



MECX223

Visual Countercultures: Graffiti, Kitsch and Conceptual Art

S2 OUA 2017

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor & Tutor

Jillian Kramer

jillian.kramer@mq.edu.au

Contact via via MQ email

Y3A 152, Phone: (02) 9850 2252

Tuesday 3-4pm via Zoom Web Conferencing or Zoom Chat (details in ilearn)

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces students to a range of theories that question traditional hierarchies of value and that enable a critical re-evaluation of the practices of everyday life. This unit theorises key topics such as: countercultures; oppositional cultures and post-subcultures; the politics of high versus popular and low culture; and counter-cultural practices in global and local contexts. The following practices, sites and objects are examined: graffiti, hip hop and crimes of style; graffiti and the cultural politics of public space; graffiti as a form of political activism and dissent; the relation between kitsch and high art; the politics of kitsch in the context of colonialism and Indigeneity; the cultural politics of tourist sites; gigantism and miniaturism; queer culture, camp and kitsch; and celebrity kitsch. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

Learning Outcomes

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

Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.

Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.

Develop research skills that will enable students to present theorised, contextualised and informed accounts of key issues and problems in the context of subcultural and counter-visual practices.

Demonstrate communication skills in order effectively and creatively to present research across different genres and cultural media.

Employ cultural literacy skills that will educate students on the importance of issues of cultural difference and ethical relations across diverse social and political contexts.

General Assessment Information

In this unit, students must submit original work. If you have previously been enrolled in this unit, please note that you cannot submit the same piece of work. Please contact your convenor for an alternative task.

If students require assistance with their assessments, they should contact their tutor and consult the resources on referencing and essay writing in the 'Assessments' section on ilearn. Students can also contact the Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) team for advice on academic writing, study strategies and planning. Additional support services are listed here: <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>.

Late Submissions:

Tasks 10% or less: No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the decline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Tasks above 10%: No extensions will be granted. Students who submit late work without an extension **will receive a penalty of 10% per day**. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Key Concepts Essay	30%	No	21 August 11:59pm (AEST)
Portfolio & Reflection Task	30%	No	25 September 11:59pm (AEST)
Final Essay	40%	No	7 November 11:59pm (AEST)

Key Concepts Essay

Due: **21 August 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **30%**

For this assessment, students are required to write a 1,000 word essay that draws on the key concepts explored between weeks one and three. They should respond to **one** of the questions

listed below.

- Popular culture, Stuart Hall argues, is structured by the "double movement of containment and resistance." Discuss in relation to a specific example of graffiti.
- Drawing on an example of graffiti, discuss Michel de Certeau's claim that "many everyday practices are tactical in character ... victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong'" (de Certeau 1988, p. xix).

In their answers, students must draw on the relevant readings and unit content in order to build a strong argument. They should aim to incorporate and discuss the work of key theorists explored in the opening weeks of the unit such as bell hooks, Michel de Certeau, Stuart Hall and Greg Tate. Students are also required to develop academic writing skills in their essays. If you have any questions about the structure of an academic essay, please ask your tutor, raise questions on the general discussion board and use the resources available at mq.edu.au/learningskills. You should also include in-text referencing and attach a reference list at the end of their essay. For more information on referencing please follow the link to Macquarie University Library's Referencing Guide here: <http://libguides.mq.edu.au/Referencing>.

Each task will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Demonstrates a clear and effective grasp of relevant key concepts explored in the unit
2. Develops an argument that is supported by both theoretical concepts and analysis of a well chosen example
3. Effectively uses writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing.

Submission: Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

Late Penalty: Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Extensions: Students who have experienced a disruption to their studies and would like to seek an extension must submit a disruption to studies notification via ask.mq.edu.au. Please email your tutor if you have any questions.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.
- Develop research skills that will enable students to present theorised, contextualised and

informed accounts of key issues and problems in the context of subcultural and counter-visual practices.

- Employ cultural literacy skills that will educate students on the importance of issues of cultural difference and ethical relations across diverse social and political contexts.

Portfolio & Reflection Task

Due: **25 September 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **30%**

In this unit, students are required to participate in the weekly forum in two ways. First, students must post a 200-300 word response to the weekly activity within the defined time frame. Second, students must also encourage engagement and peer learning by commenting on one other post in the weekly forum. The forum will be open from the Tuesday of each week until the following Tuesday.

For this assessment, students will draw on their weekly tasks in order to submit one word document to turnitin that contains two sections.

Section One: Activity Portfolio

For this section of the assessment, students must collate their activity posts from Week 1 - Week 7 and paste them into a Word Document.

Section Two: Scholarly Reflection

For this section of the assessment, students are required to select two of their own responses to the weekly activities undertaken in the discussion forms between weeks 1-7. They are required to complete a 400-500 word scholarly reflection task for each post.

In these scholarly reflections, students are required to outline the context of their post on the discussion forum, demonstrate how it enhances their understanding of the key concepts or methods explored in the unit, and discuss how their thoughts have developed since writing their post.

Students can find a template for this assessment task on the main ilearn page, underneath the link to the dialogue module and unit guide. Each post they include should be 150-300 words in length (about a paragraph). This means you may either use a full post, or an extract. The posts are not included in the word count.

This assessment task will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Submission of weekly writing activities, including two of the student's weekly responses for reflection
2. Demonstrates a clear grasp of relevant key theoretical concepts and their context
3. Demonstrates the ability to identify the significance and implications of relevant key concepts
4. Demonstrates a critical engagement with relevant unit readings, cultural studies

scholarship and debates

5. Stages a thoughtful reflection on the process of learning and engaging with cultural studies scholarship
6. Effective use of writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing

Submission: Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

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Final Essay

Due: **7 November 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **40%**

For this assessment, students are required to write a 2,000 word essay in response to one of the questions listed below. In their answers, students (a) must use the concepts offered in the relevant readings and (b) draw on example/s in order to develop and support their own argument.

- Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's work and an example of your choosing, discuss how questions about either graffiti or kitsch are in fact all about questions of taste and distinction and the consecration of the social order.
- Discuss the importance of reproductive technologies in relation to kitsch. In your answer, you need to discuss Benjamin's and Olalquiaga's work on the aura, the original and the

reproduction, the tactility of kitsch, and the democratisation of the image.

- Aboriginalist kitsch is enabled by white supremacism: it is an "assertion of rights of ownership in the intellectual and cultural sphere to match power in the political and economic sphere." B. Hodge and V. Mishra. Discuss.
- "Indigenous tourist wares were threatening because they blurred the boundaries, they rendered the other unrecognisable." R. B. Phillips. Discuss in the context of indigenous tourist art.
- "We are enveloped by the gigantic, surrounded by it, enclosed within its shadow. Whereas we know the miniature as a spatial whole or as temporal parts, we know the gigantic only partially. We move through the landscape; it does not move through us." Susan Stewart. Discuss gigantism and the miniature in the context of examples in the Australian landscape and kitsch culture.
- Art cannot exist without kitsch. Discuss in the context of the work of Marcel Duchamp and Jeff Koons.
- Kitsch and queer "are in a lascivious embrace. They constantly transmute." Craig Judd. Discuss.
- Queer kitsch brings into focus a concept of the self as "performative, improvisational, discontinuous, and processually constituted by repetitive and stylized acts." Moe Myer. Discuss.
- "Representational excess, heterogeneity, and gratuitousness of reference, in constituting a major *raison d'être* of camp's fun and exclusiveness, both signal and contribute to an overall resistance to definition." Fabio Cleto. Discuss.
- "The audience's connection with celebrities, celestoids and celeactors is dominated by imaginary relationships." Chris Rojek. Discuss how celebrity kitsch is one of the key products of this imaginary relationship.
- Dick Hebdige outlines two forms of incorporation of subcultures by a dominant culture: the commodity form and the ideological form. Discuss these two forms of incorporation in the context of an actual subcultural style, with reference to bell hooks' essay on "Eating the Other."
- Construct your own essay question, with reference to the topics and readings of the unit, *in consultation with your tutor*.

Essays will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Demonstrates a clear and effective grasp of the key concepts raised in the relevant readings
2. Identifies relevant examples and provides contextualised and forensic analysis

3. Develops a well-supported and well-researched argument
4. Effectively re-evaluates practices of everyday life that are often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral
5. Critiques relevant hierarchies of value
6. Effectively uses writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing.

Submission: Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

Late Penalty: Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

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On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
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- Employ cultural literacy skills that will educate students on the importance of issues of cultural difference and ethical relations across diverse social and political contexts.

Delivery and Resources

Students will complete this unit online. At the beginning of the study period, they will find the weekly schedule listed sequentially down the ilearn page from week 1 to week 13. Listed underneath each week, they will find details about the content, lecture, a link to the unit readings and a link to the weekly activity and discussion forum.

Unit Lectures: The lectures in this unit are available in ilearn. They are prepared by many of the cultural studies staff in the Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies Department at

Macquarie University.

Unit Readings: The readings for each week are available via online 'Unit Readings,' a service provided by the [Macquarie University Library](#). A link to the readings is provided in the listing for each week. If you have trouble finding and/or accessing the readings, please search the library's online database and consult your tutor.

Weekly Activities and Discussion: At the beginning of each week, your tutor will send an announcement that introduces the weekly topic and highlights any upcoming tasks. Following the announcement, they will also post an activity for you to complete in the weekly section. These activities are designed to help you develop your understanding of the unit content. They also aim to provide a space to ask questions and interact with your peers.

The General Discussion Forum: If you have any general questions about the unit or an assessment, and would like to share them with your peers, please start a conversation in the general discussion forum. This forum is open for everyone to start discussions, share resources and ask questions.

The Dialogue Module: This module is available for students who would like to have private conversations with their tutor.

Planning the study period: The OUA Weekly Calendar can be used to plan both your assessment tasks and weekly activities. It can be found here: <http://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/weekly-calendars>

Policies and Procedures

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure
(<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

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.

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 outcomes

- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.
- Develop research skills that will enable students to present theorised, contextualised and informed accounts of key issues and problems in the context of subcultural and counter-visual practices.
- Demonstrate communication skills in order effectively and creatively to present research across different genres and cultural media.
- Employ cultural literacy skills that will educate students on the importance of issues of cultural difference and ethical relations across diverse social and political contexts.

Assessment tasks

- Key Concepts Essay
- Final Essay

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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.
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Assessment tasks

- Portfolio & Reflection Task
- Final Essay

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

- Develop research skills that will enable students to present theorised, contextualised and informed accounts of key issues and problems in the context of subcultural and counter-visual practices.
- Employ cultural literacy skills that will educate students on the importance of issues of cultural difference and ethical relations across diverse social and political contexts.

Assessment tasks

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- Final Essay

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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
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Assessment tasks

- Key Concepts Essay
- Portfolio & Reflection Task
- Final Essay

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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position

cultural objects and practices.

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Assessment tasks

- Key Concepts Essay
- Portfolio & Reflection Task
- Final Essay

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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.
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Assessment tasks

- Key Concepts Essay
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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

- Develop analytical skills that will enable students to examine and critique the presuppositions that constitute those hierarchies of value that classify, judge and position cultural objects and practices.
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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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.

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Assessment tasks

- Key Concepts Essay
- Final Essay

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

- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate those practices of everyday life that are too often dismissed as worthless or ephemeral.
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