Media Studies 200: Intro to Media Studies

Intended for 80 undergraduate students Fall 2024 at the University of Victoria ləkwəŋən and WSÁNEĆ territories

M and Th, 10 - 11:20am | 1.5 units | prereq: AWR Taught by Jentery Sayers (he / him) | jentery@uvic.ca

Office hours: Th, 12-1pm, in CLE D331

Teaching assistant: Maya Linsley (she / any)

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Territory Acknowledgement

As a researcher and instructor at the University of Victoria, I acknowledge and respect the $L \ni k^w \ni \eta \ni n$ (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the $L \ni k^w \ni \eta \ni n$ and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. I'm a settler scholar at UVic, and I arrived here as an uninvited guest in July 2011.

In this video, Songhees Elder Elmer George welcomes visitors to the traditional lands of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ people in $l = k^w = \eta = 1$ and English. The acknowledgement in this video was prepared in consultation with local Indigenous communities.

The fact that we're gathering at UVic to study media is a product of colonization and injustice upon local lands, waters, and people. I continue to learn about those injustices, and I will make no assumptions about your knowledge or experiences of them. As part of this course, I invite ongoing dialogue about territory acknowledgements and how UVic students, faculty, and staff are building good relations and fostering reciprocity.

I've learned a lot about territory acknowledgements from the Native Students Union's webpage and this August 2019 episode of *U in the Ring*: "With Knowledge Comes

Responsibility: Territory Acknowledgements," featuring Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, Maggie Easton, Steven Farina, Robbie Lewis, Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas, and Kolin Sutherland-Wilson. I welcome your recommendations, too.

Description

This course "surveys the cultural and material roles media play around the world in the 21st century. Emphasis on building a common vocabulary for studying media as well as understanding how audio, images, video, and text mediate people's relation to culture." For more information, see "MDIA200 - Media in the 21st Century" in UVic's academic calendar.

The course counts toward UVic's new Media Studies certificate, which requires 10.5 units of coursework.

Goals

I designed this course for you to:

- Build a vocabulary for understanding media. This means you'll develop a language for attending to the particulars of audio, images, text, video, and interfaces.
- Learn a variety of techniques for engaging media today. This means we'll 2. experiment with different approaches to media in the 21st century.
- Account for context and culture in the analysis of media across the globe. This 3. means we'll consider how, where, when, by whom, for whom, and under what assumptions media are made, interpreted, and circulated.
- Respond directly to classroom activities and lectures about media. This means you'll complete four worksheets to demonstrate what you're learning.
- 5. Reflect on your learning and communicate its applications to the study and production of media today. This reflection will take the form of a portfolio, which will be your final project in this course.

I will assume you've no experience in Media Studies, and I will focus on critical approaches to media as they apply to content creation. I will not teach film. For that, I recommend Film Studies. I also won't teach technical or professional communication. For that, I recommend Professional Communication.

About Us

My name is Jentery Sayers (he / him). I skip a syllable and say it in two: "JEN-tree." You can call me Jentery, Doctor Sayers, or Professor Sayers.

I spend 14.68% of the day looking for my glasses, and I enjoy writing about games and media. I grew up in Richmond, Virginia and went to Virginia Commonwealth University for my BA and BS degrees. Then I moved to Seattle, where I received an MA and PhD in English from the University of Washington. I now teach courses for UVic Media Studies and English, and I direct the Media Studies program. I like to play TTRPGs, drums, guitar, and soccer in my spare time. I also do my best to maintain a portfolio of my work.

You can email me at jentery@uvic.ca or find me in Clearibue D331. My office hours are Thursday, 12-1pm, in CLE D331. I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays.

Hi! I'm Maya, your TA for the term (she/any). I'm a current English MA student and a recent grad from UVic's Honours English BA.

There was a time when I, too, spent 14.68% of the day looking for my glasses, but now I can't look for anything if they're not on my face. I partly attribute my rapidly deteriorating eyesight to the amount of time I've spent reading fanfiction on my phone. Alas, it will never get better, as my area of research is now fan studies.

I'm super stoked about MDIA 200 and more than happy to answer all your questions about our course, your undergrad woes, life, death, MLA citations, the crushing reality of latestage capitalism, where to kickbox in Vic, etc. You can email me at mlinsley@uvic.ca or see me in my evil lair by appointment.

Materials

You do not need to purchase a textbook or any primary sources for this course, but you will need access to a computer, the internet (including Brightspace), a camera, and a microphone.

Handouts: I produce my own handouts for this course and will circulate them in Brightspace each week. They include concise overviews of key themes and terms to help you prepare for upcoming class sessions. You can think of them as an alternative to an MDIA 200 textbook.

Slide Decks: I will create HTML slide decks for most class sessions and link to them in Brightspace immediately before class begins. This way, you can access my slides during and after class.

Primary Sources: My slide decks will frequently contain primary sources or links to them. We'll discuss these primary sources in class to apply what you're learning from the weekly handouts. Examples of primary sources we'll study this term include the browser game, Hair Nah (2017), by Momo Pixel; the comic, "Translated, From the Japanese" (2015), by Adrian Tomine; the stop-motion animation, *Biidaaban (The Dawn Comes)* (2018), by Amanda Strong, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Bracken Hanuse Corlett; and the photo story, "Fighting for Food Sovereignty Amid Worsening Wildfires" (2023), by Steph Kwetáseľ wet Wood.

Content Warnings: I'll include content warnings for materials, including primary sources, before I share or screen them in class.

Recordings: I do not plan to record our class sessions; however, you are welcome to record audio for private access, study, and note-taking.

Brightspace: I'll use the course Brightspace to:

- Circulate a class announcement each week (usually on Mondays) to help you plan for what's next,
- Share weekly handouts, my slides, and any primary sources we study in class,
- Point you to resources available online,
- Accept all your assignments (please don't submit anything to me by email), and
- Comment on those assignments and mark them.

Assignments

There are no exams, quizzes, presentations, group projects, or participation marks in this course.

I am asking you to complete five assignments this term.

- 1. Worksheet 1: 20% of your final grade (due by Thursday, September 26th at 10am).
- Worksheet 2: 20% of your final grade (due by Monday, October 21st at 10am).
- Worksheet 3: 20% of your final grade (due by Thursday, November 14th at 10am).
- **Worksheet 4**: 15% of your final grade (due by Monday, December 2nd at 10am).
- **Portfolio**: 25% of your final grade (due by Thursday, December 12th at 10am). 5.

Worksheets: The worksheets will ask you to apply what you're learning in class through a combination of media (audio, images, text, and video). A worksheet will never contain more than five prompts, and I will encourage you to use class time to draft your brief responses to them. I will circulate each worksheet well before it's due, and I'll review each prompt in class to ensure it's clear.

Portfolio: You'll conclude MDIA 200 by producing a portfolio that documents what you learned in this course, reflects on that learning, and communicates its significance to someone in particular (e.g., a professor, student, friend, or family member).

Brightspace: Please use Brightspace to submit all your work this term. You do not need to purchase any software to use Brightspace, but you will need your UVic NetLink ID, access to the internet, and a computer. I cannot accept assignments by email.

Feedback: I will provide brief and focused feedback on worksheets according to their grading rubrics. Please email me or schedule an appointment (F2F or Zoom) to discuss my feedback. Again, I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays. Thanks in advance for your patience.

Workshop: Worksheet 4 will ask you to register for a workshop in UVic Libraries, attend it, and document what you did and learned. I will circulate a signup sheet for the workshops in September.

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Workload

The most important thing to know about this course is that *I'll opt for care in every instance*. If the workload becomes too much, or we're juggling more than we should, then we'll cut material. I planned for the maximum in advance, under the assumption we won't get to everything. And that's totally fine.

I suggest dedicating 3 to 5 hours to MDIA 200 each week in addition to our weekly meetings on Monday and Thursday. Of course, 3 to 5 hours per week is only a guideline. You may find that you need more or less time depending on the activity, your preferences, and your familiarity with the work and materials involved.

I will give you some time during class to draft responses to the worksheets; however, you will need more time (between classes) to develop and refine your work, hence the recommended 3 to 5 hours per week.

Schedule

Here's the schedule for the term. It's subject to change. In fact, I'm 94.37% certain it will change. I will use a Brightspace announcement to notify you at least two weeks in advance of those changes, and I will never use schedule changes to increase your workload (e.g., add an assignment or reading).

All materials for this course are available in Brightspace. Please study them before the date they're assigned. This way, we can make the most of our time together in class.

All meetings are scheduled to occur in person (face-to-face). If you miss a class session, or you simply want a review, then I recommend checking Brightspace to view the slide deck for that session and touching base with a peer to see if they're willing to share their notes.

Th 5 September: Hello!

We'll introduce ourselves, and I'll provide an overview of the course.

After class, please read:

- The course outline, including the schedule and policies, and
- The handout titled, "The Content Industry."

Please email me if you're on the waitlist for this course and have questions or concerns.

MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION

This module begins on Monday, September 9th and ends on Thursday, September 19th.

M 9 September: Communication, Part 1

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- 1. "Acts of Communication" and
- "Senses of Communication."

Please email me if you have any trouble accessing my slide decks in Brightspace.

Th 12 September: Communication, Part 2

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- 1. "Means of Communication" and
- "Levels of Communication." 2.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 1.

M 16 September: Communication, Part 3

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- 1. "Forms of Communication" and
- 2. "Models of Communication."

Tuesday, September 17th is the last day for a 100% reduction of tuition fees for standard firstterm and full-year courses.

Th 19 September: Communication, Part 4

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Miscommunication."

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 1, which is due by Thursday, September 26th at 10am.

MODULE 2: MEDIA

This module begins on Monday, September 23rd and ends on Thursday, October 17th.

M 23 September: Media, Part 1

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- "Medium Specificity," 1.
- "Media Convergence," and 2.
- "Understanding Media."

Please let me know if you've any questions or concerns about registering for a workshop in UVic Libraries.

Th 26 September: Media, Part 2

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

"Images," 1.

- 2. "Comics," and
- "Ways of Seeing."

Worksheet 1 is due today by 10am.

M 30 September: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

No class today.

Today is the last day to pay first-term fees without penalty.

Th 3 October: Media, Part 3

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- "Text." 1.
- "Typography," and
- 3. "Ways of Reading."

M 7 October: Media, Part 4

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- "Audio," 1.
- "Podcasts." and
- "Ways of Listening."

Tuesday, October 8th is the last day for a 50% reduction of tuition fees for standard courses.

Th 10 October: Media, Part 5

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- 1. "Video,"
- 2. "Animation," and
- 3. "Ways of Watching."

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 2.

M 14 October: Thanksgiving

No class today.

Th 17 October: Media, Part 6

Before class, please read the handouts titled:

- "Interfaces," 1.
- 2. "Video Games," and
- "Ways of Interacting." 3.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 2, which is due by Monday, October 21st at 10am.

MODULE 3: APPROACHES

This module begins on Monday, October 21st and ends on Thursday, November 28th.

M 21 October: Approaches, Part 1

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Effects."

Effects will address affect, cognition, and behaviour.

Worksheet 2 is due today by 10am.

Th 24 October: Approaches, Part 2

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Culture."

Culture will address rituals, values, and community.

M 28 October: Approaches, Part 3

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Aesthetics."

Aesthetics will address art, design, and experience.

Th 31 October: Approaches, Part 4

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Meaning."

Meaning will address semiotics, discourse, and encoding/decoding.

Today is the last day to withdraw from first-term courses without penalty of failure.

M 4 November: Approaches, Part 5

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Persuasion."

Persuasion will address rhetoric, propaganda, and disinformation.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 3.

Th 7 November: Approaches, Part 6

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Representation."

Representation will address power, identity, and intersectionality.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 3, which is due by Thursday, November 14th at 10am.

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M 11 November: Reading Break

No class today.

Th 14 November: Conferences

No class today, but please schedule a time to meet with me if you've questions or concerns about the course.

Worksheet 3 is due today by 10am.

M 18 November: Approaches, Part 7

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Narrative."

Narrative will address genre, story, and plot.

Th 21 November: Approaches, Part 8

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Ownership."

Ownership will address monopolies, regulation, and public / private media.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 4.

M 25 November: Approaches, Part 9

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Participation."

Participation will address voice, play, and fandom.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the Portfolio.

Th 28 November: Approaches, Part 10

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Preservation."

Preservation will address collection, migration, and emulation.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 4, which is due by Monday, December 2nd at 10am.

M 2 December: Last Session!

Before class, please read the handout titled, "Media Studies: A Review."

Worksheet 4 is due today by 10am.

Wednesday, December 4th is National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Th 12 December: Portfolio

Please submit your portfolio by 10am today. I hope you've a wonderful winter break!

Resources

Here are some resources for the course and your studies at UVic.

UVic Learn Anywhere

UVic Learn Anywhere is where you can find articles, tip sheets, and video tutorials to develop the learning skills you need for academic success at UVic.

UVic Libraries

Everyone at the University of Victoria Libraries is committed to the success of UVic's students and faculty. The library's foundational role in acquiring and preserving research resources is critical in the complex digital environment of 21st-century scholarship. Their expert staff are increasingly working within disciplines, across disciplines, and beyond traditional boundaries, as they navigate this exciting landscape with students, faculty, and researchers. They welcome the wider public into their physical spaces and actively seek partnerships with local and regional organizations to support and enhance the rich arts, culture, and learning opportunities in UVic's communities.

Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE)

The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement serves as a hub for cultural, academic, and community connections. Whether you are a student seeking guidance, a community looking to collaborate, or an individual interested in learning more about Indigenous initiatives at UVic, IACE is here to support you on your journey. They work closely with Indigenous students, staff, faculty, Elders, and community to create opportunities for meaningful engagement, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and voices are woven into the fabric of their work.

Centre for Academic Communication (CAC)

The Centre for Academic Communication offers online and in-person one-on-one tutorials, workshops, and more. As a priority, they actively coach students on academic integrity, including preventing accidental plagiarism. Their free services are available to all UVic students. They are here to support students with time management and planning for a successful semester. They also coach students on reading, writing, speaking, understanding academic expectations, and other aspects of academic communication. They can support you in creating academic posters, blogposts, PowerPoint slides, and e-portfolios.

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

Community-Engaged Learning is a rewarding way to apply your studies to real-life projects in the community. This type of learning is a partnership between UVic students, faculty,

campus partners, and the community beyond campus. It's a way to gain meaningful handson experience that supports and honours the community and strengthens your academic experience.

Academic Concessions and Accommodations

If your academic courses are affected by illness, accident, or family affliction, you may wish to request an academic concession. Are you a student with a learning disability, ADHD, mental health issue, or long-term recurring physical or sensory disability? Do you have chronic health issues? If you do, UVic provides academic accommodations to address barriers to your education.

Student Wellness

Their team of practitioners offers a variety of services to support students' mental, physical, and spiritual health. You can make a same-day or pre-booked appointment with a counsellor, nurse, physician, or spiritual care provider.

Ombudsperson

The ombuds office is an independent, impartial, and confidential resource for undergraduate and graduate students and other members of the University of Victoria community. The ombudsperson helps resolve student problems or disputes fairly.

Student Groups

The following student groups may be relevant to your life as a student here at UVic:

- The Native Students Union,
- The Students of Colour Collective,
- The Society for Students with a Disability (SSD),
- The Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM), and
- UVic Pride Collective.

Policies

Here are the policies for this course alongside several UVic policies. Please let me know if anything is unclear, ignorant, or mistaken. I'll correct it.

Media Studies Certificate

This course counts toward UVic's Media Studies certificate. In fact, it's required for the certificate.

Communications and Office Hours

The best way to communicate with me is by email (jentery@uvic.ca) or during office hours, which are Thursday, 12-1pm, in CLE D331. I can also make an appointment to meet with you in person or via Zoom.

I respond to email between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Assessment and Feedback

Two of the four worksheets as well as the portfolio are required to pass this course. Failure to complete these three assignments will result in a failing N grade (calculated as a 0 for your GPA).

I will use UVic's official grading system to produce rubrics to assess your work. I will not post marks publicly or outside my office, and I do not use plagiarism or AI detection software.

All assignments should be submitted via Brightspace. I cannot accept worksheets or the portfolio via email.

I will use Brightspace to provide feedback on your work. If you ever want additional feedback, then feel free to ask me. I can provide it in person, via Zoom, or by email. Please also note that I will mark all the assignments in this course. (Maya is not marking this term.)

Throughout the term, I'll request feedback from you on how the course is going. I'll also ask you to complete Course Experience Surveys at the end of the term.

Late Submissions and Extensions

I've a 24-hour grace period (no questions asked, no email required, and no penalties) for every worksheet in this course. A late penalty of five points per business day will apply after 24 hours. I do not consider weekends or holidays to be business days.

I will not accept worksheets more than two weeks after they are due and cannot accept the portfolio more than three days after it is due.

Please email me if you need an extension for any assignment, and we can discuss possibilities on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation

There is no participation or attendance mark in this course; however, it is driven by class discussion and workshops, which are difficult to record or "capture."

I will assume you are attending each class meeting. If you are unable to attend a particular meeting, then please email me in advance and coordinate with a peer to get notes and the like from the session(s) you'll miss.

You do not need to provide me with documentation for an absence.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

I aim to create an inclusive learning environment that attends to difference and honours each of you, including your experiences at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, power, and class. I want to be a resource for you, and I continue to learn about EDI. If something is said in class (by anyone, including me) that makes you feel uncomfortable, then don't hesitate to talk with me. If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your university records, then let me know, and I'll correct the documents provided to me. If your performance in the class is being impeded by your experiences outside of class, then keep me posted, and we'll make adjustments. I also welcome any suggestions to improve the quality of the course, and I will make available mechanisms for anonymous feedback since you may prefer them.

Information for All Students

This page contains a list of important UVic policies.

Creating a Respectful, Inclusive, and Productive Learning Environment

UVic is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment across all modalities of learning and teaching. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations. Instructors or students who have unresolved questions or concerns about a particular learning environment should bring them to the Chair or Director of the unit concerned (or Dean, in the case of undepartmentalized faculties).

Accessibility

UVic commits to addressing and removing barriers that hinder full and equal participation of people with disabilities. UVic's Accessibility Plan includes guiding principles and existing resources. It summarizes consultations, barriers, and priorities for the next three years to address those barriers.

Equity Action Plan

The Equity Action Plan's goals provide UVic with strategic direction to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to create the conditions in which everyone feels a sense of belonging: as connected and respected parts of the university community.

Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response

UVic's Sexualized Violence Resource Office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) offers information on how to start the conversation about consent, where to get support on and off campus, and the options available under UVic's Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy.

Accommodation of Religious Observance

UVic recognizes its obligation to make reasonable accommodation for students whose observance of holy days might conflict with the academic requirements of a course or program. Students are permitted to absent themselves from classes, seminars, or workshops for the purposes of religious or spiritual observance. In the case of compulsory classes or course events, students will normally be required to provide reasonable notice to their instructors of their intended absence from the class or event for reasons of religious or spiritual observance. In consultation with the student, the instructor will determine an appropriate means of accommodation. The instructor may choose to reschedule classes or provide individual assistance. Where a student's participation in a class event is subject to grading, every reasonable effort will be made to allow the student to make up for the missed class through alternative assignments or in subsequent classes. Students who require a rescheduled examination must give reasonable notice to their instructors. If a final exam cannot be rescheduled within the regular exam period, students may request an academic concession.

Student Conduct

UVic is committed to promoting a safe, respectful and supportive learning, living, and working environment. As part of the university community, each student is responsible for their personal conduct as it affects the university community, university activities, and the university's property. The Office of Student Life works directly with the university community to review and help resolve non-academic student conduct concerns. They administer the university's Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy and serve as a supportive resource to the university community.

Non-Academic Student Conduct

UVic's Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300) clarifies what non-academic student misconduct is; details how the university responds to non-academic misconduct allegations; outlines the review and investigation processes; describes possible outcomes and ensures that when misconduct is found to have occurred, any sanctions that are applied are fair and consistent; and, explains how to appeal a decision that has been made under the policy

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members, and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification, or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community. This policy is designed to ensure that the university's standards are upheld in a fair and transparent fashion.

Students are responsible for the entire content and form of their work. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit students from developing their academic skills through the exchange of ideas and the utilization of resources available at the university to support learning (e.g., The Centre for Academic Communication). Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes a violation of academic integrity in a particular instance should consult their course instructor.

Copyright

All course materials, including my slides, handouts, and lectures, are made available for educational purposes and the exclusive use of students in this course. The material is protected under copyright law even if it is not marked as such, and the syllabus is licensed CC BY-NC 4.0. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires written permission, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

Generative Al

UVic encourages innovative teaching practices and supports instructors who may like to adopt new pedagogical approaches and learning technologies. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a form of machine learning with the capabilities to produce text, images, video, music, code, etc. UVic does not have a general ban on the use of GAITs, including ChatGPT. Instead, UVic embraces the appropriate and ethical use of GAITs in learning and teaching. The university recognizes potential concerns associated with the use of GAITs, including potential biases in the algorithms and the possibility that GenAI might be used in ways that violate academic integrity principles and intellectual property rights. Faculty and instructors are best positioned to make decisions about the use of GAITs in their courses. UVic offers guidelines to support faculty, instructors, and students in the responsible, effective, and ethical use of artificial intelligence tools. These guidelines also support principles of academic integrity and help to prepare students for a future where the use of GAITs continues to evolve.

Basic Needs

I want you to thrive in this course and everywhere else. Please let me know as early as possible if you have any concerns or if you require any supports to succeed. I'll do my best to help. If, for instance, you need to cover gaps in care, then please don't hesitate to bring your children to class meetings. Babies who are nursing are always welcome, as I do not want you to choose between feeding your child and continuing your education.

Some material in this outline was informed by the Media Texthack Team's Media Studies 101 project.

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