

CO350 MASS MEDIA IN AUSTRALIA

Syllabus

Instructor Name: Michael Ward

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Course Credits: 4 BU credits

Course Description

The course analyses Australian media in the context of media globalization, audience fragmentation and platform convergence. The academic program introduces students to these issues by examining Australian film and television history to contextualize developments in digital media, national identity and government policy. This includes analysis of the impact of social media on news media and declining trust in established media.

The course examines the impact of globalization on Australian mass media, national media policies, content, and business models. The course compares Australian and US media, especially the role of Australia's unique public service media, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

The program is supported by field trips to significant media and screen cultural sites and a lecture program featuring leading media professionals.

Critical material will be introduced to discussions, and examples of this material are posted on Blackboard Learn. Key current texts on national media and globalization (see Books and Other Course Materials) will accompany audiovisual and audio content to enable description and analysis of key issues presented and discussed each week to provide insights.

Course Objectives

Students develop an understanding of:

- The history of Australian mass media, including film, television, radio and print
- The importance of Australian content and national identity in Australian media policy
- Media structures and ownership and control of Australian media, including public service broadcasting
- Regulatory, policy and creative environment for Australian film, television, print and radio sectors
- Media business models, including advertising, other revenue models and public funding
- Media globalization, audience fragmentation and platform convergence disruption of Australian mass media, especially the impact on democracy and trust.

Question-driven Course Description

Students will employ a variety of strategies to answer the following questions.

- What is the primary focus of Australian media policy?
- How has media policy shaped Australian media content and business models?
- How does US media policy compare to Australian policy approaches?
- What is Australia's public service media's role in meeting media policy objectives?
- How are platform convergence, audience fragmentation and globalization impacting Australian media policy, especially regarding national identity and Australia's screen sector?

Program Learning Outcomes

Study Abroad Sydney Program Outcome:

The student will “demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, literature and the arts, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media”.

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning

Course strategies include attending lectures, two field trips, classroom discussions, ungraded collaborative class exercises in which global and national socio-historical, political and economic contexts, presenting and writing analytical commentary based on reading and researching.

CO 350 has a minimum of 40 hours of classroom lectures, screenings and seminars, including two compulsory field trips [to attend a live broadcast of the ABC *QandA* program and to the **Museum of Australian Democracy, National Film and Sound Archive** and **The Australian War Memorial** in Canberra, 11 November].

Classes at the BUSAC run in either 4 hour or 2-hour time slots according to the schedule.

The course is delivered through lectures from the professor, guest lecturers, and in-class interactive discussions with students. The program will be supported by field trips and an industry-aligned lecture program featuring leading media professionals, including a former public media executive and an advertising industry representative. Source material will be introduced through lectures by either the course coordinator or a keynote guest lecturer.

To promote confidence and establish a non-judgmental classroom environment, group discussions and activities are not individually graded. However, they will form part of each student's contribution mark. Ungraded elements include in-class activities such as in-class research topics, a short form quiz and discussions and online interaction via the Blackboard Learn Discussion platform. Students are expected to engage with and contribute to discussions that follow lectures.

The course will be supported by reference material and course notes available in Blackboard Learn. This will form an essential part of the course reading material. Relevant audiovisual and audio excerpts will also be screened and referenced during class, with media presentations related to the topic scheduled for that week.

To prepare for the session and gain maximum benefit from the course, students are expected to reference readings and any additional prescribed video, audio or written material prior to class.

Format

Discussions introduce key concepts and provide historical, political, economic, and cultural analyses. The student is encouraged to explore other meanings and develop their own textually-based and research-based analytical and evaluative skills. The student is expected to contribute to all discussions and will need to prepare for each class by completing the reading designated in the schedule and by allowing all possible time for the consideration of issues raised in preparatory material provided in advance.

Books and Other Course Materials

- Cunningham, S. (2014). Policy and regulation. Cunningham S. and Turnbull S. (eds.). *The Media and Communications in Australia* 4th edition. Pp. 73 – 94. Allen & Unwin.
- Dibley, B., & Turner, G. (2018). Indigeneity, cosmopolitanism and the nation: The project of NITV. *Making Culture* (pp. 129-139). Routledge.
- FCC. (2021). The FCC and its regulatory authority. <https://www.fcc.gov/media/radio/public-and-broadcasting#FCC>
- Flew, T. (2018). Introduction to global media: key concepts. *Understanding Global Media*. Pp. 1-17. Palgrave.
- Flew, T. (2014). Twenty key concepts in new media – Introduction to global media: key concepts. *New Media*, (pp. 18-36). Oxford University Press.
- Goldsmith, B. (2010). *Outward looking Australian Cinema*
- Harrington, S. (2014) *Television*. Cunningham S. and Turnbull S. (eds), *The Media and Communications in Australia*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Iosifidis, P. (2016). *Globalisation and the Re-emergence of the Regulatory State*
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303479643_Globalisation_and_the_Re-emergence_of_the_Regulatory_State
- Lotz, A. & Potter, A. (2022). Effective cultural policy in the 21st century: challenges and strategies from Australian television. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 28:6, 684-696
- Newman, N. (2024). Reuters Institute digital news project. *Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions*. Executive Summary. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2024>
- Newman, N. (2024). Foreword, Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/DNR%202024%20Final%20lo-res-compressed.pdf>
- Pasquale F. (2015). *The Black Box Society: the secret algorithms that control money and information*.
- Rutherford, A. (2022). 'The making of Jay Swan in 'Mystery Road: Origin'. *The Monthly*
<https://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/anne-rutherford/2022/05/2022/making-jay-swan-mystery-road-origin>
- Ryan, M. (2024). *Film, cinema and streaming* in B. Griffen-Foley & S. Turnbull (Eds.) *The Media and communications in Australia*. Routledge. pp. 168-183.
- Scarlata, A., & Lobato, R. (2023). Broadcaster video-on-demand in Australia: Platforms, policy and local content. *Media International Australia*, 1329878X231177122.
- Sinclair, J. (2014). *The Media and Communications: Theoretical Traditions*, (15 – 29). Cunningham S. and Turnbull S. (eds), *The Media and Communications in Australia*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Swiatek, L. & Brevini, B. (2018). Australia: The Perpetual Battler. *Transparency and Funding of Public Service Media—Die deutsche Debatte im internationalen Kontext*. pp. 133-143. Springer VS, Wiesbaden
- Ward, M. (2024). CO350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide.

Courseware

www.bu.edu/learn/CO350

This is an active online link to all materials, including course outlines, criteria sheets, due dates of assignments, secondary sources, online links, and announcements.

Assignments and Grading

Final Grades

All Grades out of 100 Points			
Grade	Max	Avg	Min
F	59.4	50	0.0
D	69.4	65	59.5
C-	72.4	72	69.5
C	76.4	75	72.5
C+	79.4	78	76.5
B-	82.4	82	79.5
B	86.4	85	82.5
B+	89.4	88	86.5
A-	93.4	92	89.5
A	100	96	93.5

Assessment Weighting and due date

	Assessment	Due Date	Weighting
1	Course engagement and participation	Ongoing	10%
2	Assignment 1: Draft Essay or Journal outline	Due Week 3, 8 pm	5%
3	Assignment 2: Essay	Due Week 4, 8.00 pm	25%
4	Quiz	Week 5, 6.45 – 8.00 pm	20%
5	Assignment 3: Journal	Due Week 7, 8.00 pm,	15%
6	Final Exam	9.00 am – 11.00 am,	25%

Assessment Descriptions

1. Course engagement and participation

Weight: 10% of final grade. Contribution to class discussions and exercises and engagement in research sessions.

2. Assignment 1: Draft essay or journal outline and submit it by 8.00 pm, through the library with the cover sheet.

Weight: 5 % of final grade. A 100 - 200 word dot point outline of essay structure (introduction, literature, main issues discussed, conclusion) or outline of media content, platforms or issues. The

journal may discuss your experiences of Australian media and the changing, globalized media environment.

3. Assignment 2: Essay - to be submitted by 8.00 pm, through the Library with coversheet.

Select **one** of the topics a) – e) and write a 1,000 word paper (including a reference list):

a) Using a recent example from the Australian media, examine the role, functions, and structure of an Australian public broadcaster, ABC or SBS. Compare it to an American public broadcaster (e.g., WGBH, Boston) or another international public broadcaster (e.g., BBC) that performs a similar function.

OR

b) Using a recent example from the Australian media, examine the role, functions, and structure of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and compare it to the US media regulator, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

OR

c) Examine the regulations relating to an element of Australian screen and media policies, such as film, radio or television content, ownership or censorship (classification). Elaborate on the perceived benefits and costs of such policy and the impact on Australian media, especially noting current and emerging global media issues.

OR

d) Most Australian screen dramas receive government funding, unlike in the US, where most drama is privately financed (by broadcasters, studios and increasingly OTT services like Netflix or Disney Plus). Discuss, noting the difference to the US, why this is the case, what impact it may have on the Australian industry, and the kind of content made, with reference to specific screen dramas.

OR

e) Examine the implications of changes in global media arrangements and technology (globalization, convergence, fragmentation) for Australian media and/or government policy, using an example from cinema, radio, television, or print media. Contrast with a description of such changes (globalization, convergence, fragmentation) on the US media industry and/or government policy.

Weight: 25% of final grade.

Length: 1000 words, including reference list (please add word count)

Due 8.00 pm, through the library with coversheet.

4. QUIZ Week 5, 6.

Open book (class reader only) **in class**.

A one-hour quiz, consisting of short answer questions, will take place in Week 5. Weight: 25% of final grade.

5. ASSIGNMENT 3: - Final version of Journal – to be submitted by 8.00 pm, through the library with coversheet

Your journal may contain short statements in your own words about the elements considered, seen and discussed in class. You may reference your **field trip experiences** and observations of mass media

at work in Australia. The journal reflects on these ideas, discussing your experiences of Australian media and the changing, globalized media environment.

You may reference observations of mass media at work in Australia.

The journal should consist of:

- 3 quality typed entries of approximately one page in length
- short statements (in your own words) about
- elements considered, seen and discussed in class, field trips or of media content, or
- about issues arising from the course.
- an appropriate bibliography.

The journal may include reviews, responses, attitudes, or viewpoints on films, television programs, streamed content, videos, books, articles, radio /audio/podcast programs, newspaper stories, social media, etc. The entries may be short, personal, experimental or impressionistic, but must include your thoughts on reading/viewing the item, article or program.

The journal may also include collected material (clippings, links, articles, etc.). The journal should be kept on a weekly basis and reflect this in its presentation.

Weight: 10% of final grade.

Length: 3 quality, one-page entries.

Due: **Week 7, 8.00 pm**, through the library.

6. FINAL EXAM 9.00 am – 11.00 am. As per the Examination Schedule

The examination will consist of up to 8 essay topics, with students to **select 3 questions to answer**.

Topics will be related to the material covered within the course.

Weight: 25% of final grade

Length: 2 hours

Resources/Support/How to Succeed in This Course:

There is the opportunity for students to meet professors face-to-face either ahead of or following class times; students can also make contact for longer meeting times via email or submit questions via email.

The most effective way to succeed in this course is to keep reading along the timeline of required readings.

Being prepared for each scheduled class will mean students gain more from lectures and interactive class discussions. Time management is crucial to such success, as is an open and enquiring mind.

There is also ample material on the BU learn site for students to expand their contextual knowledge of set texts, and the BU Sydney library has books and visual material for research.

When writing or presenting it is crucial that students are guided by the Grading Criteria Sheets provided in “Appendices” as a means to successful navigation of requirements.

Professors are notified of students with documented disabilities or special needs ahead of first classes and offer assistance to these students in line with BU policy, which is also BU Sydney policy.

Community of Learning: Class and University Policies

Course members' responsibility for ensuring a positive learning environment (e.g., participation/ discussion guidelines).

It is the responsibility of both the professor and all student members of the class to ensure a positive learning environment. It is thus understood that any member of the class who demonstrates behavior that undermines this positive learning environment will: firstly, be questioned and counseled regarding this behavior, seeking a satisfactory outcome; secondly, upon further recurrence, be brought into the delivery of the class material in an effort to involve them more; lastly, in light of the behavior continuing, the student will be expelled from the learning space for the rest of that day's class, and a grade deduction will be implemented as for "missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons". (There is no precedent for this behavioral model thus far on our programs.)

Course Matters

Attendance at all classes is mandatory.

Any absence for medical reasons or other misadventure must be supported by a medical certificate or a letter offering a satisfactory explanation. Strict penalties apply, on a pro rata basis, for any unapproved absence. Missing one class without reason would attract as much as a 10% penalty.

Statement on Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "... expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean".

Late Work

In general, there will be no extensions granted for any coursework. The exception is where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case, a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of 5% per day will apply.

Appendix 1 Grading Criteria

Interpretation and Research

1. Relevance of answer to question/topic
2. Effective use/relevance of evidence
3. Development of argument
4. Originality of argument/interpretation
5. Extent of research

6. Critical use of scholarship.

Presentation

7. Clarity of expression
8. Originality of expression (vs. paraphrase, summarising)
9. Appropriate tone and register of expression to assignment format
10. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, syntax, word choice, proof-reading
11. Referencing (in-text/footnotes)
12. Bibliography.

Outline of Class Meetings: Date, Topic, Readings Due, Assignments Due

CLASS SCHEDULE

Although the following schedule is intended to be final, it may, from time to time, be necessary to alter it. Should changes be needed, students will be given adequate time to accommodate them.

Field trip 1: ABC *Q and A* television studio audience, depart BUSAC at 8.15 pm.

Field trip 2: Museum of Democracy and National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, depart BUSAC at approx. 6.45 am.

Class schedule for weeks 1-7 is below.

Date	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(1) Michael Ward	<p>1.1 10.00 – 10.45 am: Course Outline: Introduction to CO 350 course outline, objectives with information on assessment and key milestones. Introduction to approaches to media research and key concepts such as media policy, convergence, fragmentation and globalization Field trips: ABC Q&A; MOAD, NFSA Canberra</p> <p>1.2 11.30 – 12.30 pm: Introduction to media globalization and media policy Media policy, business models and media ownership. Media policy - concepts such as regulation for Australian content, children's programs and accessibility. 12.45 – 2.00 pm Screening – 4 Corners 60th anniversary</p>	<p>1.1: Introduction to Course and its texts. Course syllabus. Course reader (to be distributed in class and on Blackboard): Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. ABC <i>Media Watch</i> program</p>	<p>Discussion: Is media important to society? Is it important for democracy? From the class handout, online research (as a group) to provide a short definition (e.g., globalization (own words), broadcasting, Free-to-air, Subscription TV, genre, audience ratings). Report back to class.</p>
(1)	<p>1.3 6.30 – 7.30 pm Australian media policy, media history and business models The historical context of Australia's media. Australia's media structure. Private /commercial, Public service media Print media: press, journalism and magazines 7.30 – 8.30 pm Screening: Australian drama <i>Mystery Road- Origins</i></p>	<p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. Rutherford, A. (2022). <i>The making of Jay Swan in 'Mystery Road: Origin'</i> Flew, T. (2018). <i>Understanding Global Media</i>. (Ch 1, pp. 1-8) Cunningham, S. (2014), <i>Policy and regulation</i>, (Ch 5, pp. 73 – 76). Flew, T. (2018). Introduction to global media: key concepts.</p>	<p>Small group activity: Research international screenings of <i>Mystery Road</i> and report back.</p>

Date	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(2) Michael Ward	<p>2.1 10.00 – 10.45 am Media regulation: The Australian Communications and Media Authority and Australian television, radio and online regulation.</p> <p>Comparison with the role of the FCC in the US.</p> <p>10.45- 11.05 Class small group activity: Journal outlines</p> <p>2.2 11.15 - 12 pm: Mass Media: Television</p> <p>Introduction to Australian television, including an analysis of commercial and public television history in Australia, compared to the US.</p> <p>Australian broadcasting: commercial, subscription and public service broadcasting business models.</p> <p>2.3 12.15 – 1.15 pm Public service media part 1: The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and media policy; comparison with US public broadcasting.</p> <p>1.30 – 2.00 pm Screening ABC <i>Media Watch</i> program</p>	<p>Sinclair J. (2014). <i>The Media and Communications: Theoretical Traditions</i>. Ch. 1. pp. 15 – 29.</p> <p>FCC. (2021). The FCC and its regulatory authority.</p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (Television section)</p> <p>Harrington, S. (2014). Television (pp. 173-191)</p> <p>Swiatek, L., & Brevini, B. (2018). <i>Australia: The Perpetual Battler</i></p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (ABC section)</p>	<p>Small group activity:</p> <p>From the class handout, online research (as a group) to:</p> <p>1: describe the role of ACMA & FCC.</p> <p>2. identify and summarize one of Australia's broadcasting services (commercial free-to-air, subscription, OTT). Present a short description.</p>
(2) Michael Ward	<p>6.30 - 8.30 pm SVOD</p> <p>Screening:</p> <p><i>Colin from Accounts (Binge): 30 minutes</i></p> <p><i>SBS Our Law (30 minutes)</i></p> <p>https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/our-law</p>	<p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (SVOD section)</p>	

Date	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(3) Michael Ward	<p>3.1 10.00 – 10.45 am: 10.00 – 10.45 am: Australian film policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - silent film to “talkies”, - impact of US film on Australia in the 1930s, - the long period when Australian film disappeared (1930s-1980s). - The Australian film renaissance <p>3.2 11.00 – 12.00 pm: Australian Indigenous screen policy</p> <p>Recent Australian cinema history, focusing on global film industry changes (1990s-2024).</p> <p>8.15 – 10.30 pm Field Trip QandA program audience.</p> <p>Meet: BUSAC foyer- walk to ABC – 8.15 pm.</p>	<p>Broinowski, A. (2018). In a globalized landscape, how do we protect and project Australian stories?</p> <p>Goldsmith, B. (2010). Outward looking Australian Cinema</p> <p>McNiven, L. (2023). The Rise of First Nations Filmmakers. National Film & Sound Archive (NFSA). https://www.nfsa.gov.au/latest/short-history-indigenous-filmmaking</p> <p>Ryan, M. (2024) Film Cinema and streaming.</p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (Film section)</p>	<p>Assignment 1: Draft Journal outline submitted through the library by 8 pm</p> <p>Class: using Course reader identify the peaks and lows of Australian cinema box office.</p> <p>Identify Broinowski's main reasons why we protect Australian films</p> <p>Field Trip ABC Q and A program</p>
(3)	Screening: <i>The Sapphires</i>	Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (Film section)	

Date	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(4) Margaret Cassidy Michael Ward	4.1 10 – 12 noon Guest lecture SBS & NITV: Ethnic and Indigenous Broadcasting 4.2 12.30-1.30 Australian screen policy and globalisation Screening: NFSA Screening – Australian cinema examples.	3.4 Dibley, B., & Turner, G. (2018). <i>Indigeneity, cosmopolitanism and the nation: The project of NITV. Making Culture.</i> (pp. 129-139). Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide. (SBS)	Assignment 2 Essay is due by 8.00 pm,
Michael Ward	4.3 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm Guest lecture: Social media, Influencers and trust How is social media constructed and understood today?		.

Week 5	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(5)	Canberra Field Trip Museum of Australian Democracy National Film and Sound Archive Australian War Memorial	ABC <u>Media Watch</u> program	
	Assessment Quiz (6.45 – 8.00 pm) Open book (class reader only).		Assessment (in-class written test) Open book - Ward M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Class reader.

Week 6	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(6) Michael Ward	<p>6.1 Globalization and National policy, media diversity and media reform SVOD, revenue models and globalisation</p> <p>Media globalization impact on Australian media.</p> <p>Australian local content policy, BVOD, global digital media and the traditional television and film model.</p> <p>Examine the impact of media globalization and new technologies on national media policy.</p> <p>6.2 Globalization and national media case study Global industry transformations: new platforms and distribution systems, disruption of traditional media business models for the Australian screen industry. The disruption of new platforms by new Over The Top (OTT) services.</p> <p>A case study of Netflix. The disruption of new platforms by new services, especially Netflix, is introduced.</p> <p>Screening News Corp and media trust 4 C part 1. https://iview.abc.net.au/show/four-corners.</p>	<p><i>Iosifidis, P. (n.d.). Globalisation and the Re-emergence of the Regulatory State</i> (pp. 25-28 re globalization and media regulation; and pp. 30-31 on the media industry).</p> <p>Scarlata, A., & Lobato, R. (2023). Broadcaster video-on-demand in Australia: Platforms, policy and local content. <i>Media International Australia</i>, 1329878X231177122.</p> <p>Turner, G. (2019). <i>Approaching the cultures of use: Netflix, disruption and the audience</i></p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide.</p>	<p>Small group activity:</p>
John Wright	<p>Guest lecture Australian advertising</p> <p>History and contemporary issues in Australian and global advertising - focus on the importance of advertising revenues for media.</p> <p>Screening: Australian advertising examples.</p>	<p>Sinclair, J. (2006). Globalization trends in Australia's advertising industry.</p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide.</p>	<p>Develop and present an advertising pitch from a concept given by guest lecturer.</p>

Week 6	Class content	Required reading and viewing	Assignments/Class Preparation
(7)	<p>7.1 News Media and Disruption</p> <p>The focus is on news media, beginning with definitions and analysis methods, examining changes in how media are consumed, and the emerging issues of ‘fake news’ and trust.</p> <p>Comparing US and Australian media consumption</p> <p>7.2 Media, Algorithms, Artificial intelligence and trust</p>	<p>Neilsen, R. (2024). Foreword, Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024.</p> <p>Pasquale F. (2015). The Black Box Society: the secret algorithms that control money and information.</p> <p>Ward, M. (2024). CO 350 Australian Mass Media Course Guide.</p>	<p>Journal (Assignment 3) to be submitted 8.00 pm,</p>
Michael Ward	<p>7.3 Review and final class</p> <p>Media policy and Australian national identity</p> <p>Australian film policy</p> <p>Globalization and its impact on Australian media</p> <p>Public service media</p> <p>News Media, social media and trust</p>		
	Final Examination 9 am – 11 am		Final Examination