

Victoria University of Wellington

Media Studies

School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies
Te Kura Tānga Kōrero Ingarihi, Kiriata, Whakaari, Pāpāho

MDIA 206 Media and Digital Cultures 2009 Trimester 1 Course Outline

Course Description

This course introduces some of the key arguments and issues discussed in the rapidly developing field of new media studies. We examine how digital technologies (such as the Internet, digital music, video games) are transforming contemporary culture and everyday life, and, in turn, how cultural, economic, and political forces shape these technologies. By interrogating the historical development of selected media from a variety of theoretical perspectives, we will examine how new cultural forms are made possible by various new technologies. These discussions will be embedded in an exploration of the social institutions that produce and distribute media texts and the different ways in which they are consumed.

Coordination and Teaching

Trimester Dates:

Start – Monday 2 March 2009

Mid-trimester break - Monday 13 April until Friday 24 April

End – Friday 5 June

Study/Examination Period - Monday 8 June until Wednesday 1 July

Lecture time: Thu 2.10–4 pm

Venue: MY LT101

Convenor and Lecturer:

Angi Buettner

42-44 KP

Room 205

Tel.: 463 5070

Email: angi.buettner@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Tue 1–2

Tutorial times (all tutorials held in 77 Fairlie Terrace, room 205):

Sign up via the 206 Blackboard website

Times tba

Guest Lecturers:

Anita Brady

Jo Smith

Geoff Stahl

Tutor:

Tba

Consultation times: tba

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Course Structure

The two-hour session on a Thursday will consist of a lecture or introduction to the topic, as well as whole-class discussion time. The tutorial hour is the forum where you can ask questions about lecture and reading material as well as discuss essay writing skills, and where you can try out your ideas on others. Tutorials start in week 2. As this is a course designed to provoke critical thinking, active participation in class discussion is expected. The course is structured in three parts:

Part 1: New media economies and technologies

If conventional media studies emphasises the importance of issues of production, textuality and consumption, this section of the course suggests that the issue of technology cuts across all three of these areas of study. Part 1 invites us to understand how larger social, economic and political forces inform the shape, style and function of technologies. We also look at the changing political economies generated by technological innovations and how discourses of “the new” contribute to capitalist systems of accumulation.

Part 2: New Media Interfaces

If part 1 focuses on condition of production and the question of technologies, part 2 looks at how new media technologies change our understanding of media texts. We ask: how have digital technologies changed conventional approaches to understanding music and television? What new models of analysis do we have to understand video gaming? What new interfaces are emerging between ourselves, as media consumers, and the media content we consume?

Part 3: The Politics and Practices of New Media

In this section of the course we raise the issue of changing notions of community, agency (ability to act in the world) and subjectivity (ways of understanding ourselves) in light of new media technologies. We ask: how has the Internet impacted upon our understanding of social relations? How are ideas about race and ethnicity transformed and reconfirmed in light of web-based media? Who are *you* online?

Learning Aims and Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. be familiar with recent and emerging theories of new media
2. demonstrate knowledge of recent and emerging methods of new media analysis
3. demonstrate further development of their written, spoken and visual communication literacies
4. be able to demonstrate critical analytical skills in relation to new media theories and practices.

Blackboard

Information relevant to this paper including assessment, information on reading material and resources will be available on Blackboard and updated regularly. Announcements will also be posted. Check this site regularly.

NB: As this is a team-taught paper, some lecturers may choose NOT to make their notes available to you via Blackboard. The lecture notes that are posted are only indicative of the content of the lectures and available only to complement attendance at lectures.

Your first Blackboard task is to use this forum to sign in to a tutorial. Log on to Blackboard and then select the “Tutorial Enrolment” button and then “Discussion Board” and then follow the instructions.

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Workload

This course is designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit an average of 15 hours a week, including lectures, tutorials, and academic reading, research and writing.

Course Reading

Textbook: Marshall, P. David. *New Media Cultures*. London: Arnold, 2004. (Available from vicbooks)

Recommended Book (available on Reserve in the Library):
Lister, M, K Kelly, J Dovey, S Giddings and I Grant. *New Media: a Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Recommended weekly readings (available on Blackboard).

You *must* read the assigned readings for every week, which serve as the basis for lecture, discussion, and tutorial. Use these readings for your essay and tutorial preparation. The more you read, the better equipped you will be to engage with course materials. The readings vary in mode from theoretical analysis to close readings of media texts. It is imperative that you grapple with the harder readings to better situate or frame your engagement with the new mediascapes that surround you. While the material is at times political, we encourage an open, questioning and critical approach.

Mandatory Requirements, Assessments & Penalties

This course is 100% internally assessed and is designed on the understanding that you attend every lecture session and every tutorial. Tutorials are an essential means to complete the course successfully since you will get a chance to develop your understanding of the topic, ask questions, receive information about assignments and deliver a compulsory presentation (between weeks 9–11). Part of your assessment will be based on your preparation of tutorial material and contribution in class (see assessment item 3 below).

Lateness penalties

- Assignments submitted after the deadline without a written extension will be penalised at a rate of 2% (out of a total of 100) per working day. In other words, if you get 50% for an assignment, after one day your grade will drop to 48%, then 46% the following day etc.
- Late assignments are likely to receive limited feedback.
- The weekend counts for one day (i.e. an assignment due on Friday that is submitted on Monday will receive a 2% penalty).
- Please ensure that you are aware of the time that your assignment is due, as well as the date, as this is the cut-off time utilised in calculating lateness penalties.

Extensions

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Admin Tutor (in MDIA101, 102, 103, and 201), or the Course Co-ordinator (in all other MDIA courses). Tutors cannot grant extensions.

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Assessment

Assessment item	Word length	%	Due date
1. Short Essay	1500 words	30%	Week 5 (Thursday 2 April)
2. Essay	2000 words	40%	Week 8 (Thursday 6 May)
3. Tutorial Paper	1000 words (+ tut participation)	30%	Sign-up in tutorial (between wk 9-11)

1. Short Essay (1500 words) 30% DUE WEEK 4 (Thursday 2 April, by 2 pm)

2. Essay (2000 words) 40% Due Week 8 (Thursday 6 May, by 2 pm)

3. Tutorial Paper (1000 words + tut participation) 30% Sign-up in tutorial (between wk 9-11)

LECTURE TOPICS/READINGS/TUTORIAL TOPICS

Introduction: What's New About New Media?

Week 1. Introduction to Key Concepts and Themes (AB)

Part 1: New Media Economies and Technologies

Week 2. History and Technology (AB)

Week 3. The Social Shaping of New Media: The Case of the DVD (JS)

Week 4. Political Economy of New Media: The Case of Digital Cinema (JS)

Part 2: New Media Interfaces

Week 5. Visual Culture and New Media (AB)

Week 6: Music and New Media (GS)

-----MID-TRIMESTER BREAK-----

Week 7. Embodiment and Cyborg Cultures (AKB)

Week 8. Online Communities (AKB)

Part 3: The Politics and Practice of New Media

Week 9. Surveillance Cultures (AB)

Week 10. Participation and New Media (AB)

Week 11. New Media Literacies and Everyday Life (AB)

Week 12. Course Wrap-up (AB)

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GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

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* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.