



MIT 3902G: Alternative Media

Faculty of Information and Media Studies – Winter 2023

Instructor

Dr. Atle Mikkola Kjøsén

Email

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Lecture time and location

Thursdays 1.30-4.30pm in FNB-3220

In-person drop-in office hours

Thursdays 5-6.30pm in FNB 4118

Zoom office hours

By appointment

Prerequisites

Restricted to 3rd and 4th years students in FIMS modules with priority enrolment given to MPI students.

Course Description

For the last few decades people have for various reasons increasingly turned to media outlets that are alternative to mainstream corporate and state-supported media for. For an even longer time, social movements, political organizations, and marginalized people have felt compelled to produce media that is independent from government and corporate interest, in order to build counter-hegemony, agitate, or to emancipate and better represent themselves. This course discussed the theory and practice of alternative media, its relationship to and difference from mainstream corporate and state-supported media, as well as the reasons for why people produce and consume their own media. These aspects are explored across a variety of alternative media examples and by giving students an experience in the praxis of producing alternative media.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to

- Define, classify, and discuss alternative media in its complexity and diverse formats
- Define and explain three different theoretical approaches to the study and classification of alternative media.
- Discuss what sets alternative media apart from mainstream private and public media.
- Discuss the social, political, techno-epistemological, and personal reasons for why citizens turn to produce and/or consume alternative media.
- Discuss the social role of alternative media.
- Design, produce and present a culture jam
- Design, produce, and implement their own alternative media and defend it as such.
- Collectively plan, organise and implement an alternative media day

Assignments

A detailed description of these assignments has been uploaded to the course's OWL site in the

RESOURCES=>Assignment description folder.

All written assignments must be uploaded to the corresponding **ASSIGNMENT** tab on OWL. These assignments will be submitted to Turnitin.

To mark papers, I make use of the “track changes” function in MS Word to make suggested edits and provide marginal comments. This means that all papers must be submitted in a *word doc format*. Papers in other formats will receive only a global comment, perhaps with some illegible scribbles from my e-pencil (there is a reason I now use track changes).

All marked papers will be uploaded to the corresponding assignment tab, from which you can download the marked-up document.

Class engagement (5%)

This grade is based on active engagement (i.e., “participate”) with the class. Students will self-grade their engagement using the following criteria for what constitutes engagement:

- Preparation (reviewing assigned texts before class)
- Focus (avoiding distractions during class)
- Presence (engaged and responsive during group activities)
- Asking questions (in and outside of the classroom,)
- Listening (hearing what others have to say, and also what they are not saying)
- Specificity (referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions)
- Synthesizing (making connections between readings and discussions)

Write about 250-500 words justifying your grade. The self-assessment must be submitted by the last day of classes (April 10th) to the appropriate assignment tab on OWL.

Group Culture Jam (15%)

Due: Presented in-class January 26th; peer grade due February 2nd, 11:55 to OWL.

For this assignment, groups of 4-5 must jam an artifact from or icon of popular culture (e.g. a brand, an ad, packaging, a doll or action figure, billboards, corporate fliers, comic book, magazine etc.). There are two components to this assignment: (1) the culture jam; (2) a presentation that explains why you chose the artifact you did, why and how you jammed it, how you distributed it (if applicable), and any reactions it may have received (if applicable); (3) a collective peer grade of another culture jam using the MIT grading guidelines and a 250-500 word constructive critique. The peer grade must be submitted a week after the presentations. Groups will be formed by the end lesson 2 on January 21st.

Short paper (15%)

- *Due: Various Fridays, 11:55pm; submit through appropriate assignment tab in OWL.*

- *File format:* word doc
- *Format:* 750-1000 words (1.5-2 line-spacing, 12pt, Times New Roman, consistent citation system).
- *Note:* You have the option to write individually or in a pair.

There are four separate short paper assignment descriptions respectively tied to lessons 1, 4, 5, and 6. Except for the assignment tied to lesson 1, all assignments will ask you to discuss an example of alternative media in terms of Mike Mowbray's "logics of alternative media" framework. For example, for the lesson on participatory media, you will be asked to discuss an example of participatory or community media using the "logic of participation". Since the lesson on "critical media" will also be done before the due date, you may also include arguments and critiques from that lesson's lecture content and/or assigned texts.

Due dates depend on the assignment you choose but will always be on the Thursday the week after thus giving you a week to finish. For example, if you choose to write on the assignment tied to the first lesson "Alternative to What?" on January 12th, the due date is Friday January 20th, 11:55pm. All due dates are specified in the detailed assignment descriptions.

You will get the option to re-write and thus improve the grade of this paper after receiving comments and suggestions. For the rewrites, it is expected that you include any new knowledge that may challenge or add to the arguments you presented in the paper. For example, if you wrote a paper on participatory media, you will have also done the lessons on critical media and heterodox-creative media; I expect you to incorporate highly relevant arguments and critiques into your rewrite.

The due date for the rewrite is one week after you've received your graded paper back. Please note that you may get an extension on this deadline.

Midterm 15%

- *March 9th*, in class.
- *Format:* short-answer questions and essay

The questions will be circulated no later than March 2nd.

Class group project: Alternative media day/ fair/ colloquium (20%)

Due: March 30th (during the scheduled class time or the entire day).

Note: the group for this project is the entire class.

Alternative or radical media fairs are relatively common in the activist community worldwide. It is often organized by individuals or organizations that also create their own alternative media. The idea behind them is to bring together all types of different alternative media projects in one space in order to share ideas, get wider distribution, learn from each other, put on workshops for how people can make their own alternative media, and much more. This class group project is intended to simulate the process of organizing such a fair from the first steps of brainstorming and planning to finding a venue, necessary equipment, vendors and workshop presenters, and finally holding the fair.

The first brainstorming session for this class group project will be held on February 2nd. The course instructor will facilitate this first session and will relay their experience in organizing several local anarchist book fairs. There will be additional planning sessions scattered throughout the course. In addition to these scheduled sessions, it is expected that subgroups will meet outside of class times in order to plan and implement specific aspects of the fair.

Final alternative media project (30%)

Due: March 30th, i.e., ready to be distributed, presented, screened, performed etc. on the alternative media day.

For the final assignment, you will need to develop your own alternative media project or participate in a significant fashion in an already-existing alternative media project(s). This assignment can be based on a variety of media formats, including print, digital, and non-traditional media. Students can work on this project either as individuals or in groups of up to four.

There are two assessed and graded components to the alternative media project:

1. the project itself
2. a written explanation of the project 750-1000-words paper (double-spaced).

In addition, there are two pass/fail component of this project:

1. short chat with course instructor about the format and content of your project (this can be done during office hours (drop-in or Zoom) or during the project brainstorm lesson on March 2nd)
2. students must distribute it during the media day (what distribution means depends on your media format; you'd screen a video, perform a play, present posters, hand out or make a reading space for your zine etc.).

Grading and rewriting papers

All assignments will be graded per the MIT grading guideline, which are summarized below (the complete MIT grading guidelines can be found on the last page of this outline).

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Note on citations and writing errors: over the last few years, some common mistakes in citations and grammar have crept into undergraduate writing. With regards to citations: students either don't cite in-text sufficiently or provide incomplete citations, in particular not providing page numbers in citations. With regards to writing, too many students submit papers that have clearly not been proofread for grammar, typos, punctuation and so on. In many cases, most of these mistakes are even pointed out by the spell check on word. **For incomplete in-text citations (including missing page numbers) and for egregious writing mistakes, 0.25 points per infraction will be deducted from the grade.**

All grades will be posted to OWL's **GRADEBOOK**. All graded papers will come with comments and suggested edits in track changes. Graded papers can be downloaded from the **ASSIGNMENT** tab on OWL.

You have the option to re-write your short paper and the final paper if you submit by March 27th. A rewrite means that you must engage with comments and suggested edits as provided in track changes, otherwise it will not be graded. ***The grade you receive for your rewrite will be the final grade of your assignment.*** I strongly recommend you choose to rewrite an assignment because you can make some remarkable improvements; past students have managed to increase their grade by two whole letter grades. Rewriting is one of the best ways to improve and become confident your scholarly writing and knowledge.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses. For your own protection, always keep a copy of your assignments. In case of loss, theft, destruction, dispute over authorship, or any other eventuality, it will be your responsibility to provide a copy of the assignment.

Extensions, Late Penalty and Make-up Tests

I give out extensions like candy on Halloween, you just have to ask (you don't have to give me a reason because that is none of my business). Both shit and life happens, and you're an adult who must take responsibility for your own learning.

If you haven't asked for an extension or submitted accompanying documentation of illness or emergency to the FIMS front office, you will receive a penalty of 3% a day for up to four days; on the fifth day, the paper will receive an automatic FAIL.

Travel schedules, employment, etc. will NOT count as legitimate reasons for missing or rescheduling an exam.

If you have a medical illness or compassionate grounds (i.e., death in family, house fire), please contact the FIMS front office for accommodation.

Make-up midterms will be scheduled by and administered by undergraduate student services (UGSS) on select days after the midterm period. More instructions about this will be shared via UGSS to students that writing the mid-term. Please note that students writing the mid-term will receive a different set of questions.

Communication Policy

The best way to contact me is via email (akjosen2@uwo.ca). When you send me an email, please put the course code (MIT 3902) in the subject line. I respond to most email inquiries within 48 hours. If you send an email after 5pm, I will most likely not answer it until the following morning. Emails sent after 5pm on Friday may not be answered until Monday morning.

Please send inquiries that can be answered with a sentence or two. For inquiries that require more thorough responses, please talk to me during a break in class, drop-in to my office hours, or request a meeting over Zoom.

To keep in touch and give you updates about the course, tips, and suggestions for assignments and more, I send announcements via OWL. These announcements will be pushed to your email. You are therefore required to periodically check your Western email account. Students are responsible for ensuring that their email account is working properly, including making sure it is not full.

PPE Requirements

Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per university policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).

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 (e.g., due to instructor having to self-isolate or a significant proportion of students isolating/being sick), 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). In the eventuality of the course being moved online, the instructor will provide an updated course outline, which will outline online course lessons and related policies. The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Statement on the Use of Zoom Recording

Participants in this course are not permitted to record Zoom sessions (office hours or lectures if the course is forced to be delivered online), except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Zoom sessions will not be recorded by the instructor.

Course Schedule

All assigned texts, weekly lesson slides, and external course content are accessible on OWL, in the **RESOURCES** folder.

January 12 – Lesson 1: Introduction—Alternative to What?

- Atton, Chris (2002). *Alternative Media*. London: Sage. Pp. 9-19.
- Chomsky, Noam (1997). "What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream?" <https://chomsky.info/199710/>
- Downing, John (2001). "Graffiti and Dress". *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing. 121-129
- Kjoson, Atle M. (2018). "Alternative to What?" *OpenWide*, vol. 19, no. 1: 4-6.
- Waltz, Mitzi (2005). *Alternative and Activist Media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Pp. 1-5, 13-19.
- *OpenWide: The FIMS' Alternative Student Publication* 22:3.

January 19 – Lesson 2: Culture Jamming

- Fink, Moritz and DeLaure, Marilyn (2017). "Introduction". In Moritz Fink and Marilyn DeLaure (2017) (Eds). *Culture Jamming: Activism and the Art of Cultural Resistance*. NYC: NY University Press. 1-24.
- Dery, Mark (1993). "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs." <https://www.markdery.com/books/culture-jamming-hacking-slashing-and-sniping-in-the-empire-of-signs-2/>
- Wettergren, Åsa (2013). "Culture Jamming." In Snow, David A., della Porta, Donatella, Klandermans, Bert, and McAdam, Doug (Eds.) (2013). *Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Pp. 1-2.

January 26 – Lesson 3: Culture jamming group project presentations

- Order of presentations will be distributed a few days prior.

February 2 – Lesson 4: Participatory alternative media + class group project meeting 1

- Michel Albert (1997). "What Makes Alternative Media Alternative?" *Z Magazine*. <https://zcomm.org/zmagazine/what-makes-alternative-media-alternative-by-michael-albert/>
- Gehl, Robert. W. (2015). "The Case for Alternative Social Media." *Social media + Society*, July-December: 5-8.
 - It is recommended that you create an account with the social media site Mastodon to make sense of this article.
- Mowbray, Mike (2015). "Alternative logics? Parsing the literature on alternative media." In Atton, Chris (Ed.) (2015). *Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. London: Routledge. Pp. 21-25
- Waltz, Mitzi (2005). *Alternative and Activist Media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Pp. 6-8.
- Downing, John (2001). "Public speech, dance, joke and song". *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing. 105-120.

February 9 – Lesson 5: Critical alternative media

- Downing, John (2001). "The Press". *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing. 143-157.
- Harcup, Tony (2015). "Listening to the Voiceless. The practices and ethics of alternative journalism". In Atton, Chris (Ed.) (2015). *Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. London: Routledge. Pp. 313-323.
- Mowbray, Mike (2015). "Alternative logics? Parsing the literature on alternative media." In Atton, Chris (Ed.) (2015). *Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. London: Routledge. Pp. 26-27.
- Sandoval, Marisol and Fuchs, Christian (2010). "Towards a critical theory of alternative media." *Telematics and Informatics* 27:141-150.
- Waltz, Mitzi (2005). *Alternative and Activist Media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Pp. 6-8.

February 16 – Lesson 6: Heterodox-creative media + class group project meeting 2

- Downing, John (2001). "Graffiti and Dress." *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing. Pp. 121-142.
- Downing, John (2001). "Mind Bombs: woodcuts, satirical prints, fliers, posters and murals". *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing. 158-180.
- Mowbray, Mike (2015). "Alternative logics? Parsing the literature on alternative media." In Atton, Chris (Ed.) (2015). *Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. London: Routledge. Pp. 27-30.
- Triggs, Teal (2006) "Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic". *Journal of Design History* 19(1): 69-83.

Feb 23 – Reading week

No lesson.

March 2 – Lesson 7: Alternative media project brainstorming and design week

- Browse folder on OWL with examples of or links to various alternative media projects.
- Try to complete as much of the brainstorming form as possible (download from OWL)
- During class, chat with course instructor about your project if you have not done so already.

March 9 – Midterm

Essay question options will be circulated one week prior.

March 16 – Lesson 8: The public pedagogy of alternative media + class group project meeting 3

- Breunig, Mary (2005). "Turning Experiential Education and Critical Pedagogy Theory into Praxis". *Journal of Experiential Education* vol. 28, no. 2:106-122.
- Jennifer A. Sandlin and Jennifer L. Milam (2008). "Mixing Pop (Culture) and Politics: Cultural Resistance, Culture Jamming, and Anti-Consumption Activism as Critical Public Pedagogy." *Curriculum Inquiry*. 38(3): 323-350.

March 23 – Lesson 9: Working lesson + final class group project meeting

- Work on your individual alternative media projects during class time (after final meeting).

March 30 – Lesson 10: Alternative media day

April 6 – Lesson 11: Alternative media day debrief

- Prepare for the debrief by writing a self-reflection of how you think the day went, the process of planning and organizing it, and your role in it.

Projects and write-up due April 10th, 11:55pm.

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

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

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.

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 4th 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.