



UNSW Course Outline

MDIA5027 Understanding Digital Cultures - 2024

Published on the 23 Sep 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA5027

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 : Postgraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

This course critically investigates the internet, social media, and digital technologies - we will trace the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life, moving 'beyond' the digital in order to think about the consequences of digitisation. The course

will employ socio-cultural understandings of our information society, with a cultural studies/ethnographic approach to examining the production, circulation, and use of digital media and multimedia.

Understanding Digital Cultures will address a range of themes, such as: material cultures; DIY cultures; visual cultures; etc.

Course Aims

Relationship to Other Courses

The course complements others that focus on digital cultures, media cultures, technology, and the environment.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Identify and conceptualise the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life.
CLO2 : Understand and be able to discuss the interface between emerging/established new media technologies, and cultural practices involving information, communication, knowledge, identities and power.
CLO3 : Develop the capacity to critically reflect upon and creatively analyse the implications of particular instances of the production, use, and consumption of digital media and multimedia in today's information society.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Identify and conceptualise the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-Class Project• Major Project• Short Essay
CLO2 : Understand and be able to discuss the interface between emerging/established new media technologies, and cultural practices involving information, communication, knowledge, identities and power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major Project• Short Essay
CLO3 : Develop the capacity to critically reflect upon and creatively analyse the implications of particular instances of the production, use, and consumption of digital media and multimedia in today's information society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major Project

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Learning and Teaching in this course

Students will use a range of social media platforms in this module.

Additional Course Information

Lectures are Monday 11-12.

Tutorials are 2 hours in duration.

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
In-Class Project	20%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Not Applicable
Major Project	50%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 15/11/2024 11:58 PM
Short Essay	30%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 18/10/2024 11:59 PM

Assessment Details

In-Class Project

Assessment Overview

Ongoing creative project (such as a blog or social media curation), which is worked on in class in small groups.

Students will receive verbal feedback in class and written feedback via Moodle; social media statistics and social media feedback will impact the grade.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify and conceptualise the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life.

Detailed Assessment Description

As a group you will create user-generated contents throughout this assessment using a critical approach. The content will likely take the form of a video. You need to upload the content to the

assessment hub on Moodle with the names of participants in the group. The user-generated content you create can take whatever form you like, but it must be no longer than two minutes in duration.

Assessment Length

NA

Assessment information

NA

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Generative AI Permission Level

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](#).

NA

Major Project

Assessment Overview

2500 words; or, a media format (a video, a blog, a podcast, etc.), which needs to be first approved by the convenor.

This is the final assessment task.

Students will receive written feedback via Turnitin.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify and conceptualise the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life.
- CLO2 : Understand and be able to discuss the interface between emerging/established new media technologies, and cultural practices involving information, communication, knowledge, identities and power.
- CLO3 : Develop the capacity to critically reflect upon and creatively analyse the implications of particular instances of the production, use, and consumption of digital media and

multimedia in today's information society.

Detailed Assessment Description

Weight: 50%

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: Identify and conceptualise a topic from the lecture. Understand and be able to discuss the interface between digital technologies and cultural practices involving information, communication, knowledge, identities, artificial intelligence, power, etc. Develop the capacity to critically reflect upon and creatively analyse digital culture.

Assessment length: 2000-2500 written (for written) or 5 minutes for video

Students will receive verbal feedback before submission and rubric feedback via Turnitin.

Criteria for Assessment 3: Video Option

This short video (less than five minutes) will be on a topic from the module. Below I provide criteria for a video with a mark of a credit. A distinction will satisfy the below and include additional exceptional qualities in terms of analysis and/or production value. A pass mark will be deficient in more than two of the criteria. A rubric will be used to assess the project.

A credit or better project will incorporate the three styles of video production we exercised in the tutorials—video essay, experimental video, and interview video. The student electing for the video option should begin by selecting a topic from the lecture. The student should write a script that they intend to read and record. This script could be around 500 words. The script should clearly and early state the argument for the video and how it is going to be supported. This concept should be further discussed with the insights from an academic article. Please see rubric for the assessment criteria for the video's argument: <https://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/mod/page/view.php?id=5892767>

The student should write this script in such a way that they reference tangible, visible things—things that the student could film and could illustrate the video. The student should then film those objects. This is b-roll footage and will constitute the majority of the video's visual content.

Once the student has recorded their audio voice over, collected the b-roll, etc., they should begin editing. First, upload the voice over using a video editing software (options below). Then overlay pertinent b-roll over the voice over. Include at least one montage of experimental editing, this does not have to be long. Conclude by adding a title graphic at the beginning, appropriate music in the most sensible locations, and the credit sequence detailing the academic article and

student's name.

90% of the video should be filmed by the student.

10% of the video can be from video not collected by the student – b-roll gathered from other sources.

The audio should be audible.

The b-roll video should mix both close-ups and distant shots.

The voice-over for the video should reference the key concept from the lecture.

The student should comment on what the interviewee said in the voice over.

The background for the interview should be thoughtful and not distracting.

The edit should not include accidental artifacts that should have been edited out.

Assessment Length

2000-2500 written (for written) or 5 minutes for video

Submission notes

NA

Assessment information

Please see Moodle.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Generative AI Permission Level

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.

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NA

Short Essay

Assessment Overview

1000 words.

Students will receive written feedback via Turnitin.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify and conceptualise the pervasive influence of digital cultures throughout contemporary life.
- CLO2 : Understand and be able to discuss the interface between emerging/established new media technologies, and cultural practices involving information, communication, knowledge, identities and power.

Detailed Assessment Description

NA

Assessment Length

1000 words

Assessment information

1. Choose one of the lectures.
2. Answer this question: How does digital culture relate to [insert your choice of topic: eg, history, language, writing, cities, networks, data, artificial intelligence, ecology]? In order to answer this question:
 - i. Read and reference at least 2 texts from the class readings and and at least 1 other academic source.
 - ii. Use a case study, as a grounding example to illustrate your arguments (it could be a platform, a scenario, a press article, an anecdote, a practice, etc.).

The assessment requires you to demonstrate both comprehension and critical skills. It is not enough to describe an example or a situation; you need to engage critically with both the readings and the example. This means that you must demonstrate that you have a comprehension of what the texts are arguing. At the same time, you must provide a critical assessment and evaluation of how valid or appropriate you think those arguments are to explain your case study.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

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NA

General Assessment Information

This course consists of both individual writing and group media production.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Passing the course requires completing all assessments to a satisfactory degree.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 0 : 2 September - 8 September	Other	Prepare intellectually for the module.
Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September	Lecture	Week 1 Introduction: A Model of Digital Culture
Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September	Lecture	Week 2 History: Origins of Social Media and Aspirations for World Knowledge
Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September	Lecture	Week 3 Culture: The Practices of Making Digital Technologies
Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October	Lecture	Week 4 Power: Activism and Conspiracy in Digital Culture
Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October	Lecture	Week 5 Matter: Elementality and Materiality of Digital Culture
Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October	Homework	Reading week
Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October	Lecture	Week 7 Intelligence: In Humans, More-than-humans, and Quantum Computing
Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November	Lecture	Week 8 Information: Complexity and the Origins of Life
Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November	Lecture	Week 9 Planet: Technospheres, the Dataome, and Alien Media
Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November	Lecture	Week 10 Review

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

General Schedule Information

A lecture and a tutorial each week. Attendance in tutorial is mandatory.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

Students will use a range of social media platforms in this module.

Recommended Resources

Many of the module readings come from this book From the Big Bang to Big Data: https://primoa.library.unsw.edu.au/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma9951495881201731&context=L&vid=61UNSW_INST:UNSWS&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,From%20Big%20Bang%20to%20Big%20Data

Additional Costs

No additional costs but students will use their personal phones and computers.

Course Evaluation and Development

Each year the convenor reads students' feedback and adjust teaching and lecturing to better accommodate student needs.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
	Adam Fish					Yes	Yes

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 Plagiarism

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>