MECO331
Forensic Media
S2 Day 2018

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

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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

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

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.

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application

http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Methods of Feedback

Example Sources of Feedback in a Unit (Adapted from Trudy Ambler, S2 2017) (Adapted from ‘Feedback is a Dialogue’ – University of Strathclyde Glasgow)

Informal:

*Comments from the unit convenor in the forum discussions and unit activities

*Through the ‘announcement’ function in iLearn, if there are points of relevance to the whole class
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>
<tr>
<td>On-course Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 week after presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5 November 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.
This Assessment Task relates to the following 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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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.

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.

This Assessment Task relates to the following 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.

• 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.

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Final Essay

Due: 5 November 2018
Weighting: 50%

Due Date: Monday 5 November 2018. 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. Drawing on one or more of the cases from the Deathscapes project, discuss in analytical detail how the settler-colonial state structurally produces Indigenous deaths in custody.

9. Drawing on one or more of the cases from the Deathscapes project, discuss in analytical detail the relations of power that are critical in producing deaths of refugees and asylum seekers at the border and in immigration detention prisons. In your answer, be sure to discuss the relation between settler-colonial sovereignty and the militarised control of the border.

10. How does forensic genetics at once validate the question of identity and put it in question?
11. What is the ‘CSI effect’ and what is its impact on the judicial process, juries, policy debates and public understandings of law?

12. 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.

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

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

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

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.

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Delivery and Resources

All tutorials commence in Week 1 of semester.

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.

MMCCS Session Remark Application
http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Unit Schedule

MECO331 FORENSIC MEDIA 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: Deathscapes 1: Indigenous Deaths in Custody
Week Seven: Deathscapes 2: Asylum Seeker and Refugee Deaths at the Border
RECESS: 18 September to 28 September
Week Eight: READING WEEK: NO CLASSES
Week Nine: Forensic Genetics and the Media
Week Ten: Forensic Drone Media
Week Eleven: Forensic Geospatial Technologies
Week Twelve: Forensic Uses of Social Media

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week One: 30 July: Introduction to Forensics and Forensic Media

Readings:

Week Two: 6 August: Forensic Art and Illustration

Readings:


Week Three: 13 August: Suspicion: Dealing with the Forensic Photograph

Readings:


Week Four: 20 August: Forensic CCTV

Readings:


Week Five: 27 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: 3 September: Deathscapes 1: Indigenous Deaths in Custody

Readings:

Read at least two Indigenous deaths in custody cases available at the Deathscapes website: http
Week Seven: 11 September: Deathscapes 2: Asylum Seeker and Refugee Deaths at the Border

Read at least two asylum seeker or refugee deaths at the border cases available at the Deathscapes website: https://www.deathscapes.org

RECESS: 17 September to 1 October 2018

Week Eight: 2 October to 5 October: READING WEEK: NO CLASSES

Week Nine: 8 October: Forensic Genetics and the Media

Readings:


Simon A. Cole 2013, ‘A Surfeit of Science: The “CSI Effect” and the Media Appropriation of the Public Understanding of Science,’ *Public Understanding of Science*, vol. 0, pp. 1-17.

Week Ten: 15 October: Forensic Drone Media

Readings:


Week Eleven: 22 October: Forensic Geospatial Technologies

Readings:
Week Twelve: 29 October: Forensic Uses of Social Media

Readings:


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). 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). 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 (http://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.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 Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

**Equity 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.

**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.

**Additional Information:** MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_
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.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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Assessment tasks

• Tutorial Presentation
• On-course Essay
• 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

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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. We 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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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

**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.
- 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.
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**Assessment tasks**

- Tutorial Presentation
- On-course Essay
- Final Essay
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.
- 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

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 two new lectures and related readings based on the Deathscapes project: Indigenous deaths in custody and asylum seeker and refugee deaths at the border.