MDIA5000

Understanding Contemporary Media

Session 1, 2015
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Staff Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Consultation times and location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Convener</td>
<td>A/Prof Kath</td>
<td><a href="mailto:k.albury@unsw.edu.au">k.albury@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Monday 4.30-5.30 pm, Tuesday 11am-12pm or by appointment. Location: Robert Webster Building Room 231F</td>
<td>9385 8533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Albury</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: I reply to emails during regular working hours ONLY (i.e. Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm). Please put 'MDIA5000' in the subject line of your email to make sure I don’t miss it!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer/tutor</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. School of the Arts and Media Contact Information
Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building
Phone: 9385 4856
Email: sam@unsw.edu.au
2. Attendance Requirements

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours (ie lectures AND tutorials).
- A student who attends less than 80% of class contact hours without justification may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).
- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance.
- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, they should seek permission from the Course Authority (Kath Albury). The application should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes for up to one month. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean.
- A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure.
- For more information about the FASS attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/

3. Essential Information For FASS/SAM Students

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/

Credit Points:

| 6 credit points |

Summary of the Course
This course will introduce students to the contemporary media landscape with a focus on current developments that are influencing the practice of journalism and the role of communications within private, public and community sector organisations. Students will be introduced to key concepts and skills that frame, assist and challenge practitioners working in the contemporary journalism and communications fields.

Aims of the Course
This course aims to give students knowledge of the history and contemporary status of media production and regulation in Australia. It introduces key skills required for studying journalism and communication at a post-graduate level, and introduces students to the contemporary landscape of media production.
Student learning outcomes
On successful completion of this subject, students will:

1. Develop an understanding of the media industries that provide media content and their modes of production (particularly Australian industries);
2. Attain an understanding of the role the public and private sectors play in funding and regulating media content production;
3. Develop a capacity to understand and use diverse practical tools and theoretical approaches in the contemporary media sphere;
4. Develop skills for scholarly inquiry, specifically: locating relevant information, reading analytically, thinking critically and communicating clearly and convincingly.

Graduate Attributes
The students will be encouraged to develop the following Graduate Attributes by undertaking the selected activities and knowledge content. These attributes will be assessed within the prescribed assessment tasks. At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an advanced critical knowledge of journalism, communication and media theory and practice.
2. Undertake research-based learning utilising critical frameworks for journalism and communication research.
3. Demonstrate adaptive communication skills, through class presentations, groupwork and writing that displays evidence of critical analysis.

Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach
MDIA5000 is a cognate course for the Master of Journalism and Communication as well as the Master of PR and Advertising, and is aimed at enabling students to develop a critical understanding of the media and communications industries. It reflects my position that graduate’s practice within the field will require an advanced theoretical and practical understanding of the evolving space of journalism and communications. This course will assist students in developing critical research and communication skills that will enhance their practice as media professionals.

Teaching strategies
This course combines a one hour lecture and one hour tutorial per week. Tutorial activities will include small and large group discussion and practical exercises based on course readings and lecture content. Attendance at lectures and tutorials is compulsory. Students are required to undertake a minimum of three hours of self-directed study per week, including reading, writing and research activities.
Assessment

In order to pass this course, you must make a serious attempt at ALL assessment tasks. This is a SAM requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning outcomes assessed</th>
<th>Graduate attributes assessed</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Critical reading and writing exercise</td>
<td>1500 words</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>Friday 20 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Research Essay workplan</td>
<td>500 words</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>Monday 20 April (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Research Essay</td>
<td>2500 words</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>Friday 8 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Take-home test</td>
<td>1200-1500 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>Tuesday 9 June</td>
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Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Critical reading, writing and research exercise
Length: 1500 words
Weighting: 30%
Due Date: Friday 20 March
Submit online via Turnitin
To successfully complete this assignment you will need to work through the following five steps:

1: Choose one topic covered in Lectures 2-5; i.e. media as the Fourth Estate, the contemporary news landscape, media policy and regulation or digital media ethics.

2: Read one of the assigned course readings carefully, and identify the key arguments and themes.

3: Using UNSW library databases, and/or a search engine, find one additional peer-reviewed academic article or book chapter and one additional expert/academic blog post or online article on the same topic.

4: Read these two extra articles carefully, and identify their key arguments and themes.

5: Write a 1500 word paper summarising all three articles/chapters you have chosen, comparing and contrasting the approaches and arguments. Your paper should have an introduction, a discussion, and a conclusion. You will need to use academic referencing, and include a bibliography. In-text referencing is preferred. For a ‘how-to’, see http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html.
HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING?

In order to demonstrate critical thinking, you need to do more than simply state your personal opinion or summarise/repeat an argument from your reading.

You need to:
* Identify the main ‘problem’ you are discussing.
* Identify your own position in relation to the problem (i.e. your viewpoint).
* Offer other perspectives drawn from your reading/discussion.
* Identify the key assumptions in the article/text/image you are discussing.
* Test the quality of evidence you have been offered: i.e. is it accurate? Is it precise? Does it exclude other perspectives in order to reach a particular conclusion? (Note – this doesn’t necessarily mean the information is ‘wrong’).
* Identify and discuss the particular implications or conclusions of the perspectives you have explored.

We will talk more about this in class!

You will be assessed according to the following criteria:
- Ability to critically analyse and reflect on course content (as outlined above)
- Ability to undertake research using academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to present a concise, clearly written argument, supported by academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources
Assessment 2a: Research essay plan  
Length: 500-800 words (the word count is less important than completing all criteria successfully)  
Weighting: 5%  
Due Date: Monday 20 April  
Submit in class

FIRST: Read the essay question (Assessment 2b) and carefully consider your answer. This will take time!  
THEN draft your essay plan, which should include the following elements:

1) A 3 – 5 sentence opening statement that includes the following:  
a) An explanation as to why Benton claims that the New York Times Innovation Report is ‘key document’;  
b) your chosen ‘top three’ elements;  
c) why these elements are relevant to your current and/or future professional context.  
d) A list of 3-5 relevant references

2) 3 short paragraphs outlining the top three elements you have chosen:  
a) Each paragraph should contain 3-5 sentences outlining your arguments plus the evidence you will use to support them; followed by  
b) A list of 3-5 relevant references

3) A final paragraph (3-5 sentences)  
a) identifying the element you have decided is most important, and briefly stating how you will apply your learning; followed by  
b) A list of 3-5 relevant references

Marking criteria:  
Your essay plan MUST be submitted in class. If you do not attend class, you will receive a mark of 0. The plan will be marked out of 5, according to the following criteria

0-1 Essay plan is not submitted, or the essay plan is too short, is missing essential elements, and/or doesn’t include at least 6 appropriate scholarly and non-scholarly references.

2-3 The main definitions and central topic of the essay are clear and easy to understand, but there are vague or unclear sections, and/or it contains fewer than 9 appropriate scholarly and non-scholarly references.

4-5 All definitions and topic of the essay are clear and easy to understand, and 9-12 appropriate scholarly and non-scholarly references have been included.
Assessment 2b: Research Essay  
Length: 2500 words  
Weighting: 45%  
Due Date: Friday 8 May  
Submit online via Turnitin

According to Harvard University’s Nieman Journalism fellow, Joshua Benton, the New York Times’ leaked 2014 Innovation report was “one of the key documents of this media age” (Benton 2014). Considering Benton’s statement in the broader context of this course, why do you think he makes this assertion? Which elements of the Innovation report are most relevant to your current interests and/or future career plans? Of these, which element is likely to be most important in your professional context. Why?

Tips for structuring your essay:

1) Read and analyse Benton’s article (and the report itself) carefully. You should also read as much related academic and professional commentary as you can find (including peer-reviewed journal articles). Using this material as supporting evidence, explain why Benson says this report is a ‘key document’.

2) Identify and describe three elements of the report that are most relevant to your current interests and/or future career plans. For example, you might focus on changing business models for newspapers, the move to repackage ‘old’ media content in new formats and the impact of ‘end of the homepage’ as readers share news via social media.

3) Explain why these elements are particularly significant to you (in the broader context of the contemporary media industry). You will need to argue your case as to why the elements you have chosen matter in your specific current or future professional context. You must provide scholarly references and other evidence to support your assertions and arguments.

4) Finally, focus on one key element (ie the most important or relevant) and explain how you might apply your research for this essay in your own career. How, for example, would you explain the importance of this concept in an interview for your dream media job?


In-text referencing essential for this essay. For a ‘how-to’, see http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html

You will be assessed according to the following criteria:
- Ability to critically analyse and reflect on course content (as outlined above)
- Ability to undertake research using academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to present a concise, clearly written argument, supported by academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to argue a point in academic essay format, consisting of an introduction, a series of linked paragraphs presenting your arguments (supported by research), and a conclusion
- Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources
**Assessment 3:** Open Book Take-home Test  
**Length:** 3 x 400-500 word mini-essay  
**Weighting:** 20%  
**Due Date:** Tuesday 9 June  
**Submit online via Turnitin**

This is an open book take-home test. Each student will write 3 x 400-500 word mini essays focused on key issues and questions we cover over the semester. We will brainstorm possible topics in tutorials, and questions will be posted in the final lecture on Monday 1 June. You will need to use academic referencing, and include a bibliography. In-text referencing is preferred. For a ‘how-to’, see [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html)

You will be assessed according to the following criteria:
- Ability to critically analyse and reflect on course content (as outlined above)
- Ability to undertake research using academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to present a concise, clearly written argument, supported by academic and non-academic sources
- Ability to argue a point in academic essay format, consisting of an introduction, a series of linked paragraphs presenting your arguments (supported by research), and a conclusion
- Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources

**Late Submission**  
**PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE RULES APPLY FOR ALL COURSES IN FASS.**

If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 3% per day (including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays) will be imposed for up to 2 weeks. For example, if you are given a mark of 72 out of 100 for an essay, and your essay were handed in two days late, it would attract a penalty of 6% and the mark would be reduced to 66%. If the same essay were handed in seven days late (i.e. a penalty of 21%) it would receive a mark of 51%. If your assignment is not submitted within 2 weeks of its due date, it will receive a mark of 0. For more information on submission of late work, consult the FASS assessment protocols at [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/)
Extension procedure

- A student seeking an extension should submit a SAM extension application form (found in Forms on SAM website) to the Course Authority (Kath Albury) before the due date.
- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days.
- The Course Authority can only approve an extension of up to five days. A student requesting an extension of more than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
- The Course Authority advises their decision through the online extension tool.
- If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.
- A student who missed an assessed activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.
- This procedure does not apply to assessment tasks that take place during regular class hours or any task specifically identified by the Course Authority as not subject to extension requests.
- For more information, see the FASS extension protocols on the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/

Special Consideration

In the case of more serious or ongoing illness or misadventure, you will need to apply for Special Consideration. For information on Special Consideration please go to this URL: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Students who are prevented from attending a substantial amount of the course may be advised to apply to withdraw without penalty. This will only be approved in the most extreme and properly documented cases.

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- **Copying**: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another’s ideas or words without credit.

- **Inappropriate paraphrasing**: changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another’s ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student’s own analysis to bring the material together.

- **Collusion**: working with others but passing off the work as a person’s individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them
plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person’s academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person’s work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

• **Duplication:** submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.


The Learning Centre also provides substantial education written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example:

• Correct referencing practices;
• Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
• Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW makes use of the similarity detection tool Turnitin. For this course you are required to submit an electronic version of your written assignments so they may be reviewed using this procedure.
## Course schedule

**Lectures:** Webster Theatre A, Monday 6pm. **Tutorials:** Please check MyUNSW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture &amp; tutorial Content</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Rosen, J (2014) ‘How to be literate on what’s changing journalism’ Press Think  
Please browse Crikey’s ‘Quality Journalism Project’ before this class:  
| **Week 2:** Media, democracy and the Fourth Estate                     | 9/3   | We will discuss models of democracy, the historical role of the journalist in Western democratic process, and the implications for contemporary global news media. | Schultz, J. (1998), ‘Redefining the fourth estate’ in *Reviving The Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media*, Cambridge; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press (Download PDF via UNSW Library catalogue.)  
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616700500131950#.Utyxvf3Ohz8 |
| **Week 3:** The contemporary news landscape                           | 16/3  | We will discuss the changing landscape (and business models) of news production and distribution in Australia and elsewhere. | Tiffen, R (2014) ‘The Press’ pp 95-109 (textbook)  
Benton, J. (2014) ‘The leaked New York Times innovation report is one of the key documents of this media age’,  
Nieman Lab, http://www.niemanlab.org/2014/05/the-leaked-new-york-times-innovation-report-is-one-of-the-key-documents-of-this-media-age/ |
| **Week 4:** Media policy and regulation                               | 23/3  | We will discuss the role media and policy and regulation plays in the current media         | Cunningham, S (2014) Policy and regulation (textbook) pp73-91  
*Journalism and Media Research Centre, UNSW*. Available |
| UNSW BREAK PG READING WEEK (Wk 6) | | | |
| | 3 April – 10 April (no classes) 13 April – 17 April (no classes) | |
Full e-book access via UNSW Library
| Week 11: Local media, community media, and hyper-local media | 19/5 | We will look at the opportunities offered by local and hyperlocal journalism, with particular attention to the changing role of the journalist in hyperlocal media. | Richards, I., Chia, J. and Bowd, K. (2011), 'When communities communicate: rural media and social capital', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 33, no.1, pp.97-106.  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 12: Where to from here? Journalism futures. | 26/5 | We will reflect on recent changes in the mediashere, and focus on the ways that the media professionals have adapted (and will continue to adapt) to the world of social media, media shut-downs, and media start-ups. | Wallace, S. (2013) ‘The complexities of convergence: Multiskilled journalists working in BBC regional multimedia newsrooms’ *International Communication Gazette* 75(1): 99-117  
http://gaz.sagepub.com/content/75/1.toc  
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17512780903391912 (access via UNSW Library)  
Expected Resources for students

Required reading:
1) Textbook (available for purchase at the UNSW Bookstore):
   Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin
2) Online readings (links posted in Moodle, and above)

Course evaluation and development

   Student feedback for this course will be gathered via the online CATEI survey, and via an informal survey in week 5. Assessments and course content in this subject have been adjusted in response to previous student evaluations and feedback.