College of Design and Social Context

School of Media and Communication

Program Information Guides for Students 2010
Version 2 (Revision Date: 21/01/2010)

Bachelor of Communication Honours Programs

Plan & Program codes:
BH053 – BComm (Advertising) (Hons)
BH054 – BComm (Journalism) (Hons)
BH055 – BComm (Media) (Hons)
BH056 – BComm (Professional Communication) (Hons)
BH057 – BComm (Public Relations) (Hons)

Web reference: www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/students/programinfoguides
Welcome to the Honours program of the Bachelor of Communication at RMIT.

Honours is an advanced applied research program that provides a research environment intended to develop creative and critical applied thinkers for contemporary media industries. This course allows students to undertake communication research in the context of reflective practice. There is a commitment to exploring relevant, sustainable and innovative methods and practices relevant to contemporary communication industries and ideas.

The current mission statement for LABsome says:

LABsome Honours allows the best students to think seriously and creatively around gnarly questions in communication and media. Students are expected to push the envelope concerning ideas, methods and artefacts. In a networked, digital age what will communication be, what will it look and sound like, what will our jobs be and how should we express all this?

In LABsome everyone will be a knowledge and communication producer (not a consumer), and will be a participant within modern information networks and ecologies. (And we will know what that means in thought and deed.)

Adrian Miles
Program Director, B.Comm Honours
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1. PROGRAM INFORMATION – B COMM (HONOURS)

PROGRAM MAP – Full Time

*All courses are 12 credit points – unless otherwise stated.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Semester 1 – Option 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM2150 Research Workshop A</td>
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<td>COMM2076 Communication Revolutions</td>
<td>COMM2125 Research Thesis A *(48 cp)</td>
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<td>Complete one student elective (see page 7)</td>
<td>COMM2119 Research Project A *(48 cp)</td>
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<td>Semester 1 – Option 2:</td>
<td>Semester 2 – Option 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM2150 Research Workshop A</td>
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<td>AND</td>
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<td>COMM2076 Communication Revolutions</td>
<td>COMM2126 Research Thesis B *(24 cp)</td>
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<td>AND</td>
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<td>COMM2123 Research Project B *(24 cp)</td>
<td>COMM2127 Research Thesis C *(24 cp)</td>
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<td>OR</td>
<td>AND</td>
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<td>Complete one student elective (see page 6)</td>
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Your research occurs across two semesters. You are required to enrol in a total of 48 credit points of research/thesis courses, which can comprise of either 24 credit points per semester, or 48 credit points in the second semester only. The semester in which you undertake your elective determines which of these options you will be required to undertake to meet the program requirements.

Please note that research courses do not appear on STS (Student Timetabling System) or the School Timetable. This is because there are no set class times, and you are expected to undertake research in your own time and consult with your supervisor by appointment on a regular basis.
**PROGRAM MAP - Part Time**

*All courses are 12 credit points – unless otherwise stated.*

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<th>PART TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Semester 1:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Semester 3:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM2126 Research Thesis B <em>(24 cp)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM2127 Research Thesis C <em>(24 cp)</em></td>
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<td>COMM2123 Research Project B <em>(24 cp)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Semester 4:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM2124 Research Project C <em>(24 cp)</em></td>
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2. COURSE DETAILS:

Course details are also available online at: www.rmit.edu.au/programs/courses

COMPULSORY COURSEWORK – Honours

Semester One

COMM2150 Research Workshop A
Pre-requisites: NIL
This is a compulsory course in the coursework component of the Bachelor of Communication (Honours). This course is intended to introduce students to the methods and strategies appropriate to successfully initiating and planning a sustained research project (whether by thesis or practice). It will provide the opportunity to develop the research skills and activities relevant to your honours outcomes, and is intended to foster creative critical reflection around your proposed topic and/or project Communication Studies Honours program. Its purpose is to assist you in your studies during the program as a whole and, more particularly, to facilitate research for the Research thesis and Research Project. The course does not offer a formal instructional program in research methodology: you must possess the basic research skills relevant to your topic to enter the program. But it does provide an opportunity for you to refine your skills, to clarify your topic, to discuss your problems and to encounter examples of completed research projects as models for your own research practice. The course will include presentations on different aspects of communication research and on the theoretical, methodological and ethical protocols of scholarly enquiry.

COMM2076 Communication Revolutions
Pre-requisites: NIL
This course is a compulsory unit in the coursework component of the Communication Studies Honours Program. The program services the School’s Bachelor degrees - as well as graduates of programs in other universities - and, in doing so, enlists students whose undergraduate backgrounds, disciplinary knowledge and intellectual interests vary considerably. The present course commences with a topic that is not systematically examined in any of the School’s undergraduate programs but is clearly relevant to each of them: print cultures. The rapid diffusion of printshops through western Europe in the latter half of the 15th century has been widely presented as a revolutionary moment inaugurating new forms of thought, of cultural expression, of social and political organisation. Similarly, expansive claims have been made about the impact of broadcast media and the new wave of digital media.

The course will examine the connections between communication technologies, social relations, and verbal and visual cultural forms through the topics of print, broadcasting and some digital cultures. The aim is to hone analytical skills in relation to: claims about communication “revolutions”; the defining characteristics of various communication technologies; and the putative demise of some communication technologies. This will be done by focussing on accounts of the introduction and operation of earlier new technologies - the printing press and broadcasting apparatuses - and then placing these in relation to claims about the new wave of digital media. In the process, a range of historical, political and associated policy considerations will be canvassed.

Semester Two

COMM2151 Research Workshop B
Pre-requisites: NIL
This course is to assist students to complete their Honours research activities to the best of their abilities. It is intended to develop a collaborative, viable and peer based support environment that will achieve this, and become a model for future professional practice.
ELECTIVES COURSEWORK – Honours

Semester One

COMM2201 Public Relations: Changing Perspectives
Pre-requisite: A first degree in the field or professional experience
This course offers students advanced knowledge about new and emerging trends in public relations scholarship and industry, focussing on stakeholder relationships, collaborative advocacy, and dialogic communication. Using a hypothetical case scenario through a community consultative model, the course will apply rhetorical, critical and post-modern approaches to the practice and study of public relations. The main class activity/project is based on a simulated public relations issue management group activity which requires consultation and negotiation with multiple stakeholders.

COMM2419 Terrorism, Media and Morality
Pre-requisites: NIL
Terrorism, Media and Morality is a critical response to mediated terrorism in the 21st century. Late last century, media-orientated terrorism began displacing earlier forms by targeting media-users as well as those marked for death. ‘Theatre of Terror’ (Jenkins 1975) has become an accepted term for this phenomenon, but the Ethics of Media Use implied by that term has been largely overlooked.

Drawing extensively on scholarly literature, yet offering a fresh approach, Terrorism, Media and Morality studies the Theatre of Terror from an audience or media-user perspective, seeking answers to three main questions: How is terrorism ‘framed’ in its mediation and during our use of that news? What truths can be discerned in journalism on terrorism? What should media-users do with news about terrorism and related phenomena?

COMM2335 Transient Spaces
Pre-requisites: NIL
Transient Spaces will introduce students to theoretical and practical issues surrounding networked media, specifically the Internet and mobile phones. The practical component of the course will involve students learning to use social software and create html pages.

Semester Two

COMM2217 International Communication and Culture
Pre-requisites: NIL
The course examines intercultural communication flows, with attention both to general theoretical arguments (regarding ‘postcolonialism’, ‘globalisation’, ‘nationalism’, ‘cultural imperialism’ etc.) and a variety of empirical case studies.

The course poses a series of questions. For example, what happens when cultural forms migrate from one context to another? What contemporary phenomena are referred to by the term ‘globalisation’, and how may these be understood historically? How may formations of power which characterise international relations be understood, and how have these impacted on particular social groups and contexts?

The course approaches these areas through a series of relevant case studies of contemporary cultural forms and issues: the identity politics of dub music; ‘Orientalist’ representations; the politics of national identity in Singapore and Australia; cultural phenomena such as ‘world music’; the political and cultural economy of international media industries, and their impact upon contemporary media representations; and contemporary issues such as protests about the nature and impact of economic globalisation, the politics of race, and indigenous struggles for cultural and land rights in Australia.
COMM2420 Political Communication
Pre-requisites: NIL
Around the globe, politicians, government departments, NGOs and corporations are increasingly embracing professionalised, modernised and Americanised political communication strategies. Why, and to what effect? This course introduces students to the field of political communication. It examines the role of globalisation and new technologies, and questions how these dramatic changes affect civic engagement, political participation and voter turnout. It considers the effects of political communication, including concrete evidence regarding persuasion, political beliefs and behaviour. It addresses national and international political communication, and comparative perspectives from a number of different socio-political systems.

COMM2080 Literary Journalism: The Art and Craft of Telling True Stories
Pre-requisite: A first degree in the field or professional experience
This course is an elective in the School of Media and Communication’s honours program, which services the four streams in the School’s Bachelor of Communications degree programs. The undergraduate background of students in the program vary considerably. As an elective focussing on literary journalism, this course has clear links with the BComm (Journalism), but it has been designed to be valuable for students with differing professional and disciplinary training.

Literary journalism is an extension of feature writing; another name for it might be advanced feature writing. Compared to straight news reporting, with its adherence to the inverted pyramid format, feature articles vary in length, style and scope. An elementary feature story might be 1000 words long; an advanced feature would be at least 2500 words, and pieces of literary journalism run considerably longer, culminating in full-length books. Students will learn a method of reporting and writing that encompasses elementary and more sophisticated feature stories. Students will also examine the debates surrounding literary journalism (or advanced feature writing).

Literary journalism is a field that in the past has been overlooked and undervalued within the disciplines of both literature and journalism. Fierce debate surrounded the so-called New Journalism of the sixties and seventies precisely because it offended traditional notions of journalism and literature. In the past two decades such prejudices have begun to dissolve, replaced by a strengthening awareness within the disciplines of the value and interest of literary journalism, past and present. A body of critical literature has developed which has asserted that literary journalists offer some of the most vibrant and challenging texts available today. These texts, whether literary or documentary, provide fresh insights into major issues of the day and evoke powerful public and critical responses.

MKTG1230 Advanced Advertising
Pre-requisites: NIL
Since its inception, advertising has been a competitive industry. This course explores key academic research outputs which are redefining concepts of effectiveness in advertising communication. Emphasis is given to the study and application of these outputs in the process of building and redeveloping brand identity and corporate communication. New procedures for measuring brand value and advertising responses are critically looked at to exemplify the ways in which research outputs can help brands acquire a competitive edge. This course makes explicit the links between academic research and industry practices, the advantages of collaboration, and future opportunities between these two.
The research thesis will involve formulating, planning and executing a piece of research that will take the form of a 12,000 – 15,000 word thesis.

The research project will involve formulating, planning and executing a piece of professionally-oriented action research (e.g. a series of journalistic feature articles, the construction of a strategic communication campaign or an advertising campaign). The research project may also be in non-written form for its major outcome. For example, an interactive DVD, a website or an advertising campaign. A short written exegesis, which is a discussion of pertinent scholarly research and reflection on research and/or professional practice, is also required.

In the research thesis and the research project you will gain experience in critical reflection and problem solving at a number of levels, engaging with existing scholarship relevant to your topic, composing the results of your research into a coherent whole, and sustaining an argument.

You will work with a supervisor who will oversee your work. A satisfactory performance in COMM2150 Research Workshop A and COMM2151 Research Workshop B is required to proceed to, continue in and complete the Research Thesis and the Research Project.

**Submission**

Submission of the thesis/project is the culminating point of the program. The successful execution of your thesis/project work will depend on a number of preliminary steps undertaken during Research Workshop A.

**Supervision**

To assist you in understanding what is expected from you, and what you may expect from your supervisor, we provide the following guidelines.

It is your responsibility to arrange supervision for your thesis/project from a member of staff teaching in the School of Media and Communication in the area of your thesis/project research. First, you must select your general research area, think about possible topics and then contact the appropriate staff member for supervision. You must be prepared to be flexible about your research topic to ensure appropriate supervision can be offered in the School.

The role of a supervisor is to oversee the work and progress of a student undertaking individual research. The nature of the supervisory relation will vary according to supervisor and student, but an expectation is one hour per fortnight of consultation, averaged across the period of enrolment in Research Thesis/Research Project, and, if enrolling in the 48 point Semester 2 course, Research Thesis/Research Project, preliminary meetings in Semester 1 in the preparatory stage of the thesis/project work. Supervisors and students are advised to establish a schedule of meetings early in the supervisory relationship to ensure continuity of supervision, and regular access to supervisors for advice on the larger scale planning of the thesis, the continuing execution of research and the final composition of the thesis/project.
3. TIMETABLES

For the latest versions of the School of Media and Communication timetables, please see:

www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/student/timetables

Please note that timetables are subject to change
4. ONLINE CLASS BOOKING

- Bookings for preferred classes and tutorials for face to face courses in the School of Applied Communication are made on the internet using the Student Timetabling System (STS), prior to the commencement of each semester.

- If you want to book into classes that are offered by another School, (assuming that your program allows this, e.g. Social Science, Psychology, Business, Marketing etc), you can also book into classes and tutorials online using the **Student Timetabling System prior to the commencement of each semester**.

- Look out for notices on campus, as well as letters or emails for details regarding the dates and the web address – information is usually released approximately two weeks before classes start.

- The School of Media Communication online class booking system is generally available to students in the week prior to the commencement of classes.

- You can access the online class booking system (usually one week prior to the commencement of classes) at:  
  [www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/students/timetables](http://www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/students/timetables)

**Queries/Problems:**

**Program Structure Queries:**  
Please contact the Program Co-ordinator, Adrian Miles on 03 9925 3157 or email:  
adrian.miles@rmit.edu.au

**Administration queries/problems:**  
media@rmit.edu.au

**Technical queries:**  
helpdesk@ems.rmit.edu.au

**Class booking queries:**  
Tim Moore: tim.moore@rmit.edu.au
5. ENROLMENT ADVICE

Students are required to enrol as specified in the University’s letter of offer.

**Advanced Standing/Credit From Previous Study**

Exemptions/RPL: If you think you should get exemption/RPL for previous study or life experience, make sure you see your program/stream coordinator before enrolling.

**The credit points system**

The credit points system is used to represent the total student workload in a program in Higher Education and is the basis for calculating all fees.

Credit points reflect the course workload. They reflect *Teacher Guided Hours* plus *Learner Directed Hours* per week, for each semester.

The Honours Program comprises of 96 credit points for the year with these allocated in approximately equal numbers per semester.

- Per course: 12 credit points
- Per semester: 48 credit points
- Per year: 96 credit points

**Study Loads**

**Full-time loads (local students)**

You will not be permitted to enrol in more than a standard full-time load for the year of the program in which you are enrolling, unless under exceptional circumstances.

A full time load is 96 credit points per year (48 credit points per semester)

**Part-time loads (local students)**

Part-time students are required to enrol in a minimum of two courses per semester, unless only one course is required to complete the program.

**Study loads (international students)**

The Australian Commonwealth Government has placed a number of conditions and restrictions on students who are studying at Australian Universities on student visas.

**Underload**

Choosing to underload (i.e. enrol in less than the standard credit point load for your attendance mode) may mean that you will be out of step with the program’s offerings. There can be no guarantee that courses will be available when required for your progression or you will have the requisites for progression.

**Overload**

It is not expected that you should overload (i.e. enrol in more credit points that the standard semester load). If you wish to overload (i.e. only in exceptional circumstances), you should see your Course Coordinator. Overloads will only be permitted where an agreement has been reached with the Program Director.

**Attendance requirements**

International students are required by the Australian government to be enrolled in a full time load. The University itself has no attendance requirements for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programs, however, you must remember that you are bound by the conditions of your student visa. If you fail to meet the conditions of your visa you may be deported.

If you are away for more than five consecutive days, you must contact your Program Director/Course Coordinator immediately. You may be required to provide documentary evidence such as a medical certificate. Approval must be obtained from your Program Director/Course Coordinator for any absences exceeding five consecutive days.

**Pre-requisites and co-requisites**

It is your responsibility to ensure you have met pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements when selecting your courses of study.

**Enrolment in courses outside program**

Enrolment in courses outside your program, excluding Student Electives, will not contribute to your degree requirement.

**Student Electives – Undergraduate students only**

Any 12 credit point course without pre-requisite and advertised on the university’s student elective website can be considered a Student Elective.

**Rules, Policies and Procedures**

- For more information about RMIT University’s rules, policies and procedures refer to the Student Diary and the RMIT University web site at: www.rmit.edu.au/students/policies
• For general information about the School of Media and Communication and your program, refer to the School’s website at: www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication

**Student Administration Forms**

• Student Administration forms, e.g., Application for Single Credit/Block Credit/RPL etc, are available to students online at URL: www.rmit.edu.au/students/forms

**Student Essentials Website**

Need to get help with administration, access student services or find out what’s around on campus? See the list of information available which is accessed via www.rmit.edu.au/students and visit The Hub student service centre to help you get the most from your student life. This site and its links will provide information concerning:

**Student essentials**
Manage your studies, access student services and find out what’s on around campus.

• Need to Know
• Computers and IT
• Manage your password
• Course and program information
• Enrolment
• Exams, results and assessment
• Fees and charges
• Graduation
• Study and work abroad
• Rights and responsibilities
• Services for students
• Student Charter
• Student life
• Study resources
• The Hub
•

As part of your **student responsibilities** you must check your RMIT student email account at least once a week. RMIT sends updates about your enrolment, program, invoices, key dates and messages from your lecturers.

**Disclaimer**
This publication was prepared in October 2009. It is an information document for enrolling and re-enrolling students of RMIT University. Every reasonable effort was made to ensure that the information was correct at the time of printing. RMIT reserves the right to alter any program, course, admission requirement, staffing or other arrangement without prior notice. Readers are advised to confirm any possible changes with the School of Media and Communication.