

MDIA 310 Cultural Identity and the Media (CRN 9918)
2008 Trimester 1
COURSE GUIDE

Course Description

MDIA 310 draws on theories of identity and difference to consider the relationship between cultural identity and the media, focusing particularly (but not solely) on issues of cultural and ethnic identity. We will consider, in the New Zealand context, what it means to be Pākehā, and how this plays out in New Zealand media. We will also look much more widely at issues of cultural identity and the media in a range of other countries, and across a range of media genre. The course will draw on contemporary debates surrounding postcolonialism, globalisation, hybridity, diasporic identity and cultural appropriation.

Coordination and Teaching

Convenor: Sue Abel,
Room: 213, 42-44 Kelburn Parade,
Tel.: 463 6848
Email: sue.abel@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: Tuesday 2pm – 4pm; Wednesday 10 – 11am.

Tutor: tba

Course Format:

- Weekly two-hour lecture (with a 10 minute break in the middle)
- Weekly 50-minute tutorial starting Week 2

Lectures:

- Tuesday 12 noon – 1.50pm
- Hugh MacKenzie LT003

Tutorials:

These begin in Week 2 and run weekly. Lists of groups, meeting times and location will be posted on the notice board outside the Media Studies office, as well as on Blackboard by the end of Week 1. You must attend the same tutorial for the duration of the trimester, as tutorial exercises and participation (worth 20% of the course) will be assessed by your tutor.

Blackboard

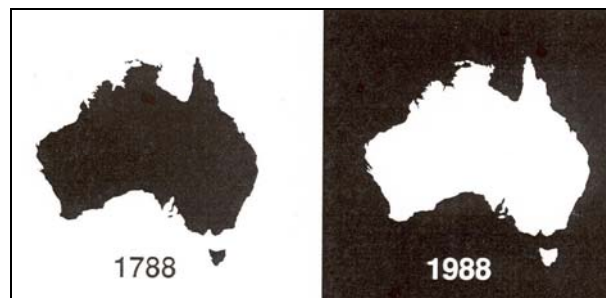
Information relevant to this paper including assessment, lecture notes, tutorial groupings, supplementary reading material for assignments and any general notices will be posted to Blackboard. Please check it regularly.

NOTE: Lecture notes that are posted contain the key points of a lecture, but do not replace your own notes. This paper is not designed as a distance learning course and notes posted on Blackboard are not intended as a substitute for attendance at lectures.

Learning Aims and Objectives

Students passing this paper should be able to demonstrate:

- a sound knowledge of the key debates about ‘race’, ethnicity and cultural identity (Assessments 2, 3 and 4)
- an understanding of debates about the media’s contribution to notions of ethnic and cultural identity (Assessments 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- critical analysis skills, especially in terms of media constructions of cultural identity (Assessments 1 and 2)
- further development of written, spoken and visual communication literacies. (Assessments 1, 2, 3 and 4, especially 2 and 3)
- further development of research skills (Assessments 1 and 2)



A commentary on Australia’s bicentenary

Workload

This course is designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit an average of 16 hours a week, including lectures, tutorials, and academic reading, research and writing.

Course Reading

Set Text: MDIA 310 Course Reader (2008) from Student Notes Distribution Centre.

A list of recommended additional readings for specific topics, as well as of relevant films and other media texts, will be available on Blackboard.

Some texts are more difficult than others, and you will almost certainly come across unfamiliar terms and concepts in many readings. If you find the academic writings challenging, and if you do not fully understand them on first reading, rest assured that this experience is not unique to you and is a fundamental aspect of university study. You should read through such material two or three times, and come to tutorials ready to discuss any difficulties, issues and questions regarding the material. You can also post questions on the Discussion Board on Blackboard – anonymously, if you wish. I will check this every two days.

Note: You are under **NO** obligation to agree with the authors (or, for that matter, with the lecturer on this course). It is more important that you think for yourself, engage with the readings, the lectures and tutorial discussion with openness and thoughtfulness, and learn to articulate and argue for your own position.

Dictionaries: While it is always a good idea to look up terms you are unfamiliar with in a dictionary, many terms have a specific meaning in the context of media studies. For these you should consult specialist dictionaries (there are several in Central Reference at P87.5) or books of Key Concepts. Both John Hartley and Tim O’Sullivan have written useful books listing key concepts which are on Closed Reserve in the library.

There is also a Glossary of terms especially relevant to this course under Course Material on Blackboard. Post a question to the Discussion Board if you think other terms should be added.

LECTURE OUTLINE 2006

Week 1 26 February	Some definitions and concepts
Week 2 4 March	Stereotypes and discourses
Week 3 11 March	Hollywood and its Others
Week 4 18 March	Otherness and Orientalism <i>First Assessment Tutorial Exercise due Thursday 20 March</i>
Week 5	No lecture – University holiday <i>Essay due Wednesday 26 March</i>
Week 6 1 April	Whiteness and Being Pākehā
Week 7 8 April	Postcolonialism
MID-TRIMESTER BREAK	
Week 8 29 April	Indigeneity and the Media
Week 9 6 May	The racial politics of comedy
Week 10 13 May	News: minority groups and the “Other”
Week 11 20 May	‘Race’, ethnicity and culture on-line <i>Second Assessment Tutorial Exercise due Thursday 22 May</i>
Week 12 27 May	Sport <i>Take home exam due Friday 30 May</i>

Mandatory Requirements & Assessment

MDIA 310 is internally assessed. **In order to pass this course, you must submit ALL set work and attend at least 8 tutorials** (if there is a legitimate reason for an absence, please provide your tutor with a note explaining this). Coursework incorporates the following:

- 1) Essay (2,000 – 2,500 words) 30%**
Due Wednesday 26 March 4pm

An analysis of a film of your choice, using as a starting point:

- the arguments in Shohat and Stam's chapter 'Stereotypes, Realism and the Struggle over Representation'
- other theory covered in the first four weeks of lectures.

- 2) Oral seminars (to be completed in pairs in tutorials from Week 4) 20%**

A. (15%)

- Start with an analysis of a key reading (to be selected from a range available)
- Select and read a related article/chapter from the Library databases
- Select and read a related article/chapter from the references to the original article
- Synthesise these articles into a 18 - 20 minute oral presentation. A written copy of this is to be handed in, with additional comments on the research process and division of work..
- The presentation is to be completed in time to allow two respondents time to read it and prepare a response/questions etc

B. (5%)

You are to be respondents to the next week's presentation. This involves:

- preparing a brief response to the issues covered
- suggesting a list of questions which arise from the material
- taking responsibility for a wider tutorial discussion.

Your tutor will do a mock presentation in Week 3

- 3) Tutorial exercises and tutorial participation 20%**
(see below)

- 4) Take home examination 30%**
Due Friday 30 May

More details, and criteria for assessment, will be given on the respective Assignment sheets, and will also be available on Blackboard.

As is usual, extension on course work will not be given lightly. If you feel you have a justifiable reason for an extension, you need to communicate with the Course Coordinator, Sue Abel, **prior to** the due date. A written explanation along with any relevant documentation will be required.

Late essays and tutorial presentations will be subject to a penalty of one mark (1% of total coursework) a day. Late Assessment Tutorial Exercises will be subject to a penalty of .5 of a mark a day.

Tutorial Exercises and Participation

Tutorials are a vital component of undergraduate study. They provide a forum for collaborative learning in which small groups can discuss, clarify and debate the issues raised in readings and in lectures. They can also help you develop communication skills which will be valuable in any postgraduate area of work. Accordingly, tutorial exercises and participation make up 20% of the assessment for this course.

In the first 11 weeks of this course an exercise will be posted to “Tutorial Exercises” on Blackboard. To meet the requirements for completing this paper, you are required to complete **six** of these. Each exercise should be 350 – 500 words, and should demonstrate a reasonable attempt to deal with the substantive issues in the relevant readings. They are to be uploaded to your tutorial’s site on Blackboard by **midnight Monday** following the relevant lecture. This is to allow your tutor time to read through them before tutorials. You should bring a copy to your tutorial to help you in discussions, and to make further notes on. In Weeks 4 and 11 you will select one of the exercises you have completed and write it up in more detail (600 – 750 words). These **two Assessment Tutorial Exercises** are worth 7.5% each. They are to be handed in to the office by Thursday 4pm in the week they are due, and uploaded to Blackboard by Friday 5pm.

NOTE: As with the essays, these two exercises cannot be assessed unless you hand in both a hard copy to the office, and an electronic copy to Blackboard.

The other 5% of tutorial assessment will be based on the amount of effort you have put into the other tutorial exercises, and your participation in tutorials. Obviously your attendance will have some relevance here, so if you cannot attend a particular tutorial you should give your tutor a note to explain your absence so that this can be taken into account. To allow tutorial groups to settle down, and for you to become more familiar with your fellow students, your tutor, and some of the ideas underlying this course, participation assessment will not start until Week 4. Criteria for tutorial participation assessment will be discussed in the second tutorial, after which official assessment criteria will be posted on Blackboard.

Presentation of Written Work

Please type your essays in 12pt with 1.5 or double spacing and leave a reasonable margin for comments from the person marking it. Proofread essays carefully so as to eliminate typing, grammatical and punctuation errors.

Students operating at 300-level are expected to be able to write with technical accuracy. Coursework grades will be compromised as a result of a lack of attention to the structure and accuracy of your writing, your referencing of sources through the essay, and your provision of a full bibliography. Poor expression, consistent mistakes in sentence structure and grammar, and the lack of a proper essay structure will automatically put essays into the C category or lower.

It is **STRONGLY** recommended that if your essay writing skills have pulled your grades down in the past, you seek help from the Student Learning Service.

It is the responsibility of the student (rather than of the tutor) to ensure that coursework is completed and submitted/presented on time. Students should observe due dates for both the essay and tutorial exercises and understand that it is *not possible* to gain course completion for 320 without submitting/presenting *all* coursework.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times. Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Turnitin

MDIA310 assignments are checked electronically for plagiarism. This is something that is becoming increasingly common in universities around the world. You will be required to post a copy of your assignment to Blackboard. It will then be uplifted to Turnitin. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

We recognise that plagiarism often arises through misunderstandings and not knowing how to reference material you have used. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. The Student Learning Centre also runs workshops on how to avoid plagiarism. You should read the material about Plagiarism below, and on the University's website.

As well as submitting work electronically, you need to hand in a hard copy (into the MDIA essay box in 42-44 KP). You are required to attach a cover sheet which you need to sign, indicating that you are aware of the University's policy on plagiarism, and that the assignment is all your own

work. Your assignment will not be marked until this cover sheet is signed. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand what plagiarism is, and what the University's policy on plagiarism is. Please do NOT sign the cover sheet if you do not understand these.



Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, leading academics in the area of 'race', cultural identity and postcolonialism

General University Policies and Statutes

These are available on Blackboard under Course Information.