



LONDON SOUTH BANK
UNIVERSITY

unit guide

Writing Popular Culture

AME_2_WPC

Faculty of Arts and Human Science

2006/7

become what you want to be

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1. UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title: Writing Popular Culture
Unit Level: 2
Unit Reference Number: AME_2_WPC
Credit Value: 15
Student Study Hours: 150
Contact Hours: 36
Private Study Hours: 110
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable): L1 Units

Course(s): Writing for Media Arts
Year and Semester: Year 2, Semester 1
Unit Coordinator: Angus Batey
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room): angus-b@dircon.co.uk

Subject Area: Journalism
Summary of Assessment Method: You will be assessed using the following methods:

1. Production (75%)
2. Production Analysis: 2000 words (25%)

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This unit investigates the theory and practice of popular journalism. Students will be introduced to the popular culture media, learn to understand how the popular culture media functions, and encouraged to put their theoretical understanding into practice in class work and in practical assessments.

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

The primary aims of the unit are:

- To introduce students to the different journalistic approaches to popular culture
- To introduce students to the journalistic sub genres in popular culture, with particular focus on celebrity culture, music, sports and cinema
- To introduce students to different historical approaches to popular culture, and to develop a broad-based understanding of the changing role of music, cinema and sport in text-based media, including magazines, broadsheets, tabloids and websites
- To encourage students to develop a sound critical and analytical approach to popular culture journalism, so as to both gain a better understanding of popular

culture's role in the media and to develop skills appropriate to undertaking work for the popular culture media

- To examine professional approaches appropriate to written journalism, reinforcing skills acquired at level one
- To introduce students to the practical possibilities and limitations of journalism in the arena of popular culture

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Intellectual Skills

By the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical approaches appropriate to the critical analysis of popular culture journalism, through practical work and written analysis
- Demonstrate an understanding of the debates around ethics and aesthetic in relation to popular culture journalism
- Demonstrate relevant academic skills in reading, writing and the conventions of presentation

4.2 Practical Skills

By the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to produce a journalistic piece in a specific subject of popular culture, to identify suitable specific subjects, and to develop an understanding of how to write, source and research popular culture feature articles to a standard acceptable to a professionally produced title
- Demonstrate an ability to critically appraise your own practical production work in relation to appropriate related artefacts

4.3 Transferable Skills

Students have an opportunity to develop:

- Creative and technical skills necessary for the writing of a journalistic piece
- Oral communication skills through seminar discussions and group work
- Written communication skills appropriate to academic study
- Analytical skills in making critical judgements
- Organisational and methodological skills of practical research
- Self-management

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

You will be assessed using the following methods:

1. Production (75%)
2. Production Analysis: 2000 words (25%)

The coursework will both test the Learning Outcomes of this unit and will relate to the broader generic criteria appropriate to this level. The pass mark for this unit is 40%.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the submission of an assignment.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

Theory:

- 1) Historical overview of and theoretical approaches to popular culture journalism
- 2) Critical approaches to the journalistic sub genres in popular culture, with particular focus on celebrity culture, music, sports and cinema
- 3) Issues in contemporary popular culture journalism including ethics, code of conduct, narrative strategies, responsibility to the audience, fictionalisation and serialisation of the information
- 4) Current state of popular culture journalism in the media industry

Practice:

- 1) Conceptualisation: developing and selling an idea, research methodologies and interview techniques
- 2) Writing skills: introduction & conclusion, quotations, discursive strategies and narrative devices

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

The unit runs over twelve weeks and consists of three-hour lectures, tutorials, workshops, presentation and feedback sessions. Students are also expected to spend approximately seven hours per week on independent reading, research and self-managed work. Students are expected to work on their practical work in their own self-managed time.

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

This unit aims to provide essential skills in planning, writing and management as well as to develop an in-depth approach to research, exploring theories and ideas. Both the script and the Production Analysis (no less than 2,000 words) will require a clear understanding and application of these ideas.

Students are also expected to carry out significant amounts of independent study and work towards the production of their script and production analysis.

Information for Students with Disabilities / Dyslexia

The Learning Support Unit provides services for students with disabilities and dyslexia while studying at London South Bank University. If you are a student with a disability or dyslexia or think you might need to be assessed for dyslexia, please contact the LSU as soon as possible.

Learning Support Unit, Caxton House
020 7815 6400 www.lsbu.ac.uk/caxton

7.4 Employability

Recent research by Skillset (Overview of anticipated trends in the future use of skills in the audiovisual industry to 2010, September 2004) acknowledges the need for media workers to keep apace with digital and new technologies by acquiring a more 'complex skillset'. The report identifies 'soft skills' as being vital to this complex skillset – soft-skills include verbal and written communication, planning, team-working, good interpersonal qualities and problem solving. These skills offer individuals a competitive advantage in the job market. Units like Writing Popular Culture help foster both these sets of skills.

Skillset also highlights the extent to which media workers of the future will need to direct their own learning, given that it is an industry dominated by freelancers and small businesses. This unit with its structure of lecture programme and self managed learning reinforces students' understanding that the self-management of skills development is part of the professional ethic of media workers.