



UNSW Course Outline

MDIA3011 Communication Design: Multimodality, Meaning, and Media - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA3011

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 : Undergraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Communication tends to be thought of and analysed in terms of specific modes such as 'writing',

'image', or 'sound', and these are very often analysed in isolation from each other. But communication is never that clear-cut. Something as seemingly straightforward as 'writing' in fact has a visual component (how it looks), and a material component (what it is produced on and with). And we also communicate through many other modes - such as through the design of objects and buildings, the sorts of networks we create through digital media, or the actions we undertake in daily life. In this course, you will extend your understanding of communication by investigating underlying principles of communication design, the range of modes we communicate with, and the complex nature of all forms of communication. You will investigate particular modes in depth, and explore how they work together. In doing so, you will develop research skills which allow you to critique and evaluate the design of multimodal communication, especially in terms of its contribution to contemporary society.

This course builds a complementary sequence when taken together with the courses MDIA2009 Communication Principles and MDIA2094 Visual Communication.

Relationship to Other Courses

This course takes a complementary approach to MDIA2094 Visual Communication. It approaches similar ideas and issues from a different point of view, and looks at communication modes beyond the visual. It is not necessary to have done MDIA2094 prior.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Identify multimodal communication in terms of both innovative modes and the co-occurrence of modalities within one communicative form.
CLO2 : Collect, evaluate and analyse multimodal communication data.
CLO3 : Compare and critically evaluate theoretical frameworks used in the analysis of multimodal communication.
CLO4 : Design a rigorous and ethical multimodal communication research project, collect appropriate data and analyse the results through the sound application of theory.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Identify multimodal communication in terms of both innovative modes and the co-occurrence of modalities within one communicative form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading Report• Essay Proposal• Essay
CLO2 : Collect, evaluate and analyse multimodal communication data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay Proposal• Essay
CLO3 : Compare and critically evaluate theoretical frameworks used in the analysis of multimodal communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay Proposal• Essay
CLO4 : Design a rigorous and ethical multimodal communication research project, collect appropriate data and analyse the results through the sound application of theory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Learning and Teaching in this course

This seminar-style course rests on students' deep reading and engagement with the course materials, and willingness to contribute to shared discussion about these. There will be some teacher-led elements via mini-lectures around key points, to ground the discussions in a concrete way. Above all, this is a course for you to think, read and explore.

Additional Course Information

Above all, this is a course for you to think, read and explore. I hope you enjoy it!

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Reading Report Assessment Format: Individual	20%	
Essay Proposal Assessment Format: Individual	30%	
Essay Assessment Format: Individual	50%	

Assessment Details

Reading Report

Assessment Overview

An 800-word (+/- 10%) written report on an allocated reading.

Feedback via LMS.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify multimodal communication in terms of both innovative modes and the co-occurrence of modalities within one communicative form.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see Moodle for full description.

Assessment information

Reading reports will be submitted in Weeks 2-5 and the relevant week will be allocated in Week 1. You will use your reading report to lead the class in a discussion of that reading.

Full instructions will be on Moodle.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Essay Proposal

Assessment Overview

Students offer a 2-page written essay proposal (20%) plus give a 2-3 minute in-class verbal

presentation (10%)

Feedback via LMS.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify multimodal communication in terms of both innovative modes and the co-occurrence of modalities within one communicative form.
- CL02 : Collect, evaluate and analyse multimodal communication data.
- CL03 : Compare and critically evaluate theoretical frameworks used in the analysis of multimodal communication.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see Moodle for full description.

Assessment information

You will give a c.10 minute presentation to the class on a self-selected topic.

Full details will be on Moodle.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Essay

Assessment Overview

3,000 words.

Feedback via LMS.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify multimodal communication in terms of both innovative modes and the co-occurrence of modalities within one communicative form.
- CL02 : Collect, evaluate and analyse multimodal communication data.
- CL03 : Compare and critically evaluate theoretical frameworks used in the analysis of multimodal communication.
- CL04 : Design a rigorous and ethical multimodal communication research project, collect appropriate data and analyse the results through the sound application of theory.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see Moodle for full description.

General Assessment Information

Full details of the assessments will be on Moodle.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Students must make a valid attempt at all assignments in order to pass the course.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Seminar	<p>MULTIMODALITY, COMMUNICATION, AND MEDIA</p> <p>This week forms the foundation of the course: in what sense is communication 'designed'? Why study multimodal texts? What texts exactly will we study? How will we study them?</p> <p>Set reading for ALL:</p> <p>This is the minimum reading to do in preparation for each week and these will be available on Moodle. Please read BEFORE the seminar. Extensive and thorough reading will underpin your grasp of this course. I'll post lots of additional readings on the Moodle site and you can of course search for your own or ask me for specific recommendations, depending on the topic you choose to pursue. It's quite a bit to get going with for Week 1, so please make an effort, even if very little of it makes sense at this point! From next week you will be leading the discussion of the readings.</p> <p>1. van Leeuwen, T. (2011). Multimodality, in J.Simpson (Ed.), The Routledge handbook of Applied Linguistics, Routledge, London and New York, pp668-682.</p> <p>2. Kress, G. (2014). Design: the rhetorical work of shaping the semiotic world. In A. Archer and D. Newfield (Eds) Multimodal approaches to research and pedagogy: recognition, resources, and access New York: Routledge pp131-152</p> <p>Optional reading: These will be additional resources that I will likely refer to in today's class, so you might want to read these if interested or go back to them later.</p> <p>Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2001). Multimodal discourse: the Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication. London: Arnold. [Chapter 1 only: Introduction, pp1-23]</p> <p>Recommended - a wide range of recommended and optional reading will be available in the separate 'course resources' section. Browse through this according to your interests and needs and feel free to ask for further guidance. Some of these will be on Leganto; others you will have to hunt for. Please just ask me if you need any help.</p>
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Seminar	<p>Semiotics: Theories, Resources, Practices</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Seminar	<p>Semiotic Resources</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Seminar	<p>Semiotic Artefacts</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Seminar	<p>The Semiotics of Social Practices</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Homework	<p>FLEX WEEK.</p> <p>There is no class this week. Use this time to prepare/get ahead on assessment.</p>
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Seminar	<p>The semiotics of the built environment (1): UNSW</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Online Activity	<p>MONDAY IS A PUBLIC HOLIDAY</p> <p>Both the Monday AND the Wednesday classes will be online-only this week</p> <p>A substitute lecture will be available on Moodle: The Semiotics of the Built Environment (2): Shops and Shopping</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Seminar	<p>The Semiotics of the Built Environment (3): Museums</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Seminar	<p>Out in the real world: applying these concepts</p> <p>Reading: please see Moodle</p>

Attendance Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes and required to attend 80% of classes. Students need to be engaged in discussion as evidence of attendance.

General Schedule Information

COMMUNICATION DESIGN: MULTIMODALITY, MEANING AND MEDIA

WELCOME!

This course is going to be, well, a bit like the mind map at the top of our moodle page! We are going to explore, explore, explore: how communication works in contemporary, complex modes where multiple resources are used all at once. Sometimes we will be exploring one specific mode in detail; other times, how multiple modes come together. We will investigate some of the common principles of communication design and from there, I want you to explore the communicative forms that interest you most. There will be a lot of reading to get through, but the assessment is designed to gradually build your confidence and experience in a specific area, and you will be able to orient your study - like the mindmap - in your own direction.

Please use O-week to get yourself oriented in relation to the course, introduce yourself on Padlet (on Moodle) and get through the readings for week 1 - they are chunky! :))) . The outline you are reading at the moment is a 'bare bones' outline only - the full details are all on the course Moodle site and you should be checking that every week for what's current, rather than coming back to this static outline.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

All the set and recommended readings will be available on the course website on Moodle.

Please do the readings BEFORE the seminar. They may or may not make sense but that's the point - we then get to explore them in further detail in the seminar. Extensive and thorough reading will underpin your grasp of this course. In weeks 2-5, specific students will be allocated to lead the discussion of the readings, but ALL students need to do ALL the (prescribed) readings.

I'll post lots of additional, optional readings on the Moodle site and you can of course search for your own or ask me for specific recommendations, depending on the topic you choose to pursue.

Recommended Resources

As above, all set readings will be available on Moodle/Leganto.

Additional Costs

N/A

Course Evaluation and Development

I use a combination of formal and informal evaluation to monitor and improve this course.

MDIA3011 was introduced in 2018, with a particularly positive response. Each year I modify it a bit - changing the topics, readings etc. Most students have indicated that they enjoyed the open-ended nature of this course, but some students have indicated that they wanted more formal input, so I now incorporate some stronger structuring via mini-lectures. Also in 2023, students were required to give longer presentations, which many felt took up too much class time, so I have cut this back for 2024. I welcome your feedback at any point, either formally through course evaluation or informally through direct comment or email.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Louise Ravelli		WEBSTER 311N		Please email me for available times.	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>