

## MIT 1050B – NAVIGATING MEDIA CULTURE – WINTER 2020 – ONLINE

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### **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).*

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### **PROFESSOR**

Dr. Norma Coates  
[ncoates@uwo.ca](mailto:ncoates@uwo.ca)

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

I am going to do office hours two ways this semester:

- Every week, I will hold online Q&A sessions synchronously over Zoom. Anyone is invited to join in to meet your classmates and to ask questions about and discuss the material. Q&A's will be held every **Tuesday from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm**. I encourage you to attend, at least to say hello and to introduce yourself.
- If you prefer to meet with me in private, please contact me and we'll set up a time to meet on Zoom. Like you, I have lots of other work to do but I am doing it from home so will be very available, especially later in the afternoon.

### **TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

Aloa Alota, [aalota@uwo.ca](mailto:aalota@uwo.ca)  
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Jinman Zhang [jzha483@uwo.ca](mailto:jzha483@uwo.ca)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

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This course introduces Media Studies to prospective MIT majors as well as non-majors who want to learn something different, augment their chosen course of study, or who are interested in the MIT minor. Media Studies helps us understand how media software (e.g. apps, television programs, films, the Internet) and hardware (e.g. smartphones, computers, television sets) shape our daily lives, ideas about who and what is important, and much more.

Questions that we explore include:

Why do we “live” on our smartphones? What impact does a constant stream of information have on us as individuals and as a society? Are our thousands of on-line friends really friends? Are we our on-line presence? From media, we learn what and who's cool, what and what not to wear, how we supposed to act, and who “we” are. But what do we know about media? Who makes it? Whose values are represented? Why are we able to interpret its messages so easily? Are social networks really social? Why do 99% of television families live in such nice houses, and why are most of those families white? Why are women and non-whites under-represented in film and television? How can we tell “real news” from “fake news?” This course helps you to think critically about media - as students, as citizens in a society, as participants in culture, and as future media producers and consumers.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret media texts of all types
- Practice interdisciplinary and critical thinking in your other classes and in daily life.
- Understand media's impact upon how we think about the world and everything in it.
- Critique media messages, inclusions, and exclusions.
- Communicate effectively in writing.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

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There is no textbook for this class. Readings are drawn from several textbooks. All readings are posted in the appropriate weekly folder in OWL. I will cross out parts of chapters that you do not have to read before I post them on OWL.

Readings and activities that demonstrate or review course concepts from newspapers, blogs, magazines, and websites are provided on OWL.

I do not teach the readings directly nor do I refer to them too often in lecture. The readings supplement and present more examples of what is presented in lecture. You will do better in the course if you do the readings. The TAs and I are happy to answer questions about them, too.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

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The assessments for this course are designed to help you learn and apply basic concepts in Media Studies.

### **Doing Media Studies (2 @ 15 % = 30%)**

Short analyses or projects in which you apply concepts and methods discussed in class. **DMS 1 IS DUE ON FEBRUARY 12. DMS 2 IS DUE ON MARCH 21.**

### **Midterm Exam (1 @ 25% = 25%)**

The midterm exam may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It may include a media analysis. **It will be available on-line during Week 7 (the week after Reading Week), from February 28 until midnight, March 8. You may take it any day that week.**

### **Final Exam: (1 x 35% = 35%)**

The final exam is comprehensive and will be administered during the exam period. It may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It may include a media analysis. I have no control over the date of the final exam.

### **Self-Assessment (10%)**

At the end of the semester, you will assign yourself a participation grade, justified with a paragraph explaining why you deserve it. As this is an online class, only you can assess how much time you put into it, what you learned, attending Q&As, meeting with me, etc. I reserve the right to change your self-assigned grade – especially as students tend to be hard on themselves. The last time I did this I raised many of the grades that students gave themselves.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

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This class was designed four years ago as an on-line class. I built it from the ground-up with on-line teaching in mind. Even so, these are strange times for all of us as we endeavor to stay physically and mentally healthy while stuck in our dorms, apartments, and our parents' homes (and in my case, my basement office). I understand that

we are all stressed, and I will be taking that into account throughout the semester. Please let me know as soon as you can when you face a circumstance that may prevent you from handing in assignments on time. Most of this class is asynchronous with lessons available weekly for you to do at your convenience. Absences should therefore not be an issue.

The University, and FIMS, wants to provide students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate **academic consideration**. **Academic consideration is not the same as academic accommodations**. Academic consideration refers to students dealing with extenuating circumstances that prevent them from fulfilling the essential academic requirements of the course. These include sudden or acute physical or mental illness, medical treatment, serious injury (including concussions), traumatic events, bereavement, and serious illness of a significant other, parent, or child. You may need to submit documentation, including a 48-hour Self-Reported Absence (SRA), a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), or other documentation, which may include police reports, obituaries, accident reports, court orders, or Emergency Room reports. Start with me if you think you need a day or two more to complete your work.

**Academic Accommodations** removes barriers that students with disabilities experience so that they may complete the essential academic requirements of a course. If you are in this category, you have likely already set up your accommodations and have an assigned counselor. As an online, asynchronous course, requests for extra time on exams is not necessary, as exams will not be timed. Please let me know if your accommodations require other adjustments.

With that out of the way, here are my course policies. FIMS policies are provided at the end of this course outline.

1. **Keep up with the work.** You cannot proceed to the next week before finishing the current week's work. Considerations will be made for religious holidays, verifiable illness, and family emergencies. For more information, please see the Notes from the Dean's Office below.
2. **Read the assigned readings before each weekly lesson.** Your understanding of the course material will be better if you familiarize yourself with the concepts taught in each lesson first.
3. **Check the OWL site for the course regularly.** You access all of the course material through OWL. I will also use it to communicate with you, and provide handouts, assignments, web links, supplemental readings, and other course material. Check it regularly. Course announcements made from OWL are sent via e-mail.
4. **Email.** Speaking of which... I know that people your age do not use email as a primary communication tool. I do, and so do your other professors. Check your email at least once a day to ensure that you do not miss important information. I will send email to you using your Western email address. Either link your Western email account to the email provider of your choice or check it regularly so that your mailbox does not fill up. Please read email from me. Not having read an email that I know that I sent to everyone will not suffice as an excuse if you miss an assignment or important announcement. The email server generates error messages if a message cannot be delivered, so I know if someone legitimately did not receive a message. Otherwise, I will assume that you did not bother to read it. Important: Do not send email to my (or anyone else's) UWO account from a Hotmail account. Western's spam catcher quarantines messages from Hotmail accounts.

I also expect good email etiquette. If you are contacting me to contest a mark, do not attempt to bully me. That might not be your intent, but without proper etiquette your email may seem aggressive. For example: "Hey Norma. You messed up my mark. Fix it" (which is not too far off from some messages I've received) will be interpreted as too aggressive. I will not respond; nor will my TA's. On the other hand, "Dear Prof. Coates, I

believe that you may have mismarked my paper. Could you please check it?" will get a positive response. Here's an article laying out how to best communicate with your professors:

<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>

5. **Office Hours.** I am going to do office hours two ways this semester:

- Every week, I will hold online Q&A sessions synchronously over Zoom. Anyone is invited to join in to meet your classmates and to ask questions about and discuss the material. Q&A's will be held every **Tuesday from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm**. I encourage you to attend, at least to say hello and to introduce yourself.
- If you prefer to meet with me in private, please contact me and we'll set up a time to meet on Zoom. Like you, I have lots of other work to do but I am doing it from home so will be very available, especially later in the afternoon.

Please do not be shy about coming to Q&A sessions or asking me for a private meeting. It is good to know your professors in case you want to study abroad (when that's possible again), go to graduate school, or even when applying for jobs after you graduate. As a professor, I write a much better reference letter when I know a bit about the student I'm writing for. Otherwise, all I can say is, "they showed up and I think they stayed awake." ☺

6. **Grading.** If you signed up for this class because you thought it would be fun, good. It will be. If you signed up for this class because you thought it would be easy, think again. Grading will be rigorous. You are no longer in high school. You will have to push yourself and establish good study habits in order to excel. *You are all here because you are smart, but do not expect that you will receive the same grades that you did in high school right away. Work hard, and you will, sooner than later.*

8. **Pass your work in on time.** Due dates are deadlines. 9. **Passing in work.** Submit your two Doing Media Studies using the Assignments tool on the OWL menu. Please do not email your assignments to me or the teaching assistants.

10. **Week start and end dates.** Weeks begin on Sunday.

11. **Zoom and Zoom Etiquette.** Q&As and private meetings will be held on Zoom. Please join meetings with your uwo.ca account. Mute your microphone upon entry if it isn't muted already. Here are excerpts from the Faculty Senate's protocol for Zoom Meetings.

*Some components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:*

- *please "arrive" to class on time*
- *please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)*
- *ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material*
- *to minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise*
- *please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor's request if the internet connection becomes unstable*
- *unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting*

*The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:*

- *if you wish to speak, use the "raise hand" function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question*
- *remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking*

- *self-identify when speaking.*
- *remember to mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise)*

*General considerations of “netiquette”:*

- *Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.*
- *Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.*
- *Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.*
- *Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately. Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.*

12. **Make-up exams.** Please contact me if you cannot do the midterm exam during its assigned week.

13. **Forums.** I set up several forums, one for technical problems, one for questions about the material, and one for you, me, and the TAs to post interesting links relevant to class material. If you have questions about the material, post them in the forum so that the entire class can read my answer.

14. **Questions about course requirements.** If you have a question about course requirements, due dates, readings, policies, etc., REFER TO THE COURSE OUTLINE before emailing me or one of the TA’s.

15. **Important information from the Dean’s Office.** Please take time to read and understand the policies and procedures provided at the end of this course outline. Pay special attention to the FIMS grade scale and policy.

16. **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 **March 12, 2021**. 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.

17. **Do not be afraid to contact me.** I know that some students can be hesitant to contact professors, for many reasons. Don’t be. I love talking to students and am here to help. The material in this course reflects North American media and popular cultures. If you are not from or have not spent much previous time in North America, I’m happy to help you think through the media and popular cultures that you’re familiar with. It’s a learning experience for me.

## SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS
1 Week of January 10 (classes begin January 11)	Course Introduction and Overview
2 Week of January 17	Media Ownership Read: Croteau and Hoynes, Chapter 2
3 Week of January 24	Regulation and Copyright Read: Croteau and Hoynes, Chapter 3
4 Week of January 31	Media and Power Read: Hodkinson, c6
5 Week of February 7	Making Meaning Read: Hodkinson, c4 to page 74
6 Week of February 14	READING WEEK – FEBRUARY 13 - 21
7 Week of February 21	Advertising and Promotional Culture Read: Carah and Louw, Chapter 11
8 Week of February 28	MIDTERM EXAM Administered on-line. Must be completed before Week 8.
9 Week of March 7	Representation and Identity 1: Race and Ethnicity Read: Hodkinson, chapter 12
10 Week of March 14	Representation and Identity 2: Gender and Sexuality Read: Hodkinson, chapter 13
11 Week of March 21	Audiences: Media Scholars and Audiences; What Audiences Do Read: Schirato et. al., chapter 5 Turn in: Doing Media Studies 2 on March 21
12 Week of March 28	New Media Read: Flew and Smith, Chapters 1 and 5
13 Week of April 4	Social Networks and Social Media Read: Carah and Louw, Chapter 11

There is a final, open book exam that will be administered during the exam period in April. The date is assigned by the University. I will let you know the date as soon as I know.

# NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2021

## 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, including take-home exams, 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 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 Accessible Education (formerly 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 two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, 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, unless noted on the syllabus. 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 or equivalent documentation, 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)

**In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.**

## 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)

### Mental Health

#### Support:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

### Accessible Education:

[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

### Accessibility

#### Information:

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

### Writing Support

#### Centre:

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

### Learning Skills

#### Services:

<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

### Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:

<https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html>

### Indigenous Services:

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

### Western International:

<https://international.uwo.ca/>

### Career Centre:

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

## 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.