School of Humanities and Communication Arts

Subject Outline

COMM7015 Key Concepts in Communication and Media Research

Spring 2024

Western Sydney University acknowledges the peoples of the Darug, Dharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations. We also acknowledge that the teaching and learning currently delivered across our campuses is a continuance of the teaching and learning that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Subject Details

Subject Code:	COMM7015
Subject Name:	Key Concepts in Communication and Media Research
Credit Points:	10
Subject Level:	7
Assumed Knowledge:	Not Applicable

Note: Students with any problems, concerns or doubts should discuss those with the Subject Coordinator as early as they can.

Subject Coordinator

Name: Associate Professor Tanya Notley

Email: t.notley@westernsydney.edu.au

Consultation Arrangement:

Tues 3-5, Parramatta South or online

Teaching Team

Name: Professor Hart Cohen

Email: h.cohen@westernsydney.edu.au

Liaison Librarian

Name: Christine Merlino

Phone: 02 9685 9893

Location: Parramatta South Library

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Contents

1 About Key Concepts in Communication and Media Research

1.1 An Introduction to this Subject

Mobile and networked media technologies have massively transformed how we work, learn, interact and play. Given this transformation, media and communication is now a vital area of research in every field and discipline. In this subject, you will be introduced to classic and contemporary media and communication technologies, texts and scholars as you explore historical and still unfolding developments and events. In doing so, you will consider how changes to media technologies, industries and practices impact upon - and are influenced by -people, cultures and economies. As you expand your knowledge of existing scholarship, you will learn how to identify and integrate the concepts, theories, methods and ethical frameworks that are most appropriate for your own thesis project.

1.2 What is Expected of You

Study Load

A student is expected to study an hour per credit point a week. For example a 10 credit point subject would require 10 hours of study per week. This time includes the time spent within classes during lectures, tutorials or practicals.

Note for Summer Terms: As Summer subjects deliver the same content and classes over a shorter period of time, the subjects are run in a more intensive mode. Regardless of the delivery mode, the study hours for each subject in Summer will be around 30 hours.

Attendance

It is strongly recommended that students attend all scheduled learning activities to support their learning.

Approach to Learning

The main learning activities in this subject are:

- Online lectures and tutorials;

- Robust VUWS site with lectures, readings, summaries;

- Uploaded readings access;

- In-class activities to promote experiential learning and problem-based pedagogy;

- Specific discussion topics to highlight syllabus topics;

- Student oral presentations based on research topic interests;

- Please check **vUWS** regularly for announcements and updates.

- Students need to be aware of the issues and fine details of weekly content and assessment criteria, as they arise week-by-week.

- Students also informally learn from each other through social interaction and class group activities.

Online Learning Requirements

Subject materials will be made available on the subject's vUWS (E-Learning) site (https://vuws.westernsydney.edu.au/). You are expected to consult vUWS at least twice a week, as all subject announcements will be made via vUWS. Teaching and learning materials will be regularly updated and posted online by the teaching team.

Special Requirements

Essential Equipment:
Not Applicable
 Legislative Pre-Requisites:
Not Applicable

1.3   Changes to Subject as a Result of Past Student Feedback

The University values student feedback in order to improve the quality of its educational programs. The feedback provided helps us improve teaching methods and subjects of study. The survey subjects results inform subject content and design, Subject Outlines, teaching methods, assessment processes and teaching materials.

You are welcome to provide feedback that is related to the teaching of this subject. At the end of the semester you will be given the opportunity to complete a Student Feedback on Subject questionnaire to assess the subject. If requested by your subject coordinator, you may also have the opportunity to complete a Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) questionnaire to provide feedback for individual teaching staff.

As a result of student feedback, the following changes and improvements to this Subject have recently been made:

- This is the third time this program has been offered and no changes have been suggested. Students have noted the value of guest lectures and these will continue in 2024.

2   Learning and Teaching Activities

Teaching Weeks	Topic	Assessment Due
Week 1 22-07-2024	**Introduction to the subject: Getting to know one another** Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	
Week 2 29-07-2024	**Media Inclusion and Media Literacy** (Tanya Notley) Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	
Week 3 05-08-2024	**GUEST LECTURE: TBC** Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	
Week 4 12-08-2024	**GUEST LECTURE: Professor Gerard Goggin, Media and Mobility** Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	- Summary
Week 5 19-08-2024	**GUEST LECTURE: Professor Gerard Goggin, Disability and Technologies** Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	
Week 6 26-08-2024	**GUEST LECTURE: Dr Aimee Hourigan, Co-design and Decolonising Research Methods** Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	- Summary
Week 7 02-09-2024	**Studying Misinformation (Tanya Notley)** In class pitch presentations Class Tutor: Tanya Notley	- Pitch Presentation
Week 8 09-09-2024	**Semester break**	

Teaching Weeks	Topic	Assessment Due
Week 9 16-09-2024	**Communication and Media Theory I: Innis, McLuhan and Mediation** Class Tutor: Hart Cohen	
Week 10 23-09-2024	**Communication and Media Theory II: Media Archaeology and Elemental Media** Class Tutor: Hart Cohen	- Summary
Week 11 30-09-2024	**Social Media 1: The idea of "Social" in Social Media (Hart Cohen)** Class Tutor: Hart Cohen	
Week 12 07-10-2024	**Social Media 2: Internet media: Digitisation, Mediation, Co-creation** Class Tutor: Hart Cohen	
Week 13 14-10-2024	**Revision and focus on essay-writing** Class Tutor: Hart Cohen	
Week 14 21-10-2024		- Research Paper
Week 15 28-10-2024		
Week 16 04-11-2024		
Week 17 11-11-2024		
Week 18 18-11-2024		

The above timetable should be used as a guide only, as it is subject to change. Students will be advised of any changes as they become known on the Subject's vUWS site.

3 Assessment Information

3.1 Subject Learning Outcomes

	Outcome
1	Identify and discuss a broad range of communication and media technologies, industries, cultures and practices and contextualise these within the relevant scholarship;
2	Articulate key concepts, approaches and methods used within the field of media and communication research;
3	Demonstrate an awareness of contemporary communication challenges, debates and developments;
4	Describe current intellectual trends relevant to leading scholars in your field of research;
5	Apply advanced skills in the execution of research grounded in the identification of literature relevant to your thesis study.

3.2 Assessment Summary

The assessment items in this subject are designed to enable you to demonstrate that you have achieved the subject learning outcomes. Completion and submission of all assessment items which have been designated as mandatory or compulsory is essential to receive a passing grade.

To pass this subject you must:

- Complete all assignments within due dates (see Activities page).
- Complete all assignments at the acceptable standard of academic English for Masters.

NOTE: The use of AI that suggests or completes assessment responses is NOT permitted in assessments in this subject. If AI* is detected in a student's assessment, you will be subject to sanctions under the Student Misconduct Rule. Use of generative AI tools may be detected.

*Examples of AI generative tools (but not limited to): ChatGPT, Word Tune, Grammarly, Quilbot, translation devices, snapGPchat, Jasper, AI Art generator or any other software, aps or programs that use AI.

Item	Weight	Due Date	SLOs Assessed	Mandatory	Threshold
Summary	25%	One concept submission is due end of Week 4, 6 and 10	1, 2, 4	Yes	No
Pitch Presentation	25%	Week 7	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes	No
Research Paper	50%	End of Week 14	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Yes	No

Feedback on Assessment

Feedback is an important part of the learning process that can improve your progress towards achieving the learning outcomes. Feedback is any written or spoken response made in relation to academic work such as an assessment task, a performance or product. It can be given to you by a teacher, an external assessor or student peer, and may be given individually or to a group of students. As a Western Sydney University student, it is your responsibility to seek out and act on feedback that is provided to you as a resource to further your learning.

Academic Integrity and Student Misconduct Rule

Western cares about your success as a student and in your future career. Studying with academic integrity safeguards your professional reputation and your degree. All Western students must:

- be familiar with the policies listed below;
- apply principles of academic integrity;
- act honestly and ethically in producing all academic work and assessment tasks; and
- submit work that is their own and acknowledge any sources used in their work.

Each time you submit an assessment, you will declare that you have completed it individually, unless it is a group assignment. In the case of a group assignment, each group member should be ready to document their individual contribution if needed.

The Student Misconduct Rule applies to all students of Western Sydney University including Western Sydney University programs taught by other education providers. You must not engage in academic, research or general misconduct as defined in the Rule or you may be subject to sanctions. The University considers submitting falsified documentation in support of requests to redo, resit or extend submissions, including sitting of deferred examinations, as instances of general misconduct.

More information is available in the Academic Integrity Guidelines. It is your responsibility to apply these principles to all work you submit to the University.

Disruption to Studies and Requests for Extensions

Western recognises that there may be times when things outside of your control impact your ability to complete your studies.

You can complete the "Request an extension or apply for a Disruption to Studies Provision" to request that you are:

- granted an extension,
- excused from a compulsory teaching activity,
- provided an alternate assessment such as a supplementary, or
- awarded another Disruption to Studies Provision.

Before you fill in the form, you should:

- Compile any documentary evidence that you have which demonstrates that you have been impacted by an event outside of your control.
- The Supporting Documentation website outlines the type of documents that you can submit to substantiate any impact.

Please note that if you don't have documents, you should still submit the form but you may be asked for documentation at a later stage.

Need help?

If you are having difficulties with understanding or completing an assessment task, contact your Subject Coordinator as soon as possible. Western also has a range of academic support services, including:

- **Library Study Smart**: book a one-to-one Zoom consultation with a literacy expert. You can discuss how to develop your assignment writing and study skills or seek assistance to understand referencing and citation requirements. Check the Library Study Smart website for how-to study guides and tools.

- **Studiosity**: Upload your assignment draft to Studiosity within vUWS to receive writing feedback within 24 hours.
- Online workshops, programs and resources: From maths and stats help to academic literacy and peer support programs, the University has a range of resources to assist.

Please also remember that there is a range of wellbeing support available - from counselling and disability services to welfare.

3.2.1 Summary

Weight:	25%
Type of Collaboration:	Individual
Due:	One concept submission is due end of Week 4, 6 and 10
Submission:	online/Turnitin on VUWS
Format:	A written work with citations where relevant.
Length:	3 x 500 words
Use of Artificial Intelligence:	If you'd like to experiment with AI to re-write your own text for a general purpose audience or to edit your text you can do so. If you do, you must add a seperate statement on how you used AI and how/whether this was useful.

Instructions:

For this first assessment you need to define and describe three key concepts from the academic field of media and communication. Your writing should be pitched as though it is written for an encyclopedia and for a general purpose audience (write for the reading comprehension of a 14 year old. The point of these summaries is to decode the jargon-laden and technically-specific language of communication and media studies for people who are new to the concepts, including undergraduate students. This kind of decoding is critical for scholars who want to engage with publics, industry and policymakers. You can choose key concepts from your set readings in the subject, draw on the subject's additional recommended readings or use your own sources and knowledge to explain your selected key concepts. Each summary should:

- Define what the concept is in plain language;
- Describe the concept's use by communication scholars and academics. If possible, explain when it was first used and for what purpose;
- Refer to at least two authors who have used or use the concept (or criticise it), and explain the contexts in which the concept has been used. For example, perhaps scholars have used the concept to examine social media platforms, media politics or civic participation; and
- Writing must be a high standard of academic English for Masters level. Use citation in a consistent style (APA recommended).

Criteria:

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Unsatisfactory
Definition of the concept (5)	Concept is highly relevant, very clearly defined	Concept relevant, succinctly defined	Concept somewhat relevant, definition well-defined	Concept somewhat relevant, adequately defined	Concept not relevant, not adequately defined
Explanation of context(10)	Multiple authors cited (where relevant) and the context for the use of the concept is very clearly explained	Multiple authors cited (where relevant) and their use of the concept quite clearly explained	Multiple authors cited (where relevant) and their use of the concept succinctly explained	Multiple authors cited (where relevant) but their use of the concept only adequately explained	Multiple authors note cited (where it was relevant) and/or their use of the concept not adequately explained
Writing quality(10)	Writing is of a high standard - without errors; excellent academic literacy	Written Material is well-written - minor errors; high academic literacy.	Writing skills are mostly adequate with a few errors; good academic literacy	Writing skills are inadequate with many errors; shows only basic academic literacy.	Weak writing skills and insufficient academic literacy;

3.2.2 Pitch Presentation

Weight:	25%
Type of Collaboration:	Individual
Due:	Week 7
Submission:	No more than 10 slides
Format:	5-10 minute in-class presentation (50%) and submission of the presentation slides with the narration notes/script included (50%)
Length:	5-10 minute presentation including submission of the presentation slides with the narration notes/script included
Use of Artificial Intelligence:	You are welcome to use AI for visuals/images only for your presentation. The source of any images should be shown on slides.

Instructions:

This assessment will help you prepare for your essay (Assessment 3). You will decide on a topic that is relevant to your intended thesis study. This will not be the same as your thesis study, but rather a related area of study. For example, your thesis study may examine 'Public Diplomacy and Social Media Listening: Examining The Practices Of the Australian Federal Government.' For your essay, you may therefore choose to look at 'The use of social media in Public Diplomacy' or 'The history of Public Diplomacy' or 'Key events that have defined Australian Public Diplomacy since 2000'. In this assessment you will pitch your idea to the class, explaining how it relates to and will inform your thesis study. Your presentation should:

1. Introduce your thesis problem and specific essay topic for this subject;

2. Explain why you are drawn to this topic and why it matters;

3. Introduce your proposed essay and explain how it will inform your thesis;

4. Explain key challenges you have identified relating to your research process and explain your next steps.

Marking Criteria:

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Unsatisfactory
Topic of your thesis interest and essay is clearly introduced	Excellent clarity in the introduction of your thesis problem and essay topic	Very high clarity in the introduction of your thesis problem and essay topic	Good clarity in the introduction of your thesis problem and essay topic	Clarity in only one of either the introduction of your thesis problem or essay topic	Absence of any clarity in the introduction of your thesis problem and essay topic
Compelling and articulate rationale for selection of essay topic	Rationale for topic is highly compelling and articulate	Rationale for topic is very compelling and articulate	Rationale for topic is compelling but not that articulate	Rationale for topic is basic in being compelling and not that articulate	Rationale for topic is neither compelling nor articulate
Scholarly and effective communication of essay topic and clear explanation of connection to thesis	Comprehensive scholarly and highly effective communication of essay topic and clear explanation of connection to thesis	Comprehensive scholarly and very effective communication of essay topic and clear explanation of connection to thesis	Somewhat scholarly and effective communication of essay topic and adequate explanation of connection to thesis	Basic scholarly and effective communication of essay topic and basic explanation of connection to thesis	No scholarly or effective communication of essay topic and a lack of an explanation of connection to thesis
Articulation of research challenges and indication of strategy for their resolution.	Highly articulate explanation of research challenges and succinct strategy for next steps.	Strong articulate explanation of research challenges and clear strategy for next steps.	Articulate explanation of research challenges and strategy for next steps.	Basic articulation research challenges and strategy for next steps.	Inadequate explanation of research challenges or next steps.

3.2.3 Research Paper

Weight:	50%
Type of Collaboration:	Individual
Due:	End of Week 14
Submission:	Submit on Turninin online via the vUWS site
Format:	Research paper in essay format (2,000 - 2,500 words)
Length:	2,000 - 2,500 words
Use of Artificial Intelligence:	AI can not be used to write this essay. If you'd like to experiment with AI to edit your own text you can do so. If you do, you must add a seperate statement on how you used AI and how/whether this was useful and you must provide the original text.

Instructions:

The final essay for this subject is the capstone assignment for the subject. It should build on the foundations laid down by the key concepts, where relevant (Assessment 1) and the presentation pitch (Assessment 2). The essay should have:

1) An introduction;

2) A main body outlining 2-4 key themes or focus areas; and

3) A conclusion.

It should reference at least 5 academic journal articles, books or book chapters (5-10 are recommended).
See the vUWS site for exemplary examples.

Marking Criteria:

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Unsatisfactory
Evidence of research and scholarship	Excellent use of sources and strong evidence of scholarship in the development of the research case	Very good use of sources and very good evidence of scholarship in the development of the research case	Good use of research sources but not as extensive or comprehensive	Fair use of research sources and not very extensive or comprehensive	Little effort or evidence of research and scholarship
Coherence of argument in relation to topic	Argument is clear and is strongly able to logically advocate a position in relation to the topic	Argument is mostly clear and very able to logically advocate a position in relation to the topic	Some good use of argument but not completely clear or adequate to link to the topic	Only fair use of argument but not very clear or adequate to link to the topic	Not much coherence in the argument or evidence of work that links into the topic
Well-structured paper in good use of sources	Paper is well-structured and makes good use of sources for the topic	Paper is mostly well-structured and sometimes makes good use of sources for the topic.Research-creation outcome is well structured with appropriate aesthetic and information treatments, and use of sources	Paper is well-structured but mostly lacks coherence in relation to the overall topic	Paper is poorly-structured and shows little coherence in relation to the overall topic	No structure in evidence and no strong sense that sources have used correctly

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Unsatisfactory
Academically literate in style and content	High standard in academic literacy sustained and consistent in style and content.Report is of a high academic standard	Report and academic standard is very good	Academic literacy standards met but occasional corrections needed in style and content	Academic literacy standards only occasionally met and many corrections needed in style and content	Poor academic literacy and stylistically inconsistent

Marking Criteria:

4 Readings and Resources

4.1 Essential Readings

Essential Reading

Amoore, L. and V. Piotukh (eds) *Algorithmic Life: Calculative Devices in the age of big data. London*: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard UP.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction.* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press

Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production,* Johnson, Randall (ed.). Cambridge UK, Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2011) *On Television.* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bruns, A. (2019) *Are Filter Bubbles Real.* Wiley

Buckingham, D. (2019) *The Media Education Manifesto.* Polity Press.

Burgess, J & N Baym (2020) *Twitter: a biography.* New York: New York Press.

Burgess, J. K. Albury, A. McCosker & R. Wilken (2022) *Everyday Data Cultures.* John Wiley & Sons.

Carlson, B. & J. Berglund (2021) *Indigenous Peoples Rise Up: The Global Ascendency of Social Media Activism.* Rutgers University Press.

Carpenter, E., & M. McLuhan (1960) (Eds.), *Explorations in Communications*, Beacon.

Dahlgren, P. (2009) *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication and Democracy.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Dezuanni, M. (2020) *Peer Pedagogies on Digital Platforms - Learning with Minecraft Let's Play videos.* MIT Press 2020.

Dezuanni M, M. Foth, K. Mallan. H. Hughes (2018) *Digital Participation through Social Living Labs: Valuing Local Knowledge, Enhancing Engagement.* Chandos Publishing

Downing, J. (2011) *Encyclopedia of Social Movement Media.* Sage.

Garnham, N., (2004, 2020) *The Media and the Public Sphere,* NY & Oxford: Routledge.

Gideon, S., (1948, 2013) *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History.* U. of Minnesota Press.

Greenfield, A. (2017) *Radical Technologies*. Verso.

Habermas, J., (1962, 1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* Berger and Lawrence Trans. Cambridge UP.

Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.

Hargittai, E. (Ed.). (2021). *Handbook of digital inequality*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Heyer, P. & P. Urquart (2019) *Communication in History*, 7th Edition. Routledge.

Hjorth, L & I. Richardson (2020) *Ambient Play*, MIT Press, Cambridge

Hjorth, L., K. Ohashi, J. Sinanan, H. Horst & S. Pink, (2020) *Digital Media in Households: Digital Kinship*, Amsterdam University Press

Hoskins, A (2018) *Digital Memory Studies: Media Pasts in Transition*. Routledge.

Huhtamo, E. & J. Parikka (2011) *Media Archaeology: Approaches Applications, Implications*, U. of California Press.

Jones, P., & D. Holmes (2011). *Key concepts in media and communications*. Sage.

Leaver, T., T. Highfield & C. Abin (2020). *Instagram*, Polity Press.

Marvin, C. (1988) *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking About Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century*, NY: OUP.

McLuhan, M. (1994) *Understanding Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Mihailidis, P. (2019) *Civic Media Literacies: Re-Imagining Human Connection in an Age of Digital Abundance.* Taylor and Francis.

Morley, D., & K.H. Chen (1996) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, NY & Oxford: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2018), *A Networked Self and Platforms, Stories, Connections.* Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2021), *After Democracy: Imagining Our Political Future*. London: Yale University Press.

Parikka, J. (2021) *Machinology: Machines, Ecology and some media theory*, https://jussiparikka.net/category/german-media-theory/

Parks, L and N. Starosielski (2015) *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*, Illinois.

Pertierra, A. & Salazar, J.F. (Eds.) (2020) *Media Cultures in Latin America: Key Concepts and New Debates*. Taylor

and Francis.

Peters, J.D. (2015) *Marvellous Clouds: Towards a Philosophy of Elemental Media.* Polis.

Proctor, J. (2004) *Stuart Hall.* London: Routledge.

Robbins, D. (1991) *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu: Recognising Society.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Schapals, A. K., A. Bruns, & B. McNair (Eds.). (2019). *Digitizing democracy.* Nueva York: Routledge.

Srnicek, N. (2017). *Platform Capitalism.* Cambridge: Polity

Starosielski, N. (2015) *The undersea network.* Duke.

Theall, D. (1971) *The Medium is the Rear-View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan.* MQP.

Thomson, T.J. (2019) To See and Be Seen: *The Environments, Interactions and Identities Behind News Images.* Rowman.

Tkacz, N. Being with Data: *The Dashboarding of Everyday Life.* ohn Wiley & Sons

Vaidhyanathan, S. (2015) *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry),* Updated Edition, University of California Press.

Vaidhyanathan, S. (2020) *Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy.* Oxford University Press.

Warfield, K., C. Abidin, and C. Cambre. (2020). Mediated Interface:s *The Body on Social Media,* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Weerakkody, N. (2008). *Research methods for media and communication.* Oxford University Press.

Woolley, S. (2020) *The Reality Game: How the Next Wave of Technology will Break the Truth,* PublicAffairs.

Zuckerman, E. (2021) Mistrust: *Why Losing Faith in Institutions Provides the Tools to Transform Them.* W.W Norton & Company.

4.2   Recommended Readings

4.3   Other Teaching and Learning Resources

5 Key Teaching and Learning Policies

The University has several policies that relate to teaching and learning. Links to important policies affecting students are below. It is your responsibility to ensure you familiarise yourself with these policies so that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities.

- – Assessment Policy
- – Assessment Policy - Review of Grade Procedures
- – Bullying Prevention Policy
- – Disruption to Studies Policy
- – Enrolment Policy
- – Examinations Policy
- – Learning and Teaching Policy
- – Progression Policy
- – Student Code of Conduct
- – Student Misconduct Rule