

University of Waterloo – Global Business and Digital Arts
GBDA 413 – Special Topics in Design & Society
THOUGHT, THEORY, AND DESIGN IN DIGITAL SOCIETY
Fall 2025

MEDIA ANALYSIS FINAL ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION & DETAILS (15%)

DEADLINE: By end of day (11:59 pm) on Wednesday, December 10th to ‘Media Analysis Final Assignment’ LEARN dropbox.

DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this final assignment is to give you a chance to demonstrate the theoretical knowledge you have acquired and explored in this course through your own media analysis of content related to digital society.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVE #S: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

TASK: Select one of the two following options for your assignment:

OPTION 1 – Written Submission	OPTION 2 – Video Submission
Prepare a 4-page (max) essay	Prepare an 8-10 minute video

For either of the above two options, follow these steps to work towards completing your assignment:

1. Find/select ONE piece of media that addresses/includes digital culture in some way and that provides you with enough relevant content to develop an effective discussion around, using course content.
 - Examples of media that I suggest: advertisements, short television/movie clips, memes, political cartoons, tweets, etc. → see below in the ‘Example Media to Analyze’ section for some examples.
 - I recommend choosing a ‘limited’ form of media → something that is quick and easy to understand and discuss → avoid ‘larger’ forms of media (like whole films, documentaries, novels, etc.).
2. After selecting your media, engage in some analysis by ‘picking it apart’ and identifying pertinent elements or features you can explore through the lens of our course content. Aim to include at least 3 distinct course concepts/elements/thinkers in your analysis.
 - Structure your analysis by developing a guiding thesis statement that organizes your discussion around 3 clear course concepts → note how each thesis point in the following examples addresses a different course concept:
 - Example thesis 1: “This meme can be interpreted specifically through course content related to, existence, identity, and happiness in the digital era.”
 - Example thesis 2: “This advertisement can be analyzed according to the perspectives of Freud, Bauman, and Marcuse, as explored through course content on digital culture.”
3. Based on your constructed thesis statement, organize the content for your submission according to these sections:
 - **Section A (10 marks) – INTRODUCTION**
 - Identify and describe the media you have chosen to analyze and provide an explanation for how you’ve interpreted it → what does the media mean to you? Explain.
 - State your 3-point thesis statement → remember each thesis point should correspond to 3 distinct course concepts/elements/thinkers
 - **Section B (30 marks) – BODY** → 10 marks X connection to 3 concepts in the course
 - Organize your body section discussion in the same order as your 3 thesis points
 - Your body section discussions should be developed around a point-proof-analysis structure:
 - Point → make a claim or statement about your observations of your chosen media

- Proof → provide a quote or other evidence to support your point
 - Analysis → connect your point and proof to elements discussed in the course/lecture content – aim to ‘show off’ the knowledge you have acquired in the course!
 - *You should strive to include 2-3 sets of point-proof-analysis in each body section
- **Section C (10 marks) – CONCLUSION**
 - Bring the exploration of your chosen media to a close
 - You may link your overall discussion to other course concepts that you see connections to, as long as you did not already explore them in the body sections
 - Provide some larger context for why the issues/concepts you’ve discussed are important/relevant in modern society
- **Section D (5 marks) – CITATIONS & REFERENCES LIST** [this section does not count in your page/time limit] + any in-text citations
 - You should provide in-text/in-video citations and references for any of the lecture content/course material discussed (if doing the video, you can simply list or mention the source + authors, and include a reference slide/page at the end of your video)
 - Any outside sources you use (**including the media you choose for analysis**, any academic sources you use, or any other sources) should also have appropriate in-text/in-video citations and should also be listed on your references page
 - All references used should be in APA-citation format (for both in-text citations and your final reference list → *remember, reference list does not count in your page/time limit)
- **Section E (5 marks) – APPENDIX** [this section does not count in your page limit]
 - Include a screenshot/copy-paste/direct link to the media you are analyzing
 - Screenshots/copy-paste is preferred, if possible → i.e. if you are analyzing a meme, tweet, political cartoon, etc. please provide it with your assignment
 - If you are analyzing a video clip or other similar media:
 - For the written essay **option 1** – provide a direct link to find it
 - For the video submission **option 2** – you can ‘play’/include the clip at the beginning of your video up to a MAX of 2 minutes, **not to be counted in your time limit**
 - *Please note: if access to the original media you are analyzing is not provided, your assignment cannot be graded* → make access as easy as possible!
- Overall Assignment to be graded out of: /60 marks = 15% of total course grade

GRADING:

- Above, you can see the grading breakdown for each element
- In addition to grading each section as described, the following will also be considered:
 - If you've thoroughly and completely addressed all required tasks
 - Extent of thought & effort in completing the required tasks
 - Strength of connections to course material/your ability to showcase your overall course knowledge in an integrated, seamless discussion
 - Spelling/grammar/clarity in writing – both in essay and in video (though writing should be minimal if you choose the video option)
 - Adherence to/inclusion of required structural/organizational components
 - Inclusion and APA formatting of both References page and in-text/in-video citations (as needed)
 - Finesse in development and delivery of content
 - Written Essay **Option 1** – Aim for effective writing conventions → use linking words/phrases to achieve flow, thoughtfully organize your content for optimized discussion, include elevated vocabulary, eliminate use of informal features like personal pronouns and contractions, etc.
 - Video Submission **Option 2** – Aim for effective presentation conventions → keep in mind: tone, pace, eye contact, volume, body language, creative engagement, etc.
- **Be sure to check out the high-scoring example of previous student work for this deliverable on LEARN – in the same folder as this assignment description!**

PARAMETERS:

OPTION 1 – Written Submission	OPTION 2 – Video Submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a 4-page (max) essay - double or single spaced, it's up to you! [excluding: reference/citation list, appendix] • Organize essay according to the above listed sections, A-E • Aim for: formal, structured, academic writing • Use 12-point, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins • Ensure you follow APA guidelines for in-text citations and reference list • *Please note: your reference/citation list is NOT included in your page limit • No title page is required for your assignment, but you may include one if you'd like (does not count in page limit) • No page headers/footers are required for your assignment – maximize use of page limit • Submit your assignment in PDF FORMAT to the 'Media Analysis Final Assignment' dropbox on LEARN by the deadline • If your content cannot be accessed because of formatting/setting issues, no one will follow up with you, and a grade of 0 will be given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an 8-10 minute video • Organize video according to the above listed sections, A-E • Aim for: formal, structured, academic delivery style • Your face must be visible + your voice must be audible for at least half of your total presentation length • Your presentation should include some creative, engaging elements → DO NOT simply read off a script for the whole video, make it dynamic, with visual cues and interesting features; DO NOT include excessive writing in the video • Some options for structure/formatting: • <u>Option 1:</u> Use a split screen with your face on one half of the screen, and a set of slides/visuals on the other • <u>Option 2:</u> Create an edited/integrated video that includes one 'full screen' • <u>Option 3 (best 'low-technology' option):</u> Have your face on the screen for the entire presentation length, and use 'old school' visual aids → e.g. printed visuals you can hold up; a skit or other type of demonstration/performance (you may ask other people to help with this if needed, but no other person should appear in your video for more than 2 minutes, total) • <u>Any other reasonable option:</u> If you think of an alternative format you'd like to use, aside from the three options here, you're free to do what you'd like, as long as you meet all the required criteria! • Submit your video to the 'Media Analysis Final Assignment' dropbox on LEARN by the deadline in an EASILY ACCESSIBLE video format → e.g.: .MP4; .AVI; .MOV • *If the file is too large to submit directly to LEARN, you may need to upload it elsewhere like YouTube or OneDrive → If uploading to YouTube, you should set the video to 'UNLISTED' so no one else can find it, and then just submit the link to dropbox; If uploading to OneDrive or other similar platforms, please ensure your submission can be accessed <u>without needing a password or to request permission</u>, etc. • If your content cannot be accessed because of formatting/setting issues, no one will follow up with you, and a grade of 0 will be given

EXAMPLE MEDIA TO ANALYZE:

- On the next page, you will find SEVERAL examples of the types of media (advertisement links, political cartoons, memes, etc.) that I recommend you choose for this assignment
- You only need to find ONE piece of media to analyze, not as many as I have on the next page!
- ***Please Note:** You **SHOULD NOT** use any of the examples I have provided on the next page, you should find your own media from the internet!*
- When you select a piece of media to analyze, please verify that it is **NOT** one of the examples I have provided on the next page!

VIDEO EXAMPLE LINKS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZpOQGbb1ts>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9ZDiGAgbXM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvegxBp0YIA&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QugooaN Rnsk>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8NJViYW6a0>

OTHER EXAMPLES:

