

## CMNS1234: Media and Communication Concepts

Newcastle City Precinct  
Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

*The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.*

## OVERVIEW

<b>Course Description</b>	<p>This foundational survey course introduces students to major perspectives used in communication studies and gives an introduction to the basic communication models, key terms and concepts used in the discipline. It introduces students to a broad range of theories in order to evaluate communication and media in its many forms and investigate its relationship to society and culture.</p> <p>Particular attention will be paid to communication functions, structures, audiences, news, media effects, advertising and propaganda, intersecting narratives such as gender, race and class that occur in communication contexts, as well as international and global communication, ideology and popular culture. In doing this it not only gives an overview of the social and cultural contexts in which communication and media occurs but also requires students to think critically and analytically about this relationship.</p>
<b>Academic Progress Requirements</b>	Nil
<b>Requisites</b>	This course replaces CMNS1110. If you have successfully completed CMNS1110 you cannot enrol in this course.
<b>Contact Hours</b>	<p><b>Newcastle City Precinct</b></p> <p><b>Lecture</b> Face to Face On Campus 1 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1</p> <p><b>Tutorial</b> Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1</p>
<b>Unit Weighting Workload</b>	<p>10</p> <p>Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.</p>

# COURSE OUTLINE

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# CONTACTS

<b>Course Coordinator</b>	<b>Newcastle City Precinct</b> Dr Chloe Killen <a href="mailto:Chloe.Killen@newcastle.edu.au">Chloe.Killen@newcastle.edu.au</a> Consultation: Please email to make an appointment.
<b>Teaching Staff</b>	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
<b>School Office</b>	<b>School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences</b> NU Space, Level 4 409 Hunter Street Newcastle <a href="mailto:HCISS@newcastle.edu.au">HCISS@newcastle.edu.au</a> +61 4985 4500

# SYLLABUS

<b>Course Content</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Overview of the development of communication studies.</li><li>2. Survey and mapping of contributing disciplinary perspectives.</li><li>3. Introduction of key concepts, terms and models.</li><li>4. Theoretical perspectives relevant to communication studies</li><li>5. An examination of the relationship between communication, in its many media forms, and culture and society.</li></ol>
<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Demonstrate their understanding of the foundational material of communication studies through written and oral presentations.</li><li>2. Explain key terms, models, concepts and a range of theories about communication.</li><li>3. Describe the conceptual connections between foundational models and theories about communication and media.</li><li>4. Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills expressed in written and verbal modes.</li><li>5. Express the capacity for independent research, critique and present arguments using academic modes of communication.</li></ol>
<b>Course Materials</b>	<p><b>Lecture Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Audio-visual copies of the lectures will be recorded and made available through the course Canvas site. PDFs of the lecture presentations will also be accessible. See Canvas for details.</li></ul> <p><b>Recommended Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The CMNS1234 Canvas Site includes some extra library materials to assist with learning and assessment. These can be found via the Course Readings link and in the Resources Module under Additional Readings. Links to relevant journals in the fields of media and communication studies are also included.</li></ul> <p><b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- All required weekly readings are available in electronic form through the Course Readings link on the CMNS1234 Canvas Site (and also in each weekly Module).</li></ul>

# SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	LECTURE: Introduction Who is who? The structure of the program. Course materials. Course Content & Outcomes. What is a survey course? What is a critical thinker? Ideas about truth and evidence.	Familiarise yourself with the CMNS1234 Canvas site. Read the Academic and Library Skills Module. Scheduling A1 Research Exercise Seminar Presentations.	
2	4 Mar	LECTURE: Communication as an Object of Study: Mapping the Territory  Class Discussion Topics: What is a theory? How do you start to research and plan for essay writing?	Griffin, EA, Ledbetter, A & Sparks, G. 2015, 'Talk about theory', A first look at communication theory, 9th edn, McGraw-Hill Education, New York, NY, pp.13-20.	
3	11 Mar	LECTURE: Information Theory  Class Discussion Topic: Models, maps and theories: How useful are they? How do you put together and deliver a class presentation?	Fiske, J. 2010, Introduction to communication studies, 3rd edn, Taylor & Francis, Florence, 6-10, pp.5-21.  Mattelart, A & Mattelart, M. 1998, Theories of communication: a short introduction, Sage, London, pp.43-46.	
4	18 Mar	LECTURE: Persuasion, Propaganda and Effects Theory  Seminar Presentation: Where does communication start? Who should take responsibility for it? Why?	Sparks, GG & Sparks, CW. 2014, 'Effects of media violence' in D Zillmann & J Bryant (eds), Media effects: advances in theory and research, 2nd edn, Taylor & Francis, New Jersey, pp.269-285.	Assessment #1: STUDENT SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS COMMENCE (Weeks 4-12)
5	25 Mar	LECTURE: Ideology, Political Economy and the Cultural Industries  Seminar Presentations Mon & Tues classes: The culture industry is responsible for the all the rubbish we have in the media. Discuss.	Hesmondhalgh, D. 2013, The cultural industries, 3rd edn, Sage, London, pp.4-33.	<i>NOTE: Week 5+6 will be treated as one due to the Easter Public Holidays. <b>Week 5 will run normal classes for Monday and Tuesday.</b></i>
6	1 Apr	Seminar Presentations Friday class: The culture industry is responsible for the all the rubbish we have in the media. Discuss.	Hesmondhalgh, D. 2013, The cultural industries, 3rd edn, Sage, London, pp.4-33.	<i>NOTE: Week 5+6 will be treated as one due to the Easter Public Holidays. <b>Friday class will run in Week 6.</b></i>
7	8 Apr	LECTURE: Technological Innovation: Social or Technological Determinism?  Seminar Presentation: Does Marshall McLuhan's declaration that 'we shape	Levinson, P. 2006, 'Electronic watermarks: a high profile for intellectual property in the digital age' in P Cobley (ed), Communication theories: critical concepts in media	

		our tools and they in turn shape us' still ring true in the digital age?	and cultural studies Vol IV, Routledge, Milton Park, pp.53-66.	
<b>Mid-Semester Recess</b>				
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8	29 Apr	LECTURE: Structuralism and Semiotics  Seminar Presentation: The science of signs suggests that we read off meanings from the structured symbols presented to us. Is this true?	O'Shaughnessy, M & Stadler, J. 2012, 'Narrative structure and binary oppositions', Media & society: an introduction, 5th edn, OUP, Melbourne, pp.258-288 & 301-303.	
9	6 May	LECTURE: The Discourses of French Post-structuralism.  Seminar Presentation: Did the poststructuralist theoretical turn in communication and media studies lead to a dissolution of certainty?	O'Shaughnessy, M & Stadler, J. 2012, 'Defining discourse and ideology', Media & society, 5th edn, OUP, Melb, pp.171-174. Downing, L. 2008, 'The archaeology of knowledge', The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, pp.48-52.	
10	13 May	LECTURE: British Cultural Studies: Valuing Popular Culture  Seminar Presentation: What is the power relationship between encoders and decoders of popular culture? Is it class based?	Williams, R. 1992, 'Raymond Williams from Culture and Society 1780- 1950 (1958)', 'Raymond Williams 'Popular' (1976)' in A Easthope & K McGowan (eds), A critical and cultural theory reader, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, pp,224-232 & 257-258.	
11	20 May	LECTURE: Audience Studies: Moving from Passive to Active Conceptions  Seminar Presentation: If audiences are active does this mean they should also be conceived of as co-creators of meaning?	Storey, J. 2018, 'Reading romance', Cultural theory and popular culture: an introduction, 8th edn, Routledge, Milton Park, pp.157-169.	Assessment #2 Major Essay Due 23:59 MONDAY 20 May
12	27 May	LECTURE: The Influence of French and British Sociology on Communication Studies  What is the relationship between structure and agency in any act of communication? Does this support transmission models or confirm reception models of communication?	Schirato, T & Yell, S. 1996, 'Cultural practice', Communication and cultural literacy: an introduction, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, pp.140-161.	
13	3 Jun	LECTURE: Summary and Review What can you expect from the test?	McIntyre, P. 2012. How are Messages Created?: Changes in Thinking about Communication Theory leading to a New Synthesis. ANZCA, Adelaide, SA.	Assessment #3 30 Question Multiple Choice Test

Mattelart, A & Mattelart, M.  
1998, Theories of  
communication, Sage,  
London, pp.1-5,  
19,43,57,91,107,129,155.

**Examination Period**

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## ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Written Assignment	Commencing Week 4 Research Exercise Papers are due one week after scheduled Seminar Presentation to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm.	Individual	30%	1, 3, 5
2	Major Essay	Week 11 Monday 20 May (by 23:59pm)	Individual	40%	3, 4, 5
3	Multiple Choice Test	Week 13 in class	Individual	30%	1, 2

### Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

## Assessment 1 - Written Assignment

### Assessment Type Description

Written Assignment

Students will conduct Library research in pairs on the allocated seminar question corresponding to their presentation week. Students will then give a 12-minute seminar presentation in pairs on that research during their regular tutorial class. Following group discussion in the tutorial class, each student will write up the research as a 1200-word paper on their own to be submitted through Canvas (via Turnitin) one week after the scheduled presentation. A complete Weekly Schedule of Lecture Topics, Required Readings and Research Exercise /Seminar Presentation Topics is available on the Canvas site under Course Materials.

### Weighting

30%

### Length

10min seminar presentation and 1200-word essay

### Due Date

Commencing Week 4 Research Exercise Papers are due one week after scheduled Seminar Presentation to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm.

### Submission Method

In Class

Online

In Class – 10min Seminar Presentation delivered in pairs for scheduled week during regular Tutorial Class time.

Online - 1200-word research exercise paper to be submitted individually to the designated Turnitin portal on the Canvas website.

### Assessment Criteria

A marking rubric is available on Canvas under 'Assessment'

### Return Method

Online

### Feedback Provided

Online - Completed Research Exercise Paper evaluation/marking rubric uploaded to Canvas no later than 3 weeks after submission. Feedback will be in the form of in-class discussion, written comments and a numerical grade.

## Assessment 2 - Major Essay

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Written Assignment
<b>Description</b>	This task will require students to conduct research into scholarly primary and secondary sources and draw upon their findings to present an argument in essay form. Students will utilise materials from the course readings as well as conducting library research in order to address their chosen question. Students should choose one of the topics provided on the course website.
<b>Weighting</b>	40%
<b>Length</b>	1500-word essay
<b>Due Date</b>	Week 11 Monday 20 May (by 23:59pm)
<b>Submission Method</b>	Online 1500-word essay to be submitted to the designated Turnitin portal on the CMNS1234 Canvas Site.
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	A marking rubric is available on Canvas under 'Assessment'.
<b>Return Method</b>	Online
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	Online

## Assessment 3 - Multiple Choice Test

<b>Assessment Type</b>	In Term Test
<b>Description</b>	Multiple choice questions will be based on material from the lectures and the weekly readings.
<b>Weighting</b>	30%
<b>Length</b>	1hr (30 question multiple choice test)
<b>Due Date</b>	Week 13 in class
<b>Submission Method</b>	In class
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Assessed on correct or incorrect answers.
<b>Return Method</b>	Online
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	No Feedback - Test will not be returned, but grades will be posted on Canvas. Numerical grades will be posted on Canvas.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Grading Scheme** This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

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\*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

### **Attendance**

Attendance/participation will be recorded in the following components:

- Tutorial (Method of recording: 80% attendance is required in CMNS1234 tutorials for all students. Students will log in using the MyUni app, to confirm their presence in the location of the scheduled class.)

There are clear, well-documented links between high attendance and student success. The University records student attendance in all first year undergraduate (1000 level) courses. Attendance is not recorded in lectures, but is recorded in all other activities, including tutorials, labs, workshops and field trips.

Students who are unable to or do not wish to use a device to check-in can ask their academic staff member to check in for them (i.e. the student doesn't need to use their own device). This method also does not record a location.

### **Communication Methods**

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision.

To ensure you stay up-to-date with the requirements of the course please regularly check the CMNS1234 Canvas site and UON student email account, engage with the lectures and course content, and attend your scheduled tutorial time to participate in discussion.

### **Course Evaluation**

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

As a result of student feedback, the following changes have been made to this offering of the course:

- Modifying assessment #1.
- Updating lecture content.
- Additional tutorial activities.
- Incorporating additional foundational elements such as library skills and academic writing skills.

### **Oral Interviews (Vivas)**

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

### **Academic Misconduct**

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

### **Adverse Circumstances**

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:

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<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

**Important Policy  
Information**

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

*This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.*

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