



UNSW Course Outline

MDIA5028 Critical Perspectives in Communication - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA5028

Year : 2024

Term : Term 1

Teaching Period : T1

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture

Academic Unit : School of the Arts and Media

Delivery Mode : Multimodal

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

Psychologist Kurt Lewin once opined that 'there's nothing so practical as good theory.' What he meant was that since theory is a distillation and modelling of human experience, it may be advantageously projected over otherwise uncertain milieux—helping us to understand the way

things are and the way they might be. With a focus on structuralism, you are introduced to a range of critical perspectives in communication. Accordingly, this course will help you to recognise and understand the power of the cultural formations behind political campaigns. You will learn how to identify the deep-seated patterns either consciously or unconsciously engaged by political actors. With an emphasis on key political texts, the course asks: What are the cultural-structural engines that shape the political proposition? What influences—or even determines—our reception and response? To which deeply anchored concepts do particular political texts speak? This course, then, proposes that such texts—and all texts, in fact—are rooted in a vast historical-cultural matrix and that our understanding of them is greatly enhanced when we can locate them (as far as we might) in a broader paradigmatic field. Accordingly, this course will help you to become far better thinkers; better critics of political campaigns.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Explain the principles and particulars underpinning the critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course
CLO2 : Identify aspects of key critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course, in examining short campaign excerpts
CLO3 : Critique a political campaign by applying specific principles and practices of structuralism, together with the principles and practices of at least one other critical perspective

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Explain the principles and particulars underpinning the critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online test • Theoretical Essay
CLO2 : Identify aspects of key critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course, in examining short campaign excerpts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online test
CLO3 : Critique a political campaign by applying specific principles and practices of structuralism, together with the principles and practices of at least one other critical perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Essay

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate | Echo 360

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Online test Assessment Format: Individual	40%	
Theoretical Essay Assessment Format: Individual	60%	

Assessment Details

Online test

Assessment Overview

40 question, 40-minute, 40-mark online multiple choice knowledge test reflecting the content covered during the initial phase of the course

Feedback via LMS

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Explain the principles and particulars underpinning the critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course
- CL02 : Identify aspects of key critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course, in examining short campaign excerpts

Assessment Length

40 minutes

Submission notes

Access this test through a link that will appear under the Assessments section on Moodle

Assessment information

This test is conducted online via Moodle. For additional detail, see Moodle. For now, note that the test covers specific material addressed and prescribed during Weeks 1-4, and so there is a limited amount of material to learn. Well-prepared students can therefore get off to a flying start in the course!

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Theoretical Essay

Assessment Overview

2,000-words.

Engaging relevant theory, with an emphasis on a structuralist perspective, students critique a political campaign from a list provided.

Feedback via LMS

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Explain the principles and particulars underpinning the critical perspectives (theoretical frameworks) covered in the course
- CL03 : Critique a political campaign by applying specific principles and practices of structuralism, together with the principles and practices of at least one other critical perspective

Assessment information

See Moodle for details.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

General Assessment Information

Please see Moodle

Grading Basis

Standard

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Lecture	Course Overview/ A course about patterns What is a critical approach? Rhetoric 1: Patterns in argument: the Classical Age FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Lecture	Rhetoric 2 Patterns in argument FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Lecture	I.A. Richards: Metaphor/Retrievals Shklovsky: Defamiliarisation Tomashevsky: free and bound motifs Jakobson: Axes of selection and combination FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Lecture	Structuralism 1 Linguistic structuralism Binaries: Saussure Semiotic Triad: Peirce Semiosis: Barthes FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
	Assessment	The A1 knowledge test (40-percent) is to be sat online on Sunday 10 March 2024 at 19:00 (7pm) AEDT. The test will be open for exactly 40 minutes, and will not be reopened. It follows that if you miss the test, you are very likely to fail the course. It is important that you have a stable internet connection. It is not recommended that you try to sit the test on a mobile phone. A well-prepared student will complete the test in 25-30 minutes; perhaps less.
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Lecture	Structuralism 2 Anthropological structuralism/ Mythologies: Vico; Piaget; Fraser; Levi-Strauss; Barthes; Foucault (archaeology/binary power relations) FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Reading	Reading Week NO LECTURE OR TUTORIALS
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Lecture	Structuralism 3 Literary/Textual structuralism Barthes – 5 codes Riffaterre – Semiotics of Poetry: Ungrammaticalities FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE. This is the final tutorial before we enter workshop/project mode.
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Online Activity	This (guest) lecture is impacted by the Easter Monday Public Holiday. Accordingly, the lecture will be pre-recorded and available for viewing as your leisure. (Online Pre-Recorded Lecture, via Blackboard Collaborate/BBC) Structuralism

		4 Visual texts NO FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIAL STUDENTS IN THE M19A ONLINE WORKSHOP (WHICH IS IMPACTED BY THE EASTER MONDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY) ARE AT LIBERTY TO JOIN ANY OTHER ONLINE/BBC WORKSHOP HELD THIS WEEK. SEE TIMETABLE ON MOODLE.
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Online Activity	Special (online/BBC) Q&A session on A2 with Convenor (replaces the lecture) NO TUTORIAL ONLINE BBC PROJECT WORKSHOPS IN TUTORIAL TIMES PER TIMETABLE THAT WILL HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED.
	Assessment	Assessment 2 is to be submitted by 23:00 (11pm) on Sunday 14 April 2024. This is a Turnitin assessment. See Moodle for detail.
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Studio	Special career counselling session replaces online lecture. Held via BBC.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

Hawkes, T (2003) Structuralism and Semiotics (2nd edn) Routledge

Recommended Resources

Chandler, D. (2017) Semiotics: The Basics (3rd. edn.) Routledge

Eagleton, T. (2008) Literary Theory: An Introduction (3rd. edn.) Blackwell

Course Evaluation and Development

Whilst we will gauge feedback during the course, we have slightly modified the 2024 programme in light of the very successful career counselling session run in 2022 and 2023. This now features as a formally timetabled part of the course in Week 10. We have also made the final assessment due in Week 9. This improves workflow for students.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Paul Ryder		311B	Please email	By appointment Wednesday 09:00-10:00 (3 x 15-minute segments). Note: for other tutor/s, see Moodle	Yes	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided).

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines> for essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Dean's List;
- review of results;
- credit transfer;
- cross-institutional study and exchange;
- examination information;
- enrolment information;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;

And other essential academic information.

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

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au

Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin, you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support, you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone, you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, 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](#).

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>