

SM5325: INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Introduction to Media and Cultural Studies

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5325

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to provide students with a postgraduate-level introduction to the most significant theories, schools of thought, movements, trends, and methods in the contemporary field of media and cultural studies. Students will learn to apply key theories and methodologies in the field to their own research, and will also develop the ability to generate extended critical analyses of contemporary media cultures from the analogue, to the digital and postdigital.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify the most significant issues and concepts in the field of media and cultural studies		x		
2	Describe key theoretical and methodological concepts in the field			x	
3	Synthesize extended critical analyses of media texts, institutions, and audiences		x		x
4	Demonstrate the ability to conduct postgraduate level research in the field			x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Provide a general view as well as rigorously explain the theories and methods in cultural and media studies in both its historical schools of thought and contemporary breakthroughs as well as up-to-date issues and topics in digital media cultures.	1	
2	Reading responses/Group Presentations	Explain key concepts, examine, and critically discuss relevant theoretical and practical illustrations examples.	1, 2	

3	Research Essays	Develop a theoretical angle, conduct research for, and analyse a relevant topic of interest.	1, 2, 3, 4	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Reading Responses	1, 2	20	-	No
2	Group Presentation	1, 2	30	-	No
3	Research Essay	1, 2, 3, 4	50	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Reading Response (2% x 10) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate that they have read at least one of the required readings and have spent some time reflecting on the readings before attending the weekly lecture and in-class discussion. For each reading response, students will be given either 2% or 0%.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings

- The reading response is submitted before the class
- Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings

- The reading response is submitted before the class
- Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings

- The reading response is submitted before the class
- Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Marginal

(D) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings

- The reading response is submitted before the class
- Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Failure

- (F) - Unable to demonstrate that the student has done the reading
- The reading response is plagiarized
 - The reading response is submitted after the class
-

Assessment Task

Group Presentation (30%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize the theories in the required readings, and to construct a well-organized argument and analysis in the presentation. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in students' initiatives to conduct self-reflection and to use theories to understand their own personal experiences.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of course materials, able to explain key concepts and debates
- Rigorous organization of slides, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
 - Critical analysis with insightful comments or arguments on personal experiences, or suggesting the ability to theorize via self-reflection

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of course materials, ability to explain key concepts and debates
- Reasonable organization of slides, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficiently coherent narrative
 - Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret concepts independently with evidence of self-reflection

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of course materials, able to explain key concepts
- Adequate organization of slides, fair structure, largely coherent narrative
 - Weak ability to approach to theorize and reflect on everyday experiences using conceptual devices

Marginal

- (D) - Loose grasp of course materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, incoherent narrative
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret everyday experiences

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of course materials
- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant narrative
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret everyday experiences
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Assessment Task

Research Essay (50%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to apply theories and methods to undertake independent research, and to construct a well-organized literature review and analysis. The threshold of originality lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course materials into their own scholarship.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of course materials, ability to explain key concepts and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field
- Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various primary and secondary resources into the analysis
 - Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing methodological frameworks

- Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking skills in literature review
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of course materials, ability to explain key concepts and debates
- Reasonable content, strong ability to integrate various primary and secondary resources into the analysis
 - Design and conduct research which is built on sufficient knowledge of existing methodological frameworks
 - Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills in literature review
 - Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of course materials, able to explain some concepts
- Adequate content, fair amount of primary and secondary sources
 - Design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
 - Adequate judgments about existing research
 - Insufficient but organized bibliography or inconsistent bibliography style

Marginal

- (D) - Loose grasp of course materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Weak content, with poor primary and secondary sources
 - Design and conduct research which is barely appropriate for the research objective
 - Marginal judgments about existing research
 - Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of course materials
- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary sources
 - Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
 - Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
 - Irrelevant/no bibliography

Assessment Task

Reading Response (2% x 10) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate that they have read at least one of the required readings and have spent some time reflecting on the readings before attending the weekly lecture and in-class discussion. For each reading response, students will be given either 2% or 0%.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings
- The reading response is submitted before the class
 - Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Good

- (B+, B) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings
- The reading response is submitted before the class
 - Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Able to demonstrate that the student has read one or all of the required readings
- The reading response is submitted before the class
 - Preliminary but original understanding of the text is formulated

Failure

- (F) - Unable to demonstrate that the student has done the reading
 - The reading response is plagiarized
 - The reading response is submitted after the class
-

Assessment Task

Group Presentation (30%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize the theories in the required readings, and to construct a well-organized argument and analysis in the presentation. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in students' initiatives to conduct self-reflection and to use theories to understand their own personal experiences.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of course materials, able to explain key concepts and debates
- Rigorous organization of slides, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
- Critical analysis with insightful comments or arguments on personal experiences, or suggesting the ability to theorize via self-reflection

Good

- (B+, B) - Firm grasp of course materials, able to explain key concepts
- Reasonable organization of slides, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficiently coherent narrative
- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret concepts independently with evidence of self-reflection

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Loose grasp of course materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, incoherent narrative
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to self-reflect and independently interpret theories

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of course materials
 - No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant narrative
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret theories, no evidence of self-reflection
-

Assessment Task

Research Essay (50%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to apply theories and methods to undertake independent research, and to construct well-organized literature review and analysis. The threshold of originality lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course materials into their own scholarship.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of course materials, ability to explain key concepts and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field
- Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various primary and secondary resources into the analysis
- Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing methodological frameworks
- Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking skills in literature review
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

(B+, B) - Firm grasp of course materials, ability to explain key concepts

- Adequate content, strong ability to integrate various primary and secondary resources into the analysis
- Design and conduct research which is built on sufficient knowledge of existing methodological frameworks
- Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills in literature review
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Loose grasp of course materials, cannot explain key concepts

- Weak content, with poor primary and secondary sources
- Design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Marginal judgments about existing research
- Poor ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of course materials

- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary sources
- Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
- Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Irrelevant or no bibliography

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Media studies. Cultural studies. Technology and culture. Everyday Life. Media theory. Digital Methods. Ethnographic Theory. Digital Ethnography. Sensory Ethnography. Subcultural Studies. Practice Theory. Cultural Industry. Affect Studies. Television Studies. New Media Studies. Internet Studies. Platform Studies. Software Studies. Postdigital Media. Social Media. Cybernetic Culture. Frankfurt School. Computational Culture. Posthumanism. Theory-fiction.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Adorno, T. W. (1991). The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture. London: Routledge. (Introduction)
2	Apperley, T., & Parikka, J. (2018). Platform Studies Epistemic Threshold. Games and Culture 13(4), 349–369.
3	Anderson, B. (2021). Affect and critique: A politics of boredom. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 39(2), 197–217.
4	Berlant, L. (2011). Cruel Optimism. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Chapter 1)
5	Bratton, B. H. (2015). The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (introduction)
6	Brottman, M. (2005). High Theory/Low Culture. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. (Introduction)
7	Chun, W. H. K. (2006). Control and Freedom. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Chapter 5)
8	Chun, W. H. K. (2008). On "sourcery" or code as fetish. Configurations 16(3), 299–324.
9	Contreras-Koterbay S., & Mirocha, #. (2016). The New Aesthetic and Art: Constellations of the Postdigital. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Institute of Network Cultures. (Chapter 1)
10	Couldry N., & Hepp, A. (2013). Conceptualizing mediatization: Contexts, traditions, arguments. Communication Theory 23(3), 191–202.
11	Cramer, F., & Jandri#, P. (2021). Postdigital: A Term That Sucks but Is Useful. Postdigital Science and Education.
12	Fisher, M. (2009). Capitalist Realism. O Books. (Chapter 6)

13	Fisch, M. (2019). Revisiting a State of Nature: An Anthropological Encounter with Multispecies Science Fiction. <i>NatureCulture</i> (5), 50–68.
14	Galloway, A. R. (2011). What is new media? Ten years after the language of new media. <i>Criticism</i> 53(3), 377–384.
15	Hall, S., & Jefferson, T. (1993). <i>Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain</i> . London: Routledge.
16	Hall, S. (2016). <i>Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History</i> . Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
17	Hansen, M. (2006). Media Theory. <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 23(3), 297–306.
18	Hester, H. (2018). <i>Xenofeminism</i> . Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. (Chapter 1)
19	Highmore, B. (2006). Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture. London: Continuum. (Chapter 1)
20	Holt, M. (2020). Hyperstitional Theory-Fiction. https://www.full-stop.net/2020/10/21/features/essays/macon-holt/hyperstitional-theory-fiction/
21	Lovink G. (2011). <i>Networks Without a Cause</i> . Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. (Introduction)
22	Mackey, R., & Avanessian, A. (2014). #Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader. London: Urbanomic. (Chapter: CCRU Cybernetic Culture)
23	Massumi B. (2002). <i>Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect and Sensation</i> . Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Chapter 1)
24	Manovich, L. (2020). <i>Cultural Analytics</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Introduction)
25	McCarthy, A. (2007). Reality Television: a Neoliberal Theater of Suffering. <i>Social Text</i> 25(4), 17–42.
26	Pandian, A. (2019). <i>A Possible Anthropology: Methods for Uneasy Times</i> . Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Chapter 2)
27	Pink, S., Horst, H., John, P., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). <i>Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice</i> . Sage. (Chapter 1)
28	Rogers, R. (2013). <i>Digital Methods</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Chapter 1)
29	Russell, C. (1999). <i>Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video</i> . Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Introduction)
30	Sampson, T. D. (2012). <i>Virality</i> . Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 1)
31	Thornton, S. (1995). <i>Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital</i> . Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. (Chapter 3)

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Bolter, J. D., & Grusin, R. (1999). <i>Remediation</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Chapter 1)
2	Debord, G. (1983). <i>Society of the Spectacle</i> . Detroit, MI: Black & Red.
3	Couldry N. (2008). Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. <i>New Media and Society</i> 10(3), 373–391.