

MDIA 321 Special Topic: Media Representations of Politics

Trimester 2 2012

16 July to 17 November 2012

20 Points

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	16 July to 19 October 2012
Mid-trimester break:	27 August to 9 September 2012
Last piece of assessment due:	16 November 2012

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
Dr. Douglas A. Van Belle	doug.vanbelle@vuw.ac.nz	463 7447	FT83-307	Thursdays 1-3pm

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Tuesdays 12 to 1.50pm 77FT306

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the MDIA 321 site on Blackboard: go to "Tutorials" and then follow the instructions under the "SCubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions" link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board outside the SEFTMS Reception, 83 Fairlie Terrace.

TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

Attendance to both lectures and tutorials is strongly advised. Lectures and tutorials build upon and extend the information in the required texts; they do not repeat the material from these texts. Therefore students are expected to independently read or view assigned texts. Texts will include visual material that may need to be purchased or rented.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard will be used as a bulletin board to post announcements and material relevant to the course, including a copy of this course outline and copies of details for the essays. It will also be used to electronically submit the essays.

Lecture notes **WILL NOT** be posted on Blackboard.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

This course explores how the nature of different media and the manner in which they are utilized enable, represent and frame the presentation of political processes, theories and dynamics. Students will analyse the representation of politics in media from a social-scientific conceptual framework.

COURSE CONTENT

The course will examine politics in media using both the technical nature of the media (i.e. TV versus print, as well as the type of content (i.e. satire versus documentary). The course is designed around an exploratory and investigative learning model, where the content of lectures, tutorials and readings are intended to serve as tools that enable the student to explore the relevant ideas in the assessed essays. In the first portion of the course, the lectures will explore background ideas while students read a textbook on politics in film and literature. This will build a foundation for the subsequent exploration that will make up the bulk of the lectures and student work for the rest of the trimester.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify the key differences between a media studies-oriented perspective on politics and a political theory based perspective.
2. Demonstrate critical awareness of how the nature of film production and the need for visual representation of literary conflict distorts the political content.
3. Analyse how the nature of descriptive prose in print texts enables and limits political representations.
4. Critically discuss how variations in narrative arcs and episodic versus stand-alone stories shapes discourses on the political

5. Examine how the presumption of a teaching objective shapes representations of politics in documentary and other “non-fictional” media narratives.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours spread evenly over the 12 week trimester and breaks, or 13 hours per teaching week.

READINGS

Essential texts:

Van Belle and Mash, *A Novel Approach to Politics*, 2nd edition (CQ Press).

Eric Flint, *1632* (Baen Books)

Ali Franken, *Why Not Me* (Delta)

Best of Andromeda Spaceways Science Fiction: Volume 2 (available online)

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 9–27 July 2012, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. You will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during trimester time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

This course is internally assessed. Below is an outline of the points of student assessment. These criteria are final for Trimester 2-2012 and supersede all other descriptions or depictions. All four assessments are required and must be completed to pass this course. Please note the definition of completion for the tutorial assignments in its description.

Essay 1: 2,000 Words	40%
Essay 2: 1,000 Words	20%
Essay 3: 2,000 Words	40%
Tutorial Preparation	Pass/Fail
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Total	100%

All essays will be submitted electronically through Blackboard.

Essays must be turned in before the last lecture of the year in order to count as completing the assignment in order to pass the course. The specific topic of the essay will be announced before the mid-trimester break.

Students are also expected to use a standard style guide for formatting references and footnotes. The formatting and referencing instructions in the Media Studies Essay Guide (posted on Blackboard) may be used, but students majoring in other disciplines or familiar with other formats may use a standard alternative specific to the discipline.

Late essays will be accepted. However, without a documented excuse that meets the university requirements for granting an extension, late essays will suffer a penalty of 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

Essay 1 (2,000 words), Due Monday 20 August

Essay 1 is intended to evaluate Objective 1

Essay 2 (1,000 words), Due Monday 1 October

Essay 2 is intended to evaluate Objectives 1, 4 and 5

Essay 3 (2,000 words), Due Monday 5 November

Essay 3 is intended to evaluate Objectives 1- 5

Tutorial Preparation

Tutorial preparation tasks will be explained during tutorials and will be due at the **start** of the next tutorial. These are intended primarily as exercises to support tutorial activities and enhance student engagement with lecture material and are not, in themselves assessments. They are, however, required. They are marked by the tutor on an acceptable/not-acceptable basis. Students must attend at least 7 out of 10 tutorials (unless excused) and complete **ALL** tutorial preparation tasks including tasks assigned for a missed tutorial. Failure to complete this required task will incur a 10% penalty in the final grade.

Additional notes on written assignments.

Always keep a copy of the finished essay or take-home test. It is your responsibility to submit the assignment on time, and in the event of loss, regardless of fault, it is in your best interest to be able to immediately make a new copy available to your tutor.

All text should be typed unless otherwise instructed. The markers prefer double spaced but alternatively you could leave a blank line between the lines you type. In respect of script size, you probably want to use a 12 point font for the main essay text and a 10 point font for footnote/endnote details. Markers also prefer a Times Roman or similar serif font.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

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 (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit all three essays
- Attend at least 7 tutorials.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

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

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

TURNITIN

Essays provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study.

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	17/7	<p>LECTURE TOPICS:</p> <p>First Hour Introduction. Course structure. Assignments and expectations.</p> <p>Second Hour Media “Types”. Communication theory and media. What do we mean by a Social Science Approach?</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: No Tutorials</p> <p>Tutorial Assignment for Week 2: Politics in a child’s world. Examine media targeted at children and discuss how politics shapes it.</p> <p>Readings For Week 2: Van Belle Chapters 1-4.</p>
Week 2	24/7	<p>LECTURE TOPICS:</p> <p>First Hour The oral tradition: Myths, gods, songs and politics.</p> <p>Second Hour “Pre” media: Constellations, monuments, symbols and signifiers.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Discussion of politics in a child’s world and political socialization.</p> <p>Tutorial Assignment for Week 3:</p> <p>The politics of sports Spectacle. Watch the Olympics Opening Ceremony.</p> <p>Readings For Week 3: Van Belle Chapters 5-8</p>
Week 3	31/7	<p>LECTURE TOPICS:</p> <p>First Hour: Sports Spectacle 1</p> <p>Second Hour: Sports Spectacle 1</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Discuss the Haka, The All Blacks and New Zealand Identity</p> <p>Tutorial Assignment for Week 4: Catalogue the stories on a 1-hour NZ evening news cast. In less than 25 words for each story, identify the disruption of the status quo, the conflict over that disruption and the resolution.</p> <p>Readings For Week 4: Van Belle 10-14.</p>
Week 4	7/8	<p>LECTURE TOPICS:</p> <p>First Hour Storytelling: structures, strategies and archetypes.</p> <p>Second Hour The stories of political structures</p> <p>Hand out of Essay Assignment.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Discussion of Essay assignment (Due Monday of Week 6).</p> <p>Readings For Week 5: A Strategic Guide to Writing for the Classroom.</p>
Week 5	14/8	<p>LECTURE TOPICS:</p> <p>First Hour News, News, News.</p> <p>Second Hour Democracy and mediated politics.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Discussion of Essay structure.</p>

Tutorial Assignment for Week 6: None.

Readings For Week 6: None

Reminder - Essay 1, Due Monday 20 August

Week 6 21/8

LECTURE TOPICS:

First Hour: The educational Imperative of the news

Second Hour: Documentaries and the educational imperative

Tutorial Activity: Essay Debrief and discussion of essay assignment

Tutorial Assignment for Week 7: None

Readings For Week 7: Al Franken, Why not me?

Mid Trimester Break:

Monday 27 August to Sunday 9 September 2012

Week 7 11/9

LECTURE TOPICS:

First Hour: The Politics of Satire

Second Hour 7 Days, the Daily Show, Colbert, Yes Minister and Weekend Update.

Tutorial Activity: Discussion of cultural norms and political satire, hand out short essay assignment guide.

Tutorial Assignment for Week 8: Select topic for short essay assignment.

Readings For Week 8: Start reading 1632

Week 8 18/9

LECTURE TOPICS:

First Hour The political cartoon.

Second Hour Politics of the graphic novel.

Tutorial Activity: TBA

Tutorial Assignment for Week 10: TBA

Readings For Week 9: Finish reading 1632.

Week 9 25/9

LECTURE TOPICS:

First Hour Speculative fiction and political theory.

Second Hour Speculative fiction and political activism.

Tutorial Activity: Politics and Armageddon.

Tutorial Assignment for Week 10: Watch a film from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Readings for Week 10: TBA

Week 10 2/10 **LECTURE TOPICS:**
First Hour Politics in film 1.
Second Hour Politics in film 2.
Tutorial Activity: Historical context and politics in film.
Tutorial Assignment for Week 11: None.
Readings for Week 11: TBA
Reminder - Essay 2, Due Monday 1 October

Week 11 9/10 **LECTURE TOPICS:**
First Hour Propaganda.
Second Hour Public Diplomacy.
Tutorial Activity: Third Essay Assignment handed out.
Tutorial Assignment for Week 12: None
Readings for Week 12:
Best of Andromeda Spaceways Science Fiction: Volume 2

Week 12 16/10 **LECTURE TOPICS:**
First Hour Novels
Second Hour Short Fiction
Tutorial Activity: Essay assignment handed out.

Study Week: Monday 22 October to Friday 26 October 2012

Reminder - Essay 3, Due Monday 5 November.