General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
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By email appointment

Tutor
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Credit points
3

Prerequisites
39cp at 100 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit examines the crucial roles that forensic media play in news media organisation. It offers a brief history of the historical emergence of forensic media, tracking the development of the police mug shot, forensic photography and the establishment of criminal archives. It then examines the broad spectrum of contemporary technologies that are shaping the field of forensic media, including: forensic typical body charts, biometrics and other border technologies, satellite imaging, CCTV, interoperable networks and megadata surveillance, drones, Twitter, Instagram, thermal imaging and emergent technologies. Forensic technologies have now become foundational for news organisations in order for them to illustrate and evidence their news stories – from mobile phone apps such as Metadata news feed to record and communicate secretive drone strikes to satellite imaging to evidence unfolding humanitarian crises. This unit places forensic media within news media contexts in order to address the ethical, geopolitical and social questions that the use of such media raises.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates
Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate research and evaluative skills that will enable students to understand the historical, political and technological forces that have been constitutive in the emergence of forensic media.
2. Apply critical and analytical skills in the examination and evaluation of the key concepts and arguments that underpin the use of forensic media across different platforms and news organisations.
3. Compare and assess local and international perspectives on forensic media.
4. Apply critical argumentation skills in order to articulate and evidence different viewpoints on the social, geopolitical and ethical uses of forensic media.
5. Integrate interpretive and communication skills in order effectively to convey the key ideas, issues and disciplinary debates on the use of forensic media across diverse platforms and contexts.
6. Apply ethical and socially responsible skills that demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on the ethical implications generated by the uses of forensic media in their respective geopolitical contexts.

General Assessment Information

Late Submissions - Guidelines

Tasks 10% or less. No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the deadline 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 10% per day penalty. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Assessing Active Participation or Active Contribution (not just ‘participation’)

Active participation is assessed by a student’s engagement in activities such as; discussions facilitated by the lecturer/tutor, contributions to online discussion forums, or general questions asked during lectures or tutorials and involvement in set activities. Participation is expected to be well considered and relevant to the unit of study.

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>On assigned tutorial date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tutorial Presentation

**Due:** On assigned tutorial date  
**Weighting:** 25%

Oral presentation of a tutorial paper based on the student’s chosen tutorial topic: minimum 15 minutes presentation. Create a tutorial presentation based on a chosen tutorial topic. Discuss the key issues and arguments of the topic as outlined in the relevant readings. Illustrate your topic with reference to relevant news, videos, political events and so on. Students are required to:

1. address in detail the key issues raised by the tutorial topic;
2. evidence and illustrate all their arguments and assertions;
3. ask the class topic-related questions and generate discussion. NB: Generating class discussion is a crucial component of this assessment.

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- 6. Apply ethical and socially responsible skills that demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on the ethical implications generated by the uses of forensic media in their respective geopolitical contexts.
On-course Essay
Due: 1 week after presentation
Weighting: 25%

Your On-Course essay must be a minimum of 1,500 words in length. It is due one week after your tutorial presentation.

In your on-course essay, you are required to develop the oral presentation you presented to the class into a formal essay, with an introduction, body and conclusion.

You will be required to:
1. Outline in your introduction the key arguments you will map in the course of your essay.
2. Discuss in detail in the body of your essay the key ideas and issues raised by the topic.
3. Deploy the theories used in the relevant tutorial readings in order to analyse and discuss the relevant forensic media you are analysing.
4. Support, through relevant evidence, all your arguments and assertions.
5. Supply a conclusion to your key arguments.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- 1. Demonstrate research and evaluative skills that will enable students to understand the historical, political and technological forces that have been constitutive in the emergence of forensic media.
- 2. Apply critical and analytical skills in the examination and evaluation of the key concepts and arguments that underpin the use of forensic media across different platforms and news organisations.
- 3. Compare and assess local and international perspectives on forensic media.
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Final Essay
Due: 6 November 2017
Weighting: 50%
Due Date: Monday 6 November 2017. Time deadline: 5pm. Weight: 50%

Word Length: 2000 words A final essay in-lieu of an examination is the third part of this unit’s assessment. Students are required to select one essay question from the list of questions below. Your essay question, however, cannot be based on the same topic as your tutorial presentation/essay. In their essay, students must draw on the critical and theoretical material discussed in the lectures and provided in the Unit Reader.

NB: Do not write on the same topic that you used for your seminar presentation.

In the Final Essay, students will be required to:

1. Outline in your introduction the key arguments you will map in the course of your essay.

2. Discuss in detail in the body of your essay the key ideas and issues raised by the essay question.

3. Deploy the theories used in the relevant tutorial readings in order to analyse and discuss the relevant forensic media you are analysing.

4. Support, through relevant evidence, all your arguments and assertions.

5. Supply a conclusion to your key arguments.

FINAL ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Forensic culture is an epistemic culture, that is, it is a culture of knowledge: it produces knowledge about criminal acts or events. Identify and discuss in detail the key attributes that define the cultural attributes of the discipline of forensics. Evidence your answer with concrete examples from the field of forensics.

2. Forensics prides itself on being a science. Yet, in fact, it also critically constituted by aesthetic, rhetorical, narratological and interpretative dimensions. Discuss.

3. Precisely because forensics is framed as offering evidentiary information about an event or a crime, it has been seized by the mainstream media as an important source of information that can inform both its news gathering practices and its production of news stories. Discuss.

4. Discuss the racialised history and contemporary racial politics of forensic ‘typical body’ charts.

5. What are the key issues that Kathryn Biber raises in relation to the visual evidence available in crime’s archive. In your answer, be sure to discuss questions of open access, resulting unintended consequences of public access of sensitive material and the issue of ‘open justice.’

6. Drawing on Peter Doyle’s ‘Public eye, private eye: Sydney police mug shots, 1912-1930’
essay, examine the ‘relationship between the subjects of archival police “mug shots” and the photographic apparatus,’ with a particular focus on ‘those aspects of display and expression of selfhood apparent in the subjects brought before the police photographer.’

7. What are the key problematics of using CCTV images for forensic purposes? In your answer, be sure to discuss the scientific, philosophical and ethical dimensions of this type of forensic use of CCTV images and to ground your analysis in the context of concrete examples.

8. How does forensic genetics at once validate the question of identity and put it in question?

9. What is the ‘CSI effect’ and what is its impact on the judicial process, juries, policy debates and public understandings of law?

10. What are the key issues that arise in using non-fiction in order to write about true crime? You need to discuss in detail the social, ethical and aesthetic questions that such non-fiction true crime writing generates.

11. Discuss both the positive and negative dimensions generated by the use of drone media.

12. How has social media revolutionised crisis mapping? Be sure to ground your analysis in detailed and concrete examples.

13. Discuss the geopolitical and biopolitical uses of technologies of extraterritorialisation by contemporary nation-states in the context of borders, asylum seekers and irregular migrants.

14. How has social media permanently changed the reporting of war, humanitarian and environmental disasters and other significant events?

15. Discuss the key aspects of biometric technologies. In your answer, focus on issues of identity, security and counter-terrorism.

16. Construct your own essay question. Be sure to consult with your tutor and to get their approval on the final version of your essay question.

On successful completion you will be able to:

• 1. Demonstrate research and evaluative skills that will enable students to understand the historical, political and technological forces that have been constitutive in the emergence of forensic media.

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https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/72235/unit_guide/print
concepts and arguments that underpin the use of forensic media across different platforms and news organisations.

• 3. Compare and assess local and international perspectives on forensic media.
• 4. Apply critical argumentation skills in order to articulate and evidence different viewpoints on the social, geopolitical and ethical uses of forensic media.
• 5. Integrate interpretive and communication skills in order effectively to convey the key ideas, issues and disciplinary debates on the use of forensic media across diverse platforms and contexts.
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Delivery and Resources
A MECO331 Reader will be available online from the MQ Library. All required reading list titles will be available via ‘Unit Readings’ in MultiSearch: http://multisearch.mq.edu.au/?course
All essays to be electronically submitted via Turnitin.

Unit Schedule
MECO331 FORENSIC MEDIA 2017 LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week One: Introduction to Forensics and Forensic Media
Week Two: Forensic Art and Illustration
Week Three: Suspicion: Dealing with the Forensic Photograph - Guest Lecturer: Associate Professor Peter Doyle
Week Four: Forensic CCTV
Week Five: Crime Scenes: Using Forensic Evidence in Nonfiction Writing - Guest Lecturer: Dr Kate Rossmanith
Week Six: Forensic Genetics and the Media
Week Seven: Forensic Drone Media
RECESS: 18 September to 28 September
Week Eight: READING WEEK: NO CLASSES
Week Nine: Forensic Geospatial Technologies
Week Ten: Geopolitics of Forensic Geospatial Technologies
Week Eleven: Forensic Uses of Social Media
Week Twelve: Forensic Biometrics
2017 SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week One: 31 July: Introduction to Forensics and Forensic Media

Readings:


Week Two: 4

7 August: Forensic Art and Illustration

Readings:


Week Three: 14 August: Suspicion: Dealing with the Forensic Photograph

Readings:


Week Four: 21 August: Forensic CCTV

Readings:


Week Five: 28 August: Crime Scenes: Using Forensic Evidence in Nonfiction Writing

Readings:
Dominick Dunne 1984, 'Justice', Vanity Fair, March,
http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/archive/1984/03/dunne198403

Week Six: 4 September: Forensic Genetics and the Media

Readings:

Week Seven: 11 September: Forensic Drone Media

Readings:

RECESS: 18 September to 28 September

Week Eight: 2 October to 6 October: READING WEEK: NO CLASSES

Week Nine: 9 October: Forensic Geospatial Technologies

Readings:
Networks Are Changing the World, One Map at a Time,’ *Journal of Map and Geographies Libraries*, vol. 8, pp. 89-100.


**Week Ten: 16 October: Geopolitics of Forensic Geospatial Technologies**

**Readings:**


**Week Eleven: 23 October: Forensic Uses of Social Media**

**Readings:**


**Week Twelve: 30 October: Forensic Biometrics**

**Readings:**


[https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/72235/unit_guide/print](https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/72235/unit_guide/print)
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:


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/](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/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://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
Graduate Capabilities

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

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Assessment tasks

• Tutorial Presentation
• On-course Essay
• 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.

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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

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Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Presentation
- On-course Essay
- Final Essay

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.
want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- 1. Demonstrate research and evaluative skills that will enable students to understand the historical, political and technological forces that have been constitutive in the emergence of forensic media.
- 3. Compare and assess local and international perspectives on forensic media.
- 5. Integrate interpretive and communication skills in order effectively to convey the key ideas, issues and disciplinary debates on the use of forensic media across diverse platforms and contexts.
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**Assessment tasks**

- Tutorial Presentation
- On-course Essay
- Final Essay

**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 research and evaluative skills that will enable students to understand the historical, political and technological forces that have been constitutive in the emergence of forensic media.
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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 outcome

• 6. Apply ethical and socially responsible skills that demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on the ethical implications generated by the uses of forensic media in their respective geopolitical contexts.

Assessment tasks

• Tutorial Presentation
• On-course 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

• 4. Apply critical argumentation skills in order to articulate and evidence different
viewpoints on the social, geopolitical and ethical uses of forensic media.

• 6. Apply ethical and socially responsible skills that demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on the ethical implications generated by the uses of forensic media in their respective geopolitical contexts.

Assessment tasks

• Tutorial Presentation
• On-course 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

• 2. Apply critical and analytical skills in the examination and evaluation of the key concepts and arguments that underpin the use of forensic media across different platforms and news organisations.
• 3. Compare and assess local and international perspectives on forensic media.
• 4. Apply critical argumentation skills in order to articulate and evidence different viewpoints on the social, geopolitical and ethical uses of forensic media.
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Assessment tasks

• Tutorial Presentation
• On-course Essay
• 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

• 4. Apply critical argumentation skills in order to articulate and evidence different viewpoints on the social, geopolitical and ethical uses of forensic media.

• 5. Integrate interpretive and communication skills in order effectively to convey the key ideas, issues and disciplinary debates on the use of forensic media across diverse platforms and contexts.

• 6. Apply ethical and socially responsible skills that demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on the ethical implications generated by the uses of forensic media in their respective geopolitical contexts.

Assessment task

• Final Essay

Changes from Previous Offering

This version of the unit has included a new reading on drone technologies that discusses the killing of civilians by armed drones in the conduct of the US’ ongoing war on terror.