CUL 350

Cultural Contexts

S2 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Anthony Lambert
anthony.lambert@mq.edu.au
Contact via anthony.lambert@mq.edu.au
Y3A 149
Email for appointment

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
6cp in CUL units at 300 level

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit provides students with an opportunity to undertake advanced and engaged cultural studies research. Student focus on critically informed ethnographic research and theory-based cultural studies. All students attend a number of campus-based seminars which reflect on key theoretical debates and methods in cultural studies and allow discussion and reflection on research methodologies. A key theme is reflection on the way in which cultural research can engage with contemporary critical debates within academic and non-academic contexts. The exploration of experience, discourse, space and narrative is tied to observation and participation within self-directed exercises and research projects. Students are required to integrate critical and cultural research with everyday experiences, from cultural phenomena and political debates, to personal and social settings including leisure activities and the workplace. Critical ethnographic and theoretical research prepares students for application of critical literacy to social contexts, for advanced research practices and for postgraduate study. Students exercise problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills and creative thinking, while learning to interact and contribute within a professional context, either as academic researchers or beyond the academy.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

> Apply cultural studies research questions and methods to chosen contexts, including cultural representations, policies and relevant texts of associated community groups, organisation and work settings

> Choose and identify key problems or issues within a field, research the chosen field and gather relevant information and propose strategies for creative solutions using culturally appropriate methods of communication suited to that context

> Reflect critically on their own experiences and use those experiences as a source of information for further cultural studies research

> Create a plan to assist in developing, in negotiation with relevant communities, ethical community and cultural standards within the contexts of specific locations and practices, including the application of theoretical frameworks to dynamic environments

> Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Participation	10%	ongoing
Lit/ Representation Survey	25%	Week 5
Cultural Focus Brief	30%	Week 9
Final Presentation/ Portfolio	35%	Weeks 12 and 13

Participation

Due: **ongoing**
Weighting: **10%**

Participation

You must attend and participate in all seminars and interviews (with convenor). You will be required to take a leadership role in the seminars and present work based on the questions and activities to the rest of the group.

You will question and share some of your experiences of your research via the **Discussion** link on the iLearn site, and respond to the postings of your colleagues with comments or suggestions.

You will present the progress of your research, and the direction in which you see your project taking, in addition to a final presentation in Week 12.

Marking Criteria:

- Active engagement in class discussion

- Demonstrated knowledge of the relevant topic(s)

- Demonstrated individual research of, and reflection on, topic

NOTE: Your participation mark in part is derived from your engagement in classes across the whole semester. Missing classes will reduce the maximum amount of marks in which you can score.

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Lit/ Representation Survey

Due: **Week 5**
Weighting: **25%**

For the semester you must choose a key activity/community/culture/creative practice or social problem/phenomenon to investigate and exlore.

Your task in this assessment is to make yourself aware of the critical and theoretical research has been done with respect to this field/group, and key representations and technologies associated with it/ them. Construct a miniature literature review or make an annotated bibliography which will inform the types of issues you may want to observe first hand when you engage with that community, group or practice in the field.

Collate a survey of representational material from available media images, policy documents, and other reportage to construct a 'public picture' of the cultural contexts and social actors

involved.

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to synthesise you research, observations and experience

- Demonstrated ability to reflect critically on your own research process

- Demonstrated ability to begin to analyse the representations of particular practices, cultures and political contexts

Submission via Turnitin link on CUL350 iLearn site

Late Penalty: A late penalty of 10% per day will be applied.

Extensions: Extensions may only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:
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Cultural Focus Brief

Due: **Week 9**
Weighting: **30%**

Observe a culture, activity or community context in practice for a minimum of 30 hours (at least 18 hours on-site) over the semester. As stated earlier, this may refer to political, social, legal, scientific or activist settings, fan based cultures, community meetings, marginalised or socially disadvantaged cultures, other topical social phenomena, media, creative, production or

performance contexts. This culture or community should be directly connected to the group, problem or representations you explored in Task Two.

Make observational notes and write up a first brief about what you observed as a piece of ethnography. This will form a comparative critical framework, which you will now place against previously identified representations of this community in the media and/or publically available policy documents.

In observing, consider how the setting is structured, and identify how members of the community/cultural group are recognised and/or recruited. How do they engage with each other, and what are the aims of interactions? Is the group political or issues based? How are roles performed within the group or activity? What can you note in terms of spatial politics and poetics? How are issues of work, ethics and identity dealt with? How do the lived experiences of those you have encountered and observed compare with the mediated and/or policy--based representations of them?

Marking Criteria:

- Evidence of independent research

- Demonstrated ability to synthesise you research, observations and experience within the context of academic arguments

- Demonstrated ability to reflect critically on your own research process

- Demonstrated ability to analyse the practices, cultures and political context within a particular field

- Clarity of expression in line with expected academic standards

Submission: Via the Turtnitin link on the CUL 350 iLearn site

Late Penalty: A late penalty of 10% per day will be applied.

Extensions: Extensions may only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:
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- Reflect critically on their own experiences and use those experiences as a source of information for further cultural studies research
- Create a plan to assist in developing, in negotiation with relevant communities, ethical community and cultural standards within the contexts of specific locations and practices, including the application of theoretical frameworks to dynamic environments
- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Final Presentation/ Portfolio

Due: **Weeks 12 and 13**
Weighting: **35%**

Your task here is to draw together the findings of your first and second assignments, building on feedback and further analysis/evidence. You will problematise, analyse and advocate ethical change in your observed culture, community or activity as appropriate.

There are two parts of this exercise: Firstly you will present your project in its entirety to the group. You may present your material as creatively or formally as you find appropriate. Start with your initial aims, take the group through your process, and accentuate the key points of interest/ characteristics of the cultural practices at play in the setting you have explored. On the basis of your research and experience, offer some solutions or propositions to help produce ethical and/ or socially inclusive outcomes for the group, or for some of the issues at hand.

Secondly, you will submit your final portfolio. You will include the Task 2 and Task 3 assignments, in addition to a 1000 word report that summarises your final position – or 'project outcomes' that you illustrated in your presentation. Here, you need to place the critical and theoretical material in relation to field notes and representations in order to create a final research statement that not only reflects your experiences, but suggests/acknowledges where further action could be taken in research, policy, creativity or social practice.

Criteria for marking:

- Demonstrated ability to synthesise you research, observations and experience within the context of academic arguments

- Demonstrated ability to reflect critically on your own research process

- Clarity of expression in line with expected academic standards

- Evidence of plans/ideas that aim to develop ethical community and cultural standards within the contexts of specific locations and practices, including the application of theoretical frameworks to dynamic environments

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Delivery and Resources

Dr Anthony Lambert is convenor for CUL350 Email: anthony.lambert@mq.edu.au

Reader: The CUL350 unit reader must be purchased from the co-op bookshop prior to Week 2. You will be expected to prepare for meetings by reading as well as thinking about your own experiences in your placement/ observation context. The readings are essential preparation for your seminar activities, your assignments and your research practice/documentation.

Classes: There will be weekly 2hr group seminars beginning in Week 2.

SEMINARS: 4pm-6pm Tuesdays

LOCATION: W5C 210

You will also be expected to contribute to regularly visit and post to the unit's iLearn site.The site will give you another way of staying in touch, so you don't feel isolated in your research or fieldwork process. Sharing experiences via iLearn will also give you an opportunity to try out ideas for you're your survey, brief and final assessment.

Unit Schedule

A unit schedule can be accessed in the unit's iLearn site.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to

demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Assessment task

- Final Presentation/ Portfolio

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Choose and identify key problems or issues within a field, research the chosen field and gather relevant information and propose strategies for creative solutions using culturally appropriate methods of communication suited to that context
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including the application of theoretical frameworks to dynamic environments

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Lit/ Representation Survey
- Cultural Focus Brief

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply cultural studies research questions and methods to chosen contexts, including cultural representations, policies and relevant texts of associated community groups, organisation and work settings
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Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Lit/ Representation Survey
- Cultural Focus Brief
- Final Presentation/ Portfolio

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative

in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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Assessment tasks

- Lit/ Representation Survey
- Cultural Focus Brief

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Reflect critically on their own experiences and use those experiences as a source of information for further cultural studies research
- Create a plan to assist in developing, in negotiation with relevant communities, ethical community and cultural standards within the contexts of specific locations and practices, including the application of theoretical frameworks to dynamic environments
- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Cultural Focus Brief

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Final Presentation/ Portfolio

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Deploy advocacy skills informed by social justice values that enable them ethically to address questions of cultural diversity within real world contexts

Assessment tasks

- Cultural Focus Brief
- Final Presentation/ Portfolio

Changes from Previous Offering

The unit has been significantly revised in order to facilitate context based cultural research; the unit has been modified in accordance with PACE requirements.