



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Undergraduate – B.A. (Media and
Communication)

Semester 1, 2018

Faculty of Arts and Social Science
School of Literature, Arts and Media
Department of Media and Communication

The following guide contains information that you will need to refer to throughout your degree. It is updated each semester. Please read it thoroughly and keep this guide for future reference. This information supplements your Unit of Study outlines, which also contain important information.

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Welcome from the Chair of Department

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the University of Sydney. I am sure that you will enjoy your studies and the friendships you make while you are here. We are certainly pleased you are joining us, and know how hard you worked to get here. Congratulations.

What a great time to study the media! By many accounts, we live in a 'post-truth' political culture, where alternative facts jostle with evidence. Disregard for science and a widespread suspicion of experts is challenging our ability to deal with some of the most wicked problems facing the planet.

People feel excluded from debates, with potentially disastrous results for rational discourse and democracy. Clear and ethical communication has never been more important, whether you work in the media, politics, civil society or the corporate sector.

So you've chosen a fascinating and rapidly evolving field of study. Our challenge is to equip you with the depth of knowledge and agility to thrive in this dynamic landscape. You're on your way to becoming world-class media makers, professional communicators and scholars.

Associate Professor Tim Dwyer
Chair of Department
Media and Communications

Media and Communication Staff

Who we are and how to contact us

The full-time academic teaching staff attached to the Media and Communications Department, including members of the Digital Cultures Program and Digital Media Unit, are located on Level 2 of the John Woolley Building A20 (entry via Manning Road).

Key Contacts for Undergraduate B.A. (Media and Communication) Students

Associate Professor, Tim Dwyer, Chair of Department
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Other Academic Staff

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Dr Justine Humphry, Lecturer

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Additional members of staff are:

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Postgraduate Internship Coordinator
Office: Room S233, John Woolley Building

Ms Adriana Hernandez
Email: Adriana.hernandez@sydney.edu.au
Undergraduate Internship Coordinator
Ph: 9351 6886
Office: Room S233, John Woolley Building

Digital Media Unit (DMU) and Loans Store,
Ph +61 2 9351 6787

digitalmediahelp@sydney.edu.au
Level 2, John Woolley Building A20
Room S202
A20 - John Woolley Building

Just walk in the main entrance, take the first right and go down the corridor

Opening Hours (during semester only):
Monday-Friday: 9am-12pm & 2pm-5pm

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Consultation with staff

All academic members of staff are available for face-to-face consultation two hours a week. You will find their consultation hours in unit of study outlines or on personal staff pages. If you are unable to attend at these times because you have lectures or tutorials scheduled you may email your lecturer to make an appointment at another time.

Normally, you should consider seeing the Undergraduate Coordinator when you are altering the standard MECO BA study pattern in any way, are considering student exchange, have questions around credit, or have questions around the best way to complete your degree.

In the event that you have a genuinely urgent inquiry, contact the Undergraduate Coordinator or Chair of Department. Please ensure that relevant parents, guardians or friends who may be seeking information on your behalf understand that due to privacy provisions we cannot discuss student matters with parents or relatives. The procedure to follow when seeking an urgent extension can be found in the Policies section below.

Your University email account

It is university policy that all university business be directed to your university email account. Please ensure you have access and use it when communicating with the university and your Academic Staff.

Raising concerns with Staff, complaints and appealing academic decisions

All members of staff are committed to the welfare of students and welcome feedback. We value our working relationship with students and strive to treat all students fairly and to be as transparent as possible about our methods of assessment.

If you have concerns about any aspect of a unit of study ranging from teaching to assessment methods, your first port of call should be your relevant lecturer or tutor. Raising concerns with the staff member directly involved is good professional and ethical practice. Do this promptly. If you are not satisfied with the response, you should put your concerns in writing to the Undergraduate Coordinator or Chair of Department.

It is best to raise concerns as soon as they arise. Should your concerns not be addressed the University has clear policies and procedures for making complaints and appealing academic decisions

The university's guide concerning these can be found here

http://sydney.edu.au/student_affairs/complaints/index.shtml

For further information about appealing an academic decision

<http://sydney.edu.au/students/academic-appeals.html>

Policies

Faculty policies on Late work, Attendance, Academic dishonesty and plagiarism, Special consideration, Special arrangements and simple extensions, and many other areas, can all be found at the Current Students page. Simply enter any of these topics into the **Search** field <http://sydney.edu.au/students/>.

This is the primary repository for all Faculty and University policies. It should be your first port of call. Comprehensive advice and links are also provided in your unit of study outlines.

If you feel unsure about a matter of policy please make an appointment to see the Undergraduate Coordinator. Also, if you are experiencing difficulties in your study, 'soldiering on' is a common phenomenon but this can compound problems. Also lack of proper documentation can be a problem. We understand that students encounter difficulties of various kinds during their study and we are able to refer you to appropriate counselling services where necessary, but it is your responsibility to contact the Unit of Study Coordinator or Undergraduate Coordinator promptly if you do have problems that affect your attendance or prevent you meeting assignment deadlines.

Submission of Assessments

Consult your unit of study outlines for advice on how to turn in your work.

Cover Sheets

Assignment coversheets are mandatory for all assignments that are handed in for assessment purposes. This includes digital assignments and Blackboard/Canvas postings. If you are submitting a physical piece of media, you should print and submit a hardcopy to your tutor with the assignment.

Cover sheets are available online at

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/media_communications/resources/assessment_coversheets.shtml

Written work should on no account be put under office doors.

Students are required to keep a copy of all assignments in case an assignment goes missing.

You should not attach any images, videos or other material to your assignments you consider valuable. While we treat all such material with care, we cannot take responsibility for its safe return.

'Style Guide'

The department 'Style Guide' that incorporates a Guide to Scholarly Communication, Essay Presentation, Referencing and Attribution in Journalism can be found on-line at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/media_communications/resources/index.shtml

APA is the preferred referencing system in the department. See the Style Guide for details.

Word Length

Unless expressed otherwise in the unit of study outline, the word count includes everything except the list of references.

Consult your unit of study outline for specific penalties applied to excessive word length.

Requirement to submit all assignments

The Department adopts the policy that in order to pass a unit of study you must submit all assignments described in the outline.

Recycling assignments

On no account should assignments already submitted in one unit be submitted again in the same unit, or another unit. This policy also applies to sharing video and audio footage unless agreed to by your coordinator.

Collecting assignments

You will be emailed or notified in lectures when your assignments are ready. Please wait to be advised rather than contacting staff. Assignments not distributed during classes (or returned after semester) can be collected from the Administrative office, Room N386, Level 3, John Woolley Building, during office hours.

Staff will endeavour to make all assignments handed in on time available for collection three weeks after the date they were submitted. Many staff return assignments via the unit LMS.

About your final grade and scaling procedures

The final grade you receive will be based on the standard of your own achievement across the criteria and standards set for all of the tasks in a unit. Assessment tasks are designed so you can demonstrate how well you have achieved the unit's outcomes.

Timetable and tutorial changes

While tutorials begin, in most cases, in week two, week one is an important induction week where the tone and scope of the unit is established (usually in lectures). Tutorials are considered to be spaces for teaching and learning, not administration. Therefore, students should endeavour to resolve administrative issues in consultation hours with the Unit Coordinator or Departmental administrative staff before class, not in tutorial time.

Any tutorial changes should also be arranged in week one to assure a smooth start to tutorials in week two. The timetabling system will no longer accept tutorial changes after week two. Students are responsible for changing their timetable/tutorial bookings up to that time.

Week-one late start to semester-late entry

Semester starts in week one and ends after the examination period, usually the end of Week 16. While the Faculty makes provision for students to add and drop units at the start of the semester, the Department considers it of the highest importance that students be available for the entire semester, and attempt to participate from week one.

Travel and also Internships should be planned *around* formal university semesters. In rare instances where students are unable to start semester in week one they should contact the unit coordinator in advance to arrange readings, so that they are fully prepared and ready to join the unit.

Entering a unit in week three (or later) is more complicated because entry into the unit at this late stage potentially breaches Faculty attendance policy, as well as stretches past the add/drop deadline date for units of study, students may be required to apply for Special Consideration in order for their case to be assessed.

Application for Special Consideration will need to be accompanied with adequate documentation. In some cases students may be requested to do catch-up work or asked to defer enrolment into the unit, especially when it impacts adversely on group production work.

Vacation is not considered legitimate grounds for Special Consideration. Internships should not interfere with regular enrolments.

In the case of units that draw on production resources such as Radio, Video and Online, students cannot be guaranteed a place in the unit unless they have properly enrolled in the unit and a workshop, and have attended by week two.

Note: If you choose to withdraw from a unit, it is courtesy to let the Unit Coordinator know.

Lab guides and Codes of Conduct

Many MECO units involve group production as well as production equipment and computer labs. To ensure fair and safe access to these resources the Department asks you to comply with lab guides and codes of conduct. These can be found at the MECO Production Resources website at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/media_communications/resources/dmu/index.shtml

BA and Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Media and Communication)

Course structure 2018

This is the recommended progression for Pass and Honours Programs.

Years 1-4 **BA and BAS (Media and Communications), Major or Minor in Digital Cultures**

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/media_communications/undergrad/index.shtml

Year 5 **Honours**

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/media_communications/undergrad/honours.shtml

By doing the course in the recommended progression you ensure that you have the different skill sets in place for each unit at the right time. It is highly recommended you follow the sequence. If you find yourself out of sequence, or plan to change it due to study abroad, please consult the Undergraduate Coordinator.

Additional guidelines for students

MECO very much values strong and supportive relationships between staff and students, and provides the following additional guidelines to foster these.

Valuing Equity and Diversity

Valuing equity means respecting and adhering to principles of fairness, transparency, and natural justice.

Valuing diversity is linked to principles of respect and tolerance. It involves all of us, staff and students alike, appreciating the perspectives of others and creating an inclusive environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Learning & Teaching Time

It is important to allow time in your busy schedules for attendance at lectures and tutorials, proper preparation, reading and assignment work (all up around eight hours per unit per week), and also leave ample time for group work.

Lectures

Lectures are a very important part of your study. Your punctuality and attentiveness is appreciated — especially for your student peers who wish to concentrate on the lecture.

Special ethical considerations surround guest lectures, which sometimes contain sensitive or commercial information. Guest lectures should not be reported beyond class purposes except with the written permission of that lecturer.

We may, for example, apply the 'Chatham House Rule' to public commentary on our activities in these spaces and especially guest lectures and seminars. This states that any people involved in a meeting "are free to use the information received [in that gathering], but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed."¹

Be Informed

Be informed of university policies that affect all of us, and also department requirements.

Tutorial Behaviour and Participation

Respect for opinions of others is crucial. A tutorial is a group rather than simply a collection of individuals, so we encourage you to use tutorials to learn from other students, not just the tutor.

By definition, learning involves taking risks, trying things out, making mistakes, asking obvious or silly questions. The tutorial as a whole benefits when everyone participates. Tutorials are in this sense very special spaces to be respected and feel safe from ridicule and mockery. You should refrain from any activity that threatens the safety of the tutorial as a learning environment. Use technology such as laptops, tablet computers, and mobile phones judiciously and discreetly, but try not to let technology disrupt your participation and the participation of others.

¹ Chatham House (2012) Chatham House Rule, accessed at <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouse-rule>

Speak Up!

We really encourage our students to raise any questions or concerns about their studies and particular units at any stage — but especially to do so as early as possible. Please feel free to seek clarification from the coordinator, who might be able to clear things up or adjust the emphasis of different lectures.

Publishing

It's common for media professionals to use social media channels to share knowledge, discuss ideas and to promote their creative works. Blogs, social media, wikis and forums are increasingly important tools for audience, business and corporate engagement. However we ask that you follow two basic guidelines about social media publishing of learning situations at this University, particularly in live blogging of classes or lectures.

First, while we invite you to freely share online the ideas we are dealing with in class, we ask you not to publish the names or images of other students, lecturers or tutors without their permission.

This is in line with the principle of informed consent for publication, which we use in interview and documentary recording. If you wish to attribute any individual comments made during classes, we ask that you seek permission from the speaker or author. In turn we will ask your informed consent if we wish to document your participation in class events and to publish this on a general access public platform such as the web.

Secondly, we ask that your social media publishing demonstrates respect for cultural diversity, diversity of opinion and existing media regulations.

In particular please be ethical and professional in your critique of others' work, and ensure you follow all applicable defamation, privacy, copyright, telecommunications and other media-related laws when publishing on social media platforms.