

MODULE 5: Communications & Audience Theories

Stage				1			
Semester (Semester1/Semester2 if applicable)				2			
Module Title				Communications & Audience Theories			
Module Number				5			
Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)				Mandatory			
Module ECTS credit				5			
Module NFQ level (only if applicable)				9			
Pre-requisite Module Titles				Research Methods			
Co-requisite Module Titles				N/A			
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)				No			
List of Module Teaching Personnel				Robbie Smyth			
Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (Hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent work	
24			12	36		48	120
Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)							
	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total		
Percentage contribution	40	60			100		

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Critically discuss and evaluate leading communication and audience theories and concepts
2. Evaluate the spectrum of research and theorization on how media audiences are measured and how audiences behave.
3. Apply advanced communication and audience theories to academic and professional situations.
4. Critique the major paradigms and theories that have shaped the field of communication, including their historical development and current trends.

Module Objectives

Understanding how audiences relate to media content and developing an ability to critically discuss research and theories in this field enhances and adds to the skills developed by creating media content. This module offers a critical depth and context

to the media skills acquired in the journalism based modules of the MA programme. It complements the knowledge and understanding acquired through completion of the Research Methods module and also offers an academic introduction to examples of research and theories potentially relevant to learners undertaking the dissertation module.

Module Curriculum

(1) Media industry audience measures

The JNLR, JNRR, ABCs, ABCe, Nielsen, TAM and Box office methodologies
The BARB and OFCOM audience research discussed
The challenge of measuring online audiences

(2) Audience histories and origins

Early ideas of audience, the impact of printing
The mass media audience from film to TV
The online audience

(3) Audience Theories

Effects Approaches
Uses and Gratifications Theory
Morley and Hall's Decoding theory
Screen and Reception theories of audiences

(4) Categorising audiences

Macro and micro approaches: From Demographic and marketing segmentation strategies to Values and Lifestyles methodologies and micro trends

(5) Communication theories and audiences

The development of mass communication theories and processes including: Coordinated Management of Meaning, Cultivation Analysis, Cultural Approaches, Face-Negotiation Theory, Groupthink, Muted Group Theory. Narrative approaches, Rhetoric, Social Exchange, Social Penetration Theory, Spiral of Silence, Standpoint Theory, Structuration, Symbolic Interaction.

(6) Advertising and audiences

From Informational Processing to Emotional Meditative models
Advertising in practice: Analysing current advertising strategies

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Berger, Arthur Asa (2011) *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture*, 4th edition, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham Maryland.

Croteau, Hoynes Milan (2012) *Media/Society – Industries, Images and Audiences*, 4th edition, Sage, Thousand Oaks, California.

McQuail, Denis, (2010) *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th edition, Sage, London

Sullivan John, (2013) *Media Audiences – Effects, Users, Institutions, and Power*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, California.

Secondary Reading

Berger, Arthur Asa (2003) *Media and Society – A Critical Approach*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham Maryland.

Castells, Manuel, (2009) *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Fiske, John (2010), *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 3rd Edition, Routledge, London.

Littlejohn, Stephen, Foss Karen (2011) *Theories of Human Communication*, 10th edition, Waveland Press, Long Grove, Illinois.

Mandiberg Michael, (2012) *The Social Media Reader*, New York University, New York

Mills Brett, Barlow David M, (2012) *Reading Media Theory - Thinkers Approaches and Contexts*, 2nd edition, Pearson, Harlow.

O'Boyle Niall, (2011) *New Vocabularies, Old Ideas: Culture, Irishness and the Advertising Industry (Reimagining Ireland)*, Peter Lang, Oxford.

Ouellette, Laurie, (2012) *The Media Studies Reader*, Routledge, London.

Storey, John, (2012) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 6th edition, Pearson, Harlow

Learners are expected to visit the websites and read reports of bodies and agencies such as:

Nielsen, TAM Ireland, National Newspapers of Ireland, Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, OFCOM, COMREG, The Federal Communications Commission. British Audience Research Board, Poynter Institute and Pew Research.

Module Learning Environment

The module learning environment is based on the introduction of key readings and research studies in lectures which become the focus of seminars and learner presentations. Learners undertake small research presentations and are expected to lead seminar discussions. The lecturer sets the critical direction of the module mapping out topics and readings while the learner is required to develop this with their own reading and research, demonstrated through class presentations, discussion and written assignment work.

Module readings and resources are available through Moodle. Learners use these as a springboard to independent study, using the college online journals and the library catalogue while also being directed to monitor industry reports and media coverage of module related issues.

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This module's teaching and learning strategy is based on using formal lectures to introduce the six curriculum areas. In each case key themes and readings are introduced with a rota of learners allocated to make presentations on the topics. The learners present and discuss, during the course of the semester, case studies and research/academic study in these seminars.

A set of hard copy core readings, adapted annually are given to learners. Learners make presentations twice a term with a requirement also to participate in class room discussions on the topics and presentations of other learners. Learners are able to deepen their critical knowledge through the completion of two written assignment pieces. The learner presentations are made through an agreed method using visual slides and other appropriate digital presentation formats.

Module Assessment Strategy

Learners are required to complete two equally weighted class presentations which account for 20% of the module marks. Alongside this they complete two written assignments. There is one major project, agreed with their lecturer which analyses some aspect of audience research. There is one academic essay taken from a list changed annually. Learners cannot present a project on the same course area as the essay assignment. At least one of the class presentations must focus on a different aspect of the topics discussed in the project and essay academic assignment.

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	10%	Presentation	Oral presentation on seminar topic
2	10%	Presentation	Oral presentation on seminar topic
3	20%	Essay	Critically reflective written essay assignment
4	60%	Project	Major project which analyses an area of audience research