



# MECO826

## Data Journalism

S2 Day 2018

*Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Alex Mesker

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Y3A 193K

by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MFJ or MCreIndMFJ or MMedia or MCreIndMMedia

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit focuses on innovative approaches to finding, reporting, producing and interacting with media stories through the use of digital technologies and data structures. Students will critically analyse and gain practical experience in data-driven reporting techniques, the principles of information design and the production of data visualisations. The unit also covers user experience, gamification, collaboration and the potential uses and limitations of 'big' data for journalistic practice.

## 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:

Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.

Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.

Apply advanced reporting and storytelling techniques to find and produce stories that inform, educate and entertain.

Identify and analyse new literacies in journalism.

Situate the focus on data and visualization within debates about journalism and its social function.

## General Assessment Information

### Late Submission Penalty

*“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.”*

This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Special Consideration/ Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#">Portfolio: Deconstructed Data</a>	35%	No	Week 7, Friday 11:59pm
<a href="#">Data Story Pitch and Plan</a>	25%	No	Week 9 Class
<a href="#">Data Journalism Project</a>	40%	No	Week 12, Friday 11:59pm

### Portfolio: Deconstructed Data

Due: **Week 7, Friday 11:59pm**

Weighting: **35%**

#### You will submit:

- a Portfolio that is made up of three blog posts from the Community of Inquiry Blog (apx equiv 500 words each; weeks 1-7).
- a 250 word overview/introduction that reflects on the work completed and contextualises the work within key debates and discussions.

**Format:** Submit your portfolio as a Word document with text and links to your MECO 826 blog posts via Turnitin submission link in iLearn.

Detailed instructions will be issued each week to guide your posts.

- **Analysis:** Demonstrate that you can identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualisations and interactive reporting) and its history.
- **Case Studies:** Your ability to choose appropriate examples to analyse and evaluate concepts and approaches to news gathering and storytelling.

- **Context:** Your post will demonstrate that you can situate literacies in journalism within debates about journalism and its social function.
- **Presentation:** Clarity of expression and appropriate use of the platform.

### Assessment Style & Feedback:

This is a formative assessment. You will receive informal feedback on your posts each week. Your formal feedback will include a grade out of 100, a qualitative rubric and written comments.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
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- Situate the focus on data and visualization within debates about journalism and its social function.

## Data Story Pitch and Plan

Due: **Week 9 Class**

Weighting: **25%**

Each Student will pitch their data-driven story idea to the class in week 9. You will have 10 minutes to present and another 10 minutes for discussion.

Students should post all relevant presentation materials to your Blog prior to class including links to relevant data sets, tools and back up research. You will use this post to talk the class through your idea and plan. (You may use presentation platforms or Powerpoint slides but it is not required.)

You should also acknowledge and discuss any existing pieces of Data Journalism or Visualizations that inspired your approach.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Research:** The breadth and depth of your background research and your ability to identify relevant datasets
- **Reporting:** Demonstrate that you have developed a workable plan to report your story
- **Storytelling:** Show that you understand how you use data to find stories and/or how you use data to tell stories.
- **Innovation:** Your plan includes suitable use of the tools and products of data journalism

- **Presentation and Persuasion:** Quality of your pitch as a form of persuasive communication

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.
- Apply advanced reporting and storytelling techniques to find and produce stories that inform, educate and entertain.
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## Data Journalism Project

Due: **Week 12, Friday 11:59pm**

Weighting: **40%**

A data driven feature or series of stories that should include a headline, an introduction and three-four original visualizations\* including links to all relevant data sets and sources. (\*You may storyboard any ideas that you are unable to produce due to technical limitations but please discuss this approach with your lecturer ahead of time.) (apx 1500 words)

A reflection that explains your process and decisions and critically assesses the benefits, challenges and limits of data driven journalism. Also discuss how you would promote your project via social and online media. Please cite relevant literature. (apx. 750 words)

You should post your project to the blog (or a link to it if you have posted it at an external site) and submit a copy as a Word document via the Turnitin submission link in iLearn.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Research:** The quality of the research you conducted including your background research, your ability to identify suitable datasets or gather suitable data
- **Reporting:** The quality and relevance of your reporting including your choice of sources and selection of facts and quotes
- **Visualizations/Interactivity:** The success of your visualizations or interactives as a form of effective non-fiction storytelling
- **Reflection and context:** Show that you can contextualise your project within the key

debates of the field including ethics, audience engagement, effective storytelling and efficiency.

- **Social Media:** Demonstrate an understanding of how to promote and redistribute your feature in social media channels.

This is a summative assessment: Feedback will include a grade out of 100, a qualitative rubric and a comment about your project.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.
- Apply advanced reporting and storytelling techniques to find and produce stories that inform, educate and entertain.
- Identify and analyse new literacies in journalism.
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## Delivery and Resources

An online collaborative learning space will be available to students for the duration of the unit (URL will be supplied in classes). Information about weekly readings and learning activities will be available via iLearn.

Come along for a unit overview and introduction in week 1. Tutorials start in week 2.

## 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.mq.edu.au](http://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](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](#)

## 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](http://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/](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.

MMCCS website [https://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/faculties\\_and\\_departments/faculty\\_of\\_arts/departments/media\\_music\\_communication\\_and\\_cultural\\_studies/](https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/)

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcomes

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.
- Apply advanced reporting and storytelling techniques to find and produce stories that inform, educate and entertain.
- Identify and analyse new literacies in journalism.
- Situate the focus on data and visualization within debates about journalism and its social function.

#### Assessment tasks

- Portfolio: Deconstructed Data
- Data Story Pitch and Plan
- Data Journalism Project

### PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of



knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.
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## **Assessment tasks**

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## **PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
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## PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
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## PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to gather, analyse and interpret data as a journalist.
- Apply advanced reporting and storytelling techniques to find and produce stories that inform, educate and entertain.
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## PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Identify and critically analyse the practice of data journalism, its products (including visualizations and interactive reporting) and its history.
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