CULT2130 - Media Structures and Practices
Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: Dr. Rebecca Beirne
Room: GP 2.28
Ph: 0418-265-991
Fax: 4921 6933
Email: rebecca.beirne@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Thursdays 1-2:30pm or by appointment

Course Overview
Media Structures and Practices interrogates the role of media within our society, and the ways in which media structures influence media practices and content. The course focuses on a variety of media forms, including newsmedia, television, film, and the internet, and considers media on local, national, and global levels. The course seeks to examine how and why consumers find pleasure in the media as part of their daily lives, how it is used in a variety of social relationships, and the role of government and corporations in influencing media. The media cannot be understood without also seeing how media is produced, and while the course largely examines media structures and practices from a theoretical perspective, there will also be a practical component wherein students will be given the opportunity to create their own media text. In each of the major assignments, students will be able to select which media industries they would like to focus on to enable a variety of interests and backgrounds to be reflected.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term
Self-Directed Learning for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
- Readings available online.
- Self-directed research.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
* Demonstrate knowledge of how the media operates on a local and global level.
* Discuss key issues surrounding contemporary media structures and practices.
* Critically analyse theoretical discussion of media structures and practices.
* Apply the principles of media practice to an independent media project.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 1 - 2010
CTS Download Date: 10 February 2010
Course Content
Course topics may include:
* Australian media
* Case study analysis of particular media organisations in their specific settings.
* Questions of media ownership, media regulation and control.
* The production and regulation of children's media
* The media and social change
* Media production
* Theoretical consideration of the tension between culture and commerce in the media;
or other similar topics, as appropriate.

Assessment Items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Weekly journal 30%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>2000 words, 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>40%</td>
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</tbody>
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Assumed Knowledge
40 units at 1000 level

Callaghan Campus Timetable
CULT2130
MEDIA STRUCTURES & PRACTICES
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 – 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture and Tutorial</th>
<th>Thursday 10:00 - 11:00</th>
<th>[GP201]</th>
<th>Rebecca Beirne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>[GP216]</td>
<td>Rebecca Beirne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>[GP320]</td>
<td>Jason Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>[V105]</td>
<td>Bronwyn McDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>[GP212/214]</td>
<td>Jason Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 13:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>[GP130]</td>
<td>Jason Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 14:00 - 15:00</td>
<td>[GP216]</td>
<td>Bronwyn McDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 15:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>[GP316]</td>
<td>Rebecca Beirne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Thursday 16:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[GP212/214]</td>
<td>Rebecca Beirne</td>
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IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;

b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may
be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

**Plagiarism** is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

**Turnitin** is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or

- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).

- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

**RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS**

Students can access the University's policy at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html)

**MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM**

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS**

*Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations* items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in [Late Penalty](#) (under student) at the link above.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

- applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

- whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html)

**Note:** different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

**Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:**

- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.
Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at; student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability.

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>Dean of Students Office</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In doing this they provide information and advice and help students resolve problems of an academic nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/</a></td>
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School of Humanities and Social Science
This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

End of CTS Entry

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - 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.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
### Weekly outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 1</th>
<th>Introduction to Media Structures and Practices and Research Methods</th>
<th>Go through the course outline and assessments and construct a list of any questions you have for asking in the tutorial.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk 2</td>
<td>The Media and Public Influence</td>
<td>Read Herman and Chomsky ‘Introduction’ to <em>Manufacturing Consent</em> (available on Blackboard). Write up your findings for your journal and discussion in the tutorial. In your journal entry, you need to: outline two points made by Herman and Chomsky that you found interesting and apply Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model to a contemporary media example (make sure you give page numbers or ranges for specific quotes or paraphrases in all your journal entries).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 3</td>
<td>The Impact of Commerce (screening: <em>Rich Media, Poor Democracy</em>)</td>
<td>Find five specific examples of ‘non-advertising’ media used for indirect advertising. This might be in a television show, film, newspaper article, etc (any entertainment or news media items that are not specifically advertisements but that are functioning in a particular case to promote some kind of product or industry). Document your findings (specific citations please), and use these to reflect on one or more of the following: What are the potential impacts this kind of sub-textual advertising may have on viewers (including children where relevant)? What are the potential benefits that producers and hosts might be gaining from engaging in this form of indirect advertising? Imagine this story was being told without trying to sell a product. How might it be different?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 4</td>
<td>Media Structures Case study 1: Television in Australia, Britain and the U.S.</td>
<td>Conduct your own research into how one media industry other than Hollywood film is structured (public or private? main firms? ownership? regulatory bodies? how does it work?). This might be for example the Australian newspaper industry, the Hong Kong film industry, or any other national media industry of your choice. This forms the initial research for your 1500 word mid-semester assignment, which you will build on next week. Your journal entry should detail what you found out about the industry you researched, and list an initial bibliography that you can then use in your report assignment. Remember to use databases to find solid journal articles, books and other academic sources. Only use general websites where they are official sources such as government or university publications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Media Structures Case Study</td>
<td>Assignment Details</td>
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<td>Wk 5</td>
<td>Media structures case study 2: The Hollywood Film Industry</td>
<td>Either build on the research into media structure you started last week, or choose another media industry to investigate. Please note that while you are building on last week’s research, you should discuss different points and sources than last week. You should be able to have a more developed journal entry this week that will be able to map the key features of your chosen industry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
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<td>Semester break April 2-9, 2010</td>
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<td>Mid-semester assignment due by 2pm, Monday 12th of April (1500 words, 25%)</td>
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<td>Wk 6</td>
<td>Transnational Media</td>
<td>Choose one large Australian, Singaporean or other national media organisation and research its international linkages. Your journal entry this week should reflect upon how a transnationally based media may differ from an enclosed national media system, and what effects this might have on the both the national industry and the media presented.</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
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<td>Wk 7</td>
<td>Globalisation and Corporate Media: News and the Fox Network</td>
<td>Compare how one politically-based news story is presented on the Fox network and one other network - (if you do not have access to Fox directly the website or Youtube both contain shows you can view). Write about differences and similarities in the way the news story that you investigated was presented on the Fox network and one other network. Be sure to reference your sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 8</td>
<td>Globalisation and Corporate Media: Disney</td>
<td>Research the cross-media promotion of one contemporary Disney production. Your entry should contain what you found out about Disney's cross-media promotion of one of their films during your research this week, and critically reflect upon the effects of such promotion on a global scale. You must include in-text and bibliographic references to your sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 9</td>
<td>Globalisation and Corporate Media: Google, do no evil? (screening: Google Behind the Screen)</td>
<td>Read Stross ‘Introduction’ to Planet Google (available on Blackboard). Critically reflect on three points from the reading that you found most interesting. You should then reflect on the ways in which corporate culture may influence media products. You should give in-text references with page numbers for quotations and specific paraphrases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
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<td>Wk 10</td>
<td>Independent media and the media reform movement</td>
<td>Locate an example of independent media (any non-corporate, marginal form of media culture, such as a zine, independently produced newspaper, people’s homemade clips on Youtube, other non-or barely-profit media forms like blogging, etc.) and write up the features of the form of independent media you studied (ownership? How is it put out? Distributed? Audience?). Critically reflect on how your example of independent media differs from, and how it is similar to, corporate media forms. Account for why this might be the case. Be sure to clearly reference the media item and any</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
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secondary sources used.

| Wk 11 | Local Media | Research a local media outlet, find out who owns it, and what its operational structure is. This can be your local community newspaper, a local radio station, television network, or other form of media. The organisation you research should not be a large regional or national publication/outlet that caters both to your local area as well as a variety of others. If you would like to research a local media organisation that is somewhere other than your local area, this is also acceptable. In your journal entry, you are asked to reflect on what you found out about your media outlet, and what effect this might have upon the media it produces. You should acknowledge ALL your research sources with clear in-text references and a bibliography. |
| Wk 12 | Becoming empowered media consumers and producers | In your journal entry for this week, collect together your ideas for your final project in an outline that contains an overview of your project, what sources/theories you will be using and how you will locate and access the material you need. |
| Wk 13 | CONSULTATION WEEK | Your lecturer and tutor will be available during the lecture and tutorial times to discuss your final project with you and clear up any problems you may be having. |

Final assignment due by 2pm on Thursday the 10th of June

Assignments

Journal - due weekly from week 2 (worth 30% in total)

Every week, you will submit a journal entry during the tutorial session. While some weeks these will reflect upon readings, during others they ask you to critically reflect upon small research assignments. These will help you develop your research skills and develop your knowledge of media issues and industries, and assist in completing your longer assignments. Details of each weekly task is given in the outline above. Each journal entry should be submitted in hardcopy during tutorials, and should run to approximately half a page of typed script. Late journal entries will not be accepted unless accompanied by a medical certificate.

Mid-semester assignment due Monday 12 April

This is a 1500 word research-based report on how one form of media is structured (you will undertake initial research for this during the pre-tutorial tasks in weeks four and five). The criteria you will be assessed on are the following:

- Exploration and understanding of chosen media structure
- Breadth and depth of research undertaken
- Strategic use of and critical engagement with secondary sources
- Suitable examples used to illustrate ideas
- Quality of your analysis of your evidence (e.g. what does what you found out mean? What are the implications of how this media industry is structured?)
- Evidence of critical and independent thinking
- Clear acknowledgment of sources
- Accuracy of in-text referencing and bibliography
- Clarity and coherent organisation of your paper
- Clarity and precision of your written expression (spelling, grammar, sentence structure etc)
- Use of academic register (tone, appropriate word choice etc.)

Please note: This does not have to be a formalised social-sciences style report, rather, it is meant to be a report of your findings - i.e. you writing about what you found out about how the media industry you researched is structured (i.e. how it is organised and how it operates). In terms of assignment structure, this will probably be determined by what your research uncovered but one way you could do it would be to in the initial paragraph offer a general "snapshot" of the industry (government/regulations, companies/ownership/interconnections, effects of technology, historical background and any other factors that you have found that influence the structure of your media industry), and then expand on these in more detail in the following paragraphs, and then perhaps look at some things happening now that may bring about future changes at the end of your paper. If you focused on historical aspects in your research you might instead choose to offer a chronological structure - how the industry was structured at its inception, and then the various changes that have taken place through till today. While you are not expected to follow a formal report structure, it is expected that your work will be well organised and coherent, and the points will follow on from one another logically.

**Media project assignment due Monday 10 June**

"Research one media story/network/newspaper/etc and create a media-based response that critically reflects on how the relevant elements of media structure influence media practices. Your media-based response may be in the form of a zine, a blog entry, a website, a video clip or audio clip or other format with the approval of your tutor. Responses in written form may be up to 2000 words, video/audio responses should be of no more than ten minutes."

While the mid-semester assignment asked you to give an overview of a particular industry, this is your chance to focus in on a particular area of interest and explore one way in which media structure has influenced content. Several of our weeks should be able to give you ideas regarding this, you could for example: compare how a variety of different sources cover one news story, thinking about how ownership, different media formats etc has influenced how the story is presented; you could do something along the lines of a mini-Outfoxed in terms of interrogating how structural issues at a particular organisation can effect how material is presented; you could look at how censorship has effected particular cinema industries (Hays code Hollywood, contemporary Iranian cinema); you could look at the ways in which a particular television show is structured by the need to make profit or display advertisers; etc.

This is not a traditional essay, but rather a media project. This could take the form of a mini magazine style contribution, that offers a number of 'articles'/perspectives on aspects you looked into. It could be in the form of an audio clip in an investigative newradio style (please do not simply read out an essay on tape!). It could be a mini-documentary. If the form of media you would like to use is not listed in the above question, please raise how you would like to present your work to your tutor in order to check with them whether your format is acceptable. You will be assessed on the content, argumentation, research skills etc., and will not be penalised for not having access to particularly sophisticated equipment, graphics etc - we are not assessing your editing or graphic design skills, but rather your ability to critically investigate media structures and present them to an audience in a creative fashion.

While you obviously may not be able to offer the same kinds of in-text references you would do in an essay, you are still expected to clearly acknowledge your sources within your project - displaying your research through acknowledgment is in fact an essential way of demonstrating that you have made a good effort at this task. This does not have to be via formal in-text references, but should make clear who the source of the material (e.g. 'Herman and Chomsky in Manufacturing Consent argue that...+', 'The Channel Ten website notes that the owners of the network are.....+', etc.). You must then also include with your project one or more paper-based sheets documenting your sources in the form of bibliographic entries. Texts must be listed in the order in which they appear in your project, and must be properly formatted in either MLA or Harvard styles.
If submitting an audio, video or web-based project on CD or DVD, you must ensure that this is playable on a variety of sources - it is your responsibility if to ensure it is playable on a DVD/CD player and also on a computer in order to allow your tutor to view/listen and mark it. Due to the Hub being unable to process assignments other than regular essays, assignments should be submitted to the boxes on Level 3 of the General Purpose building. Due to this issue, we will also be unable to leave assignments at the Hub for you to pick up at your leisure. Therefore, if you would like to receive feedback and your project back, you will need to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage when submitting your assignment. Otherwise you will receive marks only (via Blackboard).

Sample media projects from last year will be available on the Blackboard website for you to peruse and give you a sense of what is expected.