

DIPLOMA OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

UNIT OUTLINE

SEMESTER 3 2008

UNIT CODE: ALC102

UNIT NAME: Contemporary Communication:
Making Sense of New Media

Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology

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A note from your Unit Co-ordinator

Welcome to **ALC102 Contemporary Communication: Making Sense of New Media**

This unit concentrates on the study of communication and new media and some of the implications for our society and culture. The new media extend our ability to engage in human communication particularly in today's context where most of our daily activities and routines are carried out with the help of various forms of communication technologies. New media have also changed the concepts of home, office and education, which have resulted in making work less a *place* and more of an *activity that* can be carried out from almost anywhere!

We need to understand these new technologies and cultures in the context of issues such as privacy, convergence, changing uses of media, increased commodification of information, morality, ethics and the 'synthetic or virtual reality' they have given rise to.

This unit outline explains the aims of the unit, describes the assessment requirements, policies, and gives details of the assignments. **You should always read this unit guide first**, and check it frequently when preparing to study or embarking on assignment work.

Contact details

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Unit overview

Unit: ALC102
Unit title: Contemporary Communication: Making Sense of New Media.
Prerequisites: Nil
Teaching Method: Four hours of class contact per week are allocated to this unit.

Unit description

ALC102 Contemporary Communication: Making Sense of New Media. This unit introduces students to the study of contemporary communication in new media. It offers a critical vocabulary with which to analyse the various discourses, cultures and technologies associated with the new media. The unit examines some moral, legal and ethical implications of the new media and links them with contemporary political, social and cultural concerns such as new literacy, power relations, gender, race, ethnicity and multiculturalism.

Unit overview

Learning Objectives

Please note that this unit is **not** designed to provide you with hands-on experiences with the uses and applications of new media and communication technologies but to discuss a range of communication aspects and the various implications of new media to society.

Skills developed and assessed in this Unit

1. Understanding and critically analysing the various aspects of mediated communication in terms of the global village, the information age, the post-industrial society and theories such as technological determinism, diffusion of innovations, technology adoption, and technology and power.
2. Understanding and critically analysing the various theories developed by a variety of scholars about new media such as TV, the Information superhighway and cyberspace and discussing them from the cultural and critical studies perspectives.
3. Critical analysis of the impact of new media in the home, at work and in education. Analysing and understanding the moral, legal and ethical implications of communication technologies and

how different groups in society in terms of age, class, gender, geography, disability and culture are affected-both positively and negatively, by the above mentioned new media.

4. Understanding and critically analysing contemporary global and Australian issues related to new media in terms of their regulation and policy making.
5. Understanding and critically analysing the various discourses of new media and how the framing of these discourses by various groups in society affect the policy making, adoption, and acceptance of new media in global, regional, national and local contexts.
6. Understanding how such discourses result in other frames and issues being excluded from the discussions on new media and how and why certain discourses become privileged at a given time in society.
7. Developing your reading and writing skills in addition to your critical thinking skills, which relate to being open to new information and the willingness to seek evidence that may refute one's own beliefs and opinions.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

- written and oral communication
- information collection and dissemination
- application of theoretical knowledge to practice within a professional setting

Skills

- lateral thinking
- critical analysis and evaluation
- working effectively both as an individual and in teams
- critical analysis, problem solving and creative thinking

Attitude

- independent lifelong learning
- awareness of ethics, social responsibility and cultural diversity
- appreciation of international perspectives in a global environment

Prescribed texts

You are required to acquire the following text:

Lister, M, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, Kieran Kelly (2005) ***New Media: A Critical Introduction***, Routledge, New York and London.

Referred to as the TEXT hereafter,

You are expected to read the chapters and /or pages assigned for each week from the textbook before each lecture and to read it again before the tutorial. You should also ensure detailed referencing to the text in all your assignments and to include in those assignments references of other scholarly work you have found related to your work.

The set text must be used to demonstrate your understanding of concepts / theories covered in this unit.

Other resources

Suggested Advanced Readings

After each chapter in the textbook a range of other readings is given. You should consult these lists and use whatever additional references you can for both your wider reading and most especially for each of the three assignments.

Journals (optional reading)

You should note that the following important journals carry articles relevant to the topics covered in this unit. When you visit the library, just browse through an issue or two of these journals to get some idea about the type of research that are carried out in our area of study.

Australian Journal of Communication
Cultural Studies
Continuum
Critical Studies in Media Communication (Formerly Critical Studies in Mass Communication)
Information, Communication & Society
Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media
Journal of Communication
Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly (formerly Journalism Quarterly)
Journalism Studies
Mass Communication & Society
Media, Culture and Society
New Media & Society
The Journal of International Communication
Wired (also available on the Internet) www.wired.com
Media International Australia-Culture and Policy

Newspapers, Magazines and Trade Journals (strongly suggested)

As new media and technologies develop very fast, and the academic literature such as journals and books find it very hard to keep up with them, the best way to stay abreast with the new developments in communication technologies and the issues related to them is to regularly read the popular and trade publications on the subject. Most newspapers have weekly sections devoted to communications, the mass media / entertainment, computers and information technology (IT), which are very informative and provide easy and interesting reading.

Any TV documentaries, news items and current affairs programming that deal with new communication technologies and your choice of any reality TV shows.

If you have difficulties of any kind, or need any assistance with learning the concepts and / or preparing for your assignments, do not hesitate to contact your lecturer / tutor.

Some useful websites

The Australian Bureau of Statistics <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

The American Psychological Association's website provides information on how to reference email communication, citing websites, articles and abstracts from electronic databases, web citations and quotations in text. <http://www.apa.org/journals/webref.htm>

Assessment

Assignment 1 – Essay Length: 1000 words	25%
Assignment 2 – Essay Length: 1000 words	25%
Assignment 3 – Essay Length: 2000 words	50%

Students must complete all items of assessment in this unit. If they do not complete every piece they will fail the unit.

Assessment reviews / appeals

Students may appeal against the mark/grade awarded in any component of their assessment. The appeal must relate to the assessment procedures and not simply dissatisfaction with the final grade given. Appeals will be considered by the unit co-ordinator and a recommendation made to the MIBT Academic Progress Committee. Appeals are made by completing a Review of Assessment Application.

Review of Assessment

To have an assessment in a unit reviewed students must complete the *Review of Assessment Application* available from the myMIBT Student Portal. **The form must be lodged at MIBT Reception by 5.00 pm on the Monday after the publication of results.** A \$50 fee is payable before the application will be processed. The fee will be refunded only if a change to the assessment is made in the student's favour.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration may be provided when a student completes a piece of assessment (for example: a class test, assignment or an examination) and the student believes there have been adverse circumstances affecting their performance.

Applications for Special Consideration will be accepted on medical, compassionate, and/or trauma grounds. Supporting evidence, clearly stating specific reason, must be given with the application. Reasons such as headaches, colds or returning home, will not be accepted as grounds for Special Consideration.

Students are required to complete a *Special Consideration Application* available from the myMIBT Student Portal and submit to MIBT Reception, together with supporting documentation before the assessment is due, or within 2 working days of completing the assessment.

Academic misconduct

Plagiarism and collusion are academic offences. It is dishonest and unethical to use other people's work (including that of fellow students and from the Internet) and not acknowledge that use. This practice, called plagiarism, is unacceptable. Plagiarism and collusion are forms of cheating and severe penalties are associated with them. If a student is caught plagiarising they may be failed in that piece of assessment.

- **Plagiarism** occurs when a student passes off as their own another student's work, or copies without acknowledgement of its authorship, the work of any other person.
- **Collusion** occurs when a student obtains the agreement of another person for a fraudulent purpose with the intent of obtaining an advantage in submitting an assignment or other work.

Whenever you refer to another person's research or ideas (whether by directly quoting or by paraphrasing them) you **MUST** acknowledge the source. Also, copying paragraphs from the Internet and presenting them as your own work is plagiarism. If you download and copy paragraphs from the Internet you must identify the source.

Unauthorised collaboration

Unauthorised collaboration is a form of collusion. It involves working with others with the intention of deceiving your markers about who actually completed the work. If you have collaborated with others in preparing an individual assessment item, you must disclose this to your lecturer. Assignments will sometimes be set as group work, but even in these cases generally you will still have to write up and submit your own report. If you have any doubt as to what constitutes authorised or unauthorised collaboration, consult with your lecturer.

Things you should never do

There are some activities that are never acceptable in the preparation of assignments at the tertiary level. Students who engage in any of the following activities create some doubt in the mind of the reader that the student's work is original. Many of these activities leave the student open to charges of plagiarism.

Students should never:

- Submit any assignment without providing a list of references used.
- Copy one or more sentences from a reference source (book, journal, web page etc.) without formatting the material as a quotation.
- Use data in the form of numbers, tables, graphs, diagrams or other images without citing the source of the material.
- Use program source code, even if it is freely available in the public domain, without citing the source of the code.
- Take material from reference material and paraphrase it (write in your own words) without citing the source of the material.
- Use an idea made by another person without citing the source of the idea.

References / acknowledgement of authorship (including electronic resources).

You MUST acknowledge the sources that you have drawn on. This is a necessary courtesy to the original authors, and also allows the readers of your work to follow up any points you have raised.

If you directly copy another writer's phrase, sentence or paragraph, then you should use quotation marks and note the source of the quote. If you use another writer's ideas, but not his or her exact words, you should again note the source. There are a number of ways by which you can refer to other people's work.

For the purpose of this unit, please follow the **Harvard system of referencing**. The **reference list** at the end of the essay, printed on a new page, should include full citations of all sources consulted for the essay. This referencing method, like all methods, involves noting the author's name, the title of the article and journal, or book, the year of publication, the journal's volume number, the book publisher's name and location, and the relevant page numbers. **All these sources should appear in-text / in the body of the essay as author, date, page** (e.g. Lister *et al*, 2005, p 212) wherever a reference to someone's work is made, instead of footnotes.

Electronic resources

Note that you are free to obtain information from any source, including the Internet, provided you acknowledge all your sources within the text as well as in the reference list. Acceptable online or web site information has an author, a copyright mark, and the latest update.

Details of the MIBT Referencing Guide are available on the myMIBT Student Portal under myServices / Forms.

The Harvard method will be discussed in tutorials and can also be accessed on the Deakin Library website at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/citation.html>

If you are ever in doubt about how to properly cite a reference, consult your lecturer.

Assignment submission

Assignments must be submitted by the due date. Students should complete the *Assignment Cover Sheet* (obtainable from the myMIBT Student Portal), attach it to their assignment and then place the completed assignment in their lecturer's locker located on Level 4 Building 1a. (Assignments will not be accepted at MIBT Reception). **ALC102 Assignments are to be submitted in class**

Students must keep a copy of each assignment submitted and must be able to produce the copy in the unlikely event that the original assignment is misplaced. Students must maintain 'backup' copies of all their assignment work. Electronic loss of data is common, but is **NOT** a satisfactory excuse for an extension of a submission date.

Late submission of assignments

Extension for medical reasons

If your work is late for medical reasons you will not need to seek the prior approval of your lecturer. However, you must attach a Doctor's certificate to your assignment with a note that the work is late for medical reasons. Please note that, in these circumstances, the medical certificate must cover the **entire** period of the extension, from the time the assignment was due until the time it is submitted.

Penalties for late submissions

Assignments received late and without prior approval will be penalised. A penalty of 5% of the available marks will be deducted for every day the assignment is late. Assignments received after a week, and without an approved extension, will not be marked.

Grading system

All students enrolled in any unit will be graded according to MIBT's standard grading system as follows:

GRADE	DESCRIPTION	PERCENTAGE
HD	High Distinction	80 - 100
D	Distinction	70 - 79
CR	Credit	60 - 69
P	Pass	50 - 59
N	Fail	0 - 49
DE	Deferred Examination	
EX	Exemption Granted	
RI	Results Not Finalised	
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning	
RW	Results Withheld	
W	Withdrawn	
WN	Withdrawn Fail	
XN	Enrolled Assessment Incomplete	

Changes to enrolment

- Enrolment changes can be made through the myMIBT student portal until 5.00 pm on the second Tuesday of the semester. When the enrolment portal closes changes can be made manually until the end of the second week of semester (manual changes to timetables will incur a \$50.00 fee).
- A unit can be dropped until the end of the fourth week (without penalty) and fees paid for the dropped unit will be credited to the next semester. After week four if a unit is dropped fees for that unit will be forfeited.
- Students who drop a unit after Week 4 will have 'W' (Withdrawn) recorded as their result in the unit.
- A unit dropped after Week 8 will be recorded as 'WN' (Withdrawn – Fail).
- A unit cannot be dropped in the final two teaching weeks of a semester.

Class Attendance

Attendance is an important element of a student's success in their studies and it is strongly recommended that attendance is maintained in all classes. All work covered in class is examinable.

Attendance will be recorded in all sessions and **international** students need to be aware that if they fail to meet satisfactory attendance requirements, as set out by DIAC, they may be breaching their visa requirements.

Semester timetable

Week	Topic	Assigned Readings	Notes
1	Introduction		
2	Topic New Media and New Technologies	Text: Chapter 1. (1.1 – 1.4.5)) Pages 9 - 59	
3	Topic New Media and New Technologies	Text: Chapter 1. (1.5 – 1.6.5) Pages 59 – 92	
4	Topic New media and Visual Cultures	Text: Chapter 2. (2.1 – 2.5) Pages 97 – 107	
5	Topic New Media and Visual Cultures	Text: Chapter 2. (2.6 – 2.6.7) Pages 107 – 124	Assignment 1 (essay)
6	Topic New Media and Visual Cultures	Text: Chapter 2. (2.7 – 2.8.5) Pages 125 – 154	
7	Topic: Networks, users and economics	Text: Chapter 3. (3.0 – 3.17) Pages 164 -192	
8	Topic: Networks, users and economics	Text: Chapter 3. (3.18 – 3.27) Pages 195 -215	
9	Topic: New Media and Everyday Life	Text: Chapter 4. (4.1 – 4.2.6) Pages 219 - 247	Assignment 2 (essay)
	Saturday 20 December – Sunday 4 January 2009	Christmas Break	
10	Topic: New Media and Everyday Life	Text: Chapter 4. (4.3 – 4.4.5) Pages 247 - 279	
11	Topic; Cyberculture: technology, Nature and Culture	Text: Chapter 5. (5 – 5.2.4) Pages 287 – 310	
12	Topic: Cyberculture: technology, Nature and Culture	Text: Chapter 5. (5.3 – 5.4.5) Pages 314 - 375	Assignment 3 (essay)
13	Examination week	No examination for this unit	

Semester 3 Census Date: Friday 14 November 2008

Easter Break: Classes finish on Friday 19 December 2008 and
resume on Monday 5 January 2009

Results released on portal: Monday 9 February 2009

Assessment details

How the unit's assessments develop the skills nominally being assessed:

1. The first assignment, which is a 1000 word essay requires you to have a good understanding of New Media, New Technologies and how it affects the culture around us.
2. The second assignment, which is a 1500 word essay, invites you to critically analyse issues related to Network users and economics as discussed in the textbook.
3. The third assignment, which is a 2000 word essay requires you to write a critical essay discussing New Media and Everyday life and cyber culture.

All three essays will test your skills in reading and writing as well as in critical thinking as you are expected to relate your arguments to concepts and theories covered by the unit's assigned and additional readings. You are expected to critically analyse all issues related to new communication technologies objectively and are encouraged to question any such concepts and theories you do not agree with, based on your own insights, factual evidence, personal observations, knowledge and experiences. You are also expected to follow the general rules in scholarly essay writing in terms of style, grammar, punctuation, and referencing.

Assignment preparation

The work you submit has to be the result of your own research, thinking and analysis. You will, of course, usually have a range of assigned and other readings, books, journal articles etc. on which to draw. Use of this existing material is encouraged. However, no book or article will have been written to answer the specific question set for your assignment. Thus, lengthy quotations from one source are not likely to be great benefit to you, and should be avoided

References / acknowledgement of authorship (including electronic resources) – Please refer to *Academic misconduct* pages 5 & 6 of this Unit Outline for details.

Assignment Presentation Guidelines

These guidelines are to be followed when presenting any written submission for this unit.

- Present the assignments as word-processed documents, **double-spaced**, printed on A4 paper and **single sided**
- Use Arial or Times Roman **12 point** for the body of the text.
- Set the top, bottom, left and right margins to be 25 mm wide to allow for comment.
- Include a signed MIBT cover sheet on each assignment giving your full name, student number, Unit code and assignment name.
- Include a **header** on each page that includes your name, student number and unit code.
- Include a **footer** on each page that includes the assignment name, page numbers and submission date.
- Staple the finished document in the top left-hand corner and place in your lecturer's locker as instructed. You may use a plastic A4 pocket / sleeve for submission; **please do not use folders.**

Assignment submission details:

- **Follow the above written presentation guidelines**
 - **Attach a signed official MIBT Cover Sheet to your essay.**
 - Hand in a **printed copy** of the assignment. All ideas, books, journals and web site information to be fully referenced using the **Harvard System or Harvard Style of referencing** (footnoting or Oxford system is **not** acceptable)
 - Provide a reference list at the end of the essay (not included in word count); include all page numbers. These references have to be cited in the body of the essay whenever applicable; eg. (Lister *et al*, 2005 p 7) or according to Lister *et al* (2005, p 7)
 - **For any extra reading you must include copies of the pages of information obtained (plus the copyright page) from text book/s, journals and websites.**
-

Details of each Assessment Task

Assignment 1:	Introductory Essay
Due Date:	Week 5 – in class
Length:	1,000 words
Weight:	25%
<p>Questions for Assignment One Choose ONE of the following:</p> <p>Using examples from at least 3 different types of medium, describe the main characteristics of new media and how it differs from old media.</p> <p><i>'Medium' include things such as technological devices (for example, iPods), new ways delivering services (for example e-bay) and new forms of socializing (for example, Facebook). You might also think of other types of new media.</i></p> <p>You should refer closely to pp 9- 92 in the textbook, and include other related scholarly references.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Who was dissatisfied with old media? What social forces have worked to phase out old media and invent and introduce new media?</p> <p>Present an argument about how and why new media determine or are determining the culture around us by using at least three examples.</p> <p>You should refer closely to pp 9-92 in the textbook, and include other related scholarly references.</p>	
MARKING CRITERIA	
What the Assessor will be looking for when marking this assignment:	
The assessor will be looking for the ability of students to understand the main characteristics of new and old media.	
Students will need to demonstrate awareness of the discipline of communication at cultural studies by including additional scholarly references	
Students must be able to use terminologies stated in the textbook to show their understanding of the topics and readings covered in the unit so far.	
Students must also show evidence of critical analysis of the issues raised in the readings for this assignment as well as an effective approach to problem solving relative to the question.	
The Assessor would expect all references to be clearly marked and that the students are aware of the penalties for plagiarism.	
Students must be able to present their essay in an organised structure that is presentable and easy to read.	

Assignment 2: Intermediate Essay	
Due Date: Week 9 - in class	
Length: 1,000 words	
Weight: 25%	
Questions for Assignment Two	
Choose ONE of the following:	
Is what you see, what you get?	
Using at least 4 examples NOT mentioned in the textbook, analyse how the building of immersive virtual environments, virtual reality (VR) and digital technologies in film and cinema production have contributed to the changes that have taken place in our understanding of 'visual culture'.	
You should refer closely to pp 97-154 in the textbook, and include other relevant scholarly references.	
Or	
Describe the development of the internet as a medium of communication and its potential for the development of interactive new media. Show using four web based examples (that are NOT mentioned in the book) how this communication has been influenced by the introduction of commercial interests and/or changing social norms.	
You should refer closely to pp 164-215 in the textbook, and include other relevant scholarly references.	
MARKING CRITERIA	
What the Assessor will be looking for when marking this assignment:	
The assessor will be looking for the ability of students to understand the main characteristics of immersive virtual environments, virtual reality (VR) and digital technologies	
Students will need to demonstrate awareness of the discipline of communication at cultural studies by including additional scholarly references	
Students must be able to use terminologies stated in the textbook to show their understanding of the topics and readings covered in the unit so far.	
Students must also show evidence of critical analysis of the issues raised in the readings for this assignment as well as an effective approach to problem solving relative to the question.	
The Assessor would expect all references to be clearly marked and that the students are aware of the penalties for plagiarism.	
Students must be able to present their essay in an organised structure that is presentable and easy to read.	

Assignment 3: Advanced Essay	
Due Date:	Week 12 - in class
Length:	2,000 words
Weight:	50%
Questions for Assignment Three	
Choose ONE of the following:	
Write an essay, with at least four examples drawn from different NEW MEDIA texts, on what new media means in everyday practices and in what ways are new media absorbed into the dynamics of everyday life? To what extent has the popular reception and adoption of new media been shaped by the texts, products and practices we all experience through commercialized popular culture?	
You should refer closely to pp 219-279 in the textbook, and include other relevant scholarly references.	
or	
Write an essay, with at least four examples, on what constitutes cyber culture and how it creates a new range of imaginative fictions 'so that they may seem like realistic descriptions of our bewildering everyday lives.' (Lister, 2003:287). This essay should not simply describe cyber culture; you need to also hypothesise and argue about the social/communication consequences of cyber culture.	
You should refer closely to pp 287-375 in the textbook, and include other relevant scholarly references.	
MARKING CRITERIA	
What the Assessor will be looking for when marking this assignment:	
The assessor will be looking for the ability of students to understand the main characteristics of new and old media.	
Students will need to demonstrate awareness of the discipline of communication at cultural studies by including additional scholarly references	
Students must be able to use terminologies stated in the textbook to show their understanding of the topics and readings covered in the unit so far.	
Students must also show evidence of critical analysis of the issues raised in the readings for this assignment as well as an effective approach to problem solving relative to the question.	
The Assessor would expect all references to be clearly marked and that the students are aware of the penalties for plagiarism.	
Students must be able to present their essay in an organised structure that is presentable and easy to read.	

The following assessment criteria has been included to illustrate what examiners look for when assessing written work, and in particular the sorts of factors or qualities which differentiate the various grades. Please examine the material carefully – it should serve as a valuable guide to essay writing.

Work assessed at the respective levels typically shows some or all of the features outlined in each case.

	Pass (50% to 59%)	Credit (60% to 69%)	Distinction (70% to 79%)	High Distinction (80% to 100%)
Fulfilment of overall task intent	Broadly completed but some parts are superficially treated, misunderstood or nearly overlooked	All parts dealt with satisfactorily. Some isolated examples of excellence.	Some excellent sections. Material presented is strongly linked to task; high comprehension of task.	Overall excellence; exceeds or refines the basic task requirements
Use of information (including evidence and examples)	Generally accurate and appropriate, some incomplete, unsupported or inconsistent information. Require greater effort at substantiation and wider research. Some sources or information acknowledged	Well researched with good use of material. Most information is appropriate, consistent and supportive of the conclusions drawn. Sources of information acknowledged.	Conclusions are fully supported by appropriate and well-organised data. May be some minor omissions. Sources fully referenced.	Evidence of critical or thoughtful sorting and selection of ideas. Comprehensive and accurate. Conclusions fully supported by the evidence.
Application of theories and/or concepts dealt with in the topic or unit	Generally very limited application, some misunderstanding or quite superficial treatment	Relevant concepts etc. applied in a generally appropriate and thoughtful way. No major misunderstandings; logical connections between ideas, no serious omissions.	Critical or evaluative thinking about how concepts/theories are applied; little inaccuracy or misunderstanding.	Creative or reflective processing of theories; understanding of how and why they are used; critical and evaluative thinking.
Structure and organisation	Well enough structured to make sense; could be better organised and more tightly focused on the topic. Instances of irrelevance or confusion.	Sequence and structure are logical and easy to follow. Introduction and concluding sections used effectively.	Ideas are sequenced in a logically satisfying way; connections between different themes or sections are well made.	Structure and sequence are used effectively to help integrate ideas or support logical argument. Soundly structured throughout.
Language use	Clear enough to be understood; some confused or unclear expression. Spelling, punctuation & grammar generally satisfactory but likely to need attention.	Language is generally sound and clear throughout,	Language use demonstrates precision and expressiveness as well as clarity.	Powerful, confident and precise use of language; mastery of style and tone.