



School of English, Journalism  
& European Languages

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## Unit Outline

**HEJ408**  
**Vernacular Theory**  
**Semester 2, 2008**  
[www.utas.edu.au/journalism/](http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/)

<b>Convenor:</b>	<b>Dr Jason Bainbridge</b> Room: SocSci 579 Phone: 6226 7146 Email: <a href="mailto:Jason.Bainbridge@utas.edu.au">Jason.Bainbridge@utas.edu.au</a>
<b>Consultation Hours:</b>	Monday 12pm-3pm
<b>Unit Description:</b>	This unit considers the mass media as a source of theory. Through textual analysis, students will analyse the ways in which representations of cultural institutions (like journalism) in popular media texts contribute to the field of knowledge about the practice of these institutions. Definitions of theory, knowledge and cultural legitimacy will be interrogated. The relationship between these ideas and more conventional theoretical sources will be explored through the consideration of a number of case studies.
<b>Unit Aims and Objectives:</b>	The major aims of this unit are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To familiarise students with a range of advanced theories, concepts and methods used in the study of media texts at Honours Level.</li><li>• To introduce students to advanced researching and writing skills.</li><li>• To provide students with a basic knowledge of how to conduct themselves while completing Honours.</li><li>• To continue to encourage students to think critically about the social and cultural place of media and the production of media texts.</li></ul>
<b>Learning Outcomes:</b>	At the completion of this unit students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have an awareness of the major theories, concepts and methods used in the study of media texts at Honours</li></ol>

	<p>level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Have been introduced to the basics of advanced research and writing skills.</li> <li>3. Have a basic knowledge of how to conduct themselves while completing Honours.</li> <li>4. Be able to still think critically about the social and cultural place of media and the production of media texts.</li> </ol>
<b>Required Texts:</b>	Readings will be provided in class.
<b>When Taught:</b>	Wednesday, 1:10 – 4:00pm, SB.LifeSciAnnx205
<b>Assessment:</b>	Two research essay(s) totalling 5000-words. Please see below for further details.

## LECTURE/SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Lecturer
Week 14	Introduction / Textual Analysis	
Week 15	Understanding the Vernacular	
Week 16	The Role of Media as a Source of Theory	
Week 17	Theories in Practice	
Week 18	Reading in Theory 1	
Week 19	Reading in Theory 2	
Week 20	Presentations	
	<b>Mon 1 Sep – Fri 5 Sep Mid-Semester Break</b>	
Week 21	Roundtable discussion on the use of theory	
Week 22	Conclusion	
	<b>Study Period: 20-24 October</b>	
	<b>Examination Period: 25 October - 11 November</b>	

# ASSESSMENT

## MAJOR ASSESSMENT

HEJ408  
Vernacular Theory

Two research essays totalling 5,000 words

**Due Date: Oral component: Week 20 in class.**

**Written component: Monday 27 October 2008) by 4 pm.**

**You are to prepare a 5,000 overview of a particular body of theory or theorist. This will take the form of two research essays, one of which will form the basis of an oral presentation in class and go toward your second and final research essay to be submitted on 27 October 2008.**

**The overview should consist of a basic introduction to this area or theorist, covering the major texts in the area, outlining major lines of discussion and paraphrasing the findings of these texts when necessary.**

### **In addition:**

You should be able to map any shifts or changes in the area.

You might wish to link your body of theory/theorist to a particular case study.

You might wish to make links between this theorist/body of theory and other such theories/theorists.

You might wish to make an argument for the utility of this theory or theorist in relation to a case study, or why one particular area or theorist is more compelling, convincing or otherwise relevant than another.

### **Things to remember:**

You should write this essay as an introduction to the area. Think of it as a piece in a general text on "Theory and Theorists".

You will therefore be marked on clarity, comprehension and research.

These assignments are designed to assist you in researching and preparing a theoretical framework for your Honours thesis.

**These assessments are designed to facilitate the acquisition of Learning Outcomes 1-4.**

### **Equipment**

We encourage you, where possible, to purchase your own recording devices. This will allow you to carry out media work in the field to supplement and support theoretical work.

## 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](http://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
- Careers Adviser
- Disability 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](mailto:HelpDesk@utas.edu.au) or 6226 1818, within University 1818)