



MAS 203

News and Current Affairs

S1 Day 2016

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides a critical analysis of news and current affairs across different media forms. Topics covered include: news values; narrative; the Fourth Estate; the doctrine of objectivity; the public sphere; tabloid media; and moral panics. An additional emphasis is on the roles of different media technologies in the global news environment and their possible uses in the future shaping of news and current affairs.

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture

3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Writing a news report</u>	20%	Week 5 - Friday April 1, 9pm
<u>Observe, listen and describe</u>	20%	Week 7 - Friday April 29, 9pm
<u>News IQ Quiz</u>	20%	Week 6 / Week 12
<u>News/Current Affairs Bulletin</u>	40%	Week 13 - Friday June 10, 9pm

Writing a news report

Due: **Week 5 - Friday April 1, 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Writing a news report

Students will write a news report (300-350 words) for a print or online news publication based exclusively on a government or scientific report/study which they will be given during tutorials. The exercise requires students to identify the report's most newsworthy point(s); provide some context that might be needed to write a story about the report or study (i.e. do additional background work related to the study); and translate any difficult concepts or simplify complex language that is used in the document. Students will also prepare a list of questions (5 in total) that they would ask either the lead author of the report or study, or an expert who might offer an outside perspective. These questions are to be placed underneath the news report.

The aim of this assessment is to help students familiarise themselves with processes and procedures related to the construction of news in order to enable a better evaluation of news and current affairs. Furthermore, to help students develop the skills to be able to identify and create a news story; report in a clear, concise, factual and engaging way; develop an understanding of the use and implications of selecting, editing, condensing and excluding during the story construction process; and create for readers a rich and rewarding media experience.

This assessment is to be submitted through Turnitin (links to all assessments are on the iLearn page for this unit).

Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes. Timely submission of assessment tasks is a unit requirement or penalties apply. 10% per day (including weekends) will be deducted for all late submissions unless Disruptions to Studies (including a request for an extension) is approved.

The criteria against which the report will be graded are:

- identifying newsworthiness,
- structure and style,
- comprehensiveness,
- grammar and presentation, and
- appropriate interview questions.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 1 Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

Observe, listen and describe

Due: **Week 7 - Friday April 29, 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Observe, listen and describe a short scene

This is an exercise in observation only. Students need not ask any questions to anyone during this exercise. The task is to simply observe, listen and describe a short scene that unfolds before your eyes. Find a lively location and position yourself so you can see everything clearly, and wait and watch. The place could be a food court, the subway in peak hour, a beauty salon, a sporting arena, anywhere of your choosing. You should be looking out for a small scene to record, one with a beginning, middle and end. Based on your notes (both mental and written) write a 200-word story describing the scene. Leave yourself and your opinions out of the story.

This assessment builds your skills in observation and description.

This assessment is to be submitted through Turnitin (links to all assessments are on the iLearn page for this unit).

Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes. Timely submission of assessment tasks is a unit requirement or penalties apply. 10% per day (including weekends) will be deducted for all late submissions unless Disruptions to Studies (including a request for an extension) is approved.

The criteria against which the report will be graded are:

- good use of details,
- character development,
- engage the reader,
- structure and style, and
- grammar and presentation

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 1 Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
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4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
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- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

News IQ Quiz

Due: **Week 6 / Week 12**

Weighting: **20%**

News IQ Quiz

Students knowledge of news and current affairs and associated theories will be tested twice throughout the unit via an online quiz (the quiz will be made available on the iLearn page during week 6 and week 12). The questions will be based on information discussed in the lectures and readings.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 1 Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2 Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3 Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4 Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media

News/Current Affairs Bulletin

Due: **Week 13 - Friday June 10, 9pm**

Weighting: **40%**

News and Current Affairs Bulletin

This assessment is a class-based project and is the major assessment for this unit. Students will be required to produce a 15-20 minute television program filled with various news stories + live or pre-recorded interviews. A Web site will also be created to work in tandem with the program. The stories from the program will be featured on the Web site in different mediums e.g. photography and narrative journalism; audio stories; and video. Students will work collaboratively on this project from Week 7 to Week 13 incorporating both production skills (technical and management) and audio/visual and online storytelling techniques. This project will incorporate digital camera operation, video and audio recording, digital video and audio editing using desktop software, photography and narrative journalism. Students will take on a range of roles for this project. Roles include: presenters; reporters; writers; videographers and editors; designers; multimedia producers; sound/field recordists; and researchers. Some of these roles may overlap.

Students are required to write a 800-1000 word scholarly reflection on the role they performed for this assessment. In this scholarly reflection students will consider the process, constraints and structures that may have impacted their role and the class production. At least 3 scholarly references should be used in the scholarly reflection. The

references should be used to make connections between theory and practice (i.e. compare and contrast your practical experience with theoretical approaches introduced in lectures and readings).

In the reflection students may reflect on:

- what you did and why you did it
- what you found easy or difficult
- why you found it easy or difficult
- what you liked about what you did
- why you felt like that
- how you might want to follow it up
- how you used what you have been taught in class
- what other information might have been helpful
- what you are going to do differently in this type of situation next time
- what steps you are going to take on the basis of what you have learned
- what you are going to do next

The scholarly reflection is to be submitted through Turnitin (links to all assessments are on the iLearn page for this unit).

Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes. Timely submission of assessment tasks is a unit requirement or penalties apply. 10% per day (including weekends) will be deducted for all late submissions unless Disruptions to Studies (including a request for an extension) is approved.

The criteria against which you will be graded are:

- Understanding of how news journalism functions
- Familiarity with current news topics, genres, styles and practices
- Performance and management of the everyday decision-making and practices of news journalists
- Understanding of the key ethical and legal obligations associated with news reporting
- Reflect-in-action and reflect-on-action to reveal new insights about practice and theory
- Work effectively in a team environment (completing required tasks on time and doing a

fair share of the work overall)

- Develop and perform professional work practices in areas such as time-keeping and deadlines, professional etiquette, personal organisation and care of equipment

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 1 Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2 Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3 Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4 Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5 Reflect on practice and theory

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
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- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Delivery and Resources

LECTURES

Lecture attendance for this unit is strongly recommended. If absent, students are expected to listen to the lectures recorded on Echo 360 and accessible on the iLearn page for the unit. The lectures will feature extensive use of visual aids which are better viewed live rather than via a recording. To understand the lectures students are encouraged to do the relevant readings prior to the lecture. Please note: the News IQ Quiz will be based on content in lectures and in the readings.

TUTORIALS

The tutorials will emulate a newsroom experience. The tutorials will incorporate the “writing and reporting” phase of the unit. These workshops will give you newsroom writing instruction and field experience.

You are required to attend all tutorials (**tutorials will begin in Week 2**). As participation in the process of learning is linked to and underpins the unit Learning Outcomes, you will need to either apply for Disruptions to Studies to cover any missed tutorial (if the disruption is greater than three

consecutive days) or supply appropriate documentation to your unit convenor for any missed tutorial (if less than three consecutive days).

REQUIRED READINGS

Phillips, Angela. 2015. *Journalism in Context: Practice and Theory for the Digital Age*. New York: Routledge. This is your unit text book and can be purchased from the Co-op bookshop.

The unit readings are available online through the library website.

Some of the readings are online articles - access these links on iLearn.

OTHER RECOMMENDED READING AND VIEWING

If you want to develop a superior understanding of news journalism you are encouraged to regularly engage in news consumption via a range of platforms. On Twitter and Facebook follow major news outlets and a range of individual journalists. Watch out for new trends in news production and how news is being distributed. Follow popular blogs written by well-known journalists. Listen to news radio when you're in the car and watch ABC News 24 for constant streaming of news. Diversify your viewing habits, for example watch NITV news for a perspective that is different from mainstream news. Become a news junkie.

Students are advised to make frequent use of iLearn in order to survey course content in greater detail.

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.

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://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.

Graduate Capabilities

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 outcome

- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Observe, listen and describe
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- Observe, listen and describe
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- Observe, listen and describe
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- Observe, listen and describe
- News IQ Quiz

- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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

1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- News IQ Quiz
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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

1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report
- Observe, listen and describe
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
- 3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
- 4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Writing a news report

- Observe, listen and describe
- News/Current Affairs Bulletin

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

1. Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
2. Evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and politics and culture
3. Synthesize theories to understand and evaluate the relationship between news and current affairs and society
4. Demonstrate critical evaluation of news and current affairs in global media
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Assessment tasks

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- Observe, listen and describe
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