



School of English, Journalism
& European Languages

Unit Outline

HEJ607
Topic in Journalism
Semester 5 2008 (Spring)
<http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/>

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Consultation Hours:	Tuesday 3pm-4pm Room 544 Thursday 4-5pm Room 544 Email: Nicola.Goc@utas.edu.au
Unit Description:	In this unit students undertake a research project which deals with a topic in journalism, media and communications and draws on journalism, media and communications theory to critically analyse an aspect of the field. Students must have the permission of the unit coordinator to enrol in this unit.
Unit Aims and Objectives:	This unit offers students the opportunity to research a topic in the field of journalism, media and communications, which will enhance their knowledge and understanding of the practical and theoretical issues of the journalism, media and communications disciplines.
Learning Outcomes:	Students through research and or through practical application will gain an understanding of the practical and theoretical issues of the journalism, media and communications disciplines.
Assessment:	8,000 words internal assignments (100%) The assignment(s) will assess all of the Learning Outcomes for this Unit.

ASSESSMENT

Research Topic in Journalism, Media and Communications: Assessment comprises an 8000-word research essay on an agreed topic, or a research essay/exegesis and journalistic writings totalling 8000 words on an agreed topic: 100%

Topic Supervision

In consultation with the unit coordinator, you must decide on a final topic for research by the end of week one of the Spring semester. Once we have found an appropriate supervisor for you, it is your responsibility to arrange meetings to discuss your research program.

Regular consultations with your supervisor will be necessary throughout the semester. The frequency and duration of consultations may vary according to the stage of your research, but fortnightly meetings are the norm over the course of the project. Ask your supervisor about his or her preferred mode of submission of material (ie, electronic or hard copy) and any other practical issues that might facilitate the process. If you need to see your supervisor outside your agreed meeting times, please make an appointment via telephone or email.

Your supervisor will provide guidance on the specific topic and on the process of structuring the work, but it is important to remember that Topic is an independent research project and it is your responsibility to follow your own research paths and to write and structure your work. Your supervisor will provide advice and critiques of your work but the responsibility for researching, writing and editing remains with you.

Don't forget that the Postgraduate Coursework Coordinator is also available for help with any matters not directly related to the research project.

Topic Submission

You must submit your work in hard copy form, with a signed cover sheet attached, to the School office in Hobart by 4pm on the due date. The word length is **8000** words (*excluding* references, but *including* all other material). You should meet this requirement but not exceed it by more than 800 words.

The project due date is regarded as an exam date. Any request for an extension must be submitted in advance of the due date and be accompanied by the same level of documentation as an application for a deferred exam.

Late projects will NOT be accepted so it is crucial that you submit the research project on the due date:

Semester 5 (Spring) 2008 Friday 12th December 4pm

Topic Assessment Criteria

Your work will be assessed according to the following criteria:

For research essays, or journalistic and critical components:

1. Research skills

- Evidence of well-developed information retrieval skills
- Evidence of familiarity with previous and recent work in the field of inquiry
- Ability to identify relevant materials
- Ability to formulate a viable topic
- Ability to identify and apply relevant media research methodology

2. Clarity and strength of argument

- Ability to construct an engaging, persuasive argument
- Capacity to develop and sustain the argument throughout the work
- Ability to present an effective conclusion that draws the work together

3. Contribution to knowledge

- Evidence of independent thinking

- Contribution to knowledge or understanding of a subject as appropriate to postgraduate coursework level
- 4. Structure and writing style**
- Ability to structure your work in a clear and logical way
 - Ability to write lucidly
 - Accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- 5. Presentation and observation of writing conventions**
- Quality of layout and general presentation
 - Correctness of referencing techniques

For journalistic component (if relevant):

- Evidence of ability to gather information from a range of journalistic sources, including interviews, direct observation and documents
- Evidence of knowledge of the broader context of your journalistic work, including previous stories on the topic
- Evidence of an understanding of journalistic practice, including news values, ethical and legal frameworks and specific journalistic genres, such as profiles and news features
- Ability to follow journalistic conventions in the use of description, anecdotes, introductions, conclusions, speech and style
- Presence of creative flair, including style and tone, within the boundaries of journalistic convention

For critical component (if relevant):

An exegesis is a critical explanation or interpretation of your 'creative' component - in this case your journalism. It should elaborate upon and contextualise your work, providing the opportunity for you to reflect upon your practice and that of others. However, it is important to remember that this is a scholarly piece of work, and not a simple 'diary' or anecdotal retelling of how your journalism was produced. In some cases, it will only obliquely refer to your own journalism, focusing instead on a related scholarly question or problem in journalism studies. The content, relationship and weighting between your creative and critical components need to be agreed upon by you and your supervisor.

As such, assessment will be based on points 1-5 above, but also on:

- Evidence of in-depth reflection on journalistic practice
- Evidence of an understanding of the context for your journalistic work

Topic Grades

HD 80-100

These projects will be highly accomplished in all areas and will be characterised by a consistently excellent standard. A result at the higher end of this scale indicates that the student is producing publishable work.

DN 70-79

Work in this range will be very competent, but with some inconsistencies in meeting at least one of the assessment criteria.

CR 60-69

Work in this range will be competent, but will fall significantly short in relation to one or more of the assessment criteria.

PP 50-59

These projects will provide evidence of a serious attempt at postgraduate work, but will have major inadequacies in relation to the assessment criteria.

NN 0-49

There can be a variety of fundamental problems behind a fail assessment. Projects may fail if they demonstrate inadequate research and little critical engagement with the topic or relevant scholarship. The writing may be unintelligible, or the work may be too short to develop the topic. Work in this range fails to meet the minimum standard appropriate for a postgraduate degree.

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 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.

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.

Marking Scale

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

- High Distinction (HD)—80-100%
- Distinction (DN)—70-79%
- Credit (CR)—60-69%
- Pass (PP)—50-59%
- Fail (NN)—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)