



Faculty of Arts  
& Social Sciences

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**School of the Arts and Media**

**MDIA5001**

**Writing For Media**

**Session 1, 2014**

**UNSW Course Outline**

Course Code  
Session 1, 2014  
CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

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## Location of the course

You must be enrolled in, and attend, one seminar each week (except for the mid-semester break which is 18 April to 27 April 2014).

Seminar T1	7213	T09A	Tue 09:00 - 11:00 (Weeks:1-7, 9-13)	Goldstein G03
Seminar T1	9745	T18A	Tue 18:00 - 20:00 (Weeks:1-7, 9-13)	Webster 250
Seminar T1	7217	W12A	Wed 12:00 - 14:00 (Weeks:1-7, 9-13)	Quadrangle G052
Seminar T1	7218	W14A	Wed 14:00 - 16:00 (Weeks:1-7, 9-13)	Quadrangle G026

## Staff Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Phone
Course Convener	Dr Nasya Bahfen	nasya.bahfen@unsw.edu.au	9385 6364
Lecturer	A/Prof David McKnight	david.mcknight@unsw.edu.au	9385 8536

For consultations please email your lecturer. Put 'MDIA5001' in the subject line of your email. Note that email messages will only be returned Monday-Friday, during regular office hours.

## School of the Arts and Media Contact Information

SAM Office  
Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building  
Phone: 9385 4856  
Email: [sam@unsw.edu.au](mailto:sam@unsw.edu.au)

## Attendance Requirements

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours.
- 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. 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.

## Essential Information for 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://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

### Course details

#### Credit Points:

6

#### Summary of the Course

In this course students will be introduced to key media writing skills. The course will cover a range of genres and roles in the journalism and communication field. Students will learn the fundamentals of journalistic prose, research, interviews and news story structure. The emphasis will be on writing for print journalism but the skills learnt will form the basis of a portfolio of skills that will be useful across all media and communications contexts. Students will learn how to structure and edit a news story, how to use quotes and how to engage readers.

Students will read and analyse a range of news stories and will learn to research, interview for and write print media news stories. This will include both 'hard' and 'colour' news stories. Students will learn about the values and production constraints that guide the selection of news items for a range of print and online media.

#### Aims of the Course

1. This course will enable students to explore and gain further understanding of the history of the news genre through the investigation of balance, bias and ethics with a direct emphasis of their application to real world situations in the field of media writing.
2. This course will also enable students to examine the ethical and professional aspects of the work of journalists and their social, economic and political roles.

#### Student learning outcomes

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Research a news topic efficiently and accurately
2. Conduct interviews and understand the ethical issues involved in obtaining sources and using information
3. Write hard news and soft news stories for print media
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the social, economic and political role of journalism and the context in which news is produced.

#### 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.

1. The skills of effective written communication for print media;
2. The skills involved in researching and interviewing in journalism;
3. The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem solving;
4. The skills to locate, evaluate and use relevant information for news writing;
5. A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility;
6. An understanding of the methods of investigation and theoretical frameworks appropriate to research; and
7. The ability to engage in independent and reflective learning.

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## Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach

This course is designed to enable students to develop particular communications skills that will enhance their practice as media professionals. It reflects a position informed by research that their practice within the field will require advanced levels of news writing and research to enable ongoing development as journalists, public relations staff and media officers.

## Teaching strategies

This course will be taught face to face in a lecture theatre environment but there will be a strong emphasis on encouraging student participation in the process of learning. Students will be actively engaged in solving problems posed by the lecturer. Student learning will be enhanced by the use of case studies.

## Assessment

Each piece of assessment requires students to interview a range of people who are appropriate to the story. Students will submit with each assignment a list of the people they have quoted, along with the interviewees' telephone numbers, the date, time and place of the interview. A random audit will be conducted for each assignment; lecturers will contact five interviewees on student lists to confirm the interview took place. When interviewing, students should move beyond their circle of friends, family and acquaintances, and instead question strangers and even people in authority (or their press aides).

**In order to pass this course, you must make a serious attempt at ALL assessment tasks. [This is a SAM requirement.](#)**

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Outcomes assessed	Due date	Criteria
Hard news exercise	300 words	30%	Learning outcomes 1,2,3,4  Graduate outcomes 1,2,3,5,6	Week 4 (Fri 28 March)	Written expression (hard news conventions, appropriate angle, succinct) Content (timely, appropriate background research, credible interviewee) Submission requirements (word length, background sources cited, submitted on time)
Hard news story	300 words	30%	Learning outcomes 1,2,3,4  Graduate outcomes 1,2,3,4,5,7	Week 7 (Fri 18 April)	Written expression (hard news conventions, appropriate angle, succinct) Content (timely, newsworthy, original, appropriate background research, credible interviewees) Submission requirements (word length, background sources cited, submitted on time)
Soft news story	500 words	40%	Learning outcomes 1,2,3,4  Graduate outcomes 1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Week 13 (Fri 6 June)	Written expression (soft news conventions, appropriate angle, mixture of par length) Convention (follows the conventions of a soft news story, appropriate background research, credible interviewees) Submission requirements (word length, background sources cited, submitted on time)

Details of each assessment task including a marking guide and samples may be found in the course Moodle site.

## Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks are submitted electronically using Turnitin on Moodle. Assessment tasks should be submitted by 5pm on the due date.

## Late Submission

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE RULES APPLY FOR ALL COURSES IN SAM.

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://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>.

## Extension Procedure

- A student seeking an extension should apply through to the Course Convenor before the due time/date for the assessment task.
- The Course Convenor should respond to the request within two working days.
- The Course Convenor 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.
- 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://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html>

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.

Details of what plagiarism is can be found on the Learning Centre's Website [Plagiarism & Academic Integrity website \(http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism\)](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism), in the myUNSW student A-Z: Guide <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Plagiarism.html> and in Appendix A of the [Student Misconduct Procedure \(pdf- https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf\)](https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf). 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

Topic	Week	Suggested Readings
Introduction: the rise of Journalism	1 (3 March – 7 March)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp3-17.  Banagan, Robert. "The Decision, a Case Study: LeBron James, ESPN and Questions About US Sports Journalism Losing Its Way." <i>Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture &amp; Policy</i> 140 (2011): 157.  Levine, P. (2004). Journalism and democracy: does it matter how well the press covers Iraq?. <i>National Civic Review</i> , 93(3), 16-24.
What's News? News values and writing news	2 (10 March – 14 March)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp33-45; pp69-82.  Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2001). What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited. <i>Journalism studies</i> , 2(2), 261-280.
Writing the intro and the story in journalism genres	3 (17 March – 21 March)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp131-147; pp168-185.  Hohenberg, J. 1978, <i>The professional journalist</i> . New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, pp129-138  Gissler, S 2000, Tips: Leads. <a href="http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/gissler/tips/Tip-ledes.html">http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/gissler/tips/Tip-ledes.html</a>

Journalism research and Sources	4 (24 March – 28 March)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp85-110.  Bacon, W 2006, 'Journalism as Research? Thinking about Journalism Research in an Australian University Context,' <i>Australian Journalism Review</i> , vol. 28, no. 2, pp147-157.  Alysen, B 2006, <i>The Electronic Reporter</i> , Sydney: UNSW Press, pp37-41.
The art and skills of interviewing	5 (31 March - 4 April)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp113-127.  Bahfen, N., & Wake, A. (2011). Creating radio waves: Lessons from a content analysis of diversity in student community radio news. <i>Australian Journalism Review</i> , 33(2), 113.  Phillips, G and Lindgren, M 2005, 'The Radio News Reporter,' in <i>Australian Broadcast Journalism</i> , 2nd edition. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 54-63
Writing the whole story: pulling it all together	6 (7 April - 11 April)	Stovall, J. 2005, <i>Journalism: who, what, when, where, why and how</i> . Boston: Pearson, pp167-178  Duncan, J. (1993). "The Structure of a News Story" in <i>The Front Page and Beyond</i> . Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, University of Technology, Sydney.
Workshop: Writing up and polishing your hard news story	7 (14 April – 17 April) *Good Friday	Panos London (2010). A journalist's guide to reporting research findings. <i>Panos Network</i> . <a href="http://panos.org.uk/wp-content/files/2011/06/A-journalists-guide-to-reporting-research-findings.pdf">http://panos.org.uk/wp-content/files/2011/06/A-journalists-guide-to-reporting-research-findings.pdf</a>
21 April – 25 April Mid-semester Break (no classes)		
Postgraduate reading week	8 (28 April – 2 May)	No classes
Journalists' professional codes of conduct	9 (5 May – 9 May)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp50-65.  McKnight, D 2012, <i>Rupert Murdoch: An Investigation of Political Power</i> , Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp1-20; 164-187.  Australian journalists' Code of Conduct <a href="http://www.alliance.org.au/documents/codeofethics.pdf">http://www.alliance.org.au/documents/codeofethics.pdf</a>
Investigative journalism	10 (12 May – 16 May)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp204-219.
News: information or entertainment? Writing a soft news story	11 (19 May – 23 May)	Lehman-Wilzig, S. N., & Seletzky, M. (2010). Hard news, soft news, 'general' news: The necessity and utility of an intermediate classification. <i>Journalism</i> , 11(1), 37-56.  Land, F. M. (1995). 'Awakening the Right Brain in Feature Writing', <i>Journalism &amp; Mass Communication Educator</i> , 50(3), 52-60.
Workshop: writing up and polishing your final assignment	12 (26 May – 30 May)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> . Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp189-199.  Baum, M. A. (2002). Sex, lies, and war: How soft news brings foreign policy to the inattentive public. <i>American Political Science Review</i> , 96(1), 91-110.
The social role & methodology of Journalism	13 (2 June – 6 June)	Lamble, S 2011, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism</i> , Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp18-29.  Mei, J. S. A., Bansal, N., & Pang, A. (2010). New media: a new medium in escalating crises?. <i>Corporate Communications: An International Journal</i> , 15(2), 143-155.

## **Expected resources for students**

### Required Text:

Lamble, S 2013, News as it Happens: an Introduction to Journalism, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Students can purchase the required text from the UNSW bookshop. Other readings will be placed on Moodle and must be read prior to class each week.

### Moodle:

The UNSW uses a TELT (Technology Enabled Learning & Teaching) program called Moodle to make available extra learning material, submitting assignments, and checking your grades amongst other things. It is integral to most University courses and vital to the success of students. Make sure you familiarise yourself with it in the first couple of weeks.

### Recommended texts (available from the library):

Sedorkin, G 2002, Interviewing: A Guide For Journalists and Writers, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Alysen, B 2006, The Electronic Reporter, Sydney: UNSW Press.

Phillips, G and Lindgren, M 2005, Australian Broadcast Journalism, 2nd Edition

Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Bainbridge, J, Goc, N, Tynan, L 2011, Media and Journalism: New Approaches to Theory and Practice,

Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

The UNSW library website can be found at:

<http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html>

## **Course evaluation and development**

The student learning experience is important to the Faculty and the staff in this course. Throughout the duration of the course, students are encouraged to provide either formal and/or informal feedback. At the conclusion of the semester a formal student evaluation is provided to enable feedback on the course content and teaching staff.