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A Cultural Indicators Approach to Media Industries: Using Digital Archives and "Old" Ideas to Ask New Questions

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Overview

This workshop series provides training on using software and digital tools to research media industries. Students emerge with:

- An appreciation of how those industries create social reality.
- Skills for analyzing the process in action.
- A historically informed approach to today's media challenges.
- Expertise in one of three key areas in media research: media and harm, the cultural role of media users, and celebrity.

The workshop series is designed to overcome two impediments to learning. The first is a tendency to think that media industries simply represent or distort the social world. The second is the understandable impression that their power is too complicated to scrutinize without extensive time and technological resources. Instead, this workshop series shows students how to use digital resources and qualitative coding practices to modularize this power. It isn't possible to explain how industries in general affect the world. It is, however, possible to present well-organized arguments on how particular media practices, including industries and publics, produce particular images of reality for a diverse set of reasons.

The workshop series is broadly framed within George Gerbner's "Cultural Indicators Project" (1969). Gerbner characterized media industries as "hubs" of political socialization. In the 1950s, Gerbner argued that the massive political power of the media often turned on pragmatic production decisions, frequently made at the lower levels of those industries. Certainly, he argued, media dominated social imaginations with powerful stories about "how things were," in terms of gender relations, the pleasures of consumption, and the prevalence of violence in a "scary world" (1998). At the same time, he believed that compelling explanations for how these stories were produced, distributed and popularized could often be found in small scale studies of particular media operations; examples included the role of censors in network television and even the part that shopkeepers played in popularizing women's magazines (1958). This is an accessible way to conceive media power, historicizing current media ecologies in basic trends that have long structured media studies. One specific feature of the workshop series is that it teaches students how to access key players in the media communication process and locate pivotal moments in media communication processes.

In demonstration, this workshop series applies a cultural indicators approach to three significant fields of media influence: media and harm, media users, and celebrity. The distinct feature of this approach is that it teaches students to use digital media content not as messages with self-contained meanings, but as evidence of how media industries create social ideas through production practices. Included here is the analysis of how certain public become involved in mediated realities. Students research these themes using the *Communications and Mass Media Complete* database, NVivo software, the *Informit TVNews* archive, hosted by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, YouTube and/or Twitter.

The workshop series teaches how to conceive and execute a research question, developing the capacity to house contemporary issues in the historical development of media theory. This essential basic skill in media research develops students' capacity to elucidate a media industry issue by applying existing concepts to a body of data via the appropriate tools. More precisely, this involves:

- Using Communications and Mass Media Complete database to find resources allowing students to relate media industry case studies to general questions about media influence (connected to harm, media users, and celebrity).
- Loading those resources into NVivo to elucidate common themes across scholarly sources.
- Using digital archive resources as "cultural indicators" as opposed to "texts," using these resources to connect to different actors involved in the construction of media realities.
- Analyzing this reality construction through the application of critical, theory informed thematic analysis.
- Finding ways to locate significant moments and people in processes of media communication.

There are two incentives that should be highlighted for students. First, the workshop series models writing and research skills applicable to other classes. Second, expertise in NVivo as a data management system can be highlighted as a transferable skill.

Rationale

The workshop series alerts students to the conceptual aspects of research training, overcoming the tendency to disarticulate theory and method. What this means is that it encourages us to think about media research as a practice, characterized by a dialectical relationship between theory and evidence. It's important to appreciate that it is simply impossible to ask a research question without understanding how media power has been conceptualized. Equally, these concepts mean nothing unless they can be translated into methods for organizing evidence about how media work in defined social situations. Bearing this in mind, the seminars locate research training in an important historical moment in media research. It's tempting to think that media power has never been so profound, multidimensional and impervious to existing theory. The rise of global right wing populism challenges traditions in qualitative media traditions, that have championed the capacity of popular culture to foster inclusive democracies. On the contrary, some evidence suggests that the proliferation of celebrity culture across the media sphere has reduced the diversity of mediated political discourse. The implication is that digital convergence has produced new forms of centralized media power, every bit as potent as anything witnessed in the mass media. Moreover, the subversive power of popular culture should be rethought. The emerging interest in post-truth culture suggests that this "playfulness" is largely enjoyed by those who hold the reins of power (Andrejevic 2013).

Experienced media scholars suggest that we address this crisis by revisiting the historical origins of critical media research. Instead of seeing the current situation as something that is radically new, technologically, the suggestion here is to return to basic "platform free" questions about what media power is (Turner 2015). Industry and platform specific research projects work best,

under this perspective, when they are guided by general inquiries on what it means to live in a "mediatized" world; one where the operations of media industries, societies, economies and peoples are reciprocal.

The implication of this new moment is that research practice needs to know the history of critical questions. Gerbner's Cultural Indicators approach provides this historical vision for several reasons. It is one of the most widely cited theories of media influence, offering a story about media power that has gained the attention of qualitative scholars from the cultural studies tradition (Morley 2006). In that sense, it is ideally suited to consider the relationship between the mass communication and media studies traditions, and the extent to which broadcast era research continues to teach lessons worth knowing. Uniquely, it also provides as a guide to research practice that treats digital media content as cultural artefacts, supporting a holistic research approach addressing media industries, media content, and media users.

The workshop series sits within a unit on Youth and Media. "Youth" is an evocative theme for researching media influence for three reasons. First, media influence research, as we understand it today, arguably begins with the Payne Fund Studies research on youth and cinema during the 1930s (Pietilla 2005). Second, studies of the role that media play in the social life of young people can be used to map the evolution of the field (Ruddock 2013). Third, anxiety about what media "do" to young people has been a perennial feature of social life for the last century, offering a means of connecting media research to social conversations (Osgerby 2004). Hence it is valuable terrain where we can practice addressing media theory to general audiences, thus developing employability skills.

Timeline

The unit deploys a defined process of discovery, elaborated in a sequence of workshops. Importantly, each workshop is related to a phase of a research project students undertake.

1. Workshops help students to research one of three questions on the impact of media industries. They are connected to assignments where students are asked to research:

   - The kinds of "harm" that media have been thought to cause to young audiences and criticisms that have been made of that work.
   - The reasons why media users have been seen as crucial variables in determining the social impact of media technologies and content.
   - Why twenty-first century scholars have argued that celebrity encapsulates new kinds of media dependency and influence, and industrial practices of convergence.

2. In Workshop One, students develop their understandings in a specialized area and gain literature review skills. Students may, for example, read further into how media violence stokes fear, the role of girl culture in developing the mobile phone as a social technology, or particular genre-based forms of celebrity (in fields like politics, sport, or reality television).

3. In Workshop Two, students find a case study that allows them to test and extend theory. In this step, they are asked to select a "media influence" issue that has grasped the public

imagination, and has been widely discussed in media. Then, students find a body of evidence and apply media theory to demonstrate how the case study involves media industries and audiences in public conversations that create social realities. Examples might include how feminist theory helps to explain the significance of the derision frequently directed at girl fans of boy bands.

4. In Workshop Three, students develop a method for doing cultural indicators analysis. This involves turning concepts into categories for thematic discourse analysis.

5. Having completed this analysis, students reflect on how their case study develops knowledge about their conceptual field. For example, what does knowing about Kim Kardashian tell us about celebrity; what it is, and why it matters? At the end of the unit, students write a three-part assignment, combining workshop skills to apply a theoretically informed question to media data to produce a report on how a case study demonstrates, in concrete terms, the relationship between media industries and public life.

Workshop One: Using Communication and Mass Media Complete database and NVivo to develop literature based research questions (2 hours 30 minutes)

Before Class

Install NVivo onto your personal machine. Watch one of three short videos, introducing research on celebrity, media and harm, and media users.

Celebrity Videos explain the role of celebrities as drivers of convergence, advocates of consumer culture, and embodiments of social change.

"Brainstorming a topic using Twitter" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjmN6JlQ2ME)
"Researching celebrity" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV4rSMXNXKw)

Media Harm Videos explain how "harm" has been conceived and studied across the ages, and outline the main conceptual and methodological problems that confront us if we try to argue that media are independently responsible for social problems. These ideas are exemplified through a case study on rap music and violence. The theme here is how rap is perceived as a potential social threat, since media industries position it as such.

"Understanding Media Effects: Basic Issues"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsrkP8V8qKs)
"Key questions and controversies in media effects research"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jdn6FdUVcm0)
"How media violence is connected to the real thing: the case of rap and war"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAkbhgqvkMc)

Media Users Videos explain how media users affect the impact and meaning of technologies. That said, it also explains how choices users make are affected by history, economy, and social

policy. The ideas are exemplified by a video that draws on feminist media theory to parallel 1970s girl culture and contemporary studies of mobile media.

"Media users as historical and political beings" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f64CTsmltPo)
"Feminist theory and the politics of media use" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dkh_x7iws1o)
"Media use as history" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhOgiiq2Y_8)

Watch each of the three videos and choose a research area. Then watch this tutorial, which shows you the keystrokes to perform the tasks we do in the workshop:

"Starting lit reviews, using search databases" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zrSOeX46-w)

Class Session Part 1: Navigating *Communication and Mass Media Complete* database, performing searches (1 hour)

- Log into the database.
- To the left of the screen, you will see options to limit your search. Tick the box ensuring that you search for peer reviewed journal articles only. This ensures that you will only retrieve research that has been subjected to scholarly peer review.
- Enter your research terms. Try to be as specific as you can. If you are interested in violence, for example, try to look for literature on a particular kind of violence such as gaming, fantasy, film, or horror. Focus on a certain kind of celebrity such as reality TV. Or focus on the users of a certain platform or technology such as Facebook users. See what your research returns. If you have too few resources – say less than 10 – consult tutors on broadening your research terms. N.B. to do this, you must have done the core reading and watched the online tutorials, so that you have a sense of what your topic is about in the context of general themes in media research. For example, if you are interested in violence, you might be interested in the connection between being exposed to media violence and aggressive behavior. Or, you might be interested in political aspects of the violence debate: for example, do fictional representations of terrorism affect how we view the real thing? And what kind of "media effect" is this? When we look for effects, are we looking at the right people? Why, for example, might we argue that adults are more affected by screen violence than the young? It's more likely that you will have too many articles to review. Again, try specifying – if you've just put in celebrity, try adding "definitions of." It might help to look for a recent issue for media users with sexting being a good example.
- When you have a workable list, read through the titles and keywords listed for each entry. Find the ones that interest you. Check the box to add them to your folder.
- When you have worked through the list go to "my folder." Check all the items, then click save. You will be presented with a list of all articles with their abstracts and key words. Cut and paste this information into a word file. Save it to your computer.

Class Session Part 2: Importing Resources to NVivo (25 minutes)

Watch the tutorial "Loading readings into NVivo: women and body image case study"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdT_LsYwX_4) then:

- Open NVivo and start a new project.
- Go to the data tab, and click import file.
- Import your annotated bibliography.

Class Session Part 3: Using NVivo to map your readings (1 hour)

- Go to the queries tab and make a word cloud. Hit queries, then word frequency at the top of the page. NVivo allows some options to make your word searching more meaningful, especially only counting words of a certain letter length. Try to think of the shortest meaningful word that is related to your topic, then use this as the minimum letter length. Then look for say the top 20 words. For example, if I was interested in doing something on rampage murders, I would use 4 letters as my minimum; this is because the concept of "myth" has been important in this area. You can run these queries a few times, experimenting with word numbers and lengths, and save all the searches.
- Use what you learned from prior reading and the online lectures to look for meaningful terms. Say you are working on celebrity. Remember your goals at this stage of the project is to find a language to explain why celebrity has become so important to media industries. Say your word search discovers several references to "authenticity." Three questions follow: what does authenticity mean in the celebrity literature, what are the most useful definitions in that literature, and how is it applied to explain how celebrities become celebrities?
- NVivo will locate exactly where that word is used. This will allow you to find the most relevant articles on this topic in your bibliography. Once you have identified these articles, go to the electronic link in your *Communications and Mass Media Complete* file, download the PDFs, and load them into your NVivo project file.
- Next, open your annotated bibliography document. When reading large amounts of academic research, it's useful to have a reading plan, based on a solid idea of what you are looking for in that reading. NVivo's coding function can help you here. Let's stay with the authenticity/celebrity example. What we know is that to use this idea, we need to be able to define it and apply it. NVivo can help us get started. Go to your word search, and look up every reference for authenticity. We need to turn these references into nodes, which, in NVivo speak, are "containers" where we can store particular ideas. What you would do is create three nodes: an "authenticity" parent node and then child nodes of "definition" and "application." In the original document, highlight the term, and then see if you can relate the reference to either definitions or applications. The point is, you can use the node coding function to begin to differentiate aspects of key terms. This will help you write your assignments, as it will begin to map out different sections of your written work such as definitions and examples in action.
- In practice, you can't always know what you are looking for, and coding can help here again. Read through all the abstracts and code things such as key/interesting ideas, key

authors (names that crop up a lot), key case studies. Again, use this exercise to identify those sources that it is worth paying more attention to.

Homework

Repeat the coding exercise for PDF articles. Having done that, you should be able to write your research question: What are the key concepts in your chosen areas, in your opinion, and how do they answer the question, "how do media influence society?" This exercise will be the basis for your critical literature review.

Workshop Two: Finding evidence about media influence from Informit TVNews archive, YouTube, and Twitter (2 hours)

Before Class

You should know what area you are working in and be able to explain key ideas in that field.

Class Session Part 1: Researching *Informit TVNews* archive (1 hour)

Note to instructors: Work with your library professionals to identify a suitable alternative, if you do not have this resource. One of the benefits of this workshop series is that it facilitates closer connections between media educators and libraries on using archival resources.

The *Informit TV News* archive stores Australian free to air news materials, including news broadcasts and discussion/review programs, such as the ABC's *Q & A*. Whether you are Australian or not, this provides an excellent database to practice cultural indicators research by examining how media create ideas that are used in social situations.

This exercise maps a method for investigating how Australian news has "created" ideas about your core topics. It provides a method for not only finding out what Australian news viewers have seen about media harm, media users, and celebrity, but also a method for investigating how these stories came about and for looking at patterns of similarity and difference between different media outlets.

- Go to the *Informit TV News* archive via your library link. This will log you in to the archive, which becomes important when you are retrieving searches later.
- Hit the advanced search button, and look for items related to the work you did in Workshop One. For example, if you want to know how Australian news has covered the role that gaming plays in teenage life, enter "gaming" and "teenagers." Hit enter. Make sure you click the "video only" button.
- Note that the list you retrieve contains information about the broadcaster (channel, show, anchor, reporter) and how to cite each video. You will need this later for your analysis.
- Download each video onto your hard drive, then import in to NVivo. Your search may specify a theme for your project. For example, a search on gaming and teenagers, run by myself in February 2017, found several stories on the risk of addiction. The addictive risks of gaming have attracted academic attention (Domahidi and Quandt 2015; King,

Delfabbro and Griffiths 2010). So too has the possibility that the addiction focus is politically motivated. Scholars of Chinese gaming, for example, have argued official concerns about gaming addiction have more to do with concerns of social control and the political threat of consumerism (Szablewicz 2010; Zhang 2013). This is notable because it connects concerns about gaming with historical patterns, where the media habits of young users are associated with moral decay (Ruddock 2013). It also fits the criticism that public and academic inquiries into media harm are politically motivated, or misrepresent the social world of media users by failing to ask about the positive influence media have for many (Ferguson 2013). This creates an obvious thematic research guide. When Australian television reports on gaming and addiction, whose advice do they access, and to what extent do these stories reflect a counter argument? Alternatively, you might take gaming as a whole. According to the archive, how many positive stories about gaming has Australian TV featured? You might pursue a similar direction if you are interested in media users. Are there more stories about risks than benefits of smartphones and tablets?

Homework

When you have selected your videos, take them home and transcribe them in NVivo. We will demonstrate how to do this in the workshop. NVivo allows you to play the audio track at transcription pace and to record who says what. This is vital for the analysis workshop.

Class Session Part 2: Using Social Media (1 hour)

For this section, you will need to use the Chrome web browser and download a plug-in called ncapture. When you have done this, the plug-in will show as a small NVivo icon with an orange arrow on the top right of the browser.

One of the big questions in media research is whether we should stop worrying about media industries, and think more about how media users create social reality through their own creative media practices (Gauntlett 2011). Social media play center stage here. In this section, we are going to show how to gather data on how social media users – at all levels of society – engage in public discussion through sharing practices. How does social media sharing create social ideas? NVivo and ncapture let us find out.

- Think of a social media angle on one of the three areas. For example, you might be interested in how a celebrity uses Twitter to create a relationship with the public. Along the same lines, you might be interested in the creation and spread of hashtags. You may be interested in Facebook pages. You could even combine the celebrity and media user categories to research how "ordinary" people use YouTube to make themselves celebrities.
- Find you data: the Facebook page, Twitter feed, or YouTube video you want to research.
- Hit the ncapture button on Chrome. Ncapture will only capture Facebook pages as PDFs, but can capture Twitter feeds and YouTube pages as datasets. The benefit is that datasets can be automatically coded (a hashtag, for example, will be sorted in a way that gives you the handle and the location of each tweeter, which may or may not be useful to you).

- When you have your dataset or PDF page, load it in to NVivo.

Homework

This is where the cultural indicators method comes in. In the next workshop, we will be learning how to analyze this material through theoretically informed coding. There are, however, other things you can do with this content.

If you are using the *Informit TV News* archive: Watch all the clips and note down the twitter handles of the journalists you encounter. If there is an especially interesting news broadcast – one that combines very different viewpoints on a particular issue – try to contact the reporter via Twitter, and ask if you can interview them about how they put the story together. Why did they do the story? How did they select the people that they interviewed? How did they determine the questions that they would ask? The idea is to discover the story behind the content. Is anyone interviewed as an expert in these clips? Can you contact them? If they agree to speak to you, ask them how they were contacted to take part in the broadcast. What was their motive for taking part? What we are looking for is how a range of factors affect news, above any conscious intention to present reality in a particular way.

If you are using social media: You have a few research options. Do you want to know more about the people who post to a Facebook page? Try contacting the administrator, and asking if you can post questions. You may do the same with Twitter. If you are involved in a project that looks at how people share media content through social media, you might try to research the media sources that social media users share. Does most of the shared sources come from mainstream media? What are the alternative sources? How much do media users know about the provenance of the information that they share? For example, have people shared posts from extremist sources, without knowing?

Workshop Three: Coding and Thematic Analysis (2 hours)

This workshop will introduce students to research methods in thematic discourse analysis, which can be performed using NVivo node coding functions. Students will learn how to make sense of data by using search and coding functions and how to translate concepts developed from literature reviews into methods for performing qualitative data analysis.

Before Class

Watch these tutorials:

"Writing your essay using NVivo coding and annotation functions"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lbcARyVWOg)
"Using NVivo to research and write about media harm"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Rk4lLy0xrE)
"The effects of social media use" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmNdbEi5VuU)

Read: Given, Lisa M. 2008. "Coding." In *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, edited by Lisa M. Given. Sage Publications. (In your reading list.)

As the reading makes clear, coding is a process that we use to find meaningful patterns from qualitative data. The goal is to organize inevitably messy evidence of culture in action. The data you have gathered is evidence of media industries at work, but that work consists of many different processes, so we should make clear rationalized distinctions about how we interpret this evidence. Coding is a dialectic process that swings between the theory that we know and the evidence we have. The goal is not to find *the* truth, but rather to provide a justified research process. It is a process that gives order to acts of interpretation, so that people who read your work are clear on how you arrived at your conclusions.

The Given reading offers several different styles of coding such as open, axial, and selective. Open coding reflects the idea that the point of doing research is to find out what you don't know. Of course, everyone goes into research with an agenda. For example, you are interested in UFC fighter Ronda Rousey as a celebrity. She's a good choice because of what we know about media and society: a young woman who at one time was a bigger draw than male competitors in a combat sport is clearly interesting, given the amount of attention paid to gender in the media. So, it would be foolish not to look for how her celebrity brings ideas about gender to life. That said, gender is a complicated issue. Rousey has been associated with all kinds of gender based themes: the objectification of the body, unequal pay, sexual abuse, to name but a few. Therefore, it makes sense at same stage to take a more selective approach, perhaps choosing one of these issues. But going the other way, it's also true that Rousey is about far more than gender. Her story is also about race and class. Then, too, there is the question of how people feel about martial arts. Some people may not be fans because they dislike the UFC, a martial art that is too brutal, or too attuned to entertainment. Others may resent the fact that Rousey quickly became more famous, and better paid, than other women fighters with longer fighting records and better skills. All we can say for sure is that celebrities like Rousey are about many things, and we can't spot them all until we start looking at how media industries use her, and audiences make sense of her image and performances.

These challenges can be addressed by using NVivo's node coding function in a way that reflects the logic of the dialectic between open and focused coding. This will be done in the following way:

- Prepare for coding by researching as much as possible about the themes that guide your topic. For example, if you are doing something on violence, then you will know that one of the big controversies in that field is an over-emphasis on its impact on audience behaviors, at the expense of other less visible effects such as the formation of political attitudes or the generation of fear. Therefore, if you are doing a project on how TV news covers violence issue, you probably want to have a node where you can collect all the places in your data where behaviors are mentioned. You would also want to have nodes for other effects such as fear or suspicion. Come to the workshop with your list of focused nodes.
- Look through your data: the transcripts from the news casts, the visuals and edits that accompany, or comments from Facebook, whatever you have. Note down anything that

strikes you as interesting or notable-even if you can't quite figure out why they are significant.

Class Session

- When you are in the workshop, the first thing we will do is show you how to create nodes. (Go to create, hit node, then enter a name and a description for your code).
- Next, we shall show you how to create child nodes. These are subcategories of parent nodes. Suppose you are interested in the authenticity of a celebrity. Literature on celebrity suggests that celebrity authenticity can take on many forms: celebrities may appear authentic because that appear to be ordinary, or appear to be honest, or are emotionally empathetic, or are good at "staying in character" (Cashmore 2013; Turner 2010; Rojek 2012). Take, for example, *The X Factor* and *American Idol*'s Simon Cowell. Fans see Cowell as authentic partly because his willingness to deliver harsh judgments never waivers on the show; his performance onscreen never waivers, and therefore he is seen as an authentic version of a certain form of decisive masculinity, regardless of what he may be like in private life (Inthorn and Street 2011). This is very different from the authenticity that may be bestowed on someone like Angelina Jolie, a star whose appeal depends partly on the blending of humanitarian aid work with her private life as devoted mother (Rojek 2012). In any case, we can see why authenticity should be focused on into different themes.
- This is where open coding comes in. We can do this is a few ways.

  - Go to your data and type a word search to match one of your parent nodes. Highlight the section of the data where someone or something is talking about that issue. What is the distinct aspect of the concept being discussed here? Is it, for example, a view of authenticity that has a distinct meaning that is worth its own sub node. The way you can tell is if you think this particular comment is interesting enough to write about in your final report. If you can't decide now, but you still want to save this piece of data as something that belongs to one of your key categories, right click on the section, and follow the prompts to "code at existing nodes." If you believe it warrants a sub node, create that first.
  - Next, try open coding. Go through your data, highlight sections that seem, to you, to say something significant about media influence in your chosen field. Highlight it, and try to assign it to a meaningful node. Then, as you move through the data, look for evidence that seems to fit in the same "container."

- Start using the annotation function. Perhaps you can't quite decide why something is important. Highlight it, right click, then add an annotation – this is a note that will record your thoughts on what something might mean, or how it might contribute to an argument. This gets you started on the writing process, and gives you more of a guiding framework as you move through the data.

Homework

The workshop will start you doing work that you will continue in your research time for this unit, in preparation for your final report, which is the last step of the research process. Your task, at this stage, is to comment on how media industries – news, social media, and the other industries that converge through the latter – arrange the ideas and languages that society uses to get a sense of itself and its values, directions and challenges. The coding exercise will allow you to comment on how particular media platforms thematize reality. The other research you have done may be able to tell you about the work from which these themes emerge. If you manage to interview a journalist, for example, you can analyze the transcript using the same coding protocols: you might have nodes such as "time pressure to produce story" or "ease of access to sources." At the end of your report, try to come up with short replies to two questions: 1) According to your case study, how do media industries and media users make social reality? 2) In your study, who are the key players in making that reality and where are they positioned in the media communication process?

Final Report

The workshop series helps students write a three-part final paper on their topic of choice. At the end of the workshop series students should be able to:

- Identify general ideas in their area of choice. These are: 1) for the harm question, that media influence operates through complex and diverse mechanisms, where the real question is how media become involved in social problems, rather than how they cause them; 2) for the celebrity question, the notion that celebrity is the driver for commercial and media culture; 3) that the social impact of media is significantly affected by the people that use them and that this often has unpredictable outcomes.
- Specify certain key concepts in the area that students wish to pursue (e.g., the concept of authenticity in celebrity, or the role of social media in performing gender).
- Identify and analyze small-scale bodies of evidence that allow them to show media power in action through qualitative coding (e.g., the way that news media connect gaming to real world violence).

Overall, the final report paper tests the ability to take an artifact from media culture, and persuade the reader that this artifact is worth remembering, historically, as an example of how media industries and users created an episode of historical significance. It provides an organized research practice oriented method to perform a key task in media studies, namely, establishing the political import of popular culture.

For an outline of how that paper works, see the following resources:

"Assignment 1: Writing Guide" (https://prezi.com/w83cwwcn5efp/assignment-1-writing-guide/)
"Explaining assignments" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llFE_mkx7l0)

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