



GOVT2603: Media Politics Semester 1, 2013 Unit of Study Outline



Unit Coordinators

Unit coordinators are listed on undergraduate and postgraduate coursework semester timetables, and can be consulted for help with any difficulties you may have. Unit coordinators (as well as the Faculty) should also be informed of any illness or other misadventure that leads students to miss classes and tutorials or be late with assignments.

Unit Coordinator: Dr Peter John Chen
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This Unit of Study Outline **MUST** be read in conjunction with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Student Administration Manual (http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/student_admin_manual.shtml) and all applicable University policies. In determining applications and appeals, it will be assumed that every student has taken the time to familiarise themselves with these key policies and procedures.

GOVT2603 Media Politics

UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit is primarily about news, its production, contents and impacts. It will examine the special demands of different news organisations and of reporting different news areas; the news media as an arena in political conflicts and the consequent interests and strategies of various groups in affecting news content; and the impacts of news on political processes and relationships.

Our primary focus is on Australia, but there is some comparison with other affluent liberal democracies. There is flexibility in assessment for you to focus on non-Australian case material, if that is of your interest.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

My objectives for the course are:

1. To provide students with a broad overview of the range of areas of research under the general rubric of "media politics". This includes:
 1. Different ontologies of thinking about media politics (institutional, behavioural, functional, constructivist)
 2. Contemporary debates about the impact of the media system on the conduct of politics
 3. Issues relevant to policy-makers consideration of the regulation of media
 4. Strategic understanding about how media can be employed to achieve political outcomes
2. The introduction and analysis the range of research methodologies used to study the media, with the objective of:
 1. Understanding the range of research methods employed
 2. Knowing their origins and purposes
 3. Recognising what they can and cannot inform us about media politics
 4. Critically evaluating their limitations
3. Provoke student interest in this area of study
4. Ensure students have an awareness of the importance of media in contemporary politics

These learning outcomes will require the use of:

- Primary and secondary research
- Written and oral communication
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Recall of key concepts

Preparation for class (completion of assessment tasks and readings) is required for successful completion of this course.

Your objectives for the course are unknown to me.

LEARNING STRUCTURE

The subject will be taught with a combination of lectures (2 hours per average week) and tutorials (1 hour per week).

ONLINE COMPONENTS

This unit requires weekly use of Blackboard Learn, the University's e-learning platform, so you will need reliable access to a computer and the Internet. To access the Blackboard Learn site: go to the University homepage (www.sydney.edu.au) > choose MyUni > choose USYD eLearning > enter Unikey to access your eLearning sites.

Alternatively, you can bookmark the login page directly at <http://elearning.sydney.edu.au/>.

If you have any difficulties logging in or using the system, visit the Student Help area of the Sydney eLearning site, <http://sydney.edu.au/elearning/student/>.

A tumblr blog is provided for this subject also, at: <http://govt2603.tumblr.com/>

UNIT SCHEDULE

Semester One

Week	Week beginning	Lecture [content]	Note
1	04 March	Introduction: Media Thinking	No tutorial this week
2	11 March	Media Effects	
3	18 March	Media and Democracy / Functionalism	
4	25 March*	Elections	Case Report due
BREAK	01-05 April	SESSION BREAK / EASTER	
5	08 April	{The Hollow Men}	Documentary viewing
6	15 April	The PR State	
7	22 April*	Censorship	
8	29 April	Ownership	
9	06 May	{Outfoxed}	Documentary viewing
10	13 May	E-Democracy Top Down	Team Report due
11	20 May	E-Democracy Bottom Up	
12	27 May	Media and Conflict	
13	03 June	Conclusion	
STUVAC	10 June	STUVAC	Final Essay due

* NB: Public holidays on Friday 29 March and Thursday 25 April.

ASSESSMENT TASKS AND DUE DATES

Case Report

- Due: 4pm, Thursday 28th March 2013
- Value: 15%
- Length: 1,000 words (+/- 10%, excludes references, includes footnotes)
- Task: Review a "media moment" (see attachment A for suggestions) and prepare a case study with notes regarding the role of the media in this event. Focus on briefly reviewing the key aspects of the case in 500 words, with 500 of analysis / observations
- Assessment criteria: Ability to summarise the key aspects of the case, clarity of the analysis of the role of the media in the case, structure, writing style.



Team Project

- Due: 4pm, Thursday 16th May 2013
- Value: 25%
- Length: 3,000 words (+/- 10%, excludes references, includes footnotes)
- Task: Tutorials will be divided into five teams which will select one of the project topics (attachment B). The team should undertake the project and prepare a report.
- Assessment criteria: Ability to carry out the assigned task, data collection and analysis. Report preparation skills, clarity of reporting on the task and findings.

Final Essay

- Due: 4pm, Thursday 13th June 2013
- Value: 60%
- Length: 3,000 words (+/- 10%, excludes references, includes footnotes)
- Task: From the list provided in attachment C, complete the essay task with gusto.
- Assessment criteria: Standard essay assessment criteria will be applied. Solid research, structure and articulation, analysis, communication, evidence of engagement with the subject matter, creativity.

READING REQUIREMENTS

The subject employs a reader and textbook:

- The reader is available from Kopystop located at 3 / 55 Mountain St. Broadway
- The textbook is *Media & Politics: An Introduction* by Wayne Errington and Narelle Miragliotta, available at the Co-Op.

Week: 1; Lecture: 04 March; Topic: Introduction - Media Thinking

- O'Shaughnessy, M. and J. Stadler, 2002, "Defining the media", *Media & Society*, 4th edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford, pp. 3-9.
- Winner, L., 1986, "Do artifacts have politics?" *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for the Limits of high Technology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 19-39.

Week: 2; Lecture: 11 March; Topic: Media Effects

- Textbook, Chapter 3
- McCullagh, C., 2002, "The media as definers of social reality", *Media Power: A Sociological Introduction*, Palgrave: Houndmills, pp. 13-36.
- Stone, D., 2002, "Symbols", *Policy Paradox: the Art of Political Decision Making*, Revised Edition, W.W. Norton: New York, pp. 137-62.
- Franti, M. and R. Tse, 1992, "Television, Drug of the Nation", *Hypocrisy Is the Greatest Luxury*, 4th & B'way/Island/PolyGram Records.

Week: 3; Lecture: 18 March; Topic: Media and Democracy / Functionalism

- Textbook, Chapters 1 and 4
- Sawant, P.B., 2001, "Viewpoint: Media in democracy", *Media Asia*, 28(1), pp. 44-50.
- Norris, P., 2000, "Evaluating media performance", *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 22-35.

Week: 4; Lecture: 25 March; Topic: Elections

- Textbook, Chapter 6
- Norris, P., 2000, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 137-40, 149-51 [extract].
- Lewis, J., Inthorn, S., and K. Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005, "Reporting opinion polls", *Citizens or Consumers? What the Media Tell Us About Political Participation*, Open University Press: Maidenhead, pp. 51-69.

Week: 5; Lecture: 08 April; Topic: {The Hollow Men}

- Boorstin, D., 1992, "From news gathering to news making: A flood of pseudo-events", *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*, Vintage Books: New York, pp. 7-44.
- Tiffen, R., 1989, "Covert manoeuvres: Leaks and briefings", *News and Power*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney, pp. 95-124.

Week: 6; Lecture: 15 April; Topic: The PR State

- Textbook, Chapter 5
- Marsh, I., 2007, "Australia's political institutions and the corruption of public opinion", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 66(3), pp. 329-341.

- Davis, A., 2002, "The expansion of public relations and its impact on news production", *Public Relations Democracy: Public Relations, Politics and the Mass Media in Britain*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, pp. 19-41.

Week: 7; Lecture: 22 April; Topic: Censorship

- Textbook, Chapters 2 and 7
- Gelber, K., 2002, "Expanding speech liberties? A capabilities approach", *Speaking Back: The Free Speech Debate Versus Hate Speech Debate*, John Benjamins: Amsterdam, pp. 29-48.

Week: 8; Lecture: 29 April; Topic: Ownership

- Textbook, Chapter 8 and 9
- Doyle, G., 2002, "Conclusions", *Media Ownership: The Economics and Politics of Convergence and Concentration in the UK and European Media*, Sage: London, pp. 171-179.
- Herman, E. and N. Chomsky, 1988, "A propaganda model", *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, Pantheon: New York, pp. 1-35.

Week: 9; Lecture: 06 May; Topic: {Outfoxed}

- Mann, R., 2012, *Bad News: Murdoch's Australia and the Shaping of a Nation* [Extract], Collingwood: Black Inc.
- Kuhn, R., 2002, "The first Blair government and political journalism", Kuhn and Neveu (eds) - *Political Journalism: New Challenges, New Practices*, Routledge/ECPR: London, pp. 47-68.
- Blair, T, 2007, Lecture by the Prime Minister The Right Honourable Tony Blair MP On Public Life, Reuters, Canary Wharf, London, 12 June.

Week: 10; Lecture: 13 May; Topic: E-Democracy Top Down

- Textbook, Chapter 10
- Christensen, H.S., 2011, "Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means?", *First Monday*, Volume 16(2-7).
- Chen, P, 2013, "Elite new media and new media elites", *Australian Politics in a Digital Age*, ANU E-Press: Canberra.

Week: 11; Lecture: 20 May; Topic: E-Democracy Bottom Up

- Papacharissi, Z., 2009, "The virtual sphere 2.0: the internet, the public sphere, and beyond", A. Chadwick and P.N. Howard, *The Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics*, London: Routledge, pp. 230-45.

- Chen, P, 2013, "Social media", *Australian Politics in a Digital Age*, ANU E-Press: Canberra.

- Barlow, J.P., 1996, *A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace*, <https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>

Week: 12; Lecture: 27 May; Topic: Media and Conflict

- Textbook, Chapter 11

- Hayes, D. and M. Guardino, 2010, "Whose views made the news? Media coverage and the march to war in Iraq", *Political Communication*, 27, pp. 59-87.
- Baudrillard, J., 1995, "The Gulf War Did Not Take Place", *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Winch, S., 2005, "Constructing an 'evil genius': News uses of mythic archetypes to make sense of bin Laden", *Journalism Studies*, 6(3) pp. 285-99.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This unit uses standards referenced assessment for award of assessment marks.

Students' assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students' achievement against criteria and standards specified to align with learning outcomes.

For reference to criteria and standards, please consult grade descriptors at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/sociology_social_policy/undergrad/grades.shtml

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic honesty is a core value of the University. The University requires students to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in their dealings with the University, its members, members of the public and others. The University is opposed to and will not tolerate academic dishonesty or plagiarism, and will treat all allegations of academic dishonesty or plagiarism seriously.

The University's Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy 2012 and associated Procedures are available for reference on the University Policy Register at <http://sydney.edu.au/policies/> (enter "Academic Dishonesty" in the search field). The Policy applies to the academic conduct of all students enrolled in a coursework award course at the University.

Under the terms and definitions of the Policy,

- "academic dishonesty" means "seeking to obtain or obtaining academic advantage (including in the assessment or publication of work) by dishonest or unfair means or knowingly assisting another student to do so.
- "plagiarism" means "presenting another person's work as one's own work by presenting, copying or reproducing it without appropriate acknowledgement of the source."

The presentation of another person's work as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement is regarded as plagiarism, regardless of the author's intentions. Plagiarism can be classified as negligent (negligent plagiarism) or dishonest (dishonest plagiarism).

An examiner who suspects academic dishonesty or plagiarism by a student must report the suspicion to a nominated academic in the relevant faculty. If the nominated academic concludes that the student has engaged in **dishonest plagiarism** or some other sufficiently serious form of academic dishonesty, the matter may be referred to the Registrar for further disciplinary action under the terms of the Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy 2012 and Chapter 8 of the University of Sydney By-Law 1999 (as amended).

USE OF SIMILARITY DETECTING SOFTWARE

Students should be aware that written assignments submitted in this Unit of Study will be submitted to similarity detecting software known as **Turnitin**. The detection and identification of work that may be suspected of plagiarism is an academic judgment for the unit coordinator, and similarity detecting software is one of the tools that an examiner or marker may use to inform a decision that plagiarism has occurred.

Turnitin searches for matches between text in your written assessment task and text sourced from the Internet, published works and assignments that have previously been submitted to Turnitin for analysis. It produces an originality report showing matches with various sources, and an overall level of match or similarity index.

There will always be some degree of text-matching when using Turnitin. These are caused by the use of direct quotations, technical terms and phrases, and the listing of bibliographic material. This does not mean you will automatically be accused of plagiarism.

Further information about Turnitin is available at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/plagiarism_and_turnitin.shtml

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Compliance Statements

All students are required to submit an authorised statement of compliance with all work submitted to the University for assessment, presentation or publication.

A statement of compliance certifies that no part of the Work constitutes a breach of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy, and must be in the form of:

- a. a University assignment cover sheet;
- b. a University electronic form; or
- c. a University written statement.

The format of the compliance statement will differ depending on the method required for submitting your work (see “Assessment Submission” below).

Assessment Submission

Electronic submission of assessment tasks via the University’s Learning Management System will be required by the due date.

Essays and assignments not submitted on or before the due date are subject to penalty, Refer to http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/late_work.shtml for the Policy on Late Work.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences assesses student requests for assistance relating to completion of assessment in accordance with the regulations set out in the [University Assessment Policy 2011 and Assessment Procedures 2011](#). Students are expected to become familiar with the University’s policies and Faculty procedures relating to Special Consideration and Special Arrangements.

Students can apply for:

- **Special Consideration** - for serious illness or misadventure
- **Special Arrangements** - for essential community commitments
- **Simple Extension** – an extension of less than 5 working days for non-examination based assessment tasks on the grounds of illness or misadventure.

Further information on special consideration policy and procedures is available on the Faculty website at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/special_consideration.shtml

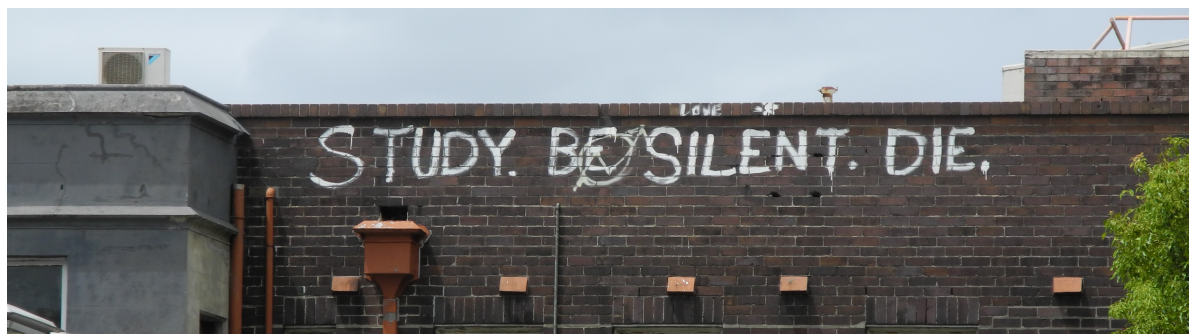
OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO THIS UNIT OF STUDY

The Faculty’s Student Administration Manual is available for reference at the “Current Students” section of the Faculty Website (http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/). Most day-to-day issues you encounter in the course of completing this Unit of Study can be addressed with the information provided in the Manual. It contains detailed instructions on processes, links to forms and guidance on where to get further assistance.

STAYING ON TOP OF YOUR STUDY

For full information visit http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/staying_on_top.shtml

The Learning Centre assists students to develop the generic skills, which are necessary for learning and communicating knowledge and ideas at university. Programs available at The Learning Centre include workshops in Academic Reading and Writing, Oral communications Skills, Postgraduate Research Skills, Honours, masters Coursework Program, Studying at University, and Workshops for English Language and Learning. Further information about The Learning Centre can be found at http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre/



The Write Site provides online support to help you develop your academic and professional writing skills. All University of Sydney staff and students who have a Unikey can access the WriteSite at <http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/>.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has units at both an Undergraduate and Postgraduate level that focus on **writing** across the curriculum or, more specifically, writing in the disciplines, making them relevant for all university students.

To find out more visit:

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/writing_hub/index.shtml and
http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/pg_writing_support/index.shtml

In addition to units of study on writing, The FASS Writing Hub offers drop-in sessions to assist students with their writing in a one-to-one setting. No appointment is necessary, and this service is free of charge to all FASS students and/or all students enrolled in WRIT units. For more information on what topics are covered in a drop-in session and for the current schedule, please visit http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/writing_hub/drop_in_sessions.shtml.

Pastoral and academic support for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** is provided by the STAR Team in Student Support services, a dedicated team of professional Aboriginal people able to respond to the needs of students across disciplines. The STAR team can assist with tutorial support, mentoring support, cultural and pastoral care along with a range of other services. More information about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be found at http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_services/indigenous_support.shtml.

The Koori Centre also provides a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. It is a facility where students can enjoy culture identity and in which they can engage their fellow students and colleagues in a respectful and honest conversation about the issues, values and pride and place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in contemporary Australian identity and life. The Centre provides access to computers, common room, study space, an Indigenous Research Library, and an orientation program at the beginning of the year.

The **Library** offers students free, online tutorials in library skills at sydney.edu.au/library/skills. There's one designed especially for students studying in the Humanities and Social Sciences at

sydney.edu.au/library/subjects/subject.html. And don't forget to find out who your Faculty Liaison Librarians are.

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Services is located on Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G20; contact 8627 8422 or email disability.services@sydney.edu.au . For further information, visit their website at <http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/disability/> .

Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) are located on Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G20; contact 8627 8433 or email caps.admin@sydney.edu.au. For further information, visit their website at http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/counselling/ .



ATTACHMENT A: CASE REVIEW TOPICS

“Media moments”, examples and suggestions:

- The Cronulla “Riots”
- Death of Neda Agha-Soltan
- The Dean “scream”
- The Dreyfus Affair
- The Falling Man
- Hurricane Katrina reporting and the Superdome
- Lance Armstrong does Oprah
- Misreporting the Hillsborough disaster
- MMR Vaccine reporting in the UK
- Peter Slipper’s text messages
- The Rise of Berlusconi
- Saving Private Lynch
- The Spill
- West Memphis 3
- UK phone hacking



ATTACHMENT B: TEAM PROJECTS

Project 1: Whose views make the news

Using talk-back radio as your subject attempt to determine how different types of radio “filter” different types of callers and issues. Use an understanding of the nature of the genre and the role of producers as “gatekeepers” to see what gets past the filter and how it is treated. You’ll need to determine a structure to this inquiry that includes systematic data collection, analysis and reporting.

Project 2: Prank Tharunka

Using your understanding of the process-orientation of journalism, design and execute a false story that you attempt to get published in the UNSW student newspaper, Tharunka. You will need to research the aspects of journalistic practice used by the paper, what type of issues are likely to be covered, and how you would go about getting the issue into the paper. Once completed (successfully or not), reflect on the practice of PR that uses an understanding of media practice to promote particular messages in your final report.

Project 3: Clicktivism?

Using an online protest page, see how many people can be recruited (through a variety of means) to support your – fictitious – cause. You’ll need to invent the cause, flesh out information about it on your page(s) and work out a means to gauge support (such as a petition or other means). Feed information to your supporters about the progress of the cause and then survey them to determine where this cause fits in their wider set of political concerns and willingness to contribute time and money to the case in the future relative to their other concerns. Following this, reflect on the implications of online causes, like Kony, etc.

Project 4: Managing expectations, shaping outcomes

Using the theory of “priming” use two or more test groups’ interpretation of a piece of news footage based on priming information provided. You will need to:

- Recruit test groups
- Find appropriate news footage
- Develop “priming” information for one group to consume
- Develop and administer a survey to participants to test the priming effects
- Report on the impact of the priming, if any
- Reflect on the implications of the test.

Project 5: Gendering politics

Are women politicians treated differently in the media? Construct a content analysis project where you analyse reporting on women in politics from a specific type of media (print, radio, tv). You will need to develop a coding frame (data collection instrument) based on the operationalization of your theories about gendered reporting in the media. The collected data will need to be analysed, compared with some type of base line or standard, and reported upon.



ATTACHMENT C: FINAL ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What are the prospects of the social media enhancing political decision-making? In this essay, consider:
 - a. The political system as an information system
 - b. The nature of “good decision making”
 - c. A working definition of social media
2. Murdoch has attacked the BBC as anti-democratic and a core risk in the development of state propaganda. Consider the arguments behind this argument and assess their validity. In this essay, look at:
 - a. The structure and processes of the BBC
 - b. Recent changes to the regulatory regime in the UK for media
3. Does the rise of digital media reduce or increase arguments for strong “media effects”? Consider in this essay:
 - a. The range of effects theories
 - b. Their historical situation
 - c. The current media environment and the relevance of a and b
4. If, as can be argued, there is a decline in the functional utility of commercial media’s “liberal democratic” / 4th estate role, what should the policy response be to adjust, correct, or ameliorate this?
 - a. Option: what is the likelihood of such amelioration being implemented
5. Consider the connection, if any, between the marketing model of political campaigning and citizen engagement. What connections are there? What are their implications?



6. If modern media is critical to the generation of individual’s personal and political subjectivities, what implications does this have for the regulation of media content? Consider in this essay:
 - a. What is meant by a subjectivity, and its political implications
 - b. Questions of determinism and free will
7. Consider the increasing tendency for journalists to be targeted by combatants in war and conflict. Why has this tendency arisen? What are the implications for this? Is there a justification behind this tendency?
8. Discuss the rise of state-supported international news media organisations like Press TV, Al Jazeera, CCTV International, and RT. Consider the role in the international news media ecosystem and their position in international relations, and cultural and soft diplomacy.
9. Can the media be “jammed”? Consider social movement resistance and representation through alternative media practice and the co-option of media strategies and genres. Can this be effective in anything but the short term?
10. Develop, in consultation with your tutor, a topic of your own preference.