CULT 2130
MEDIA STRUCTURES & PRACTICES

Course Outline

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Consultation hours: Tuesday 10-12 am

Course Overview
Semester: Semester 1 - 2006
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture & Tutorial

Brief Course Description

Media Structures and Practices interrogates the theory, organisation, meaning and 'lived practice' of contemporary media structures, principally from the perspective of cultural and media studies. The course focuses upon the key areas of media and communication in contemporary society: popular music, radio, television and film, and their points of similarity and convergence. Particular emphasis is placed upon Australian media structures, and how they relate to global media contexts. They will be examined as structures that not only document social change, but have the potential to transform societies. The course also examines 'new' media technologies, and their potential effects upon existing organisational structures.

The course seeks to examine how and why consumers find pleasure in the media as part of their daily lives, and how it is used in a variety of social relationships. This cannot be understood without also seeing how media is produced, as a series of cultural industries with global reach. Positioned somewhere between economics and consumption, the role of government is important in establishing frameworks for production and consumption. Media policy will be examined in relation to its power to establish and change institutional practice.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1 Semester 1 2006
CTS Download Date: 9/2/06
Contact Hours  
Tutorial for 2 hours per week for the Full Term  
Lecture for 1 hour per week for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts

2. Key readings placed in short loans in Auchmuty Library.
3. Blackboard / Lecture notes; and further readings list.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the histories of workplace practices, traditions and ethical frameworks relating to the media, particularly Australian institutions.
2. Demonstrate an ability to analyse the role of government and policy frameworks within different media forms.
3. Demonstrate skills in examining contemporary issues relating to media organisation, and the tensions between local and the global practices.

Course Content

This course examines the media as institutions in the ‘consciousness industry’ operating as producers of capital, images and ideologies. It involves:

1. Case study analysis of media organisations (large, medium-sized and small) in their specific settings.
2. Appraisal of claims to professional status of journalists, and the information, investigative and entertainment-based roles in contemporary journalism.
3. Comparison and contrast of different forms of media practice and cultural production (such as print and electronic journalism, television drama, book publishing, radio broadcasting, advertising, film and music making).
4. Theoretical consideration of the tension between culture and commerce in the media.

Essential Criteria in Assessment

This course contains compulsory components or assessment items that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better for the course. These essential elements are described in the CTS. They are:

(1) The attendance and completion of one in-lecture exam.
(2) The completion of the 1500 word essay (1).
(3) The completion of the 2000 word essay (2).
(4) The completion of a tutorial presentation based on a weekly topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In-Lecture Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tutorial Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Weeks 3 to 13 (as allocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Essay I (1500 words)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Day of presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Essay II (2000 words)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
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</table>

**Online Tutorial Registration:**

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system:


Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

**Studentmail and Blackboard:** [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details**

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

**Hard copy submission:**

β **Type your assignments:** All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.

β **Word length:** The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.

β **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.

β **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).

β **University coversheet:** All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet: [www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/general/assess_coversheet.pdf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/general/assess_coversheet.pdf)

β **Assignments are to be deposited in the relevant discipline assignment box:**

   o Callaghan students: School of Humanities and Social Science Office, Level 1, McMullin Building, MC127
   o Ourimbah students: Room H01.43

β **Do not fax or email assignments:** Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an assignment by the
deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse. Assignments mailed to Schools are accepted from the date posted.

6 Keep a copy of all assignments: All assignments are date-stamped upon receipt.
However, it is the student's responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in hard copy and on disk.

Online copy submission to Turnitin
In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website:

- Essay 1 (1500 words)
- Essay II (2000 words)

Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing. Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

Penalties for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the due date will be awarded zero marks.

Special Consideration/Extension of Time Applications
Students wishing to apply for Special Consideration or Extension of Time should obtain the appropriate form from the Student HUBS.

No Assignment Re-submission
Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Remarks
Students can request to have their work re-marked by the Course Coordinator or Discipline Convenor (or their delegate); three outcomes are possible: the same grade, a lower grade, or a higher grade being awarded. Students may also appeal against their final result for a course. Please consult the University policy at:


Return of Assignments
Where possible, assignments will be marked within 3 weeks and returned to students in class. At the end of semester, students can collect assignments from the Student HUBS during office hours.

Preferred Referencing Style
In this course, it is recommended that you use the use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.
An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors’ last names (or by titles for works without authors). Further information on referencing and general study skills can be obtained from:

 Infoskills:  

Further examples of the Harvard system can be found at:


**Student Representatives**

We are very interested in your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Student Representatives are the channel of communication between students and the School Board. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on the School website.

**Student Communication**

Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

**Essential Online Information for Students**

Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services can be found at:


**ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

**In-Lecture Exam (30%)**

There will be 1 closed book, one hour multiple choice exam covering the lectures and reading material. It will be held in the lecture theatre at the usual lecture time in week 6. The exam will involve judgement of students’ ability to understand key media studies concepts, and link media studies theories and debates derived from textbook and lecture material. Attendance at and completion of the exam is compulsory. The exam will be marked according to university grading standards (see table below).

**Tutorial Presentation (15%) & Essay I (25%) 1500 words**

**Tutorial & Essay Question**

For the media form of your week, outline:

- Its emergence and brief history in Australia
- Its unique technological features as a media form (its advantages and disadvantages compared to other media)
• Patterns of ownership and policy debates
• Contemporary debates surrounding production and consumption

Tutorial presentations (20 minutes each) will operate from weeks 3 to 13. All presentations must outline and critically analyse all the readings for their week. The presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

• Ability to clearly outline the features of your media form
• Evidence of use of at least 3 academic sources (not including the text)
• Use of wider contemporary media material
• Ability to analyse contemporary media issues
• Presentation of material and clarity of explanation

The 1500 word essay based upon the tutorial question is due on the same day as your tutorial presentation. The essay will assessed according to the following criteria:

• Structure (intro; body; conclusion)
• Application of concepts & definitions
• Construction of an argument/critical evaluation
• Research (at least 3 academic sources)
• Presentation (margins, font, spacing)
• Referencing (in text and reference list)

Essay II (30%)  DUE 2 June 2000 words

Question
Public media provides “an independent and non-commercial space for comment and discussion” (Jacka 2006: 355) while “the function of the commercial media is to deliver audiences to advertisers” (Turnbull 2006: 81). Selecting one media organisation (e.g. Channel Ten; the Newcastle Herald; Google; SBS; Fbi; Sony; McCann-Erikson) that is different to the media form studied in your presentation week, consider its role as a public or commercial media institution. You need to examine:

• The organisation’s stated aims and role
• Its key consumer / audience base
• Its regulatory environment (what laws/guidelines oversee its operations?)
• Recent changes and challenges to its production methods
• Its ability to inform / educate / entertain; and possible conflicts between these
• The organisation’s role in the broader public interest (issues of access; participation etc)

This question involves detailed research into (a) your media organisation’s history and current practices. Chapters 17-21 in the Cunningham & Turner text are also extremely useful in debates related to this question about the different roles and aims of commercial and publicly funded media, and issues of access, participation and workplace practices. You are expected to use at least 3 academic sources that are not text chapters.
The 2000 word essay based upon the tutorial question is due on Friday, 2 June in week 13. The essay will assessed according to the following criteria:

- Structure (intro; body; conclusion)
- Application of concepts & definitions
- Construction of an argument
- Original thought / critical evaluation
- Extent & appropriateness of research (at least 3 academic sources)
- Presentation (margins, font, spacing)
- Referencing style (in text; reference list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Week beginning</th>
<th>Lecture Topic &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Institutions, Practice &amp; Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Policy Frameworks</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Talk Radio</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>In-Lecture Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Music Radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td><strong>Note: Good Friday Holiday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Popular Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>The Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>May 29</td>
<td>Futures &amp; Funding: Commercial or Public Media?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>No lecture or tutorials</td>
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**Mid-Semester Recess: Friday 14 April - Friday 28 April**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>No lecture or tutorials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Queen’s Birthday Public Holiday: Monday 12 June**

**Examination period: Tuesday 13 June - Friday 30 June**

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1  Introduction**

20 February

**Reading:**

2130 Course outline.
WEEK 2  Institutions, Practice & Theory
27 February

Reading:

WEEK 3  Policy Frameworks
6 March

Reading:

WEEK 4  Print
13 March

Reading:


WEEK 5  Talk Radio
20 March

Reading:

WEEK 6  In-Lecture Exam
27 March

One hour multiple choice exam.

WEEK 7  Music Radio
3 April

Reading:


WEEK 8  Film
10 April

Reading:
Mid-Semester Recess: Friday 14 April - Friday 28 April

WEEK 9  Television
1 May

Reading:

WEEK 10  Popular Music
8 May

Reading:

WEEK 11  Advertising & Public Relations
15 May

Reading:


WEEK 12  The Internet
22 May

Reading:

WEEK 13 Futures & Funding: Commercial or Public?
29 May

Reading:

WEEK 14
5 June

No lecture or tutorials.
KEY INSTITUTIONAL WEB SITES

- ARIA: www.aria.com.au
- Australian Broadcasting Authority: www.aba.gov.au
- Australian Film Commission: www.afc.gov.au
- Australian Press Council: www.presscouncil.org.au
- Federal Department of Communications, Information & Technology: www.dcita.gov.au
- Film Finance Corporation: wwwffc.gov.au
- Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance: www.alliance.org.au
- Musicians’ Union: www.musiciansunion.com.au
- NSW Film & TV Office: www.fto.nsw.gov.au
- Triple J website (ABC radio): http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/

Journals

- Media International Australia
- Media, Culture & Society
- Metro
- Television & New Media
- European Journal of Communication
- Australian Journalism Review
- Australian Journalism Communication
- Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural studies

Television

- Media Watch: ABC TV, Mondays 9.15 pm
- Media Watch web site: www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/

Radio

- ABC Radio National – The Media Report, 8.30 am, Thursdays

FURTHER READINGS


B & T Marketing & Media: www.bandt.com.au


# GRADING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>49% or less</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fail (FF)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<td><strong>50% to 64%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pass (P)</strong></td>
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<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<td><strong>65% to 74%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Credit (C)</strong></td>
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<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<td><strong>75% to 84%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Distinction (D)</strong></td>
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<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>85% upwards</strong></td>
<td><strong>High Distinction (HD)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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