



School of English, Journalism
& European Languages

Unit Outline

HEJ407

Understanding the Public Sphere
Semester 1, 2008

<http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism>

Convenor:	Dr Craig Norris Room: 573 Phone: 6226 2938 Email: Craig.Norris@utas.edu.au
Consultation Hours:	10.00 – 1.00 Thursday
Unit Description:	This unit considers the role of the mass media in the public sphere. Students will be introduced to histories and theories of the public sphere. The multiple roles of the mass media will be explored: from its place in the trade and exchange of ideas to its position as a forum for local and international issues. Particular attention will be paid to the way mass media produces a sense of community.
Unit Aims and Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Outline the emergence and historical development of the public sphere.2. Analyse and understand the role of the media industries in public life and communication, especially how these industries mediate politics in both formal and informal contexts.3. Nominate and explain contemporary media developments and issues that structure, inform and reflect the condition of the public sphere.
Learning Outcomes:	Students taking this unit will: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. display written and verbal evidence of knowledge and critical thinking skills based around the theory of the public sphere, as well as related concepts and issues.2. <i>enhance</i> skills in <i>problem solving</i> through assessment tasks and tutorial activities which develop research techniques in media studies.
Required Texts:	Unit Reader

When Taught:	Thurs 2.10 - 5.00pm, SocSci309 (weeks 1-9)
Assessment:	<p>Two research essay(s) totalling 5000-words</p> <p>Research Essay 1 DUE DATE: Week 4 (Monday, 17th March) WORD LIMIT: Approx. 2000 words WORTH: 30%</p> <p>Research Essay 2 DUE DATE: Week 9 (Monday, 28th April) WORD LIMIT: Approx. 3000 words WORTH: 70%</p> <p>Assignment 1 will assess learning outcome 1 and 2. Assignment 2 will assess learning outcome 1 and 2.</p>

LECTURE/SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
1	Introduction	
Module 1: Theory and Applications		
2	The Concept and Theory of the Public Sphere	1. van Krieken et al., 2006, pp. 440-443. 2. Habermas 1989, pp. 27-56.
3	Politics, Journalism and the Public Sphere	B. Hutchins
4	Producing a Public Media Forum: Letters-to-the-Editor	Gregory and Hutchins, 2004, pp. 186-200.
5	Policy and Regulating the Public Sphere	McKay 2002, pp. 39-58.
Module 2: Contemporary Issues and Debates		
6	The Postmodern Public Sphere	1. van Krieken et al., 2006, pp. 444-449. 2. Hartley 1996, pp. 155-170.
7	Celebrity	1. Castells 2004, pp. 367-375. 2. Turner 2004, pp. 128-137.
8	1. Public Relations 2. Scandal	1. Turner et al., 2000, pp. 29-59. 2. Thompson 2000, pp. 11-30.
9	The Digital Public Sphere	Goode 2005, pp. 89-119.

ASSESSMENT

Two research essay(s) totalling 5000-words

Please note the following:

- In response to the set questions, you are required to state an argument and support it with evidence. A critical research essay is not simply a survey of the existing literature.
- You must consult published academic sources in your research. A failure to do so will result in an automatic Fail grade for the essay.

Research Essay 1

DUE DATE: Week 4 (Monday, 17th March)

WORD LIMIT: Approx. 2000 words

WORTH: 30%

You are required to independently research and analyse a topic related to the concept and theory of the public sphere, as indicated by the essay questions below.

Choose one of the following two questions and write a research essay on the theory and applications of the public sphere.

1. What and where is the public sphere in contemporary society?
2. As a concept and theory, the public sphere is no longer an adequate tool with which to analyse the reality of contemporary politics. Argue for *or* against this statement.

Research Essay 2

DUE DATE: Week 9 (Monday, 28th April)

WORD LIMIT: Approx. 3000 words

WORTH: 70%

Research Essay 2 is a self-directed assessment where you may decide the topic and focus of your analysis. Your essay topic should be developed in consultation with the unit convenor and should address a contemporary issue and debate surrounding the public sphere. Your discussion should show an awareness of how previous scholarship has approached this issue.

If you are having difficulty choosing a topic, you may write on one of the following three questions on contemporary issues and debates:

1. John B. Thompson argues that the mass media dissolve the boundaries between the public and the private spheres. What is the role of tabloidisation in this dissolution and what have been the consequences for the construction of a 'meaningful' public sphere?
2. We cannot start to understand the structure and operation of the public sphere until we understand the communications technologies that help to create it. Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of this statement.
3. Media scandals debase the traditional values underpinning the operation of the public sphere. Argue for *or* against this statement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Submission of Assignments

Students are required to submit a signed cover sheet with every assignment. This includes a declaration that all material submitted is their own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others and that they have read the University statement on Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism) on the University website at www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism or in the Student Information Handbook. Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office or the School website. **Assignments submitted without a signed cover sheet will not be marked.** Students who submit assignments without a signed cover sheet will be contacted once via their UTAS email address; in such instances the cover sheet must be completed within two weeks of the due date.

All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy (not by email) and placed in the essay box at the School office on or before 5pm on the due date. Students are required to keep copies of all submitted assignments. Assignments submitted on time will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once on time assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted. All marked assignments will be returned in tutorials unless otherwise advised.

Late Assignments

Late submissions will be penalized as follows: 10% of the available marks per day for the first five (5) working days and 50% on the following day. Late work will be accepted without penalty if accompanied by a medical certificate for the relevant period or a letter from a counsellor in the case of a serious non-medical reason.

Difficulties with your Studies

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you should raise these with your lecturer and/or one of the following Student Services staff as soon as possible:

- Learning Skills Adviser
- Disability Adviser
- Careers Adviser
- Student Counsellor

University Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

"**Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>."

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

Assignment Presentation

The Journalism, Media and Communications discipline uses the Harvard style of referencing. Please see <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/> for a brief introduction. For journalistic writing, refer to the JMC Style Guide, also available at <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/>.

For journalistic assignments, you must not use material gathered for a story, including interviews, for assessment in more than one unit. If in doubt, please discuss with your unit coordinator.

Equipment

Please note that this unit may require access to sound and/or video recording equipment and that while the school will provide access to equipment during tutorials, access to equipment outside of tutorials is not guaranteed. Where the loan of equipment is possible students will be required to sign and agree to the terms and conditions of the loan, including the penalties for late return, as presented at the time of the loan.

Honours Marking Scale

The following distribution of marks and grades is applied in assessing your work:

- First Class (HF)—80-100%
- Second Class upper division (HU)—70-79%
- Second Class lower division (HL)—60-69%
- Third Class (HT)—50-59%
- Fail (HN)—0-49%

All marks are subject to moderation.

IT Support

Learning online—for online learning and Vista support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>
Information Technology Services—for general IT Support (includes link to UTAS download website)
<http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>
Library Services—for information literacy support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>
Help Desk (email HelpDesk@utas.edu.au or 6226 1818, within University 1818)