Global Media Seminar

Class code
MCC-UE 9456

Instructor Details
Sacha Molitorisz
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Consultations Wednesdays after class by appointment.

Class Details
Global Media Seminar

Wednesdays: 10am-1pm

Room 304
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course brings together diverse issues and perspectives in rapidly evolving areas of international/global communication. Historical and theoretical frameworks will be provided to help students to approach the scope, disparity and complexity of current developments in our media landscape.

Students will be encouraged to critically assess shifts in national, regional, and international media patterns of production, distribution, and consumption over time, leading to analysis of the tumultuous contemporary global communication environment. Key concepts associated with international communication will be examined, including a focus on trends in national and global media consolidation, cultural implications of globalisation, international broadcasting, information flows, international communication law and regulation, and trends in communication and information technologies. The focus of the course will be international, with a particular emphasis on Australia.

Ultimately, we will examine the ways in which global communication is undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift, as demonstrated by the Arab spring, the Olympics coverage, and the creeping dominance of Google, Facebook and Twitter.

Desired Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the complexity and diversity of the Australian media landscape in its historical, contemporary and global contexts.
- Analyse the changing nature of global media power, ethics and information flows.
- Evaluate emerging trends in media production, distribution and consumption and their impact on the concepts of place, culture and identity.
Class Participation: 20%
Class Presentation and Paper: 30%
Final Research Paper: 50%

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to demonstrate accountability and responsibility in their preparation for, and engagement with, the course. This is a seminar subject and requires active participation. It also requires respectful and engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Students will also contribute to building a classroom environment that fosters mutual respect for all students and staff. There will be two class presentations given by students each week. Each student will give a total of two class presentations during the course. Your second reading presentation will contribute to the class participation mark.

**Class Presentation:** Students will lead a 15-minute presentation and discussion focusing on a key issue, concept or aspect of the case studies and readings introduced in Sessions 2 - 6. The presentation should focus on in-depth analysis of specific concepts, issues and examples and include the promotion of active class discussion. Students will submit a 1000 word paper in class the week after they have presented.

**Final Research Paper:** (Session 15) A 3000 word final research paper on a topic of your choice based on key concepts and topics from the course. Students are required to demonstrate their critical thinking, analysis and evaluation skills and to provide a rationale for the choice of topic by situating it in the literature that we have read in class and other readings pertinent to their particular focus. Students are expected to apply their analysis to specific, carefully selected case studies and examples. Students need to provide a topic proposal of one paragraph by Session 8 (or sooner) and have it approved by your Professor.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning. Creative work is of a highly sophisticated standard.

**Grade B:** Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research. Creative work is of a superior standard.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level. Creative work is of an acceptable standard.

**Grade D:** Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations. Creative work is of a basic standard.

**Grade F:** Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Creative work is weak, unfinished or unsubmitted.

**Grade conversion**

NYU Sydney uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
Grading Policy

NYU Sydney aims to have grading standards and results similar to those that prevail at Washington Square. At the College of Arts and Sciences, roughly 39% of all final grades are in the B+ to B- range, and 50% in the A/A- range.

We have therefore adopted the following grading guideline: in any non-Stern course, class teachers should try to insure that no more than 50% of the class receives an A or A-. (Stern has a different grading policy that we follow in all Stern courses).

A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that: it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Attendance Policy

NYU Sydney has a strict policy about course attendance for students. Faculty will not give students permission to be absent for any reason. Students should contact their instructors to catch up on missed work but should not approach them for excused absences.

All non-medical absence requests must be presented by the student to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs. Non-medical requests should be made in advance of the intended absence. All medical-based absence requests MUST be presented to the Student Life Coordinator. In the case of illness, the student should contact the Student Life Coordinator within three days of the absence or as soon as practicable and provide medical documentation. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Student Life staff and Assistant Director, Academic Programs. Any absences of which faculty have not been informed by the NYU Sydney staff will be presumed to be unexcused.

Students are expected to arrive to class promptly both at the start of class and after breaks. Arriving more than 10 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early will be considered an unexcused absence.

This attendance policy also applies for classes involving a field trip or other off-campus visit. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the agreed meeting point on time.

The faculty will report all unexcused absences to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs, and students’ final grades will be negatively impacted by each such absence. Each unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 3 percentage points from the final grade. More than two unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.
There will be no adjustment of attendance records after the end of the semester. If you wish to contest an unexcused absence, you must do so before you leave Sydney. Contact the Assistant Director, Academic Programs to discuss the attendance record as soon as you think there may be a discrepancy about your attendance in class on a given day.

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. **This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday.**

Students must notify their professor and the Assistant Director, Academic Programs in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted during class time to your instructor.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs during regular office hours (9:30-5:00, Monday-Friday). You must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs – megan.carrigy@nyu.edu – for submission to Turn-it-in.

The Assistant Director, Academic Programs will mark down the date and time of submission in the presence of the student. In the absence of the Assistant Director, Academic Programs, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person, following the same protocol.

Work submitted after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale for each day the work is late.

Written work submitted beyond five (5) weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Plagiarism Policy**

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Any course work must to be submitted as a hard copy **AND** in electronic form. All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of written work to www.turnitin.com. Instructions will be provided to you in class.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are severe and are dealt with by the Director, NYU Sydney, not your instructor. Your home school will be notified and you will be dealt with according to the standards of that school. The codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges are outlined in the respective school’s academic resources.

**Required Text(s)**

None. Weekly readings will be provided.

**Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in**

Session 1

Australian Media: History and Context

Introduction to the course: global media from an Australasian perspective. First Australians, First Fleet and first media. The rise of Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch.

Required Reading:


Articles:


Viewing:


Session 2

Media on the Move, People on the Move: SBS, Asylum Seeking and Global Migration

SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) is Australia’s multicultural public broadcaster focused on engaging with the global diaspora in Australia. It has commissioned the second season of a ground-breaking reality TV show, ‘Go Back Where You Came From,’ which starts on August 28 and runs for three episodes. This class will give you a context for the debate on asylum seekers in Australia and the role that Australian media has played in this debate including the ‘children overboard affair’ which turned the act of seeking asylum into a major media event.

Required Reading:


Additional selected news stories will also be provided to give you background on John Howard and Pacific solution; Kevin Rudd’s promise to end Pacific solution; Christmas Island tragedy; Julia Gillard returning to Pacific solution.

Viewing:

We will watch the first episode in class. Further episodes will be available on from the SBS on Demand website and you can continue to follow the facebook and twitter discussion and media coverage of the series.

Session 3
September 12

Fairfax Media: A Microcosm
The temporal qualities of media have always been fundamental to how media become embedded into our everyday life. Shifts in the importance of different kinds of frequencies in media are having a dramatic impact on news. Does the news change because the platform changes? This week we will look at a dynamic time in Fairfax Media, one of Australia’s big media companies. Its flagship is The Sydney Morning Herald, first published as the Sydney Herald in 1831 and we will use this as a case study for charting current changes facing Australian and global media companies. Starting in 1831 The Sydney Morning Herald went from local rag to one of the world’s best newspapers to ... what? Current challenges include moving from newspapers to "digital first"; new platforms: apps, online, more online with spinoff sites; dramatic staff and budget cutbacks; editorial musical chairs; and the world’s richest woman looking to buy a seat on the board.

Required Reading:
• The Sydney Morning Herald and www.smh.com.au

Session 4

The Sporting Media? The Olympics as Global Media Event.
Media create new possibilities for the experience and organisation of space. From the ‘doubling of space’ that takes place via live broadcasting to the creation of virtual spaces via the Internet, how space is reworked by contemporary media? How has coverage of the Olympics revealed changes in the global media landscape? Free-to-air television once led the Olympic conversation, how has social media impacted on the way that we experience the Olympics?

Required Reading:
Rupert Murdoch and Media Ethics: The Fox Outfoxed

Australian media is dominated by dynasties. The Packers. The Stokes. The Fairfaxs. The Murdochs, above all. Murdoch built his empire in Australia then conquered the world. This year is his annus horribilis. The phone hacking scandal shut down his money-spinner, The News of the World. The Leveson Inquiry continues to embarrass. What does it say that the next generation of these Australian dynasties - Lachlan Murdoch, James Packer - aren't so keen on media?

Required Readings:


Articles:


The Leveson Inquiry:

- The Leveson Inquiry – Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press (UK) http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/

Viewing:


FALL SEMESTER BREAK OCTOBER 1-5

How New Media Needs Old Ethics (aka From Cash For Comment to Bad Mojo Juju)
The cash for comment affair was an Australian scandal that broke in 1999, concerning paid advertising in radio that is presented to the audience in such a way as to sound like editorial commentary, as revealed by ABC TV’s Media Watch.
Cash for Comment drew a line in the sand. But then the sand blew away, with the emergence of new media. Have the ethical rules changed? Or do they still apply? This class will examine the ethics of mojo (mobile journalism) and more on the Leveson Inquiry. We also touch on issues of violence in the media: whether depictions of violence in film, music and the news contribute to the incidence of violence in the real world.

Print media in Australia has traditionally been self-regulating - is more regulation the answer? Locally, the 400-page plus report of this year's Finkelstein-Ricketson review called for the establishment of a taxpayer-funded super-regulator, the News Media Council, that would oversee print, radio, television and online media.

Required Reading:
- Finkelstein-Ricketson review [provided excerpts]
- Tanner, S., M. Kasinger, N. Richardson, 2009, “Chapter 7: Ethical Concerns,” *Feature Writing (Telling The Story)*.
- Leveson Inquiry: www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/

Articles:
- www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prince-harry-naked-pictures-leveson-1275278

Viewing:
- Media Watch ABC TV: http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s1095125.htm

**Session 7**

**October 17**

Julian Assange, Wikileaks, Investigative Journalism and the Irony of Ecuadorian Asylum

Does investigative journalism still have a place in a time of whistleblower websites and closing newspapers? Does truth deserve to be free? Is Assange a self-aggrandising trouble-maker or a noble champion of truth? In this session we will address these questions within the context of freedom of information laws in Australia and abroad.

Required Reading:

Articles:
- http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/21/why-us-is-out-to-get-assange
- http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/22/julian-assange-media-contempt

Viewing:
- *Julian*, directed by Matthew Moore, 2012
You Call That Funny?

October 24

Ever since 100,000 BCE, when Zorg slipped on a banana peel while describing that morning’s mammoth conquest, humour has formed an essential part of human storytelling. During the Depression, alcoholic Sydney journalist Lennie Lower wrote the novel *Here’s Luck*. More recently, Australian expat Clive James has cast his witty eye over popular culture and Australian identity. Humour writers remain big, including Richard Glover, Jon Ronson, Louis Theroux, Dave Barry and Bill Bryson, while Norman Gunston prefigured Ali G’s cringe-inducing gotcha style. Thanks to global media, the differences between Australian, US and other humour have eroded, and wits such as Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert now wield huge political clout. New media offers a new outlet for guerrilla satire and low budget parodies, as revealed by The Bondi Hipsters. At a time of media democratisation and information overload, humour presents - more than ever - a way to cut through. But there are risks.

Required Reading:
- James, Clive, *Unreliable Memoirs*. Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 17
- [http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/borowitzreport]

Viewing:
- Norman Gunston meets Mick Jagger [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69zoOOUxblI]
- Jon Stewart on Crossfire, 2004 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFQFB5ypDZEThe]
- Chaser team crash APEC, 2007: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdnAaQn5-8]
- The Chaser’s War On Everything, Make A Realistic Wish Sketch apology - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GQ8U-NQAxg]
- Bondi Hipsters explain why they’re going to London Olympics [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKu6VyyJMRk]

Assessment: Topic Proposals Due this Week in Preparation for Final Paper.

The Explosion of Opinion Writing

October 31

The NYT launched the first oped page in 1970. Now the world is drowning in op-ed pages and pieces - partly thanks to blogs - and the spin is getting more subtle, more pervasive, more powerful. In this session we will focus on key shifts in the production and distribution of opinion pieces.

Required Reading:
### Session 10: Mobile Media, Place and Cultural Identity in Australia

**November 7**

How do mobile media alter our experience of the boundaries between public and private life? Focusing on current research taking place in Australia into the use of mobile media in everyday life, this week we will investigate the significance of place and cultural identity for mobile media.

**Required Reading:**

### Session 11: Revolution Version 2.0 - The Arab Spring, China and Unstable Pacific States

**November 14**

The printing press played a key role the French and American revolutions. But with the advent of digital media, we now have Revolution Version 2.0 - superfast, superstrong, yet potentially bloodless. Since late 2010, the Arab Spring (or Arab Revolution) has seen rulers ousted in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, with significant unrest in many more Arab countries. Social media has been largely responsible for spreading an anti-authoritarian message, as repressive governments find themselves unable to dictate the flow of information and disgruntled citizens are able to organise on-line. Similarly, in once-tightly-controlled China, bloggers such as 27-year-old Zola and 57-year-old Tiger Temple are working with their mobiles and laptops to break down the Great Firewall of China, reporting stories their party leaders would prefer to suppress. Meanwhile, in Pacific States such as the Solomon Islands, where the new media hasn’t arrived, corruption and instability reigns.

**Required Reading:**

**Articles:**

**Viewing:**

### Session 12: Pussy Riot and the Diabolical Effects of Social Media

**November 21**

Me me me or Meme meme? Social media spreads the word, but often the message is lost. Pussy Riot protested in a church. They wore coloured balaclavas. Three members are going to jail. What were they protesting about again? Building on the recent example of Pussy Riot, we will...
investigate diverse uses of Twitter and Facebook as well as social media marketing disasters.

Articles:

Viewing:
- Gruen Planet ABC TV [aired August 22, 2012]: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/gruenplanet/

Session 13
November 28
Convergence and Shifts in Entertainment Media
A look at how the production, distribution and marketing of entertainment has changed, including the impacts of piracy, the rise of sites such as TMZ, Pedestrian, The Smoking Gun and the fall of gossip mags.

Required Reading:

Session 14
December 5
Media Tarts: Gender representation debates
As much as media has changed, the gender imbalance remains striking at the top. Thirty-seven years after media doyenne Anne Summers published Damned Whores and God's Police, the blokes still calling the shots - except when it comes to magazines. In 2011, Amanda Wilson was appointed as the first editor of the 180-year-old Sydney Morning Herald. In 2012, she was ousted and replaced by a man. Women remain on the outer in senior media positions. Meanwhile, have depictions of women in the media changed? On the surface, the sexism has softened, but a deeper analysis reveals an ongoing imbalance in the portrayals of men and women in public life. In post-feminist 2012, it still seems to be the case that the former are assessed by their achievements; the latter by their looks and their family. Research reveals that women and girls are badly underrepresented as key characters in films and TV shows - apart from the glaring exception of porn, which is booming thanks to new media. Is it still usually a case of men do, women are done?

Required Reading:
- Irigaray, Luce, 1995. This Sex Which is not One. Cornell University Press. Chapter 2, "This Sex Which Is Not One."

Articles:
• http://www.seejane.org/downloads/KeyFindings_GenderDisparityFamilyFilms.pdf

Session 15

Final Research Paper due.

December 12

Classroom Etiquette

This is a seminar subject and requires active participation. It also requires respectful and engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Eating is not permitted in any classrooms. Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities

None

Suggested Co-curricular Activities

None

Your Instructor

Born in Germany, Sacha Molitorisz arrived in Australia in 1973. After graduating with Arts (English literature) and Law degrees from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sacha was hired as a writer by The Sydney Morning Herald, where his specialties included film, music and TV, and also parenthood, education and philosophy. He has published two books: *Australian Bushrangers - The Romance of Robbery* and *From Here To Paternity - A User's Manual For Early Fatherhood*. He is currently teaching media studies at UNSW and his interests include media ethics in an age of change. He lives in Sydney with his wife and two kids, and, whenever possible, immerses himself in the Pacific Ocean.