

# MDIA 202 Television Studies

## COURSE GUIDE TRIMESTER TWO 2008

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**Consultation** Teaching staff will be available for a period of general consultation each week. These times will be announced during the first week of tutorials. Any additional information, or changes to the course, will also be announced in lectures.

### Lectures and Tutorials

Contact hours for MDIA 202 include one two-hour lecture each week and a weekly one-hour tutorial. Lectures will be held on Tuesdays, from 10-12 in Hunter LT323. In preparation for lectures and tutorials, students are expected to complete the weekly readings (see page 4-5 of this document). Tutorials for MDIA 202 will operate one week behind material covered in lectures to allow time for students to complete relevant reading prior to their tutorial. MDIA 202 lectures will incorporate the screening of indicative VHS/DVD clips which students will be encouraged to supplement with their own TV viewing and viewing of more specialized video/DVD resources (from VUW's AV suite, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, main library).

Attendance at lectures and tutorials is vital to successful progress on this course. Students should also note that, due to copyright restrictions and availability, screenings and/or clips shown as part of lectures may not be available for viewing outside of the lectures. Tutorials will start Week 2 and occur weekly thereafter. Tutorials are compulsory and aim, among a variety of functions, to provide opportunities for small group discussion and guidance as to assignment work. In MDIA 202, tutorials will also be the venue for the second assignment (tutorial presentation), meaning that it will be crucially important to attend the same tutorial right through the trimester. Tutorial enrolment is invited via blackboard and details will be announced during the first lecture. Enrolment in tutorials must be completed by the end of Week One of trimester. Once students have enrolled in a tutorial, class lists will be prepared, and names will be posted both on Blackboard and on the MDIA noticeboard (second floor, 42-44KP) by the start of Week 2 of trimester.

## Course Description

MDIA 202 offers a critical introduction to the television medium, with reference to American, British and New Zealand paradigms and contexts. Highlighting television's changing position through eras of 'scarcity,' 'availability' and 'plenty', MDIA 202 explores television culture and institutions, observing the inter-relationships between programmes, schedules, advertising and TV technologies. MDIA 202 introduces a range of television forms and genres, critically appraising key programme examples. All explorations will be informed by influential TV theory, broadcasting models, and by global developments in technology, regulation and ownership.

## Course Aims & Objectives

- To introduce and explore various critical approaches to the analysis of television and its output. This objective is underlined by the importance within MDIA 202 of such related concepts as: 'institution,' 'public service', 'convergence', 'target audience', 'scheduling', 'genre', 'hybridisation', and 'format transfer'.
- To track, with particular reference to American and British contexts, the evolution of television's institutions and aspirations from 1946 to 2008. Critical perspectives on the successive 'eras' of television (defined by John Ellis as those of "scarcity", "availability" and "plenty") will be explored, including the traditions and future of public television.
- To explore the philosophical, institutional and technological factors that have shaped television production, genres and programmes – both past and present, national and international.
- To provide the basis of a theoretical framework in relation to the above so as to prepare students for further study (and academic research) in the area of Television Studies.

NB. Assessment and examination questions for this course (please see page 6) are cumulatively designed to test student learning and understandings of **all** of the above aims and objectives. This coverage is ensured by the prohibition of any duplication of topics or material between assignment and examination questions.

## Course Reading

### Set Texts (Essential Reading)

- *MDIA 202 Course Reader (2008)*, a collection of key readings for this course (Student Notes)
- Glen Creeber (ed.) *The Television Genre Book*, BFI: London, 2001

### Recommended General Texts (Further Reading)

- Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill (eds.) *The Television Studies Reader*, Routledge: London and New York, 2004. (Bookshop and LIBRARY)
- Glen Creeber, *Tele-Visions: Methods and Concepts in Television Studies*, London BFI, 2005 (bookshop and LIBRARY)
- John Ellis, *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty*, IB Tauris: London 2000 (LIBRARY)
- Michele Hilmes (ed.) *The Television History Book*, BFI: London, 2003. (Library)
- Roger Horrocks and Nick Perry (eds.), *Television in New Zealand: Programming the Nation*, OUP: Melbourne, 2004. (LIBRARY)
- Toby Miller (ed.) *Television Studies*, London: British Film Institute, 2003. (LIBRARY)
- Horace Newcomb (ed.) *Television: The Critical View*, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> editions, OUP: New York and Oxford, 1994 and 2000. (LIBRARY)

## Mandatory Requirements and Assessment

This course's assessment involves a combination of written, oral and formal examination work. In order to pass the course you are required to attend tutorials and you must complete ALL assignment work to qualify for course completion. The items which combine to constitute your final grade for MDIA 202 are:

**Assignment 1** – *Research Essay* 2500 words, worth 30%, due **Week 6 Friday 15 August**.

**Assignment 2** – *Tutorial Presentation and Written Summary*, worth 20%, to be scheduled **Week 7-12 of trimester**. NB. The written summary must be an **individual submission**, handed in not later than 7 days after the scheduled presentation date.

**Examination** – Two-hour duration, two essays, worth 50%. Exam date to be advised.  
NB. *It is generally not possible to miss the exam day and still receive a grade for this course.*

Assignment questions and instructions will be given to you at appropriate points during the course. Assignment content and research approaches will be introduced and explained at tutorials. Essays must be delivered not later than 4.30 pm on the due date. Please read carefully (on later pages of this document) the instructions about plagiarism and avoid under-referencing any content that is included in written, oral or examination work. If inappropriate referencing is found in your work, you can expect to be penalized. If you are a student for whom English is not your first language, then you are strongly advised to book time (ideally well in advance) with VUW's Learning Support Centre for assistance with your writing.

### Style Guide/Bibliographies

You must type your essays. The university provides various computer labs for student use (you may be required to make bookings during busy periods). More information and details about their locations can be found at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/its/services/scs/> and [http://www.vuw.ac.nz/its/services/its-help/helpdesk-hints/computer\\_labs.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/its/services/its-help/helpdesk-hints/computer_labs.html) However, if you know that it will be difficult for you to type your essay (for any reason), please speak to me before the due date and we'll arrange something.

For full details regarding approaches to essay writing and the development of bibliographies, in addition to the correct use of notes, references and citation, please refer to Media Studies Essay Guidelines document which will be posted on the Blackboard site for this course.

### Due Dates and Essay Submission

All essays are to be placed in the essay submission box at the Media Studies office. **Late essays** (meaning any essays submitted *after* the due date or an arranged extension date) will be subject to penalty. Mailed essays must arrive by the due date, or risk incurring a penalty. **Essays must not be emailed.** Permission to submit any work after the due date must be sought from the course convenor, must be sought in advance of the assignment deadline, and will only be granted for exceptional reasons.

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities in examinations and other assessment procedures. For further information, refer to the Assessment Handbook, 1999, Appendix 1.

Under the revised Examination Statute (Sections 6-10), students may now apply for an aegrotat pass in respect of any item of assessment falling within the last three weeks before the day on which lectures cease. For full information and full explanation of the rules governing this provision, refer to Sections 6-10 of the Examinations Statute (which can be found in Victoria University of Wellington's 2001 *University Calendar*, pp. 70-72).

## **Essay Extensions**

As a general rule, extensions will not be granted except in the case of serious obstacles preventing a student's completion of an essay on time. If you feel that you may be in need of an extension, for any reason, speak with your tutor as early as possible. They may have advice about ways of managing the problem, or provide the contact details for someone else who can help you. If you think you require special consideration for any reason, speak with Dr. Dunleavy as soon as possible. Extension forms are available from the Media Studies administration office. They must be completed in full and signed by your tutor *prior* to submission of your essay.

## **Inappropriate Referencing and Plagiarism**

*Plagiarism is claiming someone else's work as your own.* Full and careful referencing is vitally important in all of your written and oral work on MDIA 202, to the extent that it delineates the difference between your own ideas and those of another person (usually an academic who is publishing in a field that is relevant to this course). If any instance of *inappropriate referencing* is found in your essay, whether or not the error is sufficient to necessitate the essay being referred on for a formal assessment in respect of plagiarism, it will incur a potentially substantial grade penalty. *Instances of plagiarism* in submitted assignment work take the risk of a failed grade, and in some cases, may be dealt with under the Statute on Conduct. All ideas and even the briefest of quoted phrases that are taken from the work of another person must be fully sourced. This referencing rule applies to unpublished lecture notes, handouts and any items found on or downloaded from the internet. Please consult Trisha Dunleavy (and do it well before submitting written work) if you have any uncertainties at all about what form of referencing is required of assessment items for MDIA 202. Please be warned.

## **Workload**

This course is designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit up to 15 hours a week, including attending lectures and tutorials, and completing course-related reading, research, writing and viewing.

## **Student Services and Learning Support**

Please see the next two pages of this document for general information about student services and learning support at Victoria University.

## Assessment Criteria for MDIA 202

### **A+ 85-100%**

Excellent work showing sophisticated and independent thought. Superior analysis, comprehensive research, good theoretical or methodological understanding and impeccable presentation.

### **A 80-84%**

Work is distinguished by the clarity of thought and argument. Question is answered skilfully, is meticulously structured and the argument is convincing. Demonstrates sophisticated comprehension of the topic, a familiarity with scholarship & research in the area, and a clear understanding of related theoretical issues. A high standard of critical analysis. Presentation and organization are excellent with correct use of citation conventions when required.

### **A- 75-79%**

Work of a high standard: ideas could be of 'A' quality material but the overall effect was undermined by limitation or inconsistency in one area. It could also be 'A' material that was flawed by the quality or consistency of its technical presentation, research support, or theoretical understandings. Demonstrates independent thought, good writing skills, effective selection/structuring of material, and a general clarity and sense of purpose.

### **B+ 70-74%**

Work which exhibits a good standard of research and of writing. Contains some perceptive analysis, and effective research, preparation and planning. This work may demonstrate insight and perception but this standard is not maintained through the whole work. The argument, technical quality, and other elements may be inconsistent in quality. May require greater integration of theoretical or empirical analysis. Demonstrates some independence of thought.

### **B 65-69%**

Consistently good work and still above average. May demonstrate strong analysis, theoretical reading or contextual knowledge, but without integrating these elements into a balanced argument. May be well researched and documented but in the 'B' range there could well be a deficiency in some aspect of research or understanding. May have problems with technical presentation, structure, argument and/or research.

### **B- 60- 64%**

Good work but may not be consistent and thus falls short of 'B' quality in one or more respects. In this grade area the work will have exceeded the standard expected for passes at this level. Question is satisfactorily answered and has been appropriately informed by research, but there is less attention to the detail and complexity of issues. There may be problems with the essay structure, the writing style, the selection of material or the argument. There may also be problems with presentation, expression, and grammar.

### **C+ 55- 59%**

The essay is limited in achievement due to an overall incapacity for independent research or thought – hence it will tend to demonstrate a reliance on lecture material. Work in the C range will have paid insufficient attention to critical sources and not be widely researched. Work in this category may have deficiencies in structure and organization, the quality of argument, and/or the writing style.

### **C 50- 54%**

Satisfactory completion of set tasks only. Basic engagement with the subject matter and lacking in critical analysis or a considered conceptual approach. May be poorly planned and constructed, with serious problems of clarity and expression. May not have used or have acknowledged an appropriate range of sources. May be purely descriptive. There may be some significant problems with writing, research or organization.

### **D 40-49%**

Misses the point of the exercise or has failed to respond adequately to it. The work is deficient in important respects to the extent that it cannot be regarded satisfactory at this level. A 'D' grade essay may contain some elements of attaining a pass grade.

### **E 0- 39%**

This category implies that the essay is well below the achievement minimum (in a range of respects) for work at this level. A E essay will demonstrate not one, but several of the 'D' essay's deficiencies - it may be well short of the prescribed length, badly written, poorly conceived, ill structured, hastily prepared, full of technical or other inaccuracies, and/or lacking in even a basic understanding of the concepts. An essay in the 'E' area may have been penalised by inappropriate referencing or plagiarism (please see pages 7-8 for more information).

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/calendar\\_intro.html](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html)

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

### Statement on the use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. 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. 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. 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.