



Australia's  
Global  
University



## MDIA5000

Understanding Contemporary Media

Term Two // 2019

# Course Overview

## Staff Contact Details

### Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
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## School Contact Information

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The School of the Arts and Media would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

## Course Details

**Credit Points** 6

### Summary of the Course

This course will introduce you to the contemporary media landscape with a focus on global media and media infrastructure that are influencing the role of communications within private, public and community sector organisations. You will be introduced to key concepts that frame, assist and critically challenge practitioners working in the contemporary media and communication fields. You will learn about the historical, social and political role of media with a global perspective. Through the course you will also learn about media convergence and infrastructures, digital media, current challenges and its impact on content, organizations and the public sphere. Topics covered in this course will include: The current political economy of media, the increasing convergence in media forms, changes in the media business models, visual forms of media and the postdigital era.

### Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary global media in terms of content, infrastructure, modes of production and circulation, and emerging audiences,
2. Understand the role the public and private sectors play in funding, owning and regulating media;
3. Use diverse practical tools and theoretical approaches in the contemporary media sphere;
4. Practice the skills for scholarly inquiry, specifically: locating relevant information, reading analytically, thinking critically and communicating clearly and convincingly using media forms.

### Teaching Strategies

The course is seminar based and focuses on critical thinking and discussion-based learning. In the first half hour of class, the lecturer will introduce key concepts and case studies in contemporary media scholarship; and core research skills for academic media research. In the remainder of the seminar, students will explore these skills and concepts via individual presentations, and small and large group exercises.

# Assessment

## Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task	Weight	Due Date	Student Outcomes Assessed	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Critical reading and writing exercise	(30%)	21/06/2019 12:00 PM	3, 4	
Seminar presentation	(20%)	Variable	1,3	
Research essay	(50%)	09/08/2019 12:00 PM	1,2,3,4	

## Assessment Details

### Assessment 1: Critical reading, writing and research exercise

**Start date:** Not Applicable

**Length:** 750-1000 words

**In Assessment One, you will be assessed according to the following criteria:**

1. Ability to critically analyse and reflect on course content (as outlined below)
2. Ability to undertake research using academic and non-academic sources
3. Ability to present a concise, clearly written argument, supported by academic and non-academic sources
4. Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources

**To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to work through the following five steps:**

- 1) Choose one of the scholarly articles from Weeks 2 OR 3.
- 2) Carefully analyse your chosen reading and identify the key arguments and themes. This tip-sheet from Harvard University contains great instructions to help you undertake a ‘close reading’ of your chosen text: <http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>
- 3) Using UNSW library databases, and/or a search engine, find one additional peer-reviewed academic article (NOT on our current reading list) and one additional expert/academic blog post or online article that explore similar problems, arguments or themes. They do not need to be EXACTLY the same.

- 4) Read these two extra articles carefully and identify their key arguments and themes.
- 5) Write a 750-1000-word essay summarising all three articles/chapters/blog posts you have chosen, comparing and contrasting the approaches and arguments. Your essay should have an introduction, a discussion, a conclusion, and a list of references.

You will need to use Harvard or APA (ie in-text) referencing and include a reference list at the end of your essay. For a 'how-to', see <https://student.unsw.edu.au/harvard-referencing>, and <https://student.unsw.edu.au/apa>

### **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:

- 1) Identify the main 'problem', 'issue' or 'theme' that all three of your chosen articles are addressing (ie the role of concentration of media ownership).
- 2) Identify the key *assumptions* in the texts you are discussing (ie two of your articles may assume that ownership concentration leads to standardisation of contents, while the third can argue that digital platforms are democratising media production/access).
- 3) Test the quality of *evidence* you have been offered: i.e. is it accurate? Is it precise? What leads you to trust or distrust the evidence in your chosen articles? Does it exclude or dismiss other perspectives in order to reach a particular conclusion? (Note – this doesn't necessarily mean the information is 'wrong').
- 4) Demonstrate your own *reasoning* in relation to the three articles. Identify and discuss the particular implications or conclusions of the perspectives you have explored. How are the three articles similar? How do they differ? (Note – for the purposes of this course, it's fine to use 'I'/first person in your essays).

**Do you want to know more about critical thinking? Additional resources can be found here:**

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/critical-thinking>

### **Good general tips for verifying web sources:**

Scott Rosenberg, "In the Context of Web Context: How to Check Out Any Web Page," *Wordyard Blog*, September 14, 2010, <http://www.wordyard.com/2010/09/14/in-the-context-of-web-context-how-to-check-out-any-web-page/>

**Additional tips on writing a compare-and-contrast essay.**

**Please note, these guidelines assume you are comparing two articles (ie A and B), not three (ie A, B and C). They are still valid:**

in a compare-and-contrast, the thesis [that is, your central argument] depends on how the two things you've chosen to compare actually relate to one another. Do they extend, corroborate, complicate, contradict, correct, or debate one another? In the most common compare-and-contrast paper—one focusing on differences—you can indicate the precise relationship between A and B by using the word "whereas" in your thesis:

*Whereas Camus perceives ideology as secondary to the need to address a specific historical moment of colonialism, Fanon perceives a revolutionary ideology as the impetus to reshape Algeria's history in a direction toward independence.*

Whether your paper focuses primarily on difference or similarity, you need to make the relationship between A and B clear in your thesis. This relationship is at the heart of any compare-and-contrast paper. (<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-write-comparative-analysis>).

**Assessment 2: Seminar presentation Length: 5-minute in class presentation plus 500-word documentation**

**Start date:** Not Applicable

**Length:** 500 words

**Assessment Two: Weighting: 20% Due Date: In class Submit a Word document or pdf online via Turnitin by 9am on the day of your presentation**

**You will be assessed according to the following criteria:**

- Ability to undertake research using *credible* and *authoritative* academic and non-academic sources.
- Ability to present the required information (outlined above) clearly and concisely, in no more than 5 minutes (spoken presentation), and 500 words (written documentation).
- Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources. This assessment requires you to prepare and document a concise presentation on your 'dream' role at your ideal media employer. You may choose, for example, to work as a social media editor for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, or a video producer for *Buzzfeed*. You can choose a job/role you are already very familiar with or explore something very ambitious if you like – the sky is the limit. You are required to a) undertake research using *credible* and *authoritative* academic and non-academic sources, and b) prepare a concise 5-minute presentation in which you:

- 1) Describe your chosen employer including: what they are best known for, who owns it, how they describe themselves, which markets/audiences they target, what their business model is;
- 2) Describe the scope and duties involved in your chosen role; and finally
- 3) Explain why you want to work for them in the role you have chosen.

You have NO MORE than 5 minutes to present, so you should prepare no more than 4-5 powerpoint slides. Pitching is a key professional skill in media industries. Consequently, you will be STRICTLY timed – your lecturer will sound a bell at 5 minutes and you MUST stop speaking.

### **What do I need to include in my documentation?**

Your 500 word documentation must provide clear, credible and authoritative evidence to support all the key elements of your presentation, with the addition of a complete reference list. You can write a mini- essay, or write in the style of a blog post or podcast, a feature article or job application. Whichever style you choose, you must clearly reference your work, using the Harvard referencing system.

Your reference list is NOT included in your word count. DO NOT include illustrations or powerpoint slides in your documentation.

**Your 500 word documentation must be submitted by MIDDAY on the day of your assigned presentation. If you are absent on the day of your assigned presentation, but you have submitted your 500 word summary as required, you may present your powerpoint in class the following week without penalty.**

**If you DO NOT submit your summary by MIDDAY on the day you are scheduled to present, late penalties of 3% per day will apply until the summary is submitted (unless you have been approved for Special Consideration).**

### **Assessment 3: Research Essay**

**Start date:** Not Applicable

**Length:** 2000-2500 words

In the Reuters Institute's report Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2019, Nic Newman analyses a survey of global media leaders to identify a range of key opportunities and challenges for global media organisations. These include the problem of 'platforms under pressure',

concerns regarding changes in business models and the opportunities offered by Blockchain, Virtual Reality and Augmented Intelligence. Your essay have to respond to the following questions:

Which of these trends and predictions are most relevant to your current interests in contemporary media and/or your future career plans?

Which element is likely to be most important in your professional context (as outlined in your presentation for Assessment 2). Why?

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), a conclusion, and references.
- Ability to appropriately and ethically cite academic and non-academic sources

### **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) Briefly describe/define your current interests and/or future career plans (as outlined in your seminar presentation).

3) Identify and describe three elements of the report that are *most* relevant to your current interests and/or future career plans you described in point 2. For example, if you want to work as a social media editor for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 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.

4) 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.

5) 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?

Reference: Benton, J (2014) The leaked *New York Times* innovation report is one of the key documents of this media age. *Nieman Lab*. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2019> (accessed May 20, 2019).

Harvard or APA referencing is essential for this essay.

### Attendance Requirements

You will attend all tutorials or run the risk of failing this course.

### Course Schedule

#### Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 3 June - 7 June	Tutorial	Introduction to the Contemporary Media: A global perspective
Week 2: 10 June - 14 June	MONDAY No classes	PUBLIC HOLIDAY
	Tutorial	Understanding the Political economy of contemporary Media
Week 3: 17 June - 21 June	Tutorial	Understanding Media Policy and Regulation
Week 4: 24 June - 28 June	Tutorial	Understanding technologies, infrastructures and materiality of Media
Week 5: 1 July - 5 July	Tutorial	Understanding Media Convergence and contemporary business models
Week 6: 8 July - 12 July	No classes	READING WEEK
Week 7: 15 July - 19 July	Tutorial	Understanding contemporary Genres and Media formats (presentations)

Week 8: 22 July - 26 July	Tutorial	Understanding audiences and participation (presentations)
Week 9: 29 July - 2 August	Tutorial	Understanding New (new) media and the postdigital
Week 10: 5 August - 9 August	Tutorial	Understanding Media in the postdigital era (Third assignment)

## Resources

### Prescribed Resources

Please check Moodle updates

### Recommended Resources

Please check Moodle for updates

### Course Evaluation and Development

Please check Moodle for updates

### Submission of Assessment Tasks

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#### Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on [externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au](mailto:externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au). Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

## 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/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

**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.

**Inappropriate citation:** Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

**Duplication ("self-plagiarism"):** 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.

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 (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). 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 Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose  
better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

## **Academic Information**

**For essential student information relating to:**

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

## **Image Credit**

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## **CRICOS**

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