



# CUL 350

## Cultural Contexts

MQC2 Day 2014

*Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

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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:

1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
2. Apply cultural studies research questions and methods to novel research contexts, which may include work settings
3. Develop independent student-led cultural studies research by reflecting critically on your own research process
4. Synthesise your research, observations and experience in the context of academic arguments

## General Assessment Information

Submission: Submit all assignments to your lecturer and/or via the iLearn links by the due date. Directions will be given to you in class (from Week 1).

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

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

## Assessment Tasks

| Name                                      | Weighting | Due     |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <u>Participation</u>                      | 10%       | Ongoing |
| <u>Literature &amp; Representation</u>    | 25%       | Week 5  |
| <u>Community focus &amp; Action brief</u> | 30%       | Week 11 |
| <u>Final Portfolio/Presentation</u>       | 35%       | Week 13 |

### Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Participation is graded on continual presence and engagement with themes, activities and the projects of your peers. Your participation (from week 4) also includes discussion of your research with the rest of the class. You should specify:

- what argument(s)/issues/institutions/community work you are exploring and why,
- what theoretical insights you have come up with or are drawing on
- what challenges you have come across
- what you have learnt so far in your research

During this time, you can ask your peers for their feedback and use this time to help hone your research questions and methodologies

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## Literature & Representation

Due: **Week 5**

Weighting: **25%**

Choose a key activity/community/culture/creative practice or social problem/phenomenon.

Your task here is to make yourself aware of the critical and theoretical research that has been done with respect to this field/group, and key representations 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 representational material from available theoretical insights, media images, policy documents and other reportage to construct your literature review or an annotated bibliography.

For more information on what a literature review is:

<http://guides.library.yale.edu/content.php?pid=128822&sid=1115850>

For more information on annotated bibliographies:

<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>

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## Community focus & Action brief

Due: **Week 11**

Weighting: **30%**

Observe a culture, activity or community context in practice for a minimum of 30 hours over the semester. 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, performance contexts, etc. This culture or community should be directly connected to the group, problem, or representations you explored in Task Two.

The first half of your action brief should state the existing literature (i.e. studies, research and representations) that relates to your chosen example. You need to write how your own focus, observations, and analysis either confirms, extends, differs, and/or challenges this existing literature.

The second half of your action brief should consider how the setting (context) of your example is structured and identify how members of the community/cultural group are recognised and/or recruited. Some questions you might consider:

? How do they engage with each other, and what are the aims of interactions?

? Is the group political?

? What issues are the group concerned with?

? 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?

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## Final Portfolio/Presentation

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **35%**

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/group 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. This should take no more than 15 minutes.

Secondly, you will submit your final portfolio. You will include the Task 2 and Task 3 assignments, in addition to a 1,000 word report that summaries 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 the field notes and representations in order to create a final research statement that not only reflects your experiences, but suggests and acknowledges where further action could taken in research, policy, creativity or social practice.

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## Delivery and Resources

CUL350 is unlike other CUL studies offerings in that it is structured as a series of seminars, rather than in a lecture/tutorial format.

These seminars will offer a critical examination of key theories, concepts, and issues in Cultural Studies. Seminar sessions will also incorporate discussions of their work, research, and findings. These seminars are a great opportunity to gain feedback from your convenor and your peers concerning your final project.

For these seminars, students are expected to prepare for meetings by reading as well as thinking about your own experiences in your placement/research. The readings are essential preparation for your seminar activities, your assignments and your research practice/documentation. Essential readings are available on iLearn.

## 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](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](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](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/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## 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](http://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](http://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 outcomes

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
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#### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Literature & Representation
- Community focus & Action brief
- Final Portfolio/Presentation

### 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 outcomes**

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
- 4. Synthesise your research, observations and experience in the context of academic arguments

### **Assessment tasks**

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## **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**

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
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- 3. Develop independent student-led cultural studies research by reflecting critically on your own research process
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## 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:

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## 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:

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- 3. Develop independent student-led cultural studies research by reflecting critically on

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## Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
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- 3. Develop independent student-led cultural studies research by reflecting critically on your own research process
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## 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

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
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- 3. Develop independent student-led cultural studies research by reflecting critically on your own research process
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## 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:

## Learning outcomes

- 1. Analyse the practices, cultures and political contexts within a particular field, such as a work place or a disciplinary context
- 2. Apply cultural studies research questions and methods to novel research contexts, which may include work settings
- 4. Synthesise your research, observations and experience in the context of academic arguments

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Literature & Representation
- Community focus & Action brief
- Final Portfolio/Presentation

## 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 outcomes

- 2. Apply cultural studies research questions and methods to novel research contexts, which may include work settings
- 4. Synthesise your research, observations and experience in the context of academic arguments

### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Literature & Representation
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