



MAS 203

News and Current Affairs

S1 Day 2018

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

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Y3A 193E

Consultation by appointment

Tutor

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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:

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.
- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.
- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

General Assessment Information

Assessment Criteria

GRADE	RANGE	STATUS ('Standard Grade' in AMIS)	DESCRIPTION
HD	85-100	Pass	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality, insight or creativity in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the program.
D	75-84	Pass	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality or creativity in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the program and the audience.
CR	65-74	Pass	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the program.
P	50-64	Pass	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the program; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the program. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.
F	0-49	Fail	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the program.

Special Consideration

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. Special Consideration

Expectations of students

- Actively engage with assessment tasks, including carefully reading the guidance provided, understanding criteria, spending sufficient time on the task and submitting work on time.
- Ensure that their work is their own in accordance with the University's Academic Honesty Policy.
- Incorporate theories and topics from the unit.
- Regularly engage in news consumption via a range of platforms.
- Read, reflect and act on feedback provided.

Reference Style

- All sources for submitted work should be correctly cited in-text and in a bibliography using APA formatting.
- An APA style guide is available here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Failure to correctly cite a source may lead to the student being reported for plagiarism: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Feedback in this unit

Feedback (on assessments and learning) is provided in several ways throughout this unit. The usefulness of feedback depends on what you do with it. Feedback can be provided in the form of:

- General comment, rubric and in-text comments attached to assignments marked in GradeMark
- Comments from your tutor in discussions and unit activities
- Announcements in iLearn if there are points of relevance to the whole class
- Personal reflections during the course on learning
- Email communication with individual students where comments are made by the tutor or convenor in response to questions related to course activities
- Personal consultations by phone or face to face as requested by appointment

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Story Pitch	20%	No	Week 4
News Analysis	30%	No	Week 7
News Bulletin	50%	No	Week 11 and Week 13

Story Pitch

Due: **Week 4**

Weighting: **20%**

You will develop a pitch for a television news story. This involves **presenting a pitch during your seminar** and **submitting a paper script of the pitch to your tutor**. You will need to find a newsworthy, timely topic that interests you. Think about the sources and people you will need to access, whether the topic has compelling visual elements, and whether it is appropriate to your audience. Develop a script for your **4-5 minute pitch**, which should include:

- A working headline
- A summary of the proposed story (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- An explanation of why an audience would be interested in this story
- A discussion of main sources (interview talent, reports or documents, archives, etc.)
- An indication of visuals that will accompany the story.

You will present the pitch during your seminar and your peers will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Consider converting your script to bullet points to avoid reading word-for-word. You may include props or print-outs (but not PowerPoint slides or video) for your audience.

You will also **submit a paper copy of your pitch script to your tutor in the seminar** immediately before you present. There is no required word length, but the paper copy should cover the material discussed in your pitch. It should also present evidence of research including **APA referencing where it is applicable**. The Story Pitch is intended to help students identify and apply news values, understand newsroom practices and culture, and begin the process of news production. **It will provide a starting point for the News Bulletin assignment**, as students will subsequently form groups and choose one of the pitches to produce a news story.

The criteria against which the report will be graded are:

- Identifying newsworthiness
- Research and preparation
- Understanding of news practices and story structure

- Presentation structure and clarity

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.

News Analysis

Due: **Week 7**

Weighting: **30%**

You will select a news story to analyse using theories and concepts from the unit readings. First, locate a news or current affairs story in an Australian newspaper, online news source, television, or radio program. When picking the story make sure it is recent; it was published/broadcast after the current session start date. The source is well-known and credible. The story deals with a topic that interests you and does so in an in-depth way.

Second, analyse the story using theories and concepts from our unit readings, lectures, and seminar discussion. You may consider the following aspects of the story: what makes it newsworthy, its structure, the use of multimedia, the intended audience and message, ethical concerns, and the economics of its production. You should look ahead to future unit readings for sources and topics. You may decide to apply one or more pertinent theories to analyse the story.

You will submit a **1000-word essay (+/- 10%)** analysing the article to Turnitin. The essay should be written as a formal academic essay. In addition to the citation for your chosen story and a link to the story, you must integrate at least **3 scholarly sources, including 2 unit readings, and 1 additional source**. Use APA style for in-text citations and your bibliography.

Submission:

The News Analysis will be submitted via the Turnitin link on iLearn as a PDF or Word document.

The criteria against which the News Analysis will be graded are:

- Suitability of news story
- Analysis and argument
- Application of theory and concepts
- Research and preparation
- Writing style and presentation
- Accuracy of APA referencing

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.

- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.

News Bulletin

Due: **Week 11 and Week 13**

Weighting: **50%**

There are two components to this assessment: practical and written.

Practical - News Segment (20%)

In groups you will produce a television news story for a class news bulletin. **Each group will produce a 90 to 120 second news package (story)** for the television news format. Students will work collaboratively on this project from Week 5 to Week 11, incorporating news writing, production management, and audio/visual storytelling techniques. This project will incorporate digital camera operation, audio recording, and digital video and audio editing using desktop software. This part of the assessment is due in Week 11.

The criteria against which the News Bulletin practical component will be graded are:

- Identifying newsworthiness
- Research and preparation
- Understanding of news practices and story structure
- Technical proficiency in video and sound recording, and editing
- Effective and collaborative team work

Written - Reflection Essay (30%)

You will submit a **1200 word (+/- 10%) Reflection Essay** that theorises your experience of producing the news bulletin by drawing on topics, theories and concepts from the unit. The reflection is intended to indicate what you have learnt from the process of developing a story pitch into a news bulletin. It should demonstrate your ability to make connections between theory and practice. The key is to link what you studied, discussed and read during the unit to what you did on a practical level.

You should provide examples from your experience with technical aspects of news production and working in a team, but should not simply describe the whole process. The Reflection Essay is more than a summary of what happened. It requires going beyond describing what we do to thinking about why we do things. In order to make these connections you need to incorporate **at least 5 scholarly sources, including 3 unit readings and 2 additional scholarly sources**. Include in-text citations and a bibliography in APA style. The assignment should be submitted to Turnitin in Week 13.

Submission:

The Reflection Essay will be submitted via the Turnitin link on iLearn as a PDF or Word document.

The criteria against which the News Bulletin written component will be graded:

- Analysis and argument
- Theory and concepts
- Reflection on examples of practical experience
- Research and preparation
- Writing style and presentation
- Accuracy of APA referencing

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.
- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.
- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

Delivery and Resources

Video Lectures

Video lectures will replace face-to-face lectures for this unit. They will be accessible on the iLearn page for the unit from Week 1 onwards. To get the most out of the seminars, students are required to watch the video lecture and complete the relevant readings prior to attending class.

Seminars

There are two-hour weekly seminars for this unit beginning in week 1. Seminars will include group discussions of the weekly topic and workshops related to news production. It is important that you complete the required readings for the week and watch the video lecture prior to attending the seminar so that you can contribute to the discussion and get the most out of workshop activities. The workshop components of the seminars will give you newsroom writing instruction and field experience. Toward the end of the session, seminar time will be devoted to the News Bulletin assignment.

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 seminar (if the disruption is greater than three consecutive days) or supply appropriate documentation to your unit convenor for any missed seminar (if less than three consecutive days). Students are responsible for arranging access to missed seminar content.

Required Readings

The schedule of required readings is provided on the MAS203 iLearn. All required readings are accessible online via iLearn and/or Macquarie University Library. If a reading is unavailable or a

web link is broken, please contact the convenor. Also contact the convenor if you have special requirements for accessing readings (for instance, visual impairment).

Other Recommended Reading or Viewing

If you want to develop a superior understanding of journalism you are encouraged to regularly engage in news consumption via a range of platforms. On social media, and follow major news outlets and a range of individual journalists. Watch out for new trends in news production and how news is being distributed. Listen to news radio when you're in the car and watch ABC or SBS 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 are to be sent to Unit Convenor Dr Tai Neilson.

Consultations for Assessments

Seminar instructors will be available upon appointment for consultations related to the assessments.

Applying for Special Consideration:

Information on the Special Consideration Policy, and how to apply, is available here:

<https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

Re-Marks:

The Re-mark Application form is available at <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Technologies used:

The iLearn site for MAS203 is accessible at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>. A computer and Internet access are required to complete assessments in MAS203. Basic computer and word processing skills are also a requirement.

Return of marked work:

During semester, marked work will be returned to students online via iLearn.

Examinations:

There is no exam for MAS203.

Unit Schedule

Week 1: Futures of Australian Journalism

Week 2: Print Journalism and the Public Sphere

Week 3: Broadcast News and Mass Media

Week 4: No Lecture: News Pitches

Week 5: Photo Journalism

Week 6: Audio

Week 7: Video

Week 8: Digital and Networked News

Week 9: Personalisation, Gender and Ethics

Week 10: Indigenous News

Week 11: Automation and Freelance Work

Week 12: Surveillance and Metadata Laws

Week 13: No Lecture: Reflection on News Bulletins

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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.m](#)

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 outcome

- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.

Assessment tasks

- Story Pitch
- News 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

- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

Assessment tasks

- Story Pitch
- News 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

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.

Assessment tasks

- Story Pitch
- News 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

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.
- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

Assessment tasks

- News Analysis
- News 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

- Understand and apply key theories of news and current affairs.
- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

Assessment tasks

- Story Pitch
- News 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

- Engage in news production and newsroom practices.

- Reflect on practice and theory.

Assessment tasks

- Story Pitch
- News Analysis
- News 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

- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.
- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.

Assessment tasks

- News Analysis
- News 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

- Analyse historical and technological changes to news media.
- Evaluate the relationships between news, current affairs, politics and culture.
- Locate Australian news and current affairs within global media.
- Reflect on practice and theory.

Assessment tasks

- News Analysis

- News Bulletin