



MAS 203

News and Current Affairs

S1 Day 2017

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Dr Margie Borschke

margie.borschke@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

Y3A 159

by appointment Mondays 11-12 or 4pm-6pm

Technical Officer - Digital News Facilities

Michael Baber

michael.baber@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

Y3A 290

Curriculum Design and Podcast Lecturer

Dr Helene Thomas

Tutor

Theresa Miller

[Please see iLearn](#)

Tutor

Anthony Sharwood

[Please see iLearn](#)

Tutor

Gabiann Marin

[Please see iLearn](#)

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp at 100 level or above

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

General Assessment Information

Deadlines are firm. Late submissions will be penalized by 10% per day unless you qualify for disruption to study.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Quizzes	30%	No	ongoing
Print news story	30%	No	Friday 7th April, midnight
Television News Story	40%	No	Week 10 and 12

Quizzes

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **30%**

There are four online multiple choice quizzes throughout the semester testing your understanding of the readings and podcasts.

Quizzes are hosted on MAS203s iLearn site and you can access them at the beginning of each week in which they are set. Each quiz must be completed by 9 pm on the Friday of the quiz week. See iLearn for quiz schedule and deadlines.

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

Print news story

Due: **Friday 7th April, midnight**

Weighting: **30%**

You will write a news story for a newspaper (print or online) using the inverted pyramid model introduced in classes. The news story will be based exclusively on a report or a study (such as a government report, an academic study, or NGO report). This assessment will contain: a 10-12 paragraph news story with a lead paragraph, explanation paragraphs (important facts and details, quotes and indirect quotes), and additional information; a headline and student byline (these are not counted as paragraphs); and a list of five questions that you would ask either the lead author of the report/study or an expert or someone who you believe could be affected by the report/study (these should be placed at the bottom of the news story with the heading 'Interview Questions').

The exercise requires you to identify the report's most newsworthy point(s) and prioritise the information contained in the report. The assessment should be approximately 450-500 words in total.

You will be given the report/study during workshops.

The aim of this assessment is to help you 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 you 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).

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 tasks is aligned to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 1 Demonstrate key theories and practice of news and current affairs media
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

Television News Story

Due: **Week 10 and 12**

Weighting: **40%**

There are two components to this assessment: practical and written. They are equally weighted (20% each).

Practical

In pairs or small groups you will produce a television news story for a class news bulletin. The news package will be approximately 90 seconds to 120 seconds in duration.

Students will work collaboratively on this project from Week 4 to Week 10 incorporating both production skills (technical and management) and audio/visual storytelling techniques. This project will incorporate digital camera operation, audio recording, digital video and audio editing using desktop software.

The criteria against which the TV news story will be graded are:

- Demonstrate key practices of news and current affairs media (understanding of how news journalism functions)
- Work effectively in a team environment (effective collaboration; completing required tasks on time; doing a fair share of the work overall)

This part of the assessment is due Friday, 19th May, 9pm.

Written

You are required to submit a reflective journal (minimum 1000 words).

In this journal you will reflect on your experience of producing a television news story and critically evaluate your experience where you think about the connection between theory and practice, and link these ideas with what you have learned from the unit coursework and readings and elaborating on it. You will also reflect on what you have taken out of the experience in order to inform practice.

The reflective journal is more than a description of your observations/thoughts or a summary of what happened. It requires going beyond describing what we do to thinking about why we do things. The key is to link what you studied, discussed and read during the unit to what you did on a practical level (i.e. the application of the theory to your own practice).

At least 3 references should be used in the reflection (a combination of the text book and podcast episodes). The references can be used to compare and contrast your practical experience with theoretical approaches introduced in the readings and podcasts. You are encouraged to reference as much as you like throughout the journal to demonstrate a stronger link between theory and practice. All journals should include a reference list with full bibliographic details of all sources referred to in the journal, and in-text referencing. You can use the Harvard or author-date referencing style.

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 reflective journal will be graded:

- Link theory and practice and explore the relationship between theory and practice in an authentic and concrete way

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

This part of the assessment is due Friday 2nd June, midnight.

This Assessment Task is aligned 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:

- 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

Delivery and Resources

PODCASTS

Audio podcasts will replace face-to-face lectures for this unit. There will be ten podcasts in total and they will be accessible on the iLearn page for the unit from Week 1 onwards. To get the most out of the podcasts, students are required to do the relevant readings prior to listening to the podcast. Please note: the Quiz will be based on content in the readings and podcasts.

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

There are two-hour weekly workshops/seminars for this unit and they **begin in WEEK ONE**. These will emulate a newsroom experience and 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 workshops. 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 workshop (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

Lamble, Stephen. 2016. **News as it happens: An introduction to journalism, 3rd Edition**. This is your unit text book and can be purchased from the Co-op bookshop and as an e-book.

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.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

All administrative matters including disruption to studies are to be sent to Unit Convenor Dr Margie Borschke.

CONSULTATIONS FOR ASSESSMENTS

Tutors will be available for consultations related to the assessments.

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

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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 task

- Television News Story

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

- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Quizzes
- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Quizzes
- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Print news story
- Television News Story

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

- Print news story
- Television News Story

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
- 5. Reflect on practice and theory

Assessment tasks

- Print news story
- Television News Story