

SUBJECT NO: 50129
SUBJECT NAME: NEWS & CURRENT AFFAIRS

UTS: HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

SUBJECT OUTLINE
Summer Session, 2005/2006

Level: 200
Credit points: 8
Prerequisites: 50106/50227 Media, Information and Society

Subject Co-Ordinator: Marcus O'Donnell
Phone: 8263 0511 or 0407 456 185
Email: marcus@marcusodonnell.com

Website: <http://www.marcusodonnell.com/nacaf>

Reader: **CN 2084 News & Current Affairs (Summer Session)**
Price: \$25.00
Available from:
UTS Union Shop
Level 3, Tower Bldg
Broadway
Mon to Friday 9am - 5pm
Open until: 14/12/05

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This subject takes a comparative theoretical approach to studying the exercise of power in the production of news and information programs in the media. It deals with the economic and institutional contexts, debates about the role of the press in democratic political processes, relations between journalists, their sources and public relations professionals, the impact of new media technologies and relations with audiences. Students are expected to develop research skills in this area, including a capacity to analyse their own media production work in the context of current scholarship in the field.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of this subject students are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of Australian news and current affairs and the three main themes developed in this subject: the relationship between journalists and the broader society, changing news values and the Internet and journalism.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the plurality and diversity of perspectives found in journalism studies and in the classroom and be able to effectively and efficiently discuss and debate the range of ideas raised in this subject.
3. Demonstrate the ability to investigate and critically analyse journalism practice by reference to ideas, arguments and debates in journalism studies research.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the Internet as a research resource/forum and effectively contribute to developing a collective Internet-based resource for NCAFF students.
5. Demonstrate the ability to develop a well-researched and argued analysis of journalism practice through participation in assessment tasks and class projects.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activities and resources include reading, lectures, tutorial activities and discussions, blogging, workshops and assessment completion. There is a *2006 News & Current Affairs Reader* containing the required readings for this subject. The reader can be purchased from the UTS Union Shop on Level 3 of Building 1 (Tower). A copy is also available in the UTS Markets Library. Please note that readings from online sources are not included in the Reader; they are available via Electronic Reserve (eReadings) on the UTS Library site @ <http://orac.lib.uts.edu.au/>.

COURSE CONTENT AND REFERENCES

Monday 5 December Journalism: Old and New Paradigms

The lectures and class activities will focus on traditional ways of understanding journalism and contrast these with emerging models of journalism such as public journalism and citizen journalism. We will look at issues such as objectivity, theoretical models for journalism studies, news as narrative, the emergence of new media forms and the diversity of news and current affairs.

Workshop: Constructing and using blogs to monitor and analyse news and current affairs.

Core Readings

Schudson, M. 2001: 'The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism' *Journalism*, Vol. 2, No 2

Zelizer, B. 2004, *Taking Journalism Seriously*, c.2 'Defining Journalism', Sage

Wall, Melissa, 2005 "Blog of war' weblogs as news" *Journalism* 6(2)

Singer, Jane B. (2005) "The political j-blogger; 'Normalising' a new media form to fit old norms and practices" *Journalism* 6(2)

Bird, S.E and Dardenne, R.W. 'Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News' in Berkowitz, D. (ed.) 1997: *Social Meanings of News*, Sage

Deuze, Mark, 2003, "The web and its journalisms: considering the consequences of different types of new media online," *new media & society*, Vol5(2):203-230

Further readings

Bacon, Wendy 1999, 'What is a journalist in a university?', *Media International Australia incorporating Culture & Policy*, No. 90, February, pp. 79-90.

Lichtenberg, J. 1995: 'In defence of objectivity revisited' in M. Gurevitch and J.Curran (eds.) *Mass Media and Society*, Arnold

Fortunati, Leopoldina "Mediatization Of The Net And Internetization Of The Mass Media" *Gazette: The International Journal For Communication Studies*, Vol 67(1): 27-44

Thursday 8 December Journalism and Sources

The lectures and class activities will look at the importance of the journalist source relationship in news and current affairs. Students will be introduced to various theoretical perspectives about the way journalist source relationships work and the ethical and legal issues around such relationships.

Workshop: A thorough look at the Valerie Plame CIA leak case particularly the role of *New York Times* journalist Judith Miller

Core Readings

Cottle, Simon 2000, Rethinking news access, *Journalism Studies*, 1(3),pp. 427-448.

Schlesinger, p. 1990: 'Rethinking the Sociology of Journalism: source Strategies and the Limits of Media-Centrism' in Ferguson, M. *Public Communication: the New Imperatives*, Sage

Hall, S. et al. 1978: *Policing the Crisis*, London Macmillan, c.3, 'The Social Production of News', pp 53-77

Ericson, R. et al. 1989: *Negotiating Control*, c. 7 'Negotiating Control', pp 377-398

Bacon, W. and Nash, C., 1999: 'Confidential Sources and the Public Right to Know', *Australian Journalism Review*, Vol 21(2), August pp 1-26

Further Readings

Simons, Margaret 1999, 'Feeling' in her *Fit to Print: Inside the Canberra Press Gallery*, UNSW Press, Kensington, pp. 61-95.

Thursday 15 December Journalism Politics and Popular Culture

Lectures and class activities will focus on the role of journalism in the public sphere and how this relates to theories of politics and to theories of popular culture. Debates about the changing nature of news and current affairs will be canvassed and the role of public relations professionals in the news cycle will be explored.

Workshop: Continuing to look at the Valerie Plame CIA leak case particularly the role of *New York Times* journalist Judith Miller

Core Readings

Curran, James, 2002, "Rival narratives of media history," *Media and Power*, London: Routledge.

Entman, Robert M. 2004. "Projecting Power in the news" Ch 1 *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Street, John, 2004, 'Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and political representation', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol 6, Number 4, 2004.

McNair Brian, "PR Must Die: spin, anti-spin and relations in the UK, 1997–2004" *Journalism Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3, 2004, pp. 325–338

Stromback, Jesper, 2005, "In Search of a Standard: four models of democracy and their normative implications for journalism," *Journalism Studies*, Volume 6, Number 3, 2005, pp. 331–345

Further Readings

Miller, David, 2004, "System failure: It's not just the media -- the whole political system has failed," *Journal of Public Affairs*, V4 (4) p374-83.

Gaber, Ivor, 2004, "Alastair Campbell, exit stage left: Do the 'Phillis' recommendations represent a new chapter in political communications or is it 'business as usual'?" *Journal of Public Affairs*, V4 (4), p365-373.

Turner, Graeme, 2005, "Television current affairs: does it have a future?" *In Ending the affair: the decline of television current affairs in Australia*, Sydney: UNSW Press. pp1-27 and 162-167

Monday 19 December Journalism and Cultural Diversity

Lectures and class activities will focus on the role of journalism in a socially diverse culture. Issues covered will include the Australian media coverage of Aboriginal deaths in custody, the local coverage of international affairs and the role of alternative media in reporting specific subcultures.

Core Readings

Reporting Reconciliation

Sheridan Burns, Lynette & McKee, Alan 1999, 'Reporting on Indigenous issues: Some practical suggestions for journalists', *Australian Journalism Review*, 21(2), pp. 103-116.

Reporting the world

Bacon, W., & Nash, C. 2003: Stories in distress: Three case studies in Australian media coverage of humanitarian crises, *Australian Journalism Review*, 26(1).

Nossek, Hillel, 2004, Our news and their news: The role of national identity in the coverage of foreign news, *Journalism*, Vol. 5(3): 343–368

Baum, Matthew. 2003. "War and Entertainment" Ch 1 *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the News Media Age*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Alternative Media

Harcup Tony, "I'm Doing this to Change the World": journalism in alternative and mainstream media, *Journalism Studies*, Volume 6, Number 3, 2005, pp. 361 374

Further Readings

Downey, J. and Fenton, N. 2003: 'New media, counter publicity and the public sphere' *new media & society*, Vol 5 (2): 185-202

Marcus O'Donnell, 2004, "Star Wars: patterns of change in community journalism at the Sydney Star Observer," *Australian Studies in Journalism*, Vol 13, pp 139-163

Bacon, Wendy and Nash, Chris, 2003, "How the Australian media cover humanitarian issues," *Australian Journalism Review* 25/2 pp 5 - 30

January 16 and January 19 Class Presentations News and Current Affairs Beats

Class activities will focus on the presentation by students of their research into specific news and current affairs beats.

January 30 The Future of News

Class activities will focus on bringing together the various strands of the course and a look at likely developments in the future of news and current affairs reporting.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment task 1: Student Blog

Assessment Value: 30%

Project phase 1: 5 December – 23 December (3 weeks)

Christmas break: 25 December -1 Jan

Project phase 2: 2 January – 15 January (2 weeks)

Students will each be assigned to cover an area of news and current affairs reporting. They will develop a blog to monitor, report and analyse the media's performance in this area. This will lead into the second assignment task which is a class presentation of this research to the class.

Task Requirements

Each student will be allocated a specific area of news and current affairs reporting to monitor and analyse. Up to three students may be allocated the same area. Each student will develop their own blog and they will be required to:

- * post at least 3 entries a week
- * post at least one comment per week on another student blog
- * post a minimum of 3500 words on their own blog over the five weeks

Each blog posting should be:

- * 200-500word in length
- * have 2 or more outward links

Task Aims

This task has three aims:

- * to encourage you to research and document the coverage of news and current affairs in local media;
- * to encourage you to begin the process of critically reflecting on journalism practice by comparing and contrasting selected ideas, arguments or debates found in journalism studies readings with the journalism practices in your chosen news coverage;
- * to encourage you to write up your research as a series of blog postings.

Assessment criteria:

Research skills: appropriate selection of news items and successful collection of relevant links

Critical analysis: demonstrated understanding of the process of comparing and contrasting ideas from the readings with real world experiences of journalism practice as evidenced in the quality of the analysis in your postings

Effective communication: demonstrated ability to write up a series of interesting and appealing posts

Use of blog medium: demonstrated use of the specific attributes of online communication such as effective use of links

Assessment Task 2. Class Presentation

Value: 20%

Presented in Class January 16 and January 19 2006

Students will work in groups, together with the other students who have covered the same area of news and current affairs, to present to class their observations and analysis about the area they have been monitoring in their blog. Each student will also present an initial topic outline for a research essay that arises from their blogging project.

Task requirements

Students are expected to present an overview of how the media has covered their assigned area of current affairs journalism. This will include:

- * discussion of the general areas of reporting covered in the period
- * specific analysis of selected reports
- * discussion of how the reports relate to areas of journalism studies theory as outlined in the course readings, lectures and discussions

Students will then identify and present a question for further research and some indication of how they will go about developing this as an essay topic. This topic outline will include:

- * an essay question
- * a brief summary (300 words) of the key dimensions of the topic
- * an annotated bibliography of at least 5 theoretical readings that relate to the topic
- * each annotation will be 50-100 words

A final written outline taking into account discussion in class will be posted on the students blog five days after the presentation

Task Aims

This task has three aims:

- * to encourage you to identify, explore and understand key ideas, categories or arguments in Australian journalism studies and how they relate to local media practice;
- * to encourage you to develop skill and confidence in the oral presentation and discussion of ideas and arguments;
- * to encourage you to systematically develop an essay topic and outline in preparation for your essay writing.

Assessment criteria:

Research skills: appropriate selection of media texts related to key ideas, categories or arguments as outlined in the class readings lectures and discussions

Effective communication: demonstrated ability to clearly and effectively present the chosen ideas to the class and engage students in discussion

Critical analysis: demonstrated understanding of chosen area for future research as evidenced in the quality of the essay topic outline

Assessment Task 3: Final Essay

Due: 17 February 2006

Value: 50%

A 3000 word research essay that develops an analysis of an area of news and current affairs reporting and relates it to the theoretical perspectives explored in the course.

Task Requirements

To write a 3000-word essay on an area of News & Current Affairs reporting. There should be clear links between the topic, the subject readings, your blog research and the content developed in your essay.

The 3000-word essay should include

- * an introduction,
- * a central proposition that organises the material,
- * data from your blogging research study
- * arguments supported by evidence in support of your central proposition,
- * a critical examination of opposing viewpoints,
- * a conclusion
- * a bibliography.

Task Aims

This task has three aims:

- * to encourage you to draw on the research and learning experiences accumulated during the semester;
- * to encourage you to creatively present your ideas in a written essay form using the conventions of academic presentation and referencing
- * to encourage you to treat the essay as an opportunity to display the knowledge you have acquired about news and current affairs through research, reading and reflection.

Assessment criteria:

Research skills: demonstrated ability to develop a clear, logical and convincing argumentative essay that relates to the topic, draws on relevant intellectual resources, and integrates the case study

Critical analysis: demonstrated understanding of the topic as evidenced by the quality of the central proposition, of the case in support of that proposition based on scholarly research and evidence, of the critical examination of opposing points of view, of the integration of the case study into the argument and of the conclusion

Effective communication: demonstrated ability to write up an interesting essay that observes academic referencing and bibliography protocols (Harvard style)

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

This subject is taught in intensive mode. Students must attend all sessions unless otherwise negotiated with the lecturer. Should you experience difficulties meeting these requirements, please contact your lecturer. Students who have a reason for extended absence from class (e.g., illness) may be required to complete additional work to ensure they achieve the subject objectives. It is a minimum requirement of this subject that students meet the attendance requirements and complete the three assessment tasks.

GRADES

This is a graded subject. All assessment tasks must be completed and submitted and a satisfactory level overall must be achieved to pass the subject. Assessment grades and final grades in the subject will be High Distinction / Distinction / Credit / Pass / Fail.

Grading Descriptors

High Distinction:	Work of outstanding quality on all objectives of the subject, which may be demonstrated by means of criticism, logical argument, interpretation of materials or use of methodology. This grade may also be given to recognise particular originality or creativity.
Distinction:	Work of superior quality on all objectives, demonstrating a sound grasp of content, together with efficient organisation and selectivity.
Credit:	Work of good quality showing more than satisfactory achievement on all objectives, or work of superior quality on most of the objectives of the subject.
Pass:	Work showing a satisfactory achievement on the overall objectives of the subject.
Fail:	Unsatisfactory performance in one or more objectives of the subject as contained within the assessment items.

EXPECTATIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT TASKS

All assessment tasks are expected to be submitted by the specified due date. Penalties of 10% per working day may apply for late submission.

Student Work

Students are advised that copies of any work submitted for assessment in this subject may be used for educational or promotional purposes unless a student provides the subject coordinator with a written request that their work should not be used in this way.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Assessment items provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they understand the content being covered and have achieved the objectives of the subject. Assessment enables students to demonstrate their personal integrity and respect for scholarship. This means:

- Acknowledging the sources of ideas, views and opinions from any resources including the Internet.
- Using quotation marks to indicate every direct quote from another work.
- Avoiding excessive paraphrasing even when acknowledging a source.

You are expected to familiarise yourself with UTS policy on good academic practice. **Penalties will be imposed for plagiarism and other forms of cheating.** You may be asked to produce drafts or research notes or to discuss the concepts in your work to prove that your assignment is entirely your own work. Plagiarism detection software, turnitin.com may be used to confirm that assignments are a student's own work. If your assignment contains any material that is plagiarised or copied from someone else you could receive zero for the whole subject. For advice about using information correctly and avoiding plagiarism see www.lib.uts.edu.au/catalyst/08/index.htm. If in any doubt you should seek advice from the subject coordinator.

ASSISTANCE WITH LEARNING

You should not hesitate to ask your lecturer or subject coordinator for help throughout the semester. In your first class you will be advised how to contact your lecturer. You will be provided with comments and suggestions on your assessment tasks throughout the semester.

The University Library has the resources you need for your assignments. Some items such as electronic journals, databases and e-reserve require a login and password in order to be accessed from your home or office. Information and instructions for off-campus access are available at this address: http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/services/off_campus. Items in high demand are placed in the Library's Reserve Collection and much of this material is now accessible electronically. Access via the Reserve Collection link in the Library's collection link in the Library's catalogue at: http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/finding/collections/reserve_collection

The **UTS: BELL site** (www.bell.uts.edu.au) provides an extensive and continually updated range of classes, tutorials and resources. The Harvard System is recommended for referencing of assignments see - http://www.bell.uts.edu.au/referencing/harvard_system

If you need help with your study (writing, seminar presentation or study skills) contact the **ELSSA Centre**, Level 18, Tower Building, telephone 9514-2327.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

If personal problems are affecting your university work you should seek free and confidential assistance from **Student Services**, Level 6, Building 2, telephone 9514-1171.

If you need an extension of time (up to one week) to complete an assessment item you must make a request in writing before the due date. **Request for Extension** forms are available from the Faculty Student Centre or download from <http://www.hss.uts.edu.au/facilities/forms/index.html>

You should apply for **Special Consideration** if, because of serious illness or misadventure, you have difficulty in completing assessment or attendance requirements. A Request for Special Consideration must be lodged before the assessment item is due.

The **Special Needs Service** can advise you of the university's services for people with disabilities and the options available for learning and assessment arrangements, telephone 9514-1177. Contact the Special Needs Service in the Student Services Unit if you would like a confidential discussion of your circumstances. If you have a disability or an ongoing medical condition, you should contact the **Academic Liaison Officer** at the beginning of your course to discuss whether you need particular learning and assessment arrangements and each semester let the Academic Liaison Officer know the subjects in which you are enrolled. Please note that the Academic Liaison Officer is also the person to contact if you need assistance because you have primary care for young children or other caring responsibilities. The Academic Liaison Officer is Sandra Symons and her contact details are: telephone 9514-1918 or Sandra.Symons@uts.edu.au



ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

UTS: HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

SUBJECT NAME/NUMBER	NAME OF STUDENT (PRINT CLEARLY) <i>SURNAME</i> <i>FIRST NAME</i>		STUDENT ID. NO.
STUDENT EMAIL		STUDENT CONTACT NUMBER	
NAME OF TUTOR			DUE DATE
ASSIGNMENT TITLE			
<p>I have read, understood and followed the advice in my subject outline about academic integrity. If this is the final assessment item for the subject I have attached a stamped self-addressed envelope for the assignment to be returned to me.</p> <p>Signature of Student Date</p>			

ASSIGNMENT RECEIPT

To be completed by the student if a receipt is required

SUBJECT NAME/NUMBER	NAME OF TUTOR	
SIGNATURE OF TUTOR		RECEIVED DATE