

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, AND MEDIA STUDIES

**MDIA 206
MEDIA AND DIGITAL CULTURES
2007 TRIMESTER 2
COURSE GUIDE**



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

Lecture time: Wed 2.10 – 4pm

Venue: New Kirk LT301

Convenor and Lecturer:

Jo Smith

42-44 KP
Room 211
Tel.: 463 5233 ext 8410
Email: jo.smith@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: 11-1 pm Thursday or by appt.

Guest Lecturers:

Sue Abel
Anita Brady
Angi Buettner
Geoff Stahl
Damion Sturm

Tutor:

Adam Swift (Adam.Swift@vuw.ac.nz)
Consultation times: Tuesdays 12-1, and
Wednesdays 11-12, KP106

Tutorial times (all tutorials held in KP101):

Sign up via the 206 Blackboard website:

T.1: Tuesday	2.10 - 3pm
T.2: Tuesday	3.10 - 4pm
T.3: Wednesday	12 - 12.50am
T.4: Wednesday	1.10 – 2pm

Course Structure

The two-hour session on a Wednesday 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. You have until Monday 16 to sign in to a tutorial.

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

Set Text: MDIA 206 Course Reader (2007) from Student Notes Distribution Centre. \$ TBA.

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.

You *must* read the assigned reading(s) for every week, which serves 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 perform 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).

Furthermore students who miss more than two tutorials without providing a justification to their tutor will subsequently lose 1 point of their final mark for each missed tutorial.

Assessment item	Word length	%	Due date
1. Short Essay	1800 words	30%	Week 4 (Wednesday 1st August before 4pm)
2. Long Essay	2500 words	40%	Week 8 (Wednesday 12th September before 4pm)
3. Tutorial Paper	1000 words (+ tut participation)	30%	Sign-up in tutorial (between wk 9-11)

1. Short Essay (1800 words) 30% DUE WEEK 4 (Wednesday 1st August before 4pm)*

This assessment asks you to engage with materials in Part 1 of the course. You are to select a reading from Part 1 of the course and write a critical response to it. To do this you need to:

- Identify the main thesis of the reading (what the writer is arguing)
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of this argument
- Define and demonstrate an understanding of the most salient key terms used by your chosen author
- Use examples of new media texts or practices to demonstrate your understanding and to support your argument

Write your critical response using the essay form. Include an introduction, a thesis statement (your own, *not* that of the selected author), topic sentences, presentation of argument & textual evidence and a conclusion. You should also include the correct bibliographic reference information for all sources used. To enhance the analytical dimension of your short essay we encourage you to cite the work of other authors in the field. This not only enriches your discussion, the work of other authors can be used to justify the claims you make about the reading you have selected.

*This assessment relates to objectives 1, 2 and 3.

2. Long Essay (2500 words) 40% Due Week 8 (Wednesday 12th September before 4pm)*

Essay questions will be posted on BLACKBOARD well in advance of the due date.

While your Tutorial Paper needs to be handed in to your tutor at the time of your tutorial, your short essay and long essay should be submitted to the department. **Do not hand your short or long essay assignment in to a tutor or lecturer.**

The criteria for assessing your short and long essay includes:

Argument

- Clear and succinct introduction
- Thesis precisely formulated
- Thesis well substantiated
- Logically developed argument (well-defined paragraphs)
- Paragraphs clearly focused and introduced by topic sentence
- Strong justification of argument
- Clear conclusion
- Analytical presentation
- Original and creative thought

Style and Presentation

- Legible and well set-out
- Fluently expressed
- Succinct and concise
- Correct grammar and syntax
- Correct spelling and punctuation

Criticism/methodology

- Appropriate use of lecture notes
- Accurate use of terminology
- Good use of quotations
- Good acknowledgement of sources
- Clear and precise footnoting or reference style
- Good bibliographical style

*This assessment relates to objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Unless you have a valid extension granted for your short or long essay, the following penalties will apply:

For assessments handed in after Wednesday 4pm but before Thursday 4pm	1 grade*
For assessments handed in after Thursday 4pm but before Friday 4pm	2 grades
For assessments handed in before the following Monday 4pm	3 grades
For assessments handed after Wednesday 4pm in the week following the due date	No mark

* '1 grade' in the description above is the difference between C+ and C or between A- and B+. If your work is handed in late, it may also be returned to you late.

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

This assessment asks you to engage with materials discussed between weeks 9-11 of the course. Once tutorials begin you will be asked to sign up to complete a Tutorial Paper on ONE of the three topics discussed between weeks 9-11 (see topic questions below). You must write a 1000 word essay that addresses your chosen topic. Bear in mind that your Tutorial Paper should have an analytical dimension and be structured in essay form (introduction, thesis statement, presentation of argument & textual evidence, conclusion).

An integral part of this assignment is sharing the findings of your Tutorial Paper with the rest of the class. It is therefore expected that in the week you submit your Tutorial paper you will a) attend your tutorial and b) contribute to the group discussion. Hand in your written version of the paper to your tutor at the end of the tutorial. Make sure to have an electronic backup of the Tutorial Paper you have submitted to your tutor. The criteria for assessing your Tutorial Paper includes:

1. Attendance at tutorial
2. Contribution to group discussion
3. Introduction/conclusion (in written version)
4. Argumentation (in written version)
5. Style and presentation (in written version)

Topic 1 (week 9):

Consider the relationship between notions of activism and the forms of communication offered by the Internet. How is social action augmented, enhanced or hindered by Internet technologies? Draw on the assigned readings for this topic to support your argument.

Topic 2 (week 10):

How might the Internet make new ways of experiencing "identity" possible? Think about how the Internet is utilised. What are the limits to the new possibilities identified by Turkle and others? Draw on the assigned readings for this topic to support your argument.

Topic 3 (week 11):

In what ways are our day-to-day uses of the Internet, personal mobile technologies and other media subject to surveillance? Draw on the assigned readings for this topic to support your argument.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, you cannot attend the tutorial you have signed up for, the course convenor will organise a make-up session to be held in week 12 in the second hour of the final lecture. This will involve a new topic question and will be available only to those students who can furnish a medical certificate or who can furnish proof of extenuating circumstances (and this does NOT apply to workload issues). The course convenor is the point of contact for discussing these issues.

*This assessment relates to objectives 3 and 4.

Presentation of Written Work

Please type your essays in **12pt with 1.5 or double spacing** and leave a reasonable margin for comments from the person marking it. Proofread essays carefully so as to eliminate typing, grammatical and punctuation errors. Students operating at 200-level are expected to be able to write with technical accuracy. Coursework grades may be compromised as a result of a lack of attention to the structure and accuracy of your writing, your referencing of sources through the essay, and your provision of a full bibliography. 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 the prescribed *Guidelines for SEFTMS students* as well as the essay writing guide on Blackboard.

It is the responsibility of the student (rather than of the tutor) to ensure that coursework is completed and submitted/presented on time. Students should observe due dates for both the essay and tutorial papers.

We recognise that plagiarism often arises through misunderstandings and through not knowing how to reference material you have used properly. The Student Learning Centre runs workshops on how to avoid plagiarism. You should also read the material about Plagiarism below, and the material on the University's website. SEE YOUR TUTOR if you have any doubts about the work that you submit.

Your essay should be placed in the MDIA essay box in 42-44 KP and not given directly to a tutor. You will be required to attach a cover sheet, which you need to sign, indicating that you are aware of the University's policy on plagiarism, and that the assignment is all your own work. Your assignment will not be marked until this cover sheet is signed. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand what plagiarism is, and what the University's policy on plagiarism is. Please do NOT sign the cover sheet if you do not understand these.

LECTURE TOPICS/READINGS/TUTORIAL TOPICS

Introduction: What's New About New Media?

Week 1. Introduction to key concepts and themes (JS)

Part 1: New Media Economies and Technologies

Week 2. History and Technology: the case of Web 2.0 (JS)

Read:

Goode, Luke. "Mediating Technologies." *Media Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Luke Goode and Nabeel Zuberi, eds., Pearson Longman: Auckland, 2004. pp. 59-73.

Miller, Paul. "Web 2.0: Building the New Library." *Ariadne*. 45. Oct. 2005.

<http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue45/miller/intro.html> Accessed: 06/05/2007.

Tutorial topic discussion: Identify 3 key words from Luke Goode's chapter and 2 key words from Paul Miller's article. Bring these key terms to the tutorial and be prepared to give a brief description and evaluation of each key term. By "evaluation" we mean: what insights and understandings about new media do these key terms provide? Are there any limitations or problems with these key terms that you can identify?

Week 3. The Political Economy of New Media: the case of Digital Cinema. (JS)

Read:

Lister, Martin and Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant and Kieran Kelly. eds., "Media Studies and Political Economy." *New Media: a Critical Introduction*. Routledge: London and New York, 2003. pp. 188-205.

Hight, Craig. "Making-of Documentaries on DVD: The Lord of the Rings Trilogy and Special Editions." *The Velvet Light Trap*. Number 56, Fall 2005. pp. 4-17

Tutorial topic discussion: Lister et al suggest that to develop a critical method for thinking about digital culture we must look at the *material history* surrounding new media technologies. We must consider how a technology or a medium has a "social shape". Why might this be so? What issues and ideas must we look at if we are to provide a materialist approach to new media? Provide some specific examples to back up your claim.

Part 2: Media Interfaces

Week 4. Analysing Video Games (and confessions of a sports video gamer) (DS)

Read:

Poole, S. "The origin of the species." *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution*. New York: Arcade, 2000. pp. 15-44.

McMahan, A. "Immersion, Engagement, and Presence: a method for analyzing 3-D video games." *The Video Game Theory Reader*. M. J. P. Wolf & B. Perron, eds., New York & London: Routledge, 2003. pp. 67-86.

Additional reading: Klevjer, R. "Gladiator, worker, operative: the hero of the first person shooter adventure." *Level Up* (CD-Rom appendices). M. Copier & J. Raessens, eds., Utrecht: Utrecht University Press, 2003. pp. 1-11.

Tutorial topic discussion: Identify the range of "viewing positions" discussed by Poole and McMahan and evaluate these positions in relation to your own experience of video gaming. What light does a close analysis of viewing positions throw on our understanding of video games, media consumption and the pleasures produced by contemporary media culture?

Week 5. Television and New Media (JS)

Read:

Jenkins, Henry. "Buying Into American Idol." *Convergence Culture: where old and new media collide*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2006. pp. 59-92.

Thornton-Caldwell, John. "Welcome to the Viral Future of Cinema (Television)." *Cinema Journal* 45:1. 2005. pp. 90-97.

Tutorial topic discussion: What are some of the negative *and* positive implications for media consumers of what Henry Jenkins calls an "emerging discourse of affective economies"?

MID TRIMESTER BREAK

Week 6: Music and New Media (GS)

Read:

Frith, Simon. "The Industrialization of Music." *The Popular Music Studies Reader*. Andy Bennett, Barry Shanks and Jason Toynbee, eds., New York: Routledge, 2006. pp. 231-238.

Jones, Steve. "Music That Moves: Popular Music, Distribution and Network Technologies." *Cultural Studies*. 16 (2). 2002. pp. 213-232.

Additional reading: McLeod, Kembrew. "Confessions of an Intellectual (Property): Danger Mouse, Sonny Bono, and My Long and Winding Path as a Copyright Activist-Academic," in *Popular Music and Society* 28 (1), 2005, 79-93.

Tutorial topic discussion: Identify the most important shifts that have occurred in music production, distribution and consumption, due to digital technologies. Use your own examples and provide a rationale for why the shifts you have identified have had the most significant impact.

Part 3: The Politics and Practice of New Media

Week 7. Race, Ethnicity, Culture and the Internet

Read:

Franklin, M. I. "I define my own identity": Rearticulating 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'culture'." *Postcolonial Politics, The Internet and Everyday Life: Pacific Traversals Online*. New York and London: Routledge. 2004. pp. 136-167.

Anderson, Cokie Gaston. "American Indian tribal Web sites: a review and comparison." *The Electronic Library*. Vol 21 (5) 2003. pp. 450-455.

Tutorial topic discussion: Marianne Franklin argues that identity is something fluid, something that is always being worked at, rather than something that is static and "essential". In her article, online discussion forums provide evidence for her claims. Explain Franklin's position and consider the strengths and weaknesses of her argument. Do this by considering how online technologies do *or do not* "rearticulate" notions of race, ethnicity and culture.

Week 8. Online Communities (AKB)

Read:

Flew, Terry. *New Media: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.) Melbourne: Oxford UP, 2005. pp. 61-82.

Rheingold, Howard. "A Slice of My Life in My Virtual Community." *High Noon on the Electronic Frontier: Conceptual Issues in Cyberspace*. Ed. Peter Ludlow. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. pp. 413-36.

Tutorial topic discussion: Think about the online communities you belong to (both interactive, and "imagined" in the Benedict Anderson sense). What formal and informal methods of control and management are utilised by these online forums? How does the internet transform the relationship between "media" and our understanding of community?

Week 9. Activism, Citizenship and New Media Journalism (AB)

Read:

Cassidy, John. "Me Media. How Hanging Out on the Internet Became Big Business." *The New Yorker*. May 15, 2006. pp. 50–59.

Kahn, Richard and Douglas Kellner. "Virtually Democratic: Online Communities and Internet Activism." *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice*. Andrew Feenberg and Darin Barney, eds., Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. pp. 183–200.

Tutorial topic discussion: Consider the relationship between notions of activism and the forms of communication offered by the Internet. How is social action augmented, enhanced or hindered by Internet technologies?

Week 10. Embodiment (AKB)

Read:

Turkle, Sherry. "Introduction: Identity in the Age of the Internet." *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. pp. 9-26.

Gray, Chris Hables *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age* New York: Routledge, 2002. pp. 9-20.

Tutorial topic discussion: How might the Internet make new ways of experiencing "identity" possible? Think about how the Internet is utilised. What are the limits to the new possibilities identified by Turkle and others?

Week 11. Surveillance and VR (AB)

Read:

Mar, Majid. "Cybercrimes and Cyberliberties: Surveillance, Privacy and Crime Control." *Cybercrime and Society*. London: Sage, 2006. pp. 139–154.

Tutorial topic discussion: In what ways are our day-to-day uses of the Internet, personal mobile technologies and other media subject to surveillance?

Week 12. Course Wrap-up (JS)

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 available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning,
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course,
- suspension from the course or the University.

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

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building. Telephone: 463-6070 and email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of undergraduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social Sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Postgraduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year Commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.