



UNSW Course Outline

MDIA5007 Media Ethics and Law - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA5007

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 : 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

In this course you will develop an understanding of the legal and ethical issues that frame media production and consumption. You will have the opportunity to experience a range of insightful learning exercises, such as hypothetical work scenarios and case studies, which best bring these

issues to life. Topics include media content regulation, freedom of speech, the social and health effects of media consumption, privacy, and journalistic ethics.

Relationship to Other Courses

The course covers a number of key legal concepts, such as copyright and defamation which are relevant to students of all other journalism and communication courses.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CL01 : Reflect on key legal and ethical issues relevant to the media
CL02 : Critically analyse and apply ethical and legal concepts relevant to media in Australian and international contexts
CL03 : Incorporate ethical practice into student work in the media
CL04 : Defend the actions of media and/or legal parties by way of case study analysis

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CL01 : Reflect on key legal and ethical issues relevant to the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Book Exercise• Case Study Presentation• Major Essay
CL02 : Critically analyse and apply ethical and legal concepts relevant to media in Australian and international contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Book Exercise• Case Study Presentation• Major Essay
CL03 : Incorporate ethical practice into student work in the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Study Presentation• Major Essay
CL04 : Defend the actions of media and/or legal parties by way of case study analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Study Presentation• Major Essay

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate | Echo 360

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Open Book Exercise Assessment Format: Individual	25%	Start Date: Week 5 Due Date: Week 5
Case Study Presentation Assessment Format: Individual	30%	Start Date: Week 8 Due Date: Week 8
Major Essay Assessment Format: Individual	45%	Due Date: 19/04/2024 04:00 PM

Assessment Details

Open Book Exercise

Assessment Overview

The assessment will be a written response to a specific situation relevant to media and the law. It's an 'Open Book' exercise, meaning students have a set time to complete the task during the week. The assignment has a word count of 500 words and is submitted via Moodle.

Feedback via LMS

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Reflect on key legal and ethical issues relevant to the media
- CL02 : Critically analyse and apply ethical and legal concepts relevant to media in Australian and international contexts

Assessment Length

Maximum tutorial time (2 hours)

Assessment information

The assessment will be a written response to a specific situation relevant to media and the law. It's an 'Open Book' exercise, meaning you have a set time to complete the task during the week. See Moodle for further details.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Case Study Presentation

Assessment Overview

Students will be requested to form a small group (3 students, ideally) and then will be given a recent case study to analyse. The case studies will be made available two weeks prior to presentations, which will be delivered during Week 8 tutorials. The case studies will highlight legal/ethical issues for media outlets. Whilst in groups, students will be assessed on their individual contributions.

Feedback via LMS

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Reflect on key legal and ethical issues relevant to the media
- CL02 : Critically analyse and apply ethical and legal concepts relevant to media in Australian and international contexts
- CL03 : Incorporate ethical practice into student work in the media
- CL04 : Defend the actions of media and/or legal parties by way of case study analysis

Assessment Length

Ten minutes per group member e.g. 30 minutes for 3 person group.

Submission notes

Report via Turnitin.

Assessment information

Please refer to Moodle for further details.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Major Essay

Assessment Overview

A 2000-word response to one of a series of questions on a range of topics covered in the course.

Feedback via LMS.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Reflect on key legal and ethical issues relevant to the media
- CL02 : Critically analyse and apply ethical and legal concepts relevant to media in Australian

and international contexts

- CLO3 : Incorporate ethical practice into student work in the media
- CLO4 : Defend the actions of media and/or legal parties by way of case study analysis

Assessment Length

2500 words min (including proposal)

Assessment information

See Moodle for full assessment information and instructions as well as in class. Note: The proposal will take the form of an abstract (summary) at the top of your essay when submitting, and is minimum 150 words, maximum 300 words. The total essay including proposal / abstract is 2500 words. A ten percent leeway is permissible.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

General Assessment Information

Late Submission

If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 5% per day (including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays) will be imposed, with marking capped at 5 days after the submission date. So, anything submitted after this time (without special consideration) will not be marked.

Note: Your tutor cannot give you extensions. Apply through [special consideration](#) with the relevant documentation. Student Central must verify all documentation.

Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, is regarded as a serious breach of ethical conduct and will be referred to the School of Arts and Media's Grievance Officer.

APA referencing preferred.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Students must attempt all three assessments and achieve a mark of 50% or more.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Lecture	Communicators, the media and the legal system The course kicks off by introducing students to the challenges faced by communicators, including journalists when it comes to publication. We will also turn our attention to the broader legal and regulatory systems in place to ensure that fairness is maintained, together with the notion of 'truth' at a time of the growing threat of fake news. Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Communicators, the media and the legal system
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Lecture	Reporting hate in the contemporary media environment. How do we balance the notion of 'freedom of speech' in light of the sensitivities of the new cancel culture? Furthermore, do professional communicators have the freedom to express themselves when national security concerns are so readily aired by political figures? Refer to Moodle for Readings. Note: you need the textbook (Pearson and Polden 2019) by this week. An e-copy is available via the UNSW library
	Tutorial	Reporting hate in the contemporary media environment.
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Lecture	Covering Court Legal proceedings are carefully managed processes, whose rules and privileges, communicators must understand. This week we'll explore the inherent restrictions that face the media when it comes to reporting from court. Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Covering Court
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Lecture	Contempt in a global media environment What does it mean to be contemptuous? Contempt takes many forms, which we'll examine, while also being mindful of the defence of 'public interest'. Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Contempt in a global media environment
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Lecture	Defamation in the contemporary media environment This week, we focus on defamation; we will define the concept and examine the grounds for defending coverage deemed defamatory. Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Defamation in the contemporary media environment
	Assessment	Assessment 1 due this week. An 'open book' exercise which will run for two hours at any time during the week.
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Reading	UNSW Flexi Week, which means there are no lectures or tutorials. However, it's important to keep up your readings. See Moodle for readings.
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Lecture	Media regulation in the web 2.0 era This week we analyze the impact of social media and internet giants, such as Google, on the workings of media and the lives of audience members, including the challenges of verifying the facts. Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Media regulation in the web 2.0 era
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Lecture	Intellectual Property (IP), news and creative media This week we consider how communicators can best protect their work and not fall foul when using the work of others. Readings

		Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Intellectual Property (IP), news and creative media
	Assessment	Assessment 2 group presentations will be delivered this week.
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Lecture	Privacy in contemporary media People have a right to a degree of privacy, even when some of them are deemed 'public property', but what about the 'public interest' defence, or are some of these stories just of interest to the public? Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Privacy in contemporary media
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Lecture	Confidentiality and sources Communicators, including journalists will sometimes have to keep secrets, including the sources of their stories. Is this right and are there any other ethical issues to consider? Readings Refer to Moodle for recommended readings.
	Tutorial	Confidentiality and sources
	Assessment	Assessment 3 is due on Friday, April 21 at 16.00.

Attendance Requirements

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

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

The course textbook is Pearson M, & Polden, M 2019 The Journalist's Guide to Media Law, A and U, Sydney. The library has an e-copy.

Also see Library Readings on Moodle, accessed via Moodle.

The library offers access to main news sites via subscription or factiva.com

International social media is accepted with translations.

Recommended Resources

The course readings also have recommended readings. These are particularly useful if you are focussing on a week's topic as your presentation, and your major essay (set topic question). The recommended citation style is APA. Be consistent; use ONE citation style only. The UNSW library offers free access to recent major media in print and digital editions. Archives are available via the factiva.com database.

International context and comparisons of media law and ethics are encouraged.

If you are having difficulty accessing any resources, please see convenor, Peter Roberts.

UNSW Support [Writing](#) [English Language and Conversation Skills](#)

[Student Health and Well Being](#)

Course Evaluation and Development

The course is evaluated via My Experience at the end of trimester. We've redesigned the course to fit with the new scheduling pattern and to reflect current debates in media and ethics with theoretical frameworks.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Peter Roberts		311 H Webster Building	Email for appointments	Wednesday 12.00 - 2.00	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>