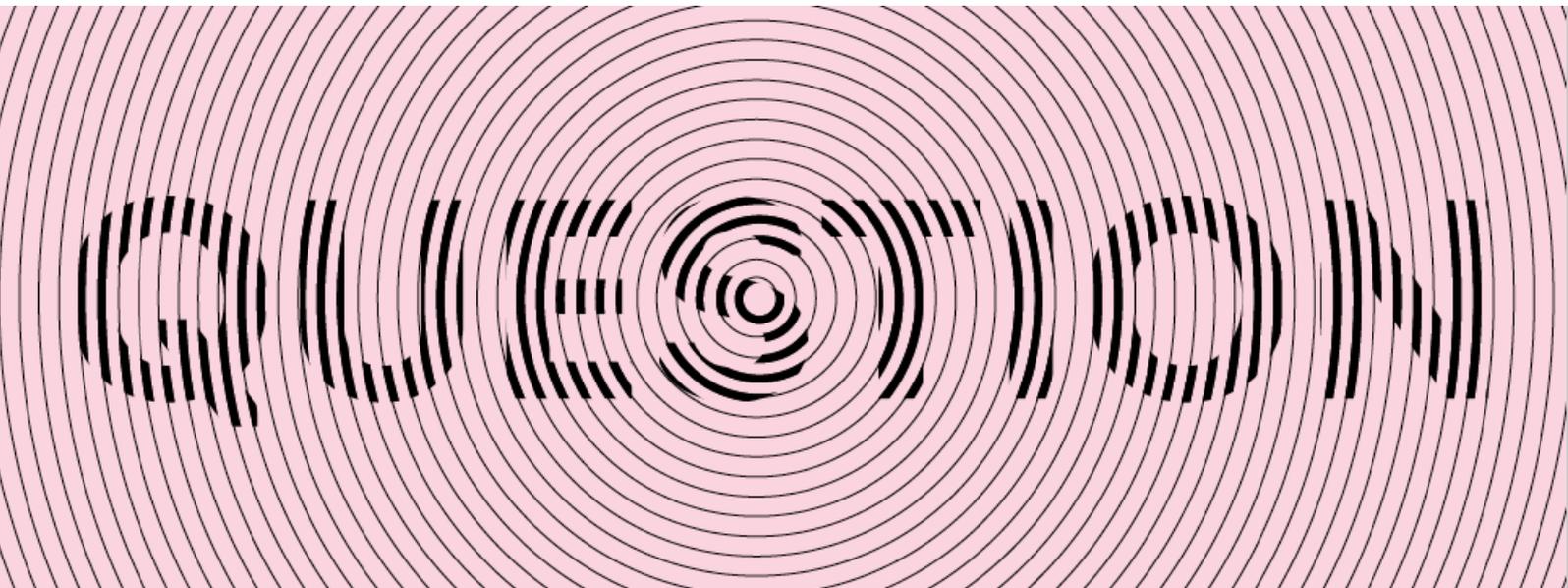




# Department of Media Studies



**MH101 BA Arts**

**Media & Cultural Studies**

**1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Handbook**

**2019-2020**

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## Welcome to Media & Cultural Studies at Maynooth University!

Welcome to Maynooth University and the Department of Media Studies. We are delighted you have chosen to expand your understandings of all things media and popular culture with us.

This 2019-20 Handbook is your guide to the academic year and to the guidelines in place regarding your academic study and practice work. Please read it carefully and refer to it throughout the year. A copy can also be found on our department website, [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies)

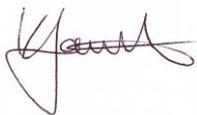
The Handbook provides details of the modules to be completed in year one and lists contact information for administrative and academic staff in Media Studies. Also included are Maynooth University Staff-Student Policies, information about grading and progression and a link to the University's policy on plagiarism.

Any specific questions you have on these policies and guidelines may be addressed to any staff member during the academic year.

The Department of Media Studies is based in the Iontas Building, on the North Campus. Anne Byrne staffs our department office and Tracy O'Flaherty staffs the English and Media Studies office.

If you have questions relating to individual modules or assignments, you should first discuss these with the lecturer teaching the module. Questions or difficulties related to your programme, including extended absences, should be discussed with Dr Javad Khajavi, the First Year Coordinator.

I look forward to an enjoyable and productive year working with you.



Dr Kylie Jarrett  
Head of the Department of Media Studies

## **Contact Details**

**Website:** [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies)

**Facebook:** Media Studies at Maynooth University

**Twitter:** @MU\_MediaStudies

### **Dr Kylie Jarrett**

Head of Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.20

**Tel:** 01-708 6948

**Email:** [kylie.jarrett@mu.ie](mailto:kylie.jarrett@mu.ie)

### **Anne Byrne**

Senior Executive Assistant

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.16

**Tel:** 01-708 3624

**Email:** [anne.m.byrne@mu.ie](mailto:anne.m.byrne@mu.ie)

### **Tracey O'Flaherty**

Executive Assistant

Department of Media Studies & English

Iontas 0.17

**Tel:** 01-708 3667

**Email:** [semts@mu.ie](mailto:semts@mu.ie)

### **Dr Sarah Arnold**

Lecturer in Media Studies, Research Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Education House 2.2.7

**Tel:** 01-474 7702

**Email:** [sarah.arnold@mu.ie](mailto:sarah.arnold@mu.ie)

### **Dr Denis Condon**

Lecturer in Media Studies, Second Year Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.25

**Tel:** 01-708 6212

**Email:** [denis.j.condon@mu.ie](mailto:denis.j.condon@mu.ie)

### **Dr Javad Khajavi**

Lecturer in Media Studies, First Year Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Education House 2.2.5

**Tel:** 01-708 4506

**Email:** [mohammadjavad.khajavi@mu.ie](mailto:mohammadjavad.khajavi@mu.ie)

**Dr Jeneen Naji**

Lecturer in Media Studies, Digital Practice Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.26

**Tel:** 01-708 3521

**Email:** [jeneen.naji@mu.ie](mailto:jeneen.naji@mu.ie)

**Dr Anne O'Brien**

Lecturer in Media Studies, Audiovisual Practice & Kairos Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.24

**Tel:** 01-708 6470

**Email:** [anne.obrien@mu.ie](mailto:anne.obrien@mu.ie)

**Dr Stephanie Rains**

Senior Lecturer in Media Studies, Third Year & International Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.22

**Tel:** 01-708 6980

**Email:** [stephanie.rains@mu.ie](mailto:stephanie.rains@mu.ie)

**Dr Gavan Titley**

Lecturer in Media Studies, MA Coordinator

Department of Media Studies

Iontas 0.23

**Tel:** 01-708 6422

**Email:** [gavan.titley@mu.ie](mailto:gavan.titley@mu.ie)

## **Module Information**

**15 ECTS credits**

### **Semester 1**

#### **Introduction to Media and Cultural Studies I (MD160)**

**7.5 ECTS Credits**

This module introduces students to foundational Media and Cultural studies concepts and theories through a focus on the centrality of narrative and storytelling to mediated communication. This module concentrates on an introduction to forms of textual analysis.

**Lecturers:** Dr Gavan Titley & Dr Anne O'Brien

### **Semester 2**

#### **Introduction to Media and Cultural Studies II (MD161)**

**7.5 ECTS Credits**

This module continues the introduction to foundational Media and Cultural Studies concepts and theories begun in MD 160. The focus is on the centrality of narrative and storytelling to mediated communication. This module concentrates on production, reception, and circulation of media content in socio-cultural and political-economic contexts.

**Lecturers:** TBA & Dr Anne O'Brien

### **Students may also take Digital Critical Skills as a second subject**

The digital critical skills stream aims to train students in basic practical digital literacy skills such as coding, image, and audio editing as well as providing them with an introduction to core web tools and techniques as well as the ethics of technology.

### **Semester 1**

#### **Digital Creation Skills: Coding, Editing & Optimising (MD190)**

**7.5 ECTS credits**

This module is the first in this stream and will focus on core basic digital production techniques and understandings.

### **Semester 2**

#### **Digital Literacy: Understanding Technology & Digital Rights (MD191)**

The second module in this subject will focus on core basic web technologies skills and digital rights knowledge.

**Lecturer:** Dr Jeneen Naji

## Timetables

The official university timetable information can be accessed at <http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/timetable>

Occasionally minor changes may have to be made to timetables after they have been published – when this occurs, the online version will be amended, and all affected students will also be notified of the change by email at the earliest opportunity.

## **Important information on grading and progression**

### **Module completion and progression**

- Students must pass all 1st year modules before proceeding to 2nd year.
- Students must submit all assessable components of each module. Students who do not may be required to repeat the module.
- In order to pass a continuous assessment module, students must pass each assessment with 40% or better. If a range of particular conditions are met, students *may* pass by compensation at 35%. For more details, see the Marks and Standards document available at the Exams Office website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/information-students>
- Students must meet the minimum attendance requirement for all modules. Students who do not meet this requirement may fail the module or have grade penalties applied.

## Marks and standards for student work

Maynooth University has a detailed Marks and Standards policy document for all undergraduates degrees. **All students should refer to this document at the earliest opportunity.**

This may be downloaded at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/information-students](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/information-students).

However, the most important information regarding marking is summarised here:

All student work is marked according to the following classifications:

First Class Honours	70-100%
Second Class Honours Grade I	60-69%
Second Class Honours Grade II	50-59%
Third Class Honours	45-49%
Pass	40-44%

Any mark below 40% is a failing mark, although depending upon their full spread of marks in all modules, students may be able to 'pass by compensation' modules up to half the subject credit-weighting, where they have received marks of 35-39%.

For the sake of consistency, the Department of Media Studies marks in percentage grades.

The following guidelines on the awarding of specific marks to specific standards of work should be noted:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Representative %</b>	<b>Class</b>
A++	Answer which could not be bettered	100	1:1
A+	Exceptional answer displaying unexpected insight	90	1:1
A	Undoubtedly first class, flawless answer, demonstrating originality	80	1:1
A-	Almost flawless answer demonstrating some originality	70	1:1
B+	Extremely high competence, perhaps displaying limited originality or technical flaws or minor errors	68	2:1
B	Fundamentally correct and demonstrating overall competence	65	2:1
B-	Competent performance, substantially correct answer but possibly containing minor flaws or omissions	60	2:1
C+	Awarded on the basis of the answer being somewhat better than a C but below a B-	58	2:2
C	Basically correct, answer with minor errors or one major error/omission.	55	2:2
C-	Awarded on the basis of the answer being somewhat below a C but better than a D+	50	2:2
D+	No more than adequate answer	48	3
D	Adequate answer with serious errors or omissions	45	Pass
D-	Lowest passing grade, barely deserving to pass	40	Pass
E+	The answer is inadequate and does not deserve to pass	38	Fail
E	The answer fails to address the question properly but displays some knowledge of the material.	35	Fail
E-	Fails to address the question	30	Fail
F+	Little relevant or correct material but some evidence of engagement with question	20	Fail
F	Very little relevant or correct material	10	Fail
F-	Totally irrelevant answer	0	Fail

## Staff-Student Communications

### **Website**

The Department of Media Studies website is at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies). This website includes all programme information, including links to detailed module descriptors showing module outlines and basic assessment information. The website also includes staff contact information and regular news/announcements. Please check the website on a regular basis.

You can also follow us on our Facebook page – Media Studies at Maynooth University – or on Twitter - @MU\_Media Studies.

### **Email**

All Maynooth University students are issued with an email account when they register, and retain the same account until they leave. These Maynooth University email accounts are the primary mode of communication used by the Department of Media Studies to contact students on both an individual and group basis. It is therefore your responsibility to check your email regularly, and we recommend that you do this **at least once a day**.

If you set up your Maynooth University email to forward messages to another email account, you must still regularly access your Maynooth University account to delete old messages. If you do not do this, your account will rapidly exceed its quota, and new messages will not be delivered until it has been cleared out.

Students wishing to make contact with a member of staff should use their Maynooth University email account only to send emails – messages from other email accounts may very well be delayed or removed by the spam-filter. All emails to any member of staff in the university should be treated as professional communications. This means **completing the subject heading of the message, addressing the recipient formally, and writing the message in clear, grammatical English**. Emails sent to any recipient must also be respectful and non-abusive.

Staff members will only reply to or send email between 9am and 5pm, Mon-Friday, except in serious, exceptional circumstances. Students who request information that is available either on moodle or which has been discussed in class will not normally receive a reply.

### **Moodle**

The Department of Media Studies uses Moodle online learning spaces for each module; they contain detailed information on module content and assessment. All students are automatically registered for Moodle access to all the modules they are taking. Please check the Moodle pages for your modules on a regular basis. Any difficulties with Moodle access should be reported to [moodlesupport@mu.ie](mailto:moodlesupport@mu.ie), not to the Department of Media Studies. Before using Moodle, please also consult its Acceptable Use Policy, available after login.

### **Access to Staff**

Students are encouraged to consult with lecturers on academic and other matters relating to a particular module. They should contact the relevant Year Coordinator for matters concerning their work in the university and their general progress as students. All full-time lecturers have specific times set aside to meet students, and these times are posted on their individual pages on the Department's website, as well as on their office doors. If the times posted by a lecturer you wish to see clash with your classes, you can ask for an appointment to see the lecturer at a mutually convenient time. These requests should be made by email. In the case of an urgent need to speak to a lecturer, please contact Anne in the Media Studies Office.

### **References**

Requests for references from staff should be made by formal email, giving full details of the nature of the course or appointment for which an application is being made (in the form of web-links where possible). Referees should have details of the applicant's address and telephone number to facilitate communication.

Every request for a reference should specify whether the reference required is a letter, a reference form (printed or online), and whether printed references should be forwarded directly to the applicant or to the institution or employer concerned. In either

case, a full postal address must be supplied to the referee.

As much notice as possible should be given to referees, the final date for submission of the reference being clearly specified. **At least two week's notice** before this final date is required.

It is essential that the referee is also supplied with an updated copy of the applicant's CV. It should indicate subjects and modules studied, along with results received to date, and also relevant extracurricular activities, such as voluntary work, relevant work experience, etc.

All of the above information should be supplied in one email to your proposed referee.

An 'open reference' may be of more limited value than the confidential reference relating to a specific application for a specific course or appointment.

Staff members appreciate a brief note informing them of the outcome of applications.

### **Social Media**

You can follow us on Facebook - Media Studies at Maynooth University or on Twitter - MU\_Media Studies - for news and events related to the study of media.



## **Department of Media Studies Staff-Student Policies**

The Department of Media Studies is committed to creating a safe and productive working environment for all students, faculty and staff of Maynooth University. This Charter is intended to contribute to this aim.

1. All faculty and staff of the Department of Media Studies undertake to treat colleagues and students with respect. It is understood that all students undertake to treat their fellow students, faculty and staff of Maynooth University with respect.
2. **Communication:** The Department of Media Studies often sends important information to students by Maynooth University email, and through Moodle. Please check your Maynooth University email account and Moodle regularly.
3. **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all timetabled classes. In particular, the following conditions will apply to all students:
  - Students **must meet the attendance requirements** for all Media Studies modules.
  - In particular, all students must attend at least 90% of all Media Studies lectures, labs, seminars or tutorials, unless exempted for documented medical or personal reasons agreed by the module coordinator.

**NB: Students failing to meet this standard may be required to repeat the module or have grade penalties applied.**

- Students who are unable to attend a timetabled class for a legitimate documented medical or personal reason must notify the Department of Media Studies of such absences at the earliest opportunity (if possible, prior to such an absence).
  - Documentation supporting reasons for such absences will not be accepted after the end of the semester in which the absence has occurred.
  - The Department of Media Studies will undertake to ensure that all classes take place as timetabled. Should unavoidable circumstances necessitate the cancellation or rescheduling of a class, every effort will be made to notify students promptly.
4. Students must submit **all the assignments** specified for a module. A module will be regarded as incomplete unless all assignments are submitted.
5. **Students are responsible for the submission of all assignments.** In particular, the following conditions will apply to all students:
- **Submission:** Submission of written assignments are through moodle and may also be requested in hard copy. If the assignment is requested in hard copy, it must be placed in the essay submission box near the stairs in the Iontas building with a signed cover sheet (available at the shelf under the stairs) attached. Hard copy assignments are collected daily and date-stamped.
  - **By email:** Where written assignments are assigned, emailed submissions will **not be accepted** unless agreed with the module coordinator in advance. All emailed assignments should contain a digital cover sheet (available on the department moodle page) with student name and the details of the module and assignment.
  - **Email details:** Where module coordinators request a submission by email, the file should have the name of the student and the module code in the file name. The email subject field should name the module and the assessment.
  - **Submission date:** All assignments must be received on the date on which they are due. Late assignments will be penalised at a rate of 5% per working day unless exempted for documented medical or pressing personal reasons **agreed by the** module coordinator.

- **Late submissions:** No assignment will be accepted after the end of teaching and exam periods in the semester in which such work falls due, unless exempted for documented medical or personal reasons agreed by the module coordinator.
  - **Retained Copies:** The Department of Media Studies requires each student to retain an exact copy of each piece of work (both written and practice-based) submitted for assessment. Submitted work is not returned to the student, but feedback is provided. In the event of submitted work being mislaid, the student will be expected to provide a replacement copy when asked. If you store your work electronically, you must be sure to maintain a back-up copy.
6. **Plagiarism:** The Department of Media Studies has a strictly enforced policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offence in the Department and in the University. Please read the plagiarism and exam checking policies carefully; they are available at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/policies](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/policies). Students who have a specific question regarding correct referencing should always seek the advice of the relevant lecturer in advance of submitting their work.
7. **Style and referencing of submissions:** All written assignments should be submitted in Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spacing, have numbered pages, a detailed cover sheet and full references and a bibliography. Referencing should be done according to the Harvard system of referencing.
8. No provision contained herein contravenes a student's statutory rights, including such rights conferred by virtue of being enrolled as a student of Maynooth University.
9. The Department of Media Studies undertakes to implement these policies in a reasonable manner, taking due account of any exceptional circumstances not expressly defined herein.

## **Useful Resources**

### **Student Support Services**

Managing your life at University can be a challenge.

Not only do you have to deal with the new ideas of your subject, you must also find ways to manage the workload among your other activities and keep your finances stable. Negotiating your way around the policies, procedures and processes of the institution can also be a frustrating experience as you may not know who to ask or what you need to know. It is also common for students to experience personal and emotional difficulties that affect their study.

You are not alone in dealing with these problems. Maynooth University has an array of student services, student support services and offices that can help you manage these or any other problems you may encounter during your studies. See the list at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/current-students](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/current-students) page of the University website to find out who can help you.

### **Programme Advisory Office**

The Programme Advisory Office is available to advise you on any choices you might have to make related to your programme including subject choice.

The Programme Advisory Office can be contacted via

Email: [programme.choices@mu.ie](mailto:programme.choices@mu.ie)

Telephone: 01 474 7428

In person: please see their website for information about meeting a member of the Programme Advisory Team: [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office)

### **Maynooth University Library**

MU Library is the portal to a vast collection of Media Studies resources that you'll need for your essays and research. The MU [library homepage](#); has excellent information, training, materials, supports and services that will help you in your studies. The library also provides a dedicated [Media Studies Subject Guide](#) (see Fig. 1 below) space on their webpage; it's a great source of subject-specific material and news.



Fig 1. Media Studies subject guide online



Fig 2. The search-box, LibrarySearch, that searches all the content in MU Library

Use **LibrarySearch** (see Fig. 2 above) on the library homepage to discover everything MU Library holds on your subject and topics. It gives you the location and details of thousands of e-books and e-journals you can read online on your devices, as well as information on books, journal articles, and databases on your subject.

You can access the information on LibrarySearch, and e-books, e-journals and databases when you're on or off-campus. If you've any queries about finding material; just ask at the Library desk or live "Library Chat" box on the homepage.

Your **MyCard** (student card) entitles you to borrow material from the Library.

#### USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS:

Links:

- Library homepage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library>
- Media Studies Subject Guide: <http://nuim.libguides.com/mediastudies>

Contact:

- Undergraduates contact: Áine Carey/Niall O'Brien: [aine.carey@mu.ie](mailto:aine.carey@mu.ie)  
[/niall.obrien@mu.ie](mailto:/niall.obrien@mu.ie)