Class code  MCC-UE 9456 001

Instructor Details  Sacha Molitorisz

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Consultations Tuesdays after class by appointment.

Class Details  Global Media Seminar

Tuesdays: 9.30am - 12.30pm.

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 approach the scope, disparity and complexity of current developments in the media landscape. These frameworks will be supplemented with the latest media news and developments, often in relation to pop culture.

Students will be encouraged to think critically, assessing shifts in national, regional and international media patterns of production, distribution and consumption over time. The aim is to come to an understanding of the tumultuous contemporary global communication environment. The key concepts under examination include: trends in national and global media consolidation; the radical cultural implications of globalisation; the disruption of established information flows and the emergence of new information channels; the ethics, law and regulation of modern media; and trends in communication and information technologies. Specific issues addressed include: the rise of celebrity culture; the challenges facing the entertainment industry; and the rise, rise and potential demise of Rupert Murdoch. The focus will be international, with a particular emphasis on Australia.

Ultimately, the course 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.

Assessment Components

Class Presentation and Paper: 30% (10% first reading presentation; 20% written paper)

Class Participation: 20% (10% general participation; 10% second reading presentation)

Final Research Paper: 50%

Class Presentation and Paper: In sessions 2 to 7, each student will lead a 15-minute presentation and discussion, based on the set readings. This presentation should focus on in-depth analysis of specific concepts, issues and examples relevant to the class, and should involve the promotion of active class discussion. Students will submit a 1000-word paper in class the week after they have presented, on a topic relevant to their presentation.

Class Participation: Students are expected to demonstrate thoroughness 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 be required to contribute to building a classroom environment that fosters mutual respect for all students and staff. Each week, students will be assigned to give class presentations. Each student will give a total of two class presentations during the course. The second reading presentation will contribute to the class participation mark.

Final Research Paper (due session 14): 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 has been covered in class and in 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 fulfill 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
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.

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

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

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 absence requests must be presented by the student to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs. Wherever possible, requests should be made in advance of an intended absence. In the case of illness, the student should contact the Assistant Director, Academic Programs within three days of the absence or as soon as practicable and provide medical documentation. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Assistant Director, Academic Programs.

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.

Be aware that absences from class may also impact on the participation grade awarded by your instructor.

Students are expected to arrive to class promptly both at the start of class and after breaks. 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.

**Late Submission of Work**

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

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday). In the absence of the Assistant Director, Academic Programs, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person. Students must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to Turn-It-In within 24 hours.

Work submitted after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) 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.

It is a serious academic offence to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

All written coursework must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form. All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of written work to the plagiarism detection software Turn-It-In. Instructions will be provided to you in class.
Week 1  
**February 12**

**Australian Media: History and Context**

Introduction to the course: global media from an Australasian perspective. First Australians, First Fleet and first media. A convict past and a wide open land bred bushrangers - does that explain Rupert Murdoch? This session ranges from the Sydney Gazette and the wartime wireless to the multiculturalism of SBS TV and the optimism of the National Broadband Network.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Viewing:**


Week 2  
**February 19**

**Fairfax Media: A Microcosm**

The temporal qualities of media have always been fundamental to how they become embedded in our everyday life. Shifts in the *frequencies* of different kinds of media are having a dramatic impact on news. A question arises: does the news change because the platform changes? This week’s focus is Fairfax Media, one of Australia’s biggest media companies, which is struggling to survive. Its flagship, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, was first published as the Sydney Herald in 1831, and provides an apt case study for charting changes and challenges facing all global media companies. From its origins more than 180 years ago, *The Sydney Morning Herald* went from local rag to one of the world’s best newspapers to ... what? The newspaper is currently reinventing itself under the "digital first" slogan, pushing its websites and apps. Unfortunately, its revenue is precarious, necessitating dramatic staff and budget cutbacks, prompting a game of editorial musical chairs and tempting the world’s richest woman to buy a seat on the board.
Week 3
February 26

The Sporting Media? The Olympics as Global Media Event

We’ve talked time; now let’s talk place. 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 is space reworked by contemporary media? And how has coverage of the Olympics revealed changes in the global media landscape? Free-to-air television once led the Olympic conversation, and perhaps still does, but for how long? New media, and specifically social media, have irrevocably altered the way audiences - and even athletes - experience major events such as the Olympics.

Required Reading:


Molitorisz, S., 2012, “How Nine Spoiled The Olympics” (UNSW)

Recommended viewing:

John Clarke, Sporting Nation: ABC TV, Episodes 1 - 3, NYU-Sydney library

Gruen Sweat: ABC TV, Episode 1, NYU-Sydney library

Week 4
March 5

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. Its goal is to get beyond the Anglo-centrism of rival networks. In August/September 2012, SBS ran the second season of a ground-breaking reality TV show, Go Back To Where You Came From. This class will provide context for the vexed debate on asylum seekers in Australia, with an emphasis on the role played by the Australian media. Of particular interest is the
"children overboard affair", which turned the act of seeking asylum into a major media event.

**Required Reading:**


Additional news stories will be provided to give background on: John Howard and Pacific solution; Kevin Rudd’s promise to end the Pacific solution; and Julia Gillard’s return to the Pacific solution.

**Required Viewing:**

SBS Series: *Go Back To Where You Came From*, Series 2, Episode 1, NYU-Sydney Library.

**Recommended Reading:**


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**Week 5**

**March 12**

**Rupert Murdoch: The Fox Outfoxed**

Australian media is dominated by dynasties. The Packers. The Stokes. The Fairfaxes. Above all, the Murdochs. Murdoch built his empire in Australia then conquered the world. After 2012, his annus horribilis, how is 2013 shaping up? The phone hacking scandal shut down his money-spinner, *The News of the World*, before the Leveson Report asked "What the hell was going on?" What does it say that the next generation of these Australian dynasties - Lachlan Murdoch, James Packer, Ryan Stokes - are having more luck investing in casinos than the media? And if anyone doubted the extreme challenges facing media's biggest families, the disagreements were plain to see when Elisabeth Murdoch tore into her brother James in her MacTaggart Lecture.

**Required Reading:**


**Articles:**


From Cash For Comment to Bad MoJo Rising: How New Media Needs Old Ethics

The Cash For Comment affair is one of Australia's biggest media scandals. In 1999, ABC TV's Media Watch reported that two of Australia's highest-paid radio personalities, John Laws and Alan Jones, had been paid to express opinions on air, and to make them sound like independent commentary.

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 "chequebook journalism", mojo (mobile journalism) and whether depictions of violence in film, music and the news contribute to the incidence of violence in the real world.

This class covers the basic principles of ethical theory, touching on Aristotle, Mill and Kant. It also looks at the regulation of media ethics. In Australia, print media has traditionally been self-regulating - but the 400-page report of 2012's Finkelstein-Ricketson review called for a taxpayer-funded super-regulator, the News Media Council, to oversee print, radio, television and online media.

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:

Tanner, S., M. Kasinger, N. Richardson, 2009, “Chapter 7: Ethical Concerns,” in Feature Writing (Telling The Story),


WikiLeaks, Investigative Journalism and the Irony of Ecuadorian Asylum

Does investigative journalism still have a place in an era of whistleblower websites and closing newspapers? Does truth deserve to be free? Is Julian Assange a self-aggrandising trouble-maker or a noble champion of truth? Or both? In this session we will address these questions, plus further ethical questions relating to journalistic sources and a reporter’s duty to the truth.

Also, we will examine the right to freedom of speech, which is enshrined in the US's First Amendment, but which has no such protection in Australia. Despite the First Amendment, however, there are significant limits on free speech in the US, just as there are in Australia. In the US and Australia, freedom of speech is far from absolute.

Required Reading:


Economou N. and S. Tanner, 2008. “The state as media regulator constraining free speech?” in Media,
Power and Politics in Australia. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: Pearson Education Australia.

**Recommended Viewing:**

The War You Don’t See, directed by John Pilger, 2010.

**SPRING BREAK**
March 29 - April 5

**Week 8**
April 9

You Call That Funny?

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 Sydney's Depression, alcoholic journalist Lennie Lower wrote the novel *Here’s Luck*. More recently, Australian expat Clive James cast his witty eye over popular culture and Australian identity. Now, in the digital age, humour writers and presenters remain popular, including Richard Glover, Jon Ronson, Louis Theroux, Dave Barry and Bill Bryson, while Australia's Norman Gunston prefigured Ali G’s cringe-inducing gotcha style. Thanks to global media, the differences between Australian, US and other humour are eroding, and wits such as Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert wield huge influence, at home and abroad. As well as political point-scoring, new media also 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.

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

**Required Reading:**


Morrow, Julian, Andrew Olle lecture, 2009


Molitorisz, S, When the joker becomes the joke, SMH/The Age, 2011,

**Required Viewing:**

Jon Stewart on Crossfire, 2004: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFQFB5YpDZEThe

Chaser team crash APEC, 2007: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdnAaQ0nS-8

The Chaser’s War On Everything, Make A Realistic Wish Sketch:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYS_Exl3nXQ

The Chaser’s War On Everything, Make A Realistic Wish Sketch apology:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GQ8U-NQAxg

**Recommended Reading:**


**Recommended Viewing:**


Bondi Hipsters explain why they’re going to London Olympics: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKu6Vyy1MRk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKu6Vyy1MRk)

**Week 9**

**April 16**

**The Explosion of Opinion**

The NYT launched the first oped page in 1970. Now the world is drowning in opinion 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. And we ask: is everyone entitled to express their opinion?

**Required Reading:**


**Week 10**

**April 23**

**Mobile Media, Place and Cultural Identity in Australia**

Mobile phones have changed the way people work, play and interact. How do mobile media alter our experience of the boundaries between public and private life? How do mobile phones inform our identity? Focusing on current research taking place in Australia into the use of mobile media in everyday life, this week’s class will investigate the significance of place and cultural identity for mobile media.

**Required Reading:**


Week 11

April 30

Revolution 2.0 - From the Arab Spring to the Great Firewall of China

The printing press played a key role the French and American revolutions. But thanks to digital media, we now have Revolution Version 2.0 - superfast, superstrong, 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 become, as never before, able to organise and militate on-line. Meanwhile in China, bloggers such as 27-year-old Zola and 57-year-old Tiger Temple work with mobiles and laptops to topple the Great Firewall of China, reporting stories their party leaders would prefer to suppress.

Required Reading:


Week 12

May 7

Pussy Riot and the Thorny Question of Privacy.

Me me me or Meme meme meme? Is social media narcissistic and ineffectual, or is it a powerful agent for social change? It certainly spreads the word. In 2012, pop-punk band Pussy Riot protested in a Moscow church. They wore coloured balaclavas. They used colourful language. But Vladimir Putin was unimpressed, and so two members went to jail. And, erm, what were they protesting again? Building on examples such as Pussy Riot, and carrying on from session 11, this class will investigate whether Twitter and Facebook are effective tools for social change, or whether social media is best suited to sharing pictures of kittens in martini glasses. Also, the class will tackle one of modern media’s thorniest questions: can a right to privacy continue to exist in a wired world?

Required reading:


Recommended reading:

Nissenbaum, H., 2011, A Contextual Approach to Privacy Online, in Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.


Week 13

May 14

Convergence, Transmedia and Shifts in Entertainment Media

For nearly two decades, "convergence" has been a defining buzzword of the fast-changing media
landscape, denoting the belief that once-separate industries - IT, telecommunications, news media, consumer electronics - are converging into one unified business. In the '90s, such thinking prompted a wave of takeovers and mergers - but most of them failed. The theory sounded good, but didn't work out in practice. Still, the buzzword survives, and in 2012 the Federal Government received the results of its Convergence Report. Meanwhile, convergence has been joined by another buzzword, "transmedia". After exploring these terms, this class examines the revolutionary changes sweeping the entertainment industry, with a particular focus on music and its challenges with piracy.

Required Reading:


Week 14  
Media Tarts: Gender representation debates  
May 21

As much as media has changed, the gender imbalance remains striking, especially at the top. Thirty-eight years after Australian media doyenne Anne Summers published Damned Whores and God's Police, blokes still call the shots. 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. 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. And, in some cases, new media is simply providing a whole new forum for misogyny. In post-feminist 2013, men are still often assessed by their achievements, but women by their looks and family. Further, research reveals women and girls remain 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 a case of men do, women are done?

Required Reading:


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.
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.