

MDIA 207 News Analysis

Trimester 1 2015

2 March to 1 July 2015

20 Points

IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 2 March to 5 June 2015

Easter/Mid-Trimester break: 3 to 19 April 2015

Last assessment item due: 16 June 2015

Withdrawal dates:

Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Thursday 2.10-4.00pm Hugh Mackenzie HMLT104

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the MDIA 207 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorial Sign Up” and then follow the instructions under the “S-Cubed Log In” link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed and on the noticeboard outside the administration office, 83 Fairlie Terrace.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff: Dr Douglas A. Van Belle

Email: doug.vanbelle@vuw.ac.nz

Phone: 04 463 7447

Room: FT83-307

Office Hours: Thursday 1.00pm-2.00pm and by appointment

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 take home test and essay. It will also be used to electronically submit the essay at the end of trimester.

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.

PRESCRIPTION

This course provides students the opportunity to develop the theoretical background and skills necessary for critically analysing the various information products generated by the increasingly global news media. Rejecting the naive assumption that the news is an accurate and objective reflection of reality, the ways in which the news presents a distorted but consistent view of the world are systematically examined, with an emphasis on how and why these distortions exist and persist. In recognition of the wide variety of careers and intellectual pursuits that will find value in the skills enabling the critical engagement of the news media, this course is designed for a diverse student audience.

COURSE CONTENT

Lectures, readings and tutorials will all explore the complex inter-relationship between the news media, the public sphere as an arena of political competition, and news media audiences as the public part of that public sphere.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

- 1) identify and analyse systemic influences that intervene between the source event and the delivered news product
- 2) identify and analyse procedural influences that intervene between the source event and the delivered news product
- 3) identify and analyse economic and business influences that intervene between the source event and the delivered news product
- 4) identify and analyse political and social influences that intervene between the source event and the delivered news product and
- 5) demonstrate a comprehension and ability to apply theories to the analysis of news content.

TEACHING FORMAT

Attendance at lectures is strongly advised and required for tutorials. Lectures and tutorials build upon and extend the information in the required readings; they do not repeat the material from the readings. Therefore students are expected to independently read and study required readings in preparation for lectures, tutorials and tests.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- take all short tests
- complete Essay and
- attend at least 7 tutorials.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20-point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 hours per teaching week.

As a guideline, this translates into 2 hours of lectures per week; 1 hour of tutorial for 11 weeks; weekly readings and short test preparation have been designed to take 6 hours per week; 15 hours of additional reading and studying outside of lecture weeks, leaving 4-5 hours per week to be scheduled for studying, researching and writing of the essay.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Short Test 1 (1 hour)	20%	1, 2, 3 and 4	Held in Tutorial Week 4
2 Short Test 2 (1 hour)	20%	1, 2, 3 and 4	Held in Tutorial Week 9
3 Short Test 3 (1 hour)	20%	1, 2, 3 and 4	Held in Tutorial Week 12
4 Essay (3,000 words)	40%	5	Tuesday 16 June via Blackboard

These criteria are final for Trimester 1, 2015 and supersede all other descriptions or depictions. All four assessments are required and must be completed to pass this course.

Short Tests

The short tests examine the student's ability to meet Learning Objectives 1 to 4. They focus heavily upon demonstrating an understanding of the content of the required readings and how that content relates to the lectures. Therefore students should tackle the readings as early in the trimester as they can manage and should consider the lectures in terms of how they contrast and complement the information in the

required readings. These tests will be held during the noted tutorials and will consist of a single essay question.

All students attending the preceding week's tutorials will be given preparation and study materials for the short tests.

Alternate testing accommodations will be made as required for students with disabilities, but official university documentation must be offered to both the tutor, Course Coordinator and Administrator at the beginning of the trimester. Make-up tests will only be offered to students with documented emergencies and please do note that the university is very strict about what counts as an emergency. **Travel plans and work commitments are not an acceptable justification for rescheduling testing.** Students with multiple assessments clustering in a test week can enquire about taking this assessment up to one week early if that helps with scheduling. Students are strongly advised to utilise the Van Belle and Van Belle essay guide as part of the preparation for these essay tests as the clarity of argument offered will be a significant marking criteria. The guide is provided online:

www.cqpress.com/docs/college/VanBelle_WritingAppendix.pdf

It is also posted on Blackboard.

Short Test 1 Held in Tutorial Week 4

Short Test 2 Held in Tutorial Week 9

Short Test 3 Held in Tutorial Week 12

Essay, Analysis of News Content, (3,000 words), due Tuesday 16 June

This essay will be submitted electronically via Blackboard. 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.

Students are also expected to use a standard style guide for formatting references and footnotes. The formatting and referencing instructions in the 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. Markers prefer a Times Roman or similar serif font.

Additional notes on written assignments

Always keep a copy of the finished essay, project or workshop assignment. 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.

All text should be printed and double-spaced unless otherwise instructed. The lecturer prefers 12-point Times Roman or similar serif font for the main essay text and a 10-point font for footnote/endnote details. Assignments must be stapled and each page numbered. Do not use plastic covers or binders. A stack of essays in plastic covers exhibits many of the same qualities as a stack of live fish.

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

IMPORTANT: All essays must be submitted in both electronic form through Blackboard before midnight on the due date and as a hardcopy into 83FT MDIA drop slot. The Blackboard submission will be the submission of record. The hardcopy must be turned in within 36 hours of the Blackboard due date and must be identical to the Blackboard copy.

Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool.

Electronic assignments are submitted as a MS Word file through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section.

Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: **83 Fairlie Terrace**. Attach an assignment cover sheet found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your tutor in tutorials or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the administration office.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **NOTE: Regardless of how late your assignment is, turn it in.**

No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 1 July 2015.

Penalties

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.

SET TEXTS

Harrison, Jackie. *News*. Routledge.

All ancillary readings listed in the course outline are required and all are available free of charge to students, online through the Victoria library online databases.

Students are also required to read *The Dominion Post*, daily, throughout the trimester. In addition, students will be expected to read independently as needed for the completion of assignments and this may require the payment of interlibrary loan fees and/or the purchase of additional reading materials.

You can order textbooks online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz.

RECOMMENDED READING

Shudson. *Sociology of News*. Norton.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course. Do note that feedback solicited from students during the course is primarily intended for the refinement of the next time a course is delivered. It is unusual to be able to immediately incorporate feedback into the current course delivery.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	5 March	<p>Lecture Topics:</p> <p>First Hour Rationality and a political economy framework for conceptualising the news industry, its actions and its products. Agreement reality, news as a representation, not a reflection of reality, thinking in Trimesters of the construction of news as the construction of a public sphere or mediated reality. The stained-glass window as a metaphor for the metaphor of the news as a window on the world.</p> <p>Second Hour Human cognition, news and the rationale behind the essay guide to be applied to all written assessment for this course.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: No Tutorials</p> <p>Readings For Week 2: Harrison Chapters 1, 2 and 4</p>
Week 2	12 March	<p>Lecture Topics:</p> <p>First Hour The Business of News — The Audience as Product, Costs versus the value of the product.</p> <p>Second Hour The Business of the News — Advertising, delivery costs, market sizes and niche versus mass audience strategies.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Discussion of target audiences, advertisers and how that might influence coverage choices.</p> <p>Readings For Week 3: Harrison Chapter 3: Schudson Chapters 6, 9 and 10</p>
Week 3	19 March	<p>Lecture Topics:</p> <p>First Hour Imperatives of and limitations on the news — Newsworthiness.</p> <p>Second Hour Imperatives of and limitations on the news -- The dramatic story structure.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: The William Shatner School of Acting Dynamics, Discuss. Study guide for Short Test 1</p> <p>Readings For Week 5: Harrison Chapter 5: Schudson Chapter 7</p>
Week 4	26 March	<p>Lecture Topics:</p> <p>First Hour Imperatives and limitations on the news -- Gatekeeping and logistics Theory.</p> <p>Second Hour Imperatives and limitations on the news -- Gatekeeping and logistics, The Sudan Somalia Example.</p> <p>Readings For Week 5: Harrison Chapter 7: Schudson Chapters 8 and 11. Livingston, Steven and D. Van Belle (2004) "The Effects of New Satellite Newsgathering Technology on Newsgathering from Remote Locations." <i>Political Communication</i> 22: 45-62. Available online through the library.</p> <p>Tutorial Activity: Short Test 1</p>

Week 5 2 April **Lecture Topics:**

First Hour Mutual exploitation model of the news.

Second Hour Three social/political communicative roles of the news -- Top down, lateral, bottom up.

Tutorial Activity: Discuss Livingston and Van Belle Reading.

Readings For Week 6: A Strategic Guide to Writing for the Classroom.
http://www.cqpress.com/docs/college/VanBelle_WritingAppendix.pdf.

Easter/Mid Trimester Break: Friday 3 to Sunday 19 April 2015

Week 6 23 April **Lecture Topics:**

First Hour Sex and the news.

Second Hour What your parents never told you about essays.

Tutorial Activity: Essay assignment discussed. The use of library database access to research articles discussed.

Tutorial Assignment to Prepare for Week 8: Students should select an Essay topic and write a one paragraph description of it to present for discussion.

Readings For Week 7: Harrison Chapter 6: Schudson Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
Bennett, W. Lance (1990) Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication* 40, Vol 2. Spring, 103-125

Week 7 30 April **Lecture Topics:**

First Hour Elite dominance of the sources of news—Framing and Agenda setting

Second Hour Elite dominance of the sources of news--Indexing

Tutorial Activity: Discuss Bennett Reading. Study guide for short test 2.

Readings For Week 8: Harrison Chapter 8.

Week 8 7 May **Lecture Topics:**

First Hour Elite dominance of the sources of news -- Strategies, taking advantage of the business imperatives of the news.

Second Hour Elite dominance of the sources of news -- Psuedo events, controlled news environments, spin, back to framing.

Readings For Week 9: Schudson Chapter 4
McLeod, Douglas M and Benjamin H Detenber (1999) Framing effects of television news coverage of social protest. *Journal of Communication*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3; p. 3 (21 pages).

Week 9 14 May **Lecture Topics:**

First Hour Classic concept of Agenda Setting -- Protest, and the disadvantaged voice, Investigative journalism.

Second Hour Classic concept of Agenda Setting -- The drama of scandal and the myth of conspiracy.

Tutorial Activity: Short Test 2.

Readings: for Week 10

Stamm, Keith, Michelle Johnson and Brennon Martin (1997). Difference among newspapers, television, and radio in their contribution to knowledge of the contract with America. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74, 687-702.

Week 10

21 May

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Television versus print -- Differences in structure and format, audience response. Vividness effect. Liberal educational presumption of the news ideal and television versus print.

Second Hour Photo Journalism, Cowboys and the power of Image.

Tutorial Activity: Discussion of Stamm et al article.

Readings for Week 11:

Schudson Chapter 12

Reminder - Essay (3,000 words)

Due Monday 16 June via Blackboard

Week 11

28 May

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Analysing the news – Race, Disasters and the international flow of news.

Second Hour Analysing the news –Disasters, localisation and the third

person effect **Tutorial Activity:** Discuss essay. Study guide for Short Test 3.

Week 12

4 June

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Topical Lecture or Guest Lecture

Second Hour Topical Lecture or Guest Lecture

Tutorial Activity: Short Test 3