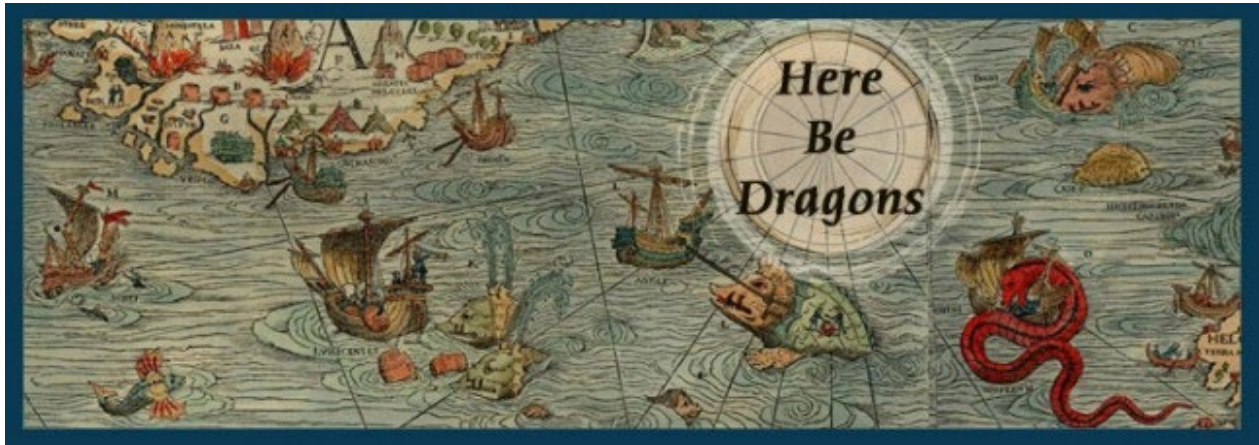


# MIT 1050B Navigating our Media Landscape



IN-PERSON Winter 2023 – Monday, 9:30am-12:30pm, HSB 236

## INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Tiara Sukhan [tsukhan@uwo.ca](mailto:tsukhan@uwo.ca)

## Drop-in Office Hours:

Thursday 7-8pm (Zoom)

Wednesday 1-2pm & Friday 2-3pm in FNB 4118

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

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## Course Description & Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the study of Media for both prospective MIT majors and non-majors, the latter of whom may want to augment their chosen course of study, explore the MIT minor option, or simply learn about something new. Now more relevant than ever, Media Studies helps us understand how media content (“software” such as apps, TV programs, films, video games, ads, the internet, news stories), and user technologies (“hardware” such as smartphones, computers, TV sets, game consoles) shape our daily lives, inform what we think we know about the world, and influence our ideas about who and what is important.

Questions that we explore include: *How do we know what we think we know? Why do we “live” on our smartphones? What impact does a constant stream of information have on us, both as individuals and as a society? Are our thousands of online friends really friends? Are we our online 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:

- ✓ Interpret, analyze and evaluate a variety of different media texts
- ✓ Apply interdisciplinary critical thinking in your other classes and in daily life.
- ✓ Understand contexts in which media texts are produced, both industrially and ideologically, which inform media’s impact on how we think about the world and everything in it.
- ✓ Critique media messages, in terms of what we see, but also what we don’t; analyze connections between form and content (medium and message)
- ✓ Understand connections between media and technology, in terms of how our engagement with media content is facilitated
- ✓ Effectively communicate in writing, regarding your critical understanding of media texts, technologies and industries

For some of you our course content may represent “uncharted waters” which will challenge your views of the world in ways that might sometimes make you feel confused, anxious or uncomfortable. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The media that we consume is not ideologically neutral and it’s important for us to understand both the messages contained within media texts we consume, and the implications of these messages in the material world.

## Course Materials

**Textbook:** [\*The Media Studies Toolkit \(2022\)\*](#) by Michael Z. Newman (available online via library using your UWO credentials – no need to purchase)

The chapters assigned for reading are all posted to Owl. These readings are a reference point for lecture content – I do not tend to teach entire readings directly, but there will be lots of overlap of key ideas. Students generally do better in the course when they do the readings, and this textbook is up to date with relevant contemporary examples.

## Course Policies

1. **Check your UWO email regularly** – aside from lectures, this will be the primary way that I will communicate with you as a class.
  - Announcements made from Owl will be sent to you as emails. It is your responsibility to ensure that you don’t miss important communications from me.
  - Please avoid emailing me from outside of your UWO account as messages from webmail accounts may end up in my spam folder.

- Please ensure that your emails contain our course number in the subject line.
  - I try to respond to emails within 24 hours between Monday morning and Friday afternoon. I generally will not reply to emails that I receive on Friday evening, or on the weekend, until Monday morning.
2. **Drop-in Office Hours** – Please reserve emails for brief queries. Substantial discussions about grades or assignments are better in-person. I will hold scheduled weekly consultation hours both in-person and virtually. Please come see me, whether to discuss assignment ideas, readings, grading feedback, or just to have a chat. There will be snacks. 😊
3. **Deadlines are not flexible, but you do have choices**
- You have four choices for “Doing Media Studies” assignments, and you must submit two, so choose the deadlines that work best for your schedule.
  - Written assignments should be submitted through the appropriate assignment portals on Owl.
  - It is your responsibility to ensure that your documents are properly saved and uploaded. Files which contain incomplete or incorrect information, or that we are unable to open because they appear “corrupted” will be treated as unsubmitted and late penalties will apply.
  - Please do not email us your work unless you have been granted permission to do so.
  - Work that is submitted on time will be graded and returned within two weeks. Work that is submitted early may be graded and returned earlier. Work that is submitted late, without appropriate documentation, will be graded at our convenience, may not receive feedback and **will be subject to a penalty of 3% per day late.**
4. **Academic Consideration (Approved deadline relief)** – sometimes things happen which make it impossible to attend class or meet deadlines.
- If you are unavoidably absent from class, you will be able to find some limited lecture content in the PowerPoint slides I will post to OWL each week, but these are outlines only; **you should also be prepared to contact colleagues in the class to obtain notes (We DO NOT provide students with lecture notes).**
  - If you contact Undergraduate Student Services in your home faculty and are granted medical or compassionate accommodation for late assessments (see the appended notes from the Dean’s Office) you are expected to contact me ASAP to negotiate a new deadline for missed work.
  - If your deadline relief applies to the midterm, then you will be expected to complete a make-up midterm to be scheduled at the convenience of the faculty. Please be advised that the make-up exam will have different questions from the original and may reference additional content covered between the time of the original test and the make-up date.
  - If you are struggling to come to class and/or complete coursework, please speak to me – I’m happy to try and help, or to point you in the direction of someone who can.

5. **Accessible Education Accommodations** – This applies to you if you have an IEP.

- Accommodations of this type need to be activated through [Accessible Education](#). This needs to be done at the start of every semester and updated every time you make changes to your timetable.
- In order to have accommodations applied for the Midterm or Final Exam, which will be written in person, you must contact [Accommodated Exams](#) directly. **You must do this IN ADDITION to registering with AE for accommodations – registration simply ensures you are eligible.** Having accommodations applied to in-person exams involves you opting in for every exam, in every course. Accessible Education has deadlines for this service, typically 10 days in advance of the scheduled assessment date.
- If you have flexible deadlines as one of your accommodations, it is expected that you will contact me ***before*** an assignment is due to discuss possible deadline relief. Should you fail to contact me in advance or fail to meet new negotiated deadlines, late penalties may still apply.

**Some advice**

First-year students may find the pace and workload of university classes challenging, as they will likely differ significantly for you from high-school. Here are some suggestions to help keep yourself on track:

- **Checklists** – make these to keep on top of weekly tasks, assignment deadlines, study priorities, etc. See [here](#) for a comprehensive list of apps to help you with time management, note-taking, and mind mapping.
- **Owl Calendar** – Assessment deadlines will be posted here, so sign into Owl regularly to get an overview of upcoming due dates.
- **Work ahead** – A full course load is a full-time job, but the labour is not balanced equally over the semester. Take advantage of what might seem to be downtime early in the term to get ahead on assignments before they start to pile up.
- **Try not to procrastinate** – as someone who struggles with this myself, I've learned that the best strategy is just to get started – no matter what the task is, it always becomes more manageable once you begin.
- **Check in** – come talk to me and the TAs during class breaks or during Drop-in Office Hours; if you're feeling bored, lonely, confused, or discouraged, a friendly conversation can help a lot.
- **Come to class!** Perhaps this seems obvious, but when the semester gets busy, lecture attendance is often the first thing to suffer. Don't make your life harder by trying to teach yourself things that you can absorb much more easily by sitting in class and listening to your prof.
- **Learn to study smarter** – DON'T TRY TO WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING I SAY! Practice strategies for discerning what is most important and effectively documenting it for review later. **Consider taking notes by hand – this will help with memory, making connections, and building physical strength and stamina needed for writing in-person exams.**

## Course Assessments

1. **Doing Media Studies (2 x 12.5% = 25%)** *You must choose **TWO** of the four available options – deadlines vary*
  - These short assignments require you to research current issues and/or apply concepts and methods learned in class to contemporary media texts and examples. The briefs will be distributed through the “Submit Assignments” and “Assignment Instructions” tabs on Owl.
  - All DMS assignments should be submitted online via the appropriate submission portal in Owl. **Read the assignment briefs and submission checklists carefully.** Failure to follow instructions is a key reason why many students lose marks needlessly.
2. **Quizzes (2 x 2.5% = 5%)** *See schedule for release dates and submission deadlines*
  - You will find these quizzes in **Owl Tests & Quizzes**. You can take each quiz at any point during the 5 days that it is available. These quizzes are timed and must be completed within the allotted time once you begin (**when the time runs out your quiz will auto-submit**).
  - There will be two sections in each quiz: A) Matching (2 question sets of 10 matches, worth 5 points each) and B) Multiple Choice (20 questions, worth 1 point each). Each quiz will be graded out of thirty points. Questions will be randomly selected from a test bank.
3. **Discussion Forums (15%)** *Weekly forums will close in sets of 4 – see syllabus for deadlines – reminders will also be provided via Owl announcements and in lectures.*
  - This is your participation grade. There will be some opportunity to participate in lecture, but as this is a large class, this will be limited. I will post discussion prompts on Owl each week throughout the semester. You are expected to contribute consistently throughout the course. **See the rubric on Owl for how this will be assessed.**
4. **Midterm (25%)** *Will take place in class Week 8 (March 6<sup>th</sup>). You will have 2.75 hours to complete it. If you have an IEP registered with Accessible Education, please be advised that you must additionally sign up to write this assessment with accommodations. The deadline to do so is February 24<sup>th</sup> (10 days in advance). Info on the format and content will be provided in advance.*
5. **Final Exam (30%)** *Scheduled by the Registrar’s Office to take place during the Final Exam period (in April)*

## Lecture Schedule

Lecture Date	Week	Topic/Readings/Assignments Due
Jan. 9	1	Introduction to Media Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No assigned readings</li> </ul>
Jan. 16	2	Media Industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Industry"</li> </ul>
Jan. 23	3	Media Regulation & Policy Read: Newman, "Policy & Regulation" <b>DMS #1 "Cinema Synergy" due 11:55pm</b>
Jan. 30	4	Media Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Ideology"</li> </ul> <b>Forums 1-4 close Friday Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:55pm</b>
Feb. 6	5	Making Meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Text"</li> </ul> <b>Quiz 1 – complete by Fri, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:55pm (covers weeks 1-5)</b>
Feb. 13	6	New Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Technology"</li> </ul> <b>DMS #2 "What the Meme?" due 11:55pm</b>
<b>READING WEEK – no class</b>		
Feb. 27	7	Consumer Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Consumerism"</li> </ul>
Mar. 6	8	<b>MIDTERM – will take place during class time</b>
Mar. 13	9	Social Networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(reading from week 6 also applies to this week)</li> </ul> <b>DMS #3 "Semiotic Detective" due 11:55pm</b> <b>Forums 5-9 close Friday March 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm</b>
Mar. 20	10	Representation I – Culture, Race & Ethnicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Representation"</li> </ul>
Mar. 27	11	Representation II – Gender & Sexuality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(reading from week 10 also applies to this week)</li> </ul> <b>Quiz 2 – complete by Fri, Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>, 11:55pm (covers weeks 6-11)</b>
April 3	12	The News <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Citizenship"</li> </ul> <b>DMS #4 "Sitcom Families" due 11:55pm</b>
April 10	13	Audiences & Fans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Newman, "Audience"</li> </ul> <b>Forums 10-13 close Monday April 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm</b>

\*\*\* Please note that you are only required to complete **TWO** of the four possible Doing Media Studies (DMS) assignment tasks. Briefs for each of these assignments can be found on Owl in the "Assignment Instructions" section.



# NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

## 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

### Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

### Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration 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 (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may 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 consideration 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.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

## 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 Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

## Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

## SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): academic advising; career services

[Psychological Services](#): Information about accessing mental health supports

[Medical Services](#): Student health related services

[Office of the Registrar](#): Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): Central Academic Supports, including [Writing Centre](#), [Learning Development](#), [Transition and Leadership Supports](#), and [Careers and Experience](#)

[Accessible Education](#): Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities

[Accessibility Information](#): Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.

[Indigenous Student Services](#): Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support

[Western International](#): Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange

## FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

*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%.*

*Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.*

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

## 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.