UNSW Course Outline

MDIA3091 Media Futures - 2024

Published on the 23 Sep 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA3091
Year : 2024
Term : Term 3
Teaching Period : T3
Is a multi-term course? : No
Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture
Academic Unit : School of the Arts and Media
Delivery Mode : In Person
Delivery Format : Standard
Delivery Location : Kensington
Campus : Sydney
Study Level : Undergraduate
Units of Credit : 6

<u>Useful Links</u>

<u>Handbook</u> <u>Class Timetable</u>

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Note: The course code for this course was previously ARTS3091

How are algorithms and artificial intelligence changing the way we live and work, how we know and communicate, and even who we are? And what can we do about it? These are vital questions for anyone who wants to be a media agent for change, whether in your work, your community, or

your daily life. Working with case studies from war, policing, education, consumption, logistics, and the workplace, this course gives you the knowledge you need to put new technologies like facial recognition under the microscope. You will develop your analytical skills by applying critical frameworks to understand big data, machine learning, computer vision, and remote sensors such as drones, and their cultural, social, and political impacts. You will also gain insight into alternative approaches to and activist interventions in algorithmic and AI systems, including First Nations, Black, and queer engagements. This course equips you to critique emerging media futures while also participating in building alternatives that are more just and equitable.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Analyse and evaluate emerging media technologies using appropriate critical frameworks.
CLO2 : Demonstrate the capacity to engage with First Nations knowledges and critical interventions to understand media futures.
CLO3 : Develop and apply ethical and participatory strategies for imagining media futures.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Analyse and evaluate emerging media technologies using appropriate critical frameworks.	• Case Study Analysis • Research Essay
CLO2 : Demonstrate the capacity to engage with First Nations knowledges and critical interventions to understand media futures.	• Course Engagement • Case Study Analysis • Research Essay
CLO3 : Develop and apply ethical and participatory strategies for imagining media futures.	• Course Engagement • Case Study Analysis • Research Essay

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Zoom | Echo 360 | Discord

Learning and Teaching in this course

The course Moodle will be the home base for this course. Here you will find: course outlines; course readings + resources; assessment information; lecture recordings and lecture slides; links to tutorials (if you are enrolled in an online tutorial); weekly information; and more. Some of the key platforms we'll be using are:

The lecture theatre + classroom: The course will also run in-person! If you're enrolled in the in-person lecture or an in-person tutorial, make sure you come along!

Leganto: This is where you can access all your course readings and course resources.

UNSW Lecture Recordings+ / Echo360 LR+: Lectures for this course are live and in person, but if you can't make it you can catch up via the recording. Recordings will be available on Echo360, which is sometimes called UNSW Lecture Recordings+

Discord: An important part of the course is its Discord server. Many of you will be familiar with Discord already but it's a messaging platform that allows you to share resources, organise conversations into channels, and generally communicate in a much more relaxed and easy way than Moodle forums allow.

Zoom: We live in unpredictable times so be prepared to use Zoom in case classes need to be temporarily moved online due to any pandemic/flood/fire related reasons.

Additional Course Information

In addition to Moodle, this course uses Discord for course communications and students will be expected to engage with one another via that platform.

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Course Engagement Assessment Format: Individual	10%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Not Applicable
Case Study Analysis Assessment Format: Group	30%	Due Date: Week 4: 30 September - 06 October, Week 5: 07 October - 13 October
Research Essay Assessment Format: Individual	60%	Due Date: Each component has a separate due date. See below.

Assessment Details
Course Engagement

<u>Assessment Overview</u>

Students demonstrate course engagement via small, in-class activities spread across the term and submitted online.

Feedback via LMS

<u>Course Learning Outcomes</u>

- CLO2 : Demonstrate the capacity to engage with First Nations knowledges and critical interventions to understand media futures.
- CLO3 : Develop and apply ethical and participatory strategies for imagining media futures.

<u>Detailed Assessment Description</u>

Full details for this assessment can be found on Moodle.

<u>Assessment Length</u>

N/A

<u>Assignment submission Turnitin type</u>

This is not a Turnitin assignment

<u>Generative AI Permission Level</u>

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

Case Study Analysis

<u>Assessment Overview</u>

Working in groups of 4-6, students develop and deliver a 10-minute presentation on a case study topic drawing on course themes. Slides submitted online prior to the presentation.

Group mark.

Feedback via LMS

<u>Course Learning Outcomes</u>

- CLO1 : Analyse and evaluate emerging media technologies using appropriate critical frameworks.
- CLO2 : Demonstrate the capacity to engage with First Nations knowledges and critical interventions to understand media futures.
- CLO3 : Develop and apply ethical and participatory strategies for imagining media futures.

Detailed Assessment Description

Full details for this assessment can be found on Moodle.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Generative AI Permission Level

Simple Editing Assistance

In completing this assessment, you are permitted to use standard editing and referencing functions in the software you use to complete your assessment. These functions are described below. You must not use any functions that generate or paraphrase passages of text or other media, whether based on your own work or not.

If your Convenor has concerns that your submission contains passages of AI-generated text or media, you may be asked to account for your work. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

You may use generative AI tools that are built into slide design apps such as Canva or PowerPoint to assist with the DESIGN of your slides. However, you CANNOT use AI to generate any CONTENT.

Research Essay

Assessment Overview

A critical research essay of 3,000 words responding to themes, topics and/or frames covered in the course.

This is the final assessment.

Feedback via LMS.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Analyse and evaluate emerging media technologies using appropriate critical frameworks.
- CLO2 : Demonstrate the capacity to engage with First Nations knowledges and critical interventions to understand media futures.
- CLO3 : Develop and apply ethical and participatory strategies for imagining media futures.

<u>Detailed Assessment Description</u>

This assessment is composed of two parts. Part 1: Essay Outline is worth 20% and Part 2: Critical Essay is worth 40%. See Moodle for full details.

<u>Assessment Length</u>

3,000 words

<u>Assessment information</u>

Part 1: Essay Outline (20%) is due 11:55 pm, Mon 7 October 2024. Part 2: Critical Essay (40%) is due 11:55 pm, Wed 20 November, 2024.

You must submit serious attempts at both components of this assessment to pass the course.

<u>Assignment submission Turnitin type</u>

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

<u>Generative AI Permission Level</u>

Simple Editing Assistance

In completing this assessment, you are permitted to use standard editing and referencing functions in the software you use to complete your assessment. These functions are described below. You must not use any functions that generate or paraphrase passages of text or other media, whether based on your own work or not.

If your Convenor has concerns that your submission contains passages of AI-generated text or media, you may be asked to account for your work. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

In-built editing tools in word processing software and correction tools such as Grammarly are permitted. However, you CANNOT use AI to generate any text, only to correct grammar and spelling in work that you have written yourself. We strongly encourage you to do be careful and restrained in your use. You MUST retain a draft of your work in its original state immediately prior to the use of the tools.

General Assessment Information

To avoid confusion, all assessment information for this course is provided in the Assessment

Hub section of the course Moodle.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

To pass this course, students must achieve a total result over 50 and attempt both Assessment 2 and Assessment 3.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 0 : 2 September - 8 September	Other	After the first introductory week, the course is designed around four blocks or modules that organise our study: Block 1: Atmosphere, Earth, Ocean (Weeks 2 + 3) Block 2: Logistics, Borders, Warehouses (Weeks 4 + 5) Block 3: Cities + Streets (Weeks 7 + 8) Block 4: Home + Work (Weeks 9 + 10)
Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September	Topic	Introduction: Media Futures We are constantly being told that we are living through a technological revolution: the epoch of big data, the age of smart machines, the era of automation. Such catchphrases are accompanied by visions of the future that alternate between the utopian and the dystopian. Our task, as critical students of media and technology, is to cut through these often reductive imaginaries and consider exactly how the ways we live and work are being changed by data-driven, machine learning and other forms of automation. This week we look at some of the dominant imaginaries surrounding media, technology, and the future. We will consider what critical methodologies are up to the task of tracing the social, economic, cultural, political, and historical implications of the technologies that shape our daily lives.
Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September	Topic	Block 1: Atmosphere, Earth, Ocean Topic: Mediated Atmospheres Keywords: planetary, affect, computation, surveillance, climate, militarism About this week: Media are not separate from the material world around us. Sky, earth, and ocean are all media through which we move and communicate. But technical media – smartphones, computers, networks, televisions – are also made from the finite, raw resources of the planet and transmit signals through atmospheres and along cables. In this first week of Bock 1: Atmosphere, Earth, Ocean, we study drone warfare, Starlink satellites, and other forms of atmospheric media and mediated atmospheres. These case studies help us understand the finite nature of media, the entanglement of media technologies with war and colonialism, and the efforts of citizens, activists, and artists to image and shape alternative media futures.
Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September	Topic	Block 1: Atmosphere, Earth, Ocean Topic: Below the Surface Keywords: extraction, infrastructure, signals, media materialities, race About this week: If media are finite, then we must also consider the costs of extracting the raw materials needed to make our technologies and the ecological and social costs of building the infrastructures media rely on. Mining lithium for smartphone and electric vehicle batteries is big business and Australia has one of the largest lithium ore reserves in the world. Extracting that lithium will leave behind poisoned water and ruined land, and further damaging Country for First Nations people. This week, we turn from the sky to dig below the surface of land and ocean to examine the cost of media futures. Our focus will be on the material infrastructures of media and the earth and water upon which they depend.
Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October	Topic	Block 2: Logistics, Borders, Warehouses Topic: Logistics + Borders Keywords: logistics, borders, infrastructure, circulation, just-in-time, securitisation About this week: This week we begin Block 2: Logistics, Borders, Warehouses. This second phase of the course focuses on the movement of commodities and people. We will consider the logistical revolution and the advent of just-in-time production, tracking the history of logistics as the science of circulation in pursuit of economic, communication, and transport efficiencies. Alongside this attention to the flow of things, we will interrogate the border as that which seeks to establish a boundary between what is allowed in and what is kept out. Building on our examination of media infrastructures in week 3, this week we will look at container ships, containers, ports, border zones, biometric scanners, detention centres as we unpack questions of labour, exploitation, surveillance, inclusion, and exclusion.
Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October	Topic	Block 2: Logistics, Borders, Warehouses Topic: Warehouses Keywords: amazon, warehouses, data centres, labour, automation About this week: This week we follow the shipping container from the port to the warehouse, considering how just-in-time production and the automation of circulation has changed the way we relate to consumption and reconfigured labor relations. We consider the warehouse as a key node of global capitalism and look specifically at the relationship between the warehousing of goods and the warehousing of data. In particular, we will

		examine the way just-in-time production and automation is changing the ways people work and the conditions they work under. At the same time, we will consider the data centre as logistical infrastructure at the core of the information and communication systems of today, including in the form of generative AI.
Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October	Topic	Flexiweek - no lectures or tutorials
Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October	Topic	Block 3: Cities + Streets Topic: The 'Smart' City + The 'Automated' Workplace Keywords: 'smart' city, productivity, algorithms, artificial intelligence, surveillance, power, governance, About this week: What does it mean for a city to be 'smart'? We will unpack this question as we move into the third block of this course on cities and streets. Data does not simply represent the ways we live, work, travel, and unwind but, in conjunction with algorithms and artificial intelligence, is actively shaping our lives. This week we consider how the logics of efficiency, productivity, and operation are transforming the cities we live in and reshaping our conceptions of ourselves. We examine how the 'smart' city intersects with surveillance, power, and ideology.
Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November	Topic	Block 3: Cities + Streets Topic: The Mean Streets Keywords: Policing, Prediction, Surplus Populations, Racialisation, State Violence, Circulation Struggles About this week: While the 'smart' city promises efficiency and smoothness, the growth of automation has also reshaped the composition of the workforce, displacing workers from historically stable manufacturing industries into precarious forms of service work. Alongside the emergence of the 'smart' city we have seen the recurrence of riots and blockades as forms of social struggle. The irruption of riot, such as the George Floyd riots that swept across the US in 2020 or the Nahel riots that irrupted across France in 2023, often respond to instances of racialised police violence. This week we consider the relationship between automation, unemployment, and policing. We ask: what are the futures of social movements in times of endemic crisis and increasing technologisation?
Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November	Topic	Block 4: Home + Work Topic: Home + Work Keywords: surveillance, social reproduction, automated labour, gender, feminist technoscience About this week: Our final phase of the course – Block 4: Home + Work – brings us from cities and streets to the intimate spaces in which we live, work, and study. The home is the nexus for a set of technologies that are shaping our futures, but that are also shaped by histories of gendered labour, new economies of data, and powerful imaginaries of smart and sustainable life. Through technologies like Amazon Echo, Apple's Siri and Google Home, we invite big technology company into our lives to work on behalf, but we also work for them, generating the data necessary to refine and advance their capabilities. With networked security cameras like those made by the Amazon-owned Ring, the home becomes a securitised extension of police surveillance. Examining these and other examples, this week considers how 'new' smart home technologies rely upon and reinforce notions of gender, race, class, and the nuclear family that have always shaped domestic life and labour.
Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November	Topic	Block 4: Home + Work Topic: Deus Ex Machina Keywords: Recap, Media Futures, Artificial Intelligence About this week: In this final week of the course we look back (like Walter Benjamin's angel of history) at the terrain we have covered and the rubble that lies in our wake. We return to the concept of media futures to see if our understanding of this term has changed and how. We conclude by returning to the imaginaries of the futurity put forward by Silicon Valley: god from the machine, the singularity, the promise of unceasing efficiency. Despite the investment in such futures, we'll see that in fact the emperor has no clothes. AI futures are sustained by hype and fear – and their promised bounties are almost never in evidence in heralded tools like chapGPT or Dall-E2. Finally, we will ask the crucial of the techno-futures we are encouraged to inhabit: what is to be done?

Attendance Requirements

School of the Arts and Media mandatory attendance requirements

The School of the Arts and Media recognizes that to equip students with UNSW Graduate Capabilities to be Scholars, Professionals, Leaders, and Global Citizens, it is vital to ensure regular attendance. Only through ongoing engagement with peers can students develop effective skills to communicate, collaborate with, and lead others, including the ability to negotiate cultural differences and the awareness to act ethically and respectfully around others. Furthermore, only in the classroom will students be able to voice their opinions, hear those of others, engage in debate to develop their knowledge, and learn first-hand from world experts in their field of study.

The School has a minimum attendance requirement of 80% for all non-lecture classes (tutorials, seminars, workshops, etc). Failure to meet the minimum attendance requirement will result in an Unsatisfactory Fail (UF) for the course regardless of performance on assessment tasks or other requirements for the course.

A student may be advised by the Course Convenor to withdraw from the course if they have already missed more than 20% of classes by the term census date. Students may also be refused final assessment if they have not met attendance requirements at the end of term.

An artefact of student attendance will be recorded by tutors and kept by the School. If a student has legitimate, documented explanation for absences (including adjustments provided by Equitable Learning Plans), the Course Convenor may choose to prescribe supplementary tasks in lieu of attendance.

Mandatory attendance requirements for SAM courses are aligned with these Program Learning Outcomes:

Bachelor of Arts (3409)

4. Collaborate effectively with others and engage sensitively with diverse cultural perspectives.

5. Communicate and debate complex ideas in a range of different contexts using a variety of suitable media.

8. Act ethically, respectfully and responsibly.

Bachelor of Media (3341)

2. Critically analyse the evolving media landscape in relation to historical, social, political, material and theoretical contexts, including settler colonialism

5. Deploy a critically informed approach to ethics, justice, and social engagement in media practices, industries, and contexts.

7. Collaborate effectively with local and international communities of practitioners across media contexts.

Bachelor of Fine Arts (4830)

4. Communicate complex ideas about art and culture using coherent methods for a variety of audiences.

6. Contribute to contemporary creatives fields through self-reflexive, ethical, and sustainable practices that incorporate principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

7. Employ professional practice principles to realise independent and collaborative initiatives.

Master of Communication and Journalism (8232)

4. Investigate and analyse issues and, through a range of media, articulate their complexities to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences

6. Act ethically, respectfully, and responsibly in the context of professional and regulatory frameworks

7. Collaborate effectively with others

Master of Public Relations and Advertising (8281)

4. Shape nuanced, media-aware communication strategies and tactics for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences

6. Act ethically, respectfully, and responsibly in the context of professional and regulatory frameworks

7. Collaborate effectively with others

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

All resources for this course are available through Moodle, with readings typically supplied via

Leganto.

Recommended Resources

All resources for this course are available through Moodle, with readings typically supplied via Leganto.

Course Evaluation and Development

This was a brand new course in 2023. One key piece of feedback we received was that 60% was an intimidating weighting for the final task. In response, we have split the 60% final assessment into two components: an outline worth 20% and a critical essay worth 40%. This will provide you with substantial formative feedback on your outline, positioning you to succeed in the final task. It also reduces the weighting of the work due at the end of the term.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Andrew Brooks		Robert Webster, Level 3			Yes	Yes
	Michael Richardson		Robert Webster, Level 2			No	No

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Student equity and disability;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- Examination information;
- Review of results;

Please see: https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines

Academic Honesty and Plagarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
- Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. UNSW Library has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW, but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your

needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Use of AI for assessments

As AI applications continue to develop, and technology rapidly progresses around us, we remain committed to our values around academic integrity at UNSW. Where the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has been permitted by your course convener, they must be properly credited and your submissions must be substantially your own work.

In cases where the use of AI has been prohibited, please respect this and be aware that where unauthorised use is detected, penalties will apply.

[Use of AI for assessments | UNSW Current Students](#)

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request Special Consideration as early as possible before the deadline. Support with Time Management is available here.

Important note: UNSW has a "fit to sit/submit" rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

School-specific Information

Use of Recording Devices

"To protect privacy and intellectual property, the School of the Arts and Media prohibits the use of recording devices in class (including live translation apps) without the explicit permission of the tutor and other class members. Doing so will be considered a breach of the UNSW Code of Conduct and Values."

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

Location: Room 312, Level 3 Robert Webster Building

Opening Hours: Monday -Friday, 9am - 5 pm

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Phone: +612 9385 4856

web: https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/our-schools/arts-media