



MECO804

Media Writing and Research

S1 Day 2016

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Senior Lecturer

Margie Borschke

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Y3A 159

After class or by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MFJ

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit focuses on the core skills that underpin journalism as a media practice including, reporting and research techniques and approaches to storytelling and representation across media. It also covers critical material on journalism and the contemporary media landscape, including ideals of objectivity, advocacy, and the use and function of news media.

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 advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media

Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.

Critically appraise and analyze the research material on journalism and media.

Identify and evaluate the key concepts underpinning the role of the fourth estate.

Critically examine the history of journalism and identify opportunities and challenges for the future of journalism.

General Assessment Information

Your news and feature stories are to be submitted online, via the turnitin submission box on the iLearn site.

A link to your seminar preparation blog can be found via iLearn. All weekly exercises and presentation documents should be posted here.

Deadlines are firm and late papers will be penalised by 2% each day unless you have grounds for a disruption to studies or have discussed this with me earlier.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>News Article</u>	20%	Friday April 8, 2016
<u>Feature Story and Reflection</u>	30%	June 10, 2015
<u>Research Report & Presentation</u>	30%	In class Week 10
<u>Seminar Preparation Blog</u>	20%	weekly, as assigned

News Article

Due: **Friday April 8, 2016**

Weighting: **20%**

What you will submit:

- 600-700 word news article plus a suggested headline (Draft due in class week 6)
- 140 character shareline (i.e. a tweet that sells and summarizes your story)
- 500 word reflection on the reporting and writing process (Alternately, you may submit a 3 minute video/audio reflection)
- Research report backup detailing sources for all facts and quotes
- A transcript of one key interview with quotes used in bold. (You should conduct at least two interviews for your story.)

Assessment Criteria:

- The quality and accuracy of the reporting and attention to detail in each article
- Your approach to the story including its structure, content and style
- Choice of sources and appropriate attribution
- Selection and use of facts and statistics
- Selection and use of quotes
- The success of your interview for this story

- The story's success as a news article
- Your ability to analyse reporting as a cultural form and social practice
- Your understanding of debates in journalism re: objectivity, impartiality and the fourth estate

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.
- Identify and evaluate the key concepts underpinning the role of the fourth estate.

Feature Story and Reflection

Due: **June 10, 2015**

Weighting: **30%**

What you will submit:

- 1000-1200 word feature plus headline (draft due in class in week 12)
- 140 character shareline (i.e. a tweet that sells and summarizes your story)
- 500-word reflection on the reporting and writing process (or a three-minute video/audio)
- Research report including backup detailing sources for all facts and quotes

Assessment Criteria:

- The success of your article as a piece of non-fiction writing, the relevance of your argument and the rigor of your reporting.
- The quality and accuracy of the reporting and attention to detail in each article
- Selection and use of facts, statistics and anecdotes
- Your approach to persuasive writing including the quality of the story's structure, content and style
- Choice of sources and appropriate attribution
- Your ability to analyse the reporting process and product as a cultural form and social practice

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.
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Research Report & Presentation

Due: **In class Week 10**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will present research on a case study on a new (or future) form of journalistic practice (i.e. data journalism, social media, native advertising, personal brand journalism, podcasts, tumblr etc).

Each student will have 20 minutes. (Times will be assigned before the study break.)

- Your case study should draw on the current scholarship and reporting on the media industry.
- To facilitate discussion, you will post a written report outlining the content of your presentation (including any relevant images, video, audio or links) to your tutorial preparation blog plus a bibliography* prior to your presentation to facilitate a productive discussion.
- You may use a platform such as Storify, Medium or Prezi to compile and present your research. In this case, provide a link to the site in the class blog.
- You may include interviews you have conducted with relevant industry experts.
- **To assist with the marking of your presentation, please submit a pdf of the blog post (including your bibliography) to the turnitin box on Ilearn. Only your oral in-class presentation will be assessed. This document will be used as a reference and will generate feedback mechanisms for your lecturer.**

Assessment criteria:

- The quality of the research and original reporting presented.
- Your understanding of key ideas in journalism studies and contemporary problems and opportunities faced by the media.
- Your ability to critically assess and contextualise the work in this field.
- The ability to develop a unique and original argument and to discuss this with your peers
- Originality of thinking and approach to the presentation of ideas.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.
- Critically appraise and analyze the research material on journalism and media.
- Identify and evaluate the key concepts underpinning the role of the fourth estate.
- Critically examine the history of journalism and identify opportunities and challenges for the future of journalism.

Seminar Preparation Blog

Due: **weekly, as assigned**

Weighting: **20%**

What you will do

- Complete preparation exercises and reports and post to your iLearn blog prior to seminar. (Exercises will set in class and posted to iLearn.) Some of your entries will be your reflections on group reporting and research tasks and others will involve collaborative tasks.
- Document your progress via the blog space
- Build an archive of resources and research to share with your peers via the blog space
- Write a weekly news round-up using Storify and post a link to your blog

Weekly deadline: Posts should be completed before class.

Assessment criteria:

- Your engagement with the course material including key questions and concepts
- Your ability to produce high quality work under deadline
- Your contribution to the community of inquiry

Please note: *This assessment is about engagement. A willingness to experiment, to take risks and make mistakes is encouraged.*

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
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Delivery and Resources

Required Reading

1. **Assigned readings:** Please check the iLearn site for details about assigned readings and required texts.
2. **News Reading:** All students should be conducting an independent study of one national and/or international news site (e.g. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*). You should allocate an hour each day for news reading.
3. **Social Reading:** You should be reading all of your fellow students blogs and any relevant shared stories before attending the weekly tutorial.

Seminar Preparation

Students will be required to complete short assignments and exercises on the iLearn site before attending class. Instructions will be announced in class and posted to iLearn. If you miss a class please check the iLearn site BEFORE attending the seminar to ensure you are prepared.

Unit Schedule

Please check iLearn for the schedule.

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

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.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/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit <ask.mq.edu.au>.

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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

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

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.
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Assessment tasks

- News Article
- Feature Story and Reflection
- Research Report & Presentation
- Seminar Preparation Blog

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.

- Critically appraise and analyze the research material on journalism and media.
- Identify and evaluate the key concepts underpinning the role of the fourth estate.
- Critically examine the history of journalism and identify opportunities and challenges for the future of journalism.

Assessment tasks

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PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
- Discriminate between, and analyze, the various writing styles and reporting techniques for various journalistic mediums.
- Critically appraise and analyze the research material on journalism and media.
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PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and

problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
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- Identify and evaluate the key concepts underpinning the role of the fourth estate.
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PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
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- Research Report & Presentation

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PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply advanced reporting, research and writing techniques to produce articles for print and online media
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