In tutorial, as in lecture, we expect that your conduct will support your own learning and that of your classmates.

Note as well that, if you do come to class, we expect that your presence and actions will always be conducive to your own learning and to that of others. If for any reason they are not (if, for example, you speak while others are speaking), you will be asked to leave class so that the rest of us can get on with our work.

All students should make themselves familiar with the University's Student Code of Conduct For a copy of the code of conduct: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf>

My Role in the course: My role is to make decisions about what we will and will not cover, design the assessments used in the course, supervise the TAs, and deliver the lectures. Please address questions about the design and overall administration of the course directly to me, either over email or in office hours. ***In addition, I am happy to meet with you to discuss course material you are having trouble with.*** Please do not email me about late or missed assignments, grades or extensions; due to the size of this course, these emails must be addressed to your teaching assistant.

The Teaching Assistants' role in the course: In addition to running the tutorials, TAs will handle all marking and issues regarding late or missed assignments. Your TA will also handle concerns about preparing for and writing exams and assignments. In addition, they will help you understand course material and lectures. Finally, they will provide information on using the course website, though the ultimate responsibility for learning to use OWL rests with you. Please address questions about any of these matters directly to your TA. Your TA will explain how best to reach her/him, and when and where s/he will hold office hours during the first tutorial meeting.

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Use of Electronic Devices: **The use of laptops, cell phones or other electronic devices is NOT permitted** in lecture unless a note is provided to me from the Student Development Centre. Your T.A. will set her/his own policies regarding technology use for your tutorial.

You may NOT record or film the lectures without my permission, which must be given beforehand.

Accommodation: Western has introduced a new policy allowing students to self-report up to 2 short (48 hours or less) absences for work worth 30% or less of their final grade. You are not allowed to self-report absences during official exam periods. Please read the policy here:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322

If you have already self-reported 2 absences, or if the duration of an absence is more than 48 hours, or the work missed greater than 30%, you will be **required to file appropriate documentation with Academic Counselling** in order to receive academic consideration. (Please see Notes from the Dean's Office Handout). Your TAs and I are not permitted to collect medical documentation; you must submit it the Dean's office in your home faculty. Compassionate accommodation will be extended only to those undergoing serious personal difficulties, such as a death in the family.

Some general considerations regarding email:

When communicating via email with your TA or with me, please do the following to ensure that you are answered promptly.

- *Try to answer your own question first.* Look again at the course outline, the assignment, or OWL.
- *Send your email from your UWO account.*
- *Include "MIT 2200" in the subject line of your email.*
- *Include your full name and section number in the body of the email.*
- *Email the right person.* In the majority of cases, this will be your TA.
- *Make sure your email is appropriate in address, tone and content.* Be polite!
- *Use standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and proofread your email before you send it.*



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Grades:

If you wish to appeal a mark on assignment, you must first consult the “Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range.” (See “Notes from the Dean’s Office”). You must then write a note to your TA (not longer than one page) explaining in detail why the assignment in question, should, according to the Guidelines, receive a higher mark. Your TA will then review the assignment and your argument and make a decision as to whether to retain or adjust your mark.

If you remain concerned about the fairness and accuracy of your TA’s assessment of your work, you may give me a clean, unmarked copy of your work to mark (if asking me to re-mark an exam, please make a photocopy of your exam booklet and white out your TAs comments). Please be aware that my grade for the assignment will be final, and that it is possible that I may give you a lower mark than the one you received from your TA.

Questions: I will reserve time toward the end of the lecture for questions. Things will run most smoothly if you make a practice of noting any questions you have as they occur to you during the lecture and then asking them during the allotted time, after class, or over email. Please give your name before asking your question.

Starting and stopping: We will make every effort to begin and end every class on time. If you are late to class, please find a seat quickly and quietly to minimize disruption. If you know you must leave early, please choose an appropriate seat close to an exit. Also, please don't begin packing up until after the lecture or tutorial has ended; doing so may prevent you or the people around you from hearing important announcements made at the end of class.

Study Groups: We encourage you to get together with others from the class and form study groups in which to discuss the course materials on your own. Such groups provide a more informal setting to work with these ideas and may also help with exam preparation. Let your TA know if you would like help in forming such a group.



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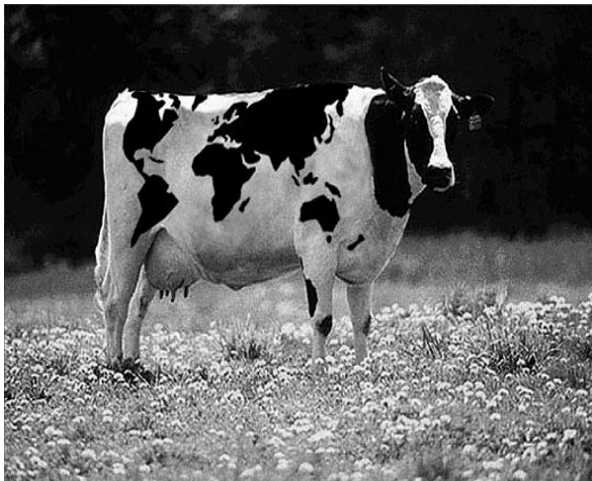
Scholastic Offenses

Students are directed to read the definition of what constitutes a scholastic offense at the following website:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

***All required papers might be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). In addition, computer-marked multiple choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

*** While I am required to include this description on all of my syllabi, ***I will NOT be using turnitin.com in this class. I believe that you each have a stake in the quality of your own education; why would you cheat yourself by cheating in the class? I believe you will choose to pursue honesty and integrity in everything you do. Having said that, if you anticipate any problems meeting course deadlines, please speak to your TA, to me, or to a MIT counselor for support and guidance.***



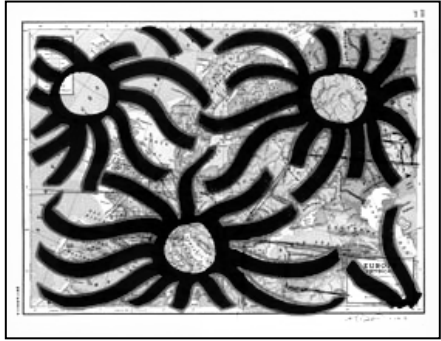
Academic Integrity: Cheating on exams or assignments is a serious violation of ethical conduct and will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or tests includes, but is not limited to:

- Using unauthorized aids
- Communicating with another student in any way during the exam
- Copying the answers of another student
- Altering an exam after it is marked

Academic dishonesty in assignments includes, but is not limited to:

- Unacceptable collaboration
- Copying all or part of another student's assignment
- Allowing another student to copy all or part of your assignment
- Using material from another source when a student's own work is expected
- Altering assignment results

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Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule may be subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and via OWL. Students will be responsible for any new deadlines.

Sept. 11 Introduction

Note: No tutorials this week.

Sept. 18 Culturalism

F.R. Leavis, from "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture" (OWL)

Raymond Williams, from "Culture and Society" (OWL)

John Storey, Ch 2 "The Culture and Civilization tradition" pp. 18-29
and Ch 3. "Culturalism" pp. 38-50 (CTPC)

Sept. 25 Critical Theory

Theodor Adorno, from "On Popular Music" (OWL)

John Storey, Ch 4 "Marxisms" pp. 66-74 (CTPC)

Liz Pelly, "The Problem with Muzak", <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-problem-with-muzak-pelly>

Oct. 2 Structuralism and Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure, from "A Course in General Linguistics" (CCTR)

Roland Barthes, from "Mythologies" (OWL)

John Storey, Ch. 6 "Structuralism and Post-structuralism" pp. 116-131 (CTPC)

Taylor Lorenz, "The Instagram Aesthetic is Over",

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/04/influencers-are-abandoning-instagram-look/587803/>

Oct. 9 Marxism: Ideology/ Hegemony (First Writing Assignment Due in Lecture)

Karl Marx, from 'Preface' to "A contribution to the critique of political economy" (CCTR)

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "from The German Ideology", (CCTR)

Louis Althusser, from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (CCTR)

John Storey, Ch 4. "Marxisms" pp. 61-64, 74-86. (CTPC)

Dan Hancox, "Kill the Boss in Your Head: Freelancing and Creativity",

<https://underpinned.co/magazine/2019/07/kill-the-boss-in-your-head-freelancing-and-creativity/>

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Oct. 16 Subjectivity and Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud, from "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (CCTR)

Jacques Lacan, from "The Mirror Stage" (CCTR)

John Storey Ch 5 "Psychoanalysis" pp. 95-109 (CTPC)

Rebecca Jennings, "Facetune and the Internet's Endless pursuit of physical perfection",

<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/7/16/20689832/instagram-photo-editing-app-facetune>

Oct. 23 IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Oct. 30 Post-structuralism: Discourse, Biopower, Panopticism

Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (CCTR)

Foucault, from "Right of Death and Power over Life" (OWL)

John Storey Ch 6. "Structuralism and Post-structuralism" pp. 133-139 (CTPC)

Paul Mozur, "Inside China's Dystopian Dream: A.I., Shame and Lots of Cameras",

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/business/china-surveillance-technology.html>

Nov. 6 FALL READING WEEK

Nov. 13 Medium Theory: Harold Adams Innis (Second Writing Assignment Due in Lecture)

Harold Innis, "A Plea for Time"

<http://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/innis-plea/innis-plea-00-h.html>

Alexander John Watson, "Introduction" to the *The Bias of Communication* (OWL)

Clive Thompson, "Social Media is Keeping us Stuck in the Moment",

<https://this.org/2017/11/15/social-media-is-keeping-us-stuck-in-the-moment/>

Nov. 20 Gender /Sexuality

Laura Mulvey, from "Visual pleasure and the narrative cinema" (CCTR)

Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble* (CCTR)

Michel Foucault, excerpts from *The History of Sexuality* (CCTR)

Sasha Costanza-Chock, "Design Justice, A.I. and Escape from the Matrix of Domination"

<https://jods.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/costanza-chock>

Nov. 27 Race and Post-Colonialism

Franz Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Mask* (CCTR)

Kobena Mercer, from "Reading Racial Fetishism" (CCTR)

Edward Said, from *Orientalism* (CCTR)

Stuart Hall, Excerpts from "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" (OWL)

Safiya Noble, "Google has a striking history of bias against black girls",

<http://time.com/5209144/google-search-engine-algorithm-bias-racism/>

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Dec. 4 Post-Humanism/ Algorithmic Culture (Third Writing Assignment Due in Lecture)

Rosi Braidotti, "Introduction" from *The PostHuman* (OWL)

Taina Boucher, Excerpts from *If...Then: Algorithmic Power and Politics* (OWL)

Nathalie Maréchal, "Targeted Advertising is Ruining the Internet and Breaking the World", https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/xwiden/targeted-advertising-is-ruining-the-internet-and-breaking-the-world

Berit Anderson and Brett Horvath, "The Rise of the Weaponized AI Propaganda Machine" <https://scout.ai/story/the-rise-of-the-weaponized-ai-propaganda-machine>



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

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

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

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 4th 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

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

g Indigenous Services:

[http://indigenous.uwo.c](http://indigenous.uwo.ca/)

a/

International and Exchange

Student

Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/int Career

Centre at Western:

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.