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No2

"CULTURAL STUDIES IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD. IT EXAMINES TEXTS AND SUB-TEXTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO POWER RELATIONS WITHIN CONTEXTS"

New Coursework Master of Arts in Media Studies

The Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS) will be introducing a Coursework Master of Arts in Media Studies in 1994. Entry to the course will be an Honours degree. An interdisciplinary offering, it will be taught by lecturers from a variety of departments including Business Administration, Audio Visual Centre, Speech and Drama, Education, and so on.

Some newspaper editors and SABC producers have expressed the opinion that high-grade humanities trained 'generalists' are now needed in South African newsrooms and other media sectors if the country's journalism is to be salvaged from the ravages of the past few decades. The Coursework MA in Media Studies seeks to address this need.

International development agencies and churches working in Africa have also indicated the need for a course addressing African media needs.

Background: Locational Factors

Durban boasts significant media infrastructures: six major newspapers, ten widely distributed and highly profitable suburban newspapers, South Africa's largest magazine industry (Republican Press), the SA Broadcasting Corporation and Capital Radio. In addition, numerous initiatives are under way to establish community, educational and commercial radio and TV stations. The region also boasts a number of community-oriented and suburban publications being published in Durban, Pinetown, Amanzimtoti, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone and Stanger. There are also trade union and ecumenical presses in the Durban area.

In the light of the location of so many media industries in the Durban area, and in terms of our discussions with newspaper editors and broadcasting news executives, there is a real need for the advanced education of media professionals.

Media and information have become central economic motors of advanced economies

Need for the Course: Economic Factors

A massive growth of media channels, technologies and markets has occurred throughout the world over the last decade, ranging from satellites, telecommunications, videotext and information technology to national and international newspapers, regional, community and specialist newspapers and magazines. With the onset of digitalization of the SABC in 1995 the entire broadcasting airscape will dramatically alter overnight.

South Africa has not escaped the international trend towards multifaceted development of media and an information economy

The local demand for media professionals in all sectors of commerce and the state is increasing faster than they can be trained by tertiary institutions. Currently, South Africa is moving towards deregulating the airwaves as recommended by the Task Group into the Future of Broadcasting (1991). This will lead to the rapid development of privately-owned, university-based and community-run radio and television stations, as well as the journalists and media services required. One consultant estimates that deregulation would create opportunities for over 300 new radio stations in South Africa.

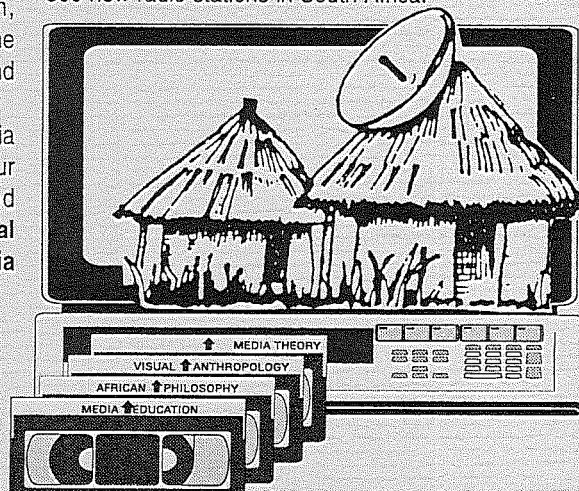
Each sector of the new media developments will need to be staffed with competent professionals. As the electronic media develop in sophistication and targeting of existing and new markets, so print media itself reorganises in response to these developments, often finding new niches, opening up new opportunities and spreading to economic and leisure activities which previously had no need of media.

Professional Standards

Simultaneously with the emergence of the media and information economy, however, the South African media has been decimated over the past decade. The closure of newspapers like the Rand Daily Mail and Sunday Express, and the rationalisations that have occurred within the SABC since 1987, resulted in the emigration of many of South Africa's journalists to Australia and other countries whose more mature economies were demanding media professionals.

Some newspaper editors and radio station managers have voiced their concern at the currently unsatisfactory state of affairs with regard to critical post-graduate journalism education which equips professionals with abilities to analyze complex social, economic and historical processes. Also, in the light of an extended period of massive social change which South Africa is about to enter, key editors have expressed their desire to provide further study opportunities for their currently employed journalists. The editor of The Star, South Africa's largest-circulation daily-newspaper has, for example, expressed interest in hiring university graduates. The Star's manager expressed support for a degree which educates media professionals who do not already have an undergraduate journalism degree.

Ken Owen, editor of the Sunday Times, has called for graduates who critically understand the workings of the media industry. They should also have the will to protect journalism practice and journalism ethics in financial and political environments that are becoming increasingly hostile to journalistic independence and quality.



The Editor-in-Chief, SABC TV News Predictions, Johan Pretorius, remarked of the course: "It will greatly contribute towards solving a pressing problem in the South African media World: too few staffers and media managers who have both practical journalistic experience and post-graduate academic knowledge of the media world, as well as a solid knowledge of content".

The current period in which South Africa finds itself calls for four main areas of professional media education:

** better educated media professionals are required if the changes and tensions in our society are to be adequately and sensitively reported in terms of both surface events and structural sub-currents;*

** media professionals with a knowledge beyond journalism skills and practices alone requires development. This relates to knowledge of content - economics, politics, social, science, education, finance, engineering, sport, arts and so on, and how to report these;*

** an understanding of how the new media technologies interact with each other, how they merge information flows, and how these can be, and are, mediated through the different channels to different (or the same) audiences. The latter is of crucial importance if Southern Africa is to become competitive in the global information economy, of which the press and broadcasting are merely two components. This will be especially so once foreign reinvestment again flows into the country;*

** Professionals from non-media sectors who interact with media industries are required;*

** media education itself is a growing element of schools and tertiary institutional syllabi. Media education courses at schools and universities are aimed at developing critical media literate citizens.*

Course Outline

The course will include:

(a) Introductory, intermediate and advanced **word-processing courses.**

(b) **Desk-top publishing and design.** Students will produce one publication on the desk-top system to the satisfaction of the CCMS staff. They will also set their dissertations by this method.

Or **Video Production** offered by the Audio-Visual Centre in association with the Department of Speech and Drama. This course will be limited to 5 candidates.

(d) An **internship** of at least one month in any media organisation during the vacation breaks or at the end of the year. The period will depend on negotiations with the organisation concerned. This criterion may be waived for candidates who have professional media experience. The employer organisation will be asked to provide an assessment of the candidate during his/her internship.

(e) Students will need to register for TWO of the following courses:

* **History and Political Economy of the Southern African Media** (CCMS). Students may specialise in any one industry - eg. cinema, press, broadcasting, advertising, telecommunications, PR, teledata etc.

* **Producing Copy for the Media.** (CCMS) Includes consideration of media law.

* **Marketing** (Business Administration Honours Course), a course on advertising.

* **Media Education** Part of the B.Ed course in the Education Faculty. (Limited places)

(f) In addition to (e), students must register for ONE course selected from Honours programmes. These include: **Theories of Media / Film/Video and Cultural Production / African Philosophy, Visual Anthropology.** (But not a course passed in any previous honours degree). The courses to be incorporated into the MA are to be negotiated with the Director, and the host department concerned.

Certain combinations will be mandatory - students doing video production will be required to register either for Film/Video and Cultural Production or Visual Anthropology, for example.

Other choices could be made from Honours courses in:

- * Political Science / Comparative African Government
- * Sociology
- * Industrial and Labour Studies
- * Economics
- * Economic History
- * Geography
- * Social Anthropology
- * Any other Honours course at the discretion of

the Director

(c) A **research dissertation** on a media topic. This component would form the central core of the second semester, and count for 30% of the final mark. Where candidates are excused the internship requirement, the dissertation will count for 50%.

Contributing Lecturers

Shahida Cassim (Senior Lecturer, Dept of Business Administration - Advertising and Marketing). Specialises in consumer behaviour and marketing.

Jasper Cecil (Director, Audio Visual Centre - Video Production). BBC trained producer with many years of technical and production experience in South Africa.

Dr Neville Herrington (Senior Lecturer, Dept of Speech and Drama - Video Production and Theory). Has worked for SABC-TV.

Prof James Zaffiro (Dept of Politics, Central College, Iowa). Widely published on history and government uses of broadcasting in Zimbabwe and Botswana. Associated with CCMS via a formal institutional linkage.

Jeanne Prinsloo (Dept of Education - Media Education, Film/Video course), holds an MA from London University in Media in Education, has school teaching and educational video production experience.

Dr Ruth Teer Tomaselli (CCMS), SABC Board member, holds a Ph.D on broadcasting in South Africa. Co-editor of two books on South African media. Formerly research executive for J Walter Thompson, and Promotions Manager, McGraw-Hill. Currently Chief Researcher, Media & Culture Research Unit, CCMS

Prof Keyan G Tomaselli (CCMS), worked full-time in the film industry for five years when he also served as executive council member and chairman of the film and TV technicians union. He was also features writer on an audiovisual magazine, and film critic on other publications.

Outside specialists will be employed as and when necessary.

The CCMS Coursework Master of Arts in Media Studies is a one-year course starting in 1994. Enquiries should be directed to the Director, CCMS. E-mail tomasell@superbowl.und.ac.za