



UNSW
SYDNEY



MDIA5028

Critical Perspectives in Communication

Term One // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Paul Ryder	p.ryder@unsw.edu.au	By e-appointment Wednesday 1300-1400. Note: for other tutor/s, see Moodle	311B	Please email

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

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The School of the Arts and Media would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Psychologist Kurt Lewin once opined that 'there's nothing so practical as good theory.' What he meant was that since theory is a distillation and modelling of human experience, it may be advantageously projected over otherwise uncertain milieux—helping us to understand the way things are and the way they might be. By introducing you to a range of critical perspectives in communication, this course will help you to recognise and understand the power of the cultural formations behind political and advocacy campaigns. With reference to cases and theories ranging from the classical to contemporary worlds, you will learn how to identify the deep-seated patterns either consciously or unconsciously engaged by political actors. With an emphasis on key political texts, the course asks: What are the cultural-structural engines that shape the political proposition? What influences—or even determines—our reception and response? To which deeply-anchored concepts do particular political texts speak? This course, then, proposes that such texts—and all texts, in fact—are rooted in a vast historical-cultural matrix, and that our understanding of them is greatly enhanced when we can locate them (as far as we might) in a broader paradigmatic field. Accordingly, this course will help you to become far better thinkers; better critics of political campaign strategy and tactics. But it's not all theory. It's practical, too. And so in the final assessment you will leverage some key critical perspectives to craft a campaign in response to a pressing social issue.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify critical approaches to communication—and key aspects of those approaches.
2. Critique a political campaign by applying to it principles of structuralism and at least one other critical approach.
3. Create a political-activist campaign and discuss how key critical perspectives in communication inform specific elements of campaign design.

Teaching Strategies

The lectures provide an opportunity to offer well-developed and nuanced insights apropos key cultural movements and associated theoretical frameworks, whilst the tutorials facilitate in-depth discussion and student engagement around these.

The course will be taught via online lectures, face-to-face tutorials, and online project consultations.

Assessment

Please see Moodle

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Online test	30%	07/03/2021 07:00 PM	1
Theoretical Essay	40%	04/04/2021 11:00 PM	1, 2
Group Campaign	30%	25/04/2021 11:00 PM	1, 2, 3

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Online test

Length: 30 minutes

Details:

30 question, 30-minute online multiple choice knowledge test reflecting the learning over Weeks 1-3.

Feedback via LMS

Additional details:

This test is conducted online via Moodle. For additional detail, see Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Assessment 2: Theoretical Essay

Details:

1500-words.

Engaging relevant theory, students critique a political campaign from a list provided.

Feedback via LMS

Additional details:

See Moodle for details.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Group Campaign

Details:

Group Campaign

3500-4000 words.

In response to a pressing social issue, in small groups students design a political-activist campaign

Feedback via LMS.

Additional details:

This assignment is submitted via Moodle by group coordinators only. See course Moodle site for details.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 15 February - 19 February	Lecture	Course Overview/ A course about patterns What is a critical approach? Rhetoric 1: Patterns in argument: the Classical Age TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February	Lecture	Rhetoric 2 Patterns in argument TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!
	Blended	Assessment 1 online forum to be held Thursday 13:30-14:00 this week. See Moodle for link.
Week 3: 1 March - 5 March	Lecture	New Criticism & Russian Formalism: I.A. Richards: Metaphor/Retrievals Shklovsky: Defamiliarisation Tomashevsky: free and bound motifs Jakobson: Axes of selection and combination TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER

		<p>INDIVIDUAL TMETABLE</p> <p>Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!</p>
	Blended	Assessment 1 online forum to be held Thursday 13:30-14:00 this week. See Moodle for link.
Week 4: 8 March - 12 March	Lecture	<p>Structuralism 1</p> <p><i>Linguistic structuralism</i></p> <p><i>Binaries</i>: Saussure</p> <p><i>Semiotic Triad</i>: Peirce</p> <p><i>Semiosis</i>: Umberto Eco</p> <p>TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TMETABLE</p> <p>Please refer to online content per Moodle, which must be accessed and viewed prior to your tutorial!</p>
Week 5: 15 March - 19 March	Lecture	<p>Structuralism 2</p> <p><i>Anthropological structuralism/ Mythologies</i>:</p> <p>Vico; Piaget; Fraser; Levi-Strauss; Barthes; Lacan; Foucault (archaeology/binary power relations)</p> <p>TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE</p>
	Blended	Assessment 2 online forum to be held Thursday 13:30-14:00 this week. See Moodle for link.
Week 6: 22 March - 26 March	Lecture	THIS IS MDIA 5028's READING WEEK. THERE IS NO LECTURE. THERE ARE NO TUTORIALS. THERE IS NO FORUM.
Week 7: 29 March - 2 April	Lecture	<p>Structuralism 3</p> <p><i>Literary/Textual structuralism</i></p> <p>Barthes – 5 codes</p> <p>Riffaterre – <i>Semiotics of Poetry</i></p> <p>TUTORIAL TO RUN THIS WEEK AS PER INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE.</p> <p>This is the final tutorial before we enter workshop/project mode.</p>

		Easter Friday (this week) does not impact MDIA 5028
Week 8: 5 April - 9 April	Lecture	<p>Structuralism 4</p> <p>Visual texts</p> <p>NO TUTORIAL</p> <p>PROJECT CONSULTS PER TIMETABLE THAT WILL HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED</p> <p>Easter Monday (this week) does not impact MDIA 5028</p>
Week 9: 12 April - 16 April	Studio	<p>ONLINE PROJECT WORKSHOP REPLACES LECTURE</p> <p>NO TUTORIAL: PROJECT CONSULTS PER TIMETABLE THAT WILL HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED</p>
Week 10: 19 April - 23 April	Studio	<p>The lecture this week is replaced by special project consults (if required).</p> <p>NO TUTORIAL: EMERGENCY PROJECT CONSULTS BY APPOINTMENT</p>

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Hawkes, T (2003) Structuralism and Semiotics (2nd edn) Routledge

Recommended Resources

Chandler, D. (2017) Semiotics: The Basics (3rd. edn.) Routledge

Eagleton, T. (2008) Literary Theory: An Introduction (3rd. edn.) Blackwell

Course Evaluation and Development

The 2020 feedback for this core compulsory course was excellent: well over 5.0/6.0 in every key category. Students particularly enjoyed the mentoring modality for Assessment 3. This feature of the course will be further developed in 2021.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.