

**Winter 2024**

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10:00 – 12:00 via Zoom

**Seminar Hours:** Thursday 1:30 – 4:30

**MIT 3872g**

**Dr James R Compton**

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**UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

**Fake News, Objectivity & News Reporting**

This course introduces students to the epistemology of news production and debates about the authenticity of journalism. It locates the historical origins of the “regime” of objectivity and situates debates about so-called “fake news” within a broad political economy of media.

**Objectives:** We apply the philosophical and historical methods of critical sociology and political economy to analyze debates concerning the origins of journalistic objectivity and the political struggles involving journalism, the production of meaning, truth and so-called “fake news.”

**Materials:** All course readings and video are available on the course OWL site.

**Outcomes:** Students who pass this course will understand the principles informing journalistic epistemology and the social history of “fake news.” They will be able to apply these concepts to researching and analyzing broadcast, print, and internet-based media.

**Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees if you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**OWL Site:** All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class. If students need assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk, which can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

**Health Emergency Contingency:**

*In the event of a health emergency, during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.*

*If university policy and public health directives necessitate additional measures to manage the spread of disease, students may be required to resume masking in instructional spaces. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).*

**Course Information**

**Weekly in-class:** Lecture/Seminar (3 hrs)

**Technology requirements** for the course include: a computer with Internet access in order to use OWL website.

## Assignments: (Subject to possible change)

Fake News Review Paper 10 double-spaced pages: ( <b>Due Mar. 28</b> )	30%
Fake News Review Paper proposal ( <b>Due Feb. 8</b> )	5%
Primary/Secondary Definers Assessment, 2-4 double-spaced pages: ( <b>Due Feb. 15</b> )	20%
Midterm	25%
Reading Notes ( <b>Submitted weekly</b> )	5%
Participation (in class discussion)	10%
Attendance	5%

- All assignments are due at 11:55 pm EST unless otherwise specified.
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin via the course OWL site.
- Students will have unlimited submissions to Turnitin.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, students must connect with their instructor within 7 days of receiving feed back.

## Grading:

1) The **Fake News Paper** (30% of your total mark) will be graded according to the following criteria:

- use of appropriate content
- validity and coherence of criticisms and argument
- logical organization
- literacy (grammar, spelling, style)

A paper proposal, **due Feb. 8**, will account for 5% of the grade. This will involve a clear thesis statement and short outline. No more than one page. Proposal to be submitted in student OWL drop box.

Your formal **written assignments should each be typed** or word-processed, double-spaced, using acceptable academic style for footnotes and bibliography. Students should follow the “Harvard” citation style.

Here is another word of caution: **Wikipedia and similar Web sites do not constitute scholarly sources**. Do not rely on them. They may be used for secondary supporting citations. Read a book or refereed journal article. They are good for you.

Papers are to be submitted in student OWL drop box.

2) **Primary/Secondary Definers Assessment** (20% of your total mark) will be graded according to the following criteria:

- use of appropriate content
- validity and coherence of criticisms and argument
- logical organization
- literacy (grammar, spelling, style)

3) **In-class participation** will be a crucial component of making this course a success. Regular attendance is expected; although students are cautioned that attendance alone does not in itself constitute participation.

**Attendance will account for 5%** of the total grade for the course. **Participation will account for 10%** of the total grade for the course. Students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings for the week; it is also expected that they will be prepared to critically discuss the material.

**Reading notes are worth 5%** of your total grade. The notes will be graded on a pass/fail basis. This is an easy 5%. Your reading notes should consist of a minimum of three short paragraphs or bullet-point sequences. The first one should answer the following:

- I. What is the work's central thesis? What are the major terms, components and concepts central to the author's argument?

The second paragraph or sequence of bullet points should answer the question:

- II. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the work's central thesis?

Additional paragraphs or sequence of bullet points may take on other arguments from the work.

Finally, the last paragraph or sequence of bullet points should pose a question for discussion that springs from the readings, or to the wider topic under discussion. Do NOT write long answers. Keep it short. Lucid concision comes from thinking!

**Reading notes will be due at the beginning of class** and are to be submitted to the instructor in person. Reading notes submitted after the class will not be accepted, unless students submit a valid and documented reason (illness, death in the family).

Reading notes are meant to assist you in making regular, meaningful contributions to class discussions, which are essential to a successful class and your comprehension of the course material. The intention is to maximize the value of our discussion time.

### **Required Texts:**

Available via OWL site.

### **Information about late or missed evaluations.**

- Late assessments without academic consideration will be subject to a late penalty **5 % per day**.
- Late assessments with academic consideration require the student to work with the Academic Advising unit in their Faculty of registration; once that has been approved, students need to contact the instructor to arrange for an alternate submission date

### **Office Hours**

Dr. James Compton will keep drop-in online office hours on Wednesdays at 10-12 or by appointment. Join Zoom Meeting using this link: <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/92433652155> and Passcode: 826128

### **Professionalism and Privacy**

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course. Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL. All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared.

Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission. Permitted recordings are not to be distributed.

The use of electronic wireless devices in the classroom is severely frowned upon. Web surfing and texting are disruptive and disrespectful of your fellow students who wish to learn. Computer-based activities other than note taking distract those around you and display, inadvertently or otherwise, a lack of respect for fellow students inappropriate to university settings. **Please turn off your phone.**

## **Communication**

- Students must include the course code in the subject line of any email communication with the instructor.
- Proper email etiquette is expected. I respond to emails addressed to “Professor Compton.” Emails should not begin with “Hey,” or “What’s up?”
- I do not respond immediately to email. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.
- When students receive a reply from the instructor or TA a polite acknowledgment is in order.

## **Covid Contingency Statement**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence, or other health emergency, during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

If university policy and public health directives necessitate additional measures to manage the spread of disease, students may be required to resume masking in instructional spaces. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).

## **Plagiarism & Statement on the use of generative AI in this course**

The use of generative AI is **not approved** in this course.

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 includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own.

Plagiarism includes submitting the same assignment in two separate courses. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking. ***Claims of ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse.*** The instructor will vigorously pursue *all* cases of plagiarism in accordance with university regulations. Penalties for plagiarism include expulsion from the university.

## **Further Notes and Advice**

(1) Given the tight deadlines for submitting grades your assignments must be submitted on time. **Late**

**assignments will not be accepted without penalty without documented medical, legal or similar reason.**

Please take careful note of the relevant deadlines. For UWO policy on accommodation for medical illness, see: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

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

(2) As a protection against misplacement of term papers, or should problems of authorship and acknowledgement arise, you are strongly advised to ***retain your research notes and an extra copy (or computer file) of your assignments*** until final grades have been submitted.

(3) Here is another word of caution: Wikipedia and similar online Websites do not constitute scholarly sources. Do not rely on them. They may be used for secondary supporting citations. Read a book or journal article. Note: Refereed academic journals available online are fine.

(4) The FIMS expects that the grades awarded in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distribution of grades.

(5) Finally, the success of the course will depend, in no small part, on the ability of students to complete the required readings for each week. The theoretical nature of much of the material means it will be ***extremely difficult*** to play catch-up if students skip readings. **Consider yourself warned.**

## OUTLINE

### WK 1:

11/01      **Introduction & Course Overview**

### WK 2:

18/01      **The Social History of Fake News/Disinformation**

**Readings:** Compton, James (2022) "Fake News: Mapping the Social Relations of Journalism's Legitimation Crisis," in *The Routledge Handbook of Media Geographies*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 106-117.

Bennett, W. Lance and Steven Livingstone (2021) "A Brief History of the Disinformation Age: Age: Information Wars and the Decline of Institutional Authority," in W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingstone (eds.), *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology, and Disruptive Communication in the United States*, New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 3-40.

### WK 3:

25/01      **Epistemology & Journalism**

**Readings:** Wright, Kate (2011) "Reality Without Scare Quotes: Developing the Case for Critical Realism in Journalism Research," *Journalism Studies*, 12 (2), 156-171, DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2010.509569

Carlson, M. (2020) "Journalistic epistemology and digital news circulation: Infrastructure, circulation practices, and epistemic contests," *New Media & Society*, 22 (2), 230-246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819856921>

**WK 4:**  
**01/02**      **News, Truth & the Ideology/Bias Debate**

**Readings:** Bennett, W. Lance (2016) “News Stories: Four Information Biases That Matter,” in *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, pp. 28-58.

Hall, Stuart et al. (2013, [1978]) “The Social Production of News,” *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, 35<sup>th</sup> edition. Chap 3 pp. 56-82.

**WK 5:**      **Fake News Paper Proposal Due**  
**08/02**      **Where Did Objectivity Come From? Partisan Press to Commercial Press**

**Readings:** Hackett, Robert and Yuezhi Zhao with Satu Repo (1989) “Democratic Discourse and the Origins of News Objectivity,” in Hackett, Robert and Yuezhi Zhao *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*, Toronto: Garamond Press, pp.15-35.

Bennett, W. Lance (2016) “Inside the Profession: The Objectivity Crisis,” in *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 10th edition. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, pp. 154-180.

**WK 6:**      **Primary/Secondary Definers Analysis Due**  
**15/02**      **A History of Political Disinformation & Media**

**Readings** Benkler, Yochai (2021) “A Political Economy of the Origins of Asymmetric Propaganda in American Media,” in W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingstone (eds.), *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology, and Disruptive Communication in the United States*, New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 43-65.

MacLean, Nancy (2021) “Since We are Greatly Outnumbered,” in W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingstone (eds.), *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology, and Disruptive Communication in the United States*, New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 120-149.

Ling, Justin (2021) “What a Rush,” Podcast Ep. 2 of *The Flamethrowers*,  
<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/podcastnews/how-to-listen-to-the-flamethrowers-a-new-podcast-by-justin-ling-1.6167507>

**WK 7:**      **No Class – Reading Week**  
**22/02**

**Readings**      No Readings

**WK 8:**  
**29/02**      **PR & Fake News**

**Readings:** Bennett, W. Lance (2016) “Citizens and the News: Public Opinion and Information Processing,” in *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 10th edition. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, pp. 59-88.

Compton, James (2004) “The Integrated Spectacle of War,” in *The Integrated News Spectacle: A Political Economy of Cultural Performance*, New York: Peter Lang: ISBN: 0820470708, pp.

167-191.

Ling, Justin (2021) "The Rage Industry," Podcast Ep. 5 of *The Flamethrowers*, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/podcastnews/how-to-listen-to-the-flamethrowers-a-new-podcast-by-justin-ling-1.6167507>

**WK 9:  
07/03**

**Midterm – In Class**

**Readings: No Readings**

**WK 10:  
14/03**

**Justin Ling – Seminar Guest**

**Readings:** Ling, Justin (2022) "Was it Really About Vaccines – or Something Darker? The Inside Story of the Convoy Protests," *The Toronto Star*, March 19, [https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/was-it-really-about-vaccine-mandates-or-something-darker-the-inside-story-of-the-convoy/article\\_18a9dd13-2a65-59a3-b8d4-df3d8d9061c3.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/was-it-really-about-vaccine-mandates-or-something-darker-the-inside-story-of-the-convoy/article_18a9dd13-2a65-59a3-b8d4-df3d8d9061c3.html)

Ling, Justin (2023) *Far and Widening: The Rise of Polarization in Canada*, August 1, Public Policy Forum, <https://ppforum.ca/publications/polarization-democracy-canada/>

**WK 11:  
21/03**

**Post Truth & the Public Sphere**

**Readings:** van Dyk, Silke (2022) "Post-truth, the Future of Democracy and the Public Sphere," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39 (4): 37–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221103514>

Bimber, Bruce and Homero Gil de Zúñiga (2020) "The Unedited Public Sphere," *New Media & Society*, 22 (4) 700-715. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819893980>

Rosa, Hartmut (2022) "Social Media Filters and Resonances: Democracy and the Contemporary Public Sphere," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39 (4): 17–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221103520>

**Wk 12:  
28/03**

**\*\*Fake News Paper due\*\***

**Responding to Disinformation**

**Readings:** Bennett, W Lance and Steven Livingston (2021) "The Coordinated Attack on Authoritative Institutions," in W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingstone (eds.), *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology, and Disruptive Communication in the United States*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 261-293.

Clark, Roy Peter (2020) "How to serve up a tasty 'truth sandwich?'," *Poynter.org*, August 18, <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2020/how-to-serve-up-a-tasty-truth-sandwich/>

McIntyre, Lee (2023) "How to Win the War on Truth," in *On Disinformation: How to Fight for Truth and Protect Democracy*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, pp. 103-132.

Wk 13:

04/04

No class

## NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2024

### 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 [Academic Calendar](#).

### 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 [here](#).

### Plagiarism

Students in this class are reminded that plagiarism – using another's work, ideas, or words without giving credit -- is a serious scholastic offence. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. **Students who use AI-content generators (such as ChatGPT) to complete assignments without attribution or permission from the instructor are committing a scholastic 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 Advising office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provide 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 Advising 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 Advising 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 Advisor.

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 Advisors 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 a FIMS module (MIT 1020E; MIT 1025F/G) have an expected course average between 68-72%. **Second year required courses** (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) have an expected course average between 70 and 75%. The **third year required course** (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.