

# MACS390: Media, war and peace

## SUBJECT OUTLINE

Autumn session 2011

8 credit points, prerequisite 24 credit points at 200 level

Media and Cultural Studies (MACS)  
School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication, Faculty of Arts

University of Wollongong



### Subject coordinator and tutor

Brian Martin, room 19.2016

*Mailing address* Arts Faculty, University of  
Wollongong, NSW 2522

*Phone* 4228 7860 (home), 4221 3763 (work)

*Email* [bmartin@uow.edu.au](mailto:bmartin@uow.edu.au)

*Web* <http://www.bmartin.cc/>

You are welcome to contact me by phone (at  
work any time; at home after 7am and before

9pm, please) or email, to discuss any issue or  
make an appointment.

Office hours: Mondays 17.30–19.30;  
Wednesdays 18.30–20.30

### Tutor

Ian Miles (contact information and office hours  
provided in tutorials)

### Assessment Summary

	Assessment	Format	Length	Due Date	Weighting
1	Attendance	Presence at tutorials	2 hours/week	Weeks 1–13	<i>See Notes</i>
2	Participation	Weekly oral reports plus participation	<i>See notes</i>	Weeks 1–13	15%
3	Short	Presentation	10 minutes maximum	Allocated in tute	15%
4	Class activity	Class time organised by student group	<i>See notes</i>	Allocated in tute	20%
5	Project plan	Summary	100 words	Week 11	10%
6	Project report	Information pack and dialogue	2500 words or equivalent	2pm Wednesday 8 June	40%

### Class Contact Details

Class times and locations are available from the  
University's website. Please note that class times on  
the timetable are provisional.  
If possible, enrol via SOLS before week 1. If you have  
timetabling difficulties, see Brian.

Generic information relating to all Arts Faculty  
subjects such as services, codes of practice, rules and  
policies can be found at Arts Central's webpage,  
under the link Subject Outlines: [http://www.uow.edu.  
au/arts/current/artscentral/UOW061165.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/current/artscentral/UOW061165.html)

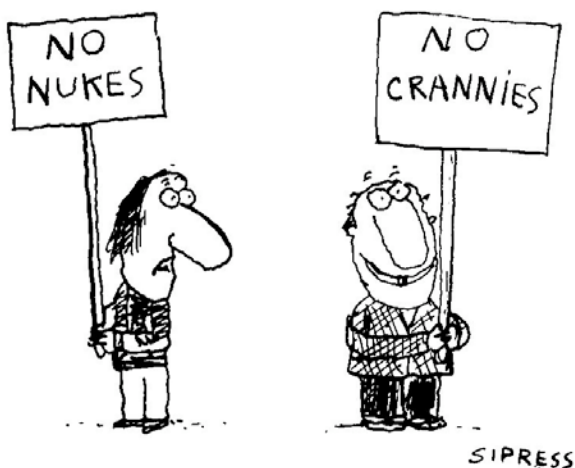


## Subject description

---

MACS390 includes material relating media to war and peace, in the wide sense including violence and nonviolence. It includes news coverage — or lack of news coverage — of wars, peace initiatives, interpersonal violence and peaceful living. It also includes war, peace, violence and nonviolence in the media outside the news, such as advertisements, dramas, comedies and music. It includes mass media and alternative media. It includes the social forces that shape the form and content of the media. And much else.

We can look at this content from various angles, called theories or perspectives. We will cover five theories in weeks 1 to 5. The goal in covering both content and theory is to understand theory by applying it to case studies and to see media/war/peace through new perspectives.



## Job skills

---

According to employers, the most important attributes for success are

- motivation, self-discipline and self-understanding
- ability to get along with others and work in teams
- communication skills: verbal, written and using communication technologies
- skills in critical thinking.

Knowledge — the factual material you learn in classes — is less important. MACS390 emphasises self-directed learning and working in teams, as well as communication skills and critical thinking. But don't rely on university education to give you everything you need for job success. Most university courses are built around individual work, not teamwork, and impose external incentives (marks) that can undermine internal motivation.

## Advice to you from last year's students

---

### *From class 1*

- Be open-minded; don't resist what is different
- Be prepared for class
- Read widely
- Bring good snacks
- Learn from other students

### *From class 2*

- Have an open mind
- Come to every class on time, fully prepared
- Bring snacks
- Follow assignment criteria
- Have fun and get involved
- Do some actual research (beyond Wikipedia)
- Be creative in class activities

## Learning outcomes; graduate qualities

---

MACS390 will expose you to a wide range of information about peace and war in the local and global media environment (informed). All the assessment tasks require you to find materials for yourself and to connect theory and case studies in original ways (independent learners). Through designing a presentation, an activity for the class and an information packs, you will solve problems in communicating about peace and war (problem solvers). Through the one-minute reports and short you'll develop skills in verbal communication; through the project you'll develop skills in written communication (effective communicators). By addressing issues of war, peace, violence and nonviolence that are vital to individuals and the world community, you will develop a greater appreciation of your role in society and how you can act responsibly (responsible).

**Informed** Have a sound knowledge of an area of a disciplinary study or interdisciplinary area of study offered by the Faculty of Arts through its majors with an understanding of its current issues, their contexts and developments over time.

**Independent Learners** Engage with new ideas and ways of thinking, enquiry and critical analysis of issues and research through a sequence of subjects that culminates in the ability to reflect broadly on their field of study. Acknowledge the work and ideas of others.

**Problem Solvers** Take on challenges and apply the relevant skills required to respond effectively to the central issues raised. Be flexible, thorough and innovative and aim for high standards.

**Effective Communicators** Articulate ideas and convey them effectively using a variety of modes. Engage collaboratively with people in different settings. Recognise how culture can shape communication.

**Responsible** Understand how decisions can affect others, and make ethically informed choices. Appreciate and respect diversity. Act with integrity as part of local, national, regional, global and professional communities.

## Special features of MACS390

*MACS390 is run a bit differently from most other subjects.* Please read the subject outline carefully rather than assuming things are like other classes.

- The penalty for less than 80% tutorial attendance is unusual. Please check it.
- You have a lot of choice in picking your assessment topics.
- Be prepared for a few unusual teaching methods. And be prepared to have some fun!

There are no formal lectures, even in the time slot called “lecture.” Educational research shows that lectures are no better than other learning modes, such as reading, for learning information, and worse for deeper forms of understanding. In MACS390, the aim is to encourage you to learn to learn for yourself, both by finding and analysing sources, by working in groups and by helping others to learn.

A lot of class time is interactive, including activities designed by groups of students — that includes you! As is commonly said, the best way to learn something is to teach it. However, if you feel that because you are not taking notes on lectures, you are not learning much, please read “Learning and taking notes” at [www.bmartin.cc/classes/](http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/).

## Subject schedule

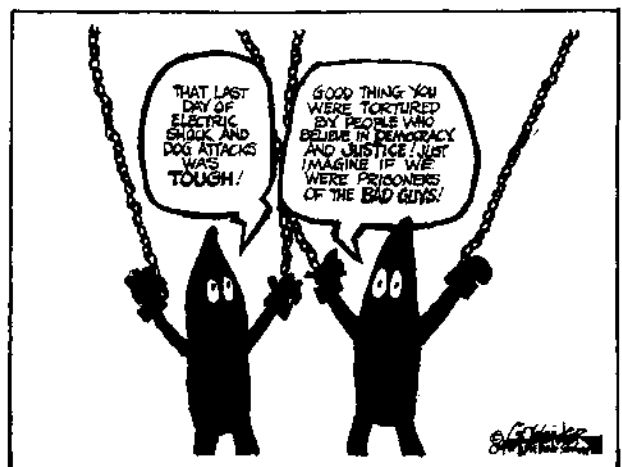
Week	Dates	
1	28 Feb–2 March	lecture & tutorial
2	7–9 March	lecture & tutorial
3	14–16 March	lecture & tutorial
4	21–23 March	lecture & tutorial
5	28–30 March	lecture & tutorial
6	4–6 April	lecture & tutorial
	11–13 April	mid session recess
7	18–20 April	lecture & tutorial
8	25–27 April	no classes
9	2–4 May	lecture & tutorial
10	9–11 May	lecture & tutorial
11	16–18 May	lecture & tutorial
12	23–25 May	lecture & tutorial
13	30 May – 1 June	lecture & tutorial
14	6–10 June	study recess

## Concepts and theories

### Peace/war/violence/nonviolence

You can pick any of these for the short, the class activity and the project report. For other possibilities, check with Brian.

aggression  
 assassination  
 backfire (see week 3)  
 centre of gravity (in Clausewitz’s framework)  
 conflict resolution  
 conspiracy theories (see week 1)  
 culture jamming  
 deciphering violence (see week 4)  
 disarmament  
 enlightenment (in Buddhism)  
 euthanasia  
 forgiveness  
 genocide  
 grammar of war discourse (see e-readings by Annabelle Lukin)  
 just war theory  
 lying (see week 5)  
 mediation  
 militarism  
 military-industrial complex  
 nonviolent action (see week 2)  
 pacifism  
 peacebuilding  
 peace conversion  
 peacekeeping  
 positive peace  
 protest music  
 realism (in international relations)  
 reconciliation  
 riots  
 satyagraha (Gandhian nonviolence)  
 social defence  
 social justice  
 terrorism  
 torture



## What happens in “lectures”

---

Interactive exercises involving writing, giving feedback, speaking, interviewing and other skills

## What happens in tutorials

---

- Introductions and/or sharing (weeks 1–13)
- Weekly 1-minute reports (weeks 1–13)
- Exercises on theories (weeks 1–5, if time is available)
- Shorts (weeks 3–6)
- Class activities (weeks 5–11)
- Preparation for the project (weeks 9–13)

## Theories covered in tutorials

---

### • Week 1. Conspiracy theories

Bring to your tutorial an article about a conspiracy theory or about conspiracy theories generally and be ready to talk about it for 30-60 seconds.

### • Week 2. Nonviolent action

There's a large amount of writing about nonviolent action. Some entry points:

- Mohandas Gandhi and his interpreters (Joan Bondurant, Richard Gregg, Krishnalal Shridharani)
- Gene Sharp. See especially his classification of methods of nonviolent action and his framework called the dynamics of nonviolent action. Publications are available at [www.aeinstein.org/](http://www.aeinstein.org/). A copy of Sharp's monumental *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (in three parts) is in Short Loans.

- International Center on Nonviolent Conflict ([www.nonviolent-conflict.org/](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/)), with copies of many articles.

- Kurt Schock, “Nonviolent action and its misconceptions” (available online).

- Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, “Nonviolence and communication,”

[www.bmartin.cc/pubs/03jpr.html](http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/03jpr.html)

### • Week 3. Backfire

Some attacks backfire against the attackers. Articles about this theory are available at [www.bmartin.cc/pubs/backfire.html](http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/backfire.html). A copy of the book *Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire* is in Short Loans.

### • Week 4. Deciphering violence

Karen Cerulo has analysed standard ways that violence is described in stories. Her book *Deciphering Violence: The Cognitive Structure of Right and Wrong* (New York: Routledge, 1998) is in Short Loans. A key extract from this book is an e-reading. Bring to your tute a newspaper or magazine with news stories about wars, murders or other violent events.



“We're looking for someone who can lie convincingly. The hard part is knowing when we've found him!”

### • Week 5. Lying

A relevant article is at [www.bmartin.cc/pubs/03sa.html](http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/03sa.html)

The following books are in Short Loans. Others are in the regular collection.

Barnes, J. A., 1994. *A Pack of Lies: Towards a Sociology of Lying*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 177.3/4

Ekman, Paul, 1985. *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage*. New York: Norton. 153.6/24

Ford, Charles V., 1996. *Lies! Lies!! Lies!!! The Psychology of Deceit*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press. 153.83/32

Robinson, W. Peter, 1996. *Deceit, Delusion and Detection*. London: Sage. 177.3/5

Weaver, Paul H., 1994. *News and the Culture of Lying*. New York: Free Press. 071.3/26

---

## Requirements and assessment tasks

### Subject Requirements

---

- You are not required to pass every component of assessment to pass the subject.

- Extensions for written work can be granted only when applications for special consideration are made through SOLS.

- Penalty for late submission of work: 10 marks per day out of 100.

- We reserve the right to hold an additional oral examination for any piece of assessment.

### Attendance

---

Attendance is required at tutorials. If you miss more than 2 tutes, marks will be subtracted from your final mark, as follows:

0, 1 or 2 absences: no penalty

3 absences: 6% subtracted

4 absences: 12% subtracted

5+ absences: 18%+ subtracted

For example, if your mark is 75% but you missed 4 tutes, your final mark will be 75% - 12% = 63%.

***So don't miss more than two tutes — and keep track!***

Tutes are omitted from the calculation when an academic consideration request is made through SOLS justifying absence on medical or compassionate grounds. If you are present for only part of a tute, that counts as fractional attendance. For example, 2.5 absences leads to a 3% penalty.

Why is attendance so important? Because MACS390 classes are interactive. A key part of your learning is from other students, and other students learn from you.

## **Participation**

---

**Due date** Weeks 1–13

**Weighting** 15%

**Length** 30-60 seconds verbal report each week

Each week, you are expected to read a substantial article (more than 1000 words) on the week's topic — or the equivalent in another medium — and give a verbal report on it to the class lasting 30 to 60 seconds. Describe the article, tell what it says and explain its significance.

The topic for week 1 is conspiracy theories. Topics for later weeks will be decided in your tute class.

*Suggestions from previous classes* Some favourite topics were protest music, culture jamming, riots, euthanasia, torture, counterculture, serial killers, honour killing and cannibalism.

The most important skill for you to learn and practise is to speak to the others in the class without reading. Jot down a few notes to remind you about key points, or go entirely from memory. If you tend to get nervous, practise by yourself one or more times. One minute goes by very quickly!

You will be marked only on whether you give a report, *not* on how well you do it. So go ahead and experiment with different forms of delivery: for example, be dramatic, or draw everyone in by starting with intriguing details.

This is a great opportunity to practise becoming a better speaker. This is a very useful skill.

### **How to become a great writer**

See <http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/> for this text.

Your participation mark starts at 15 out of 15. You lose 1.5 marks for every week you do not give a one-minute report or participate in the tute. You can make up for missed classes by attending more than one tute in a week in weeks 4 to 13.

## **Short**

---

**Due date** Shorts are given in tutorials in weeks 3 to 6. The week for your short will be decided in class.

**Weighting** 15%

**Length** 5 to 10 minutes

### ***Assessment criteria for shorts***

- Selection and understanding of the media item
- Understanding of theory/concept
- Application of theory/concept to the media item
- Quality of expression

A short is a brief presentation relating a media item to a theory or concept. Choose a media item and tell how it relates to a theory or concept related to peace/war/violence/nonviolence (see examples under "Concepts and theories," page 3).

Your media item can be a newspaper or magazine article, video clip, email message, webpage, photo, blog, tweet, etc. Tell a little bit about the item, for example who created it, where it's available, how you found it and what its significance is. You're welcome to supplement the media item with others.

You should also discuss at least two sources — normally books or scholarly articles — about the theory/concept. Tell what these sources say as well as giving the full references.

Short reports must be spoken from memory or dot-point notes. Do not read from text. *If you read from text or notes, you will be asked to do another short.*

When you put text on the screen, let the audience read it — in silence. Don't read it out loud.

If you get really nervous speaking without reading, then write down what you plan to say on your slides (not more than 100 words per slide, please), and let the audience read them.

The maximum time for an individual short is 10 minutes. You may be cut off at that time. Practise beforehand: you'll find 10 minutes is quite short!

If you wish, you can do your short jointly with one other person. Maximum time for two-person shorts: 14 minutes.

If you're using a slide show, bring it to class on a flash drive or CD and arrive early. If you're using YouTube or some other Internet source, bring the address on your flash drive or know exactly how to get to it quickly. Embedded web links in slide shows may or may not work, so don't rely on them — have a back-up method. Your help in this will make the classes run more smoothly.

### Checklist for your short

- I've displayed, distributed and/or described a specific media item.
- I've discussed two sources about the theory/concept.
- I'm prepared to talk to the class. I won't read text from my notes or my slides.
- I've organised my material to finish in less than 10 minutes.
- I've arranged to arrive early or on time with a flash drive and web links that I need.

### Class activity

**Due date** Class activities are given in class in weeks 5 to 11. The week for your activity will be decided in class.

**Weighting** 20%

**Length** Allocated time will be

- individual, 18 minutes
- team of two, 34 minutes
- team of three, 48 minutes
- team of four, 60 minutes

#### Assessment criteria for class activities

- understanding of theory and case study
- audience involvement
- aids (handouts, slide show, posters, videos, costumes, props, music)
  - use of a de Bono technique
  - method of evaluating how well the class understood your message

This is an activity, *not a presentation.*

You can work individually or in a team of two or three students (four at the most) to run the class on a topic agreed by Brian. Normally the topic will cover both a case study and a peace/war concept or theory — your choice: see the list on page 3. The case study will normally include a connection with the media but, unlike the shorts, there is no need to focus on a particular media item. For example, you might cover the Kennedy assassination from the point of view of conspiracy theories (or assassination) or a peace rally from the point of view of nonviolent action.

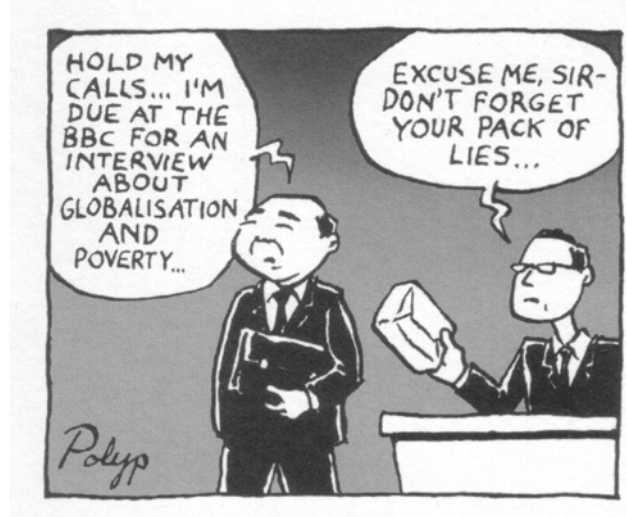
Use a de Bono method in the activity to encourage students to think creatively about the theory or case study.

A few specific points:

- Identify sources for any quotes, for example in handouts.
- Plan every detail. For example, if you want responses to a question, you might display the

instruction “Everyone write down a response on a slip of paper” rather than “What do you think?” Planning details will make your workshop more engaging.

- Practise in advance to iron out difficulties and check that you can stay within the allotted time. Keeping to time can be a big challenge.



Here are some examples of activities that are effectively organised to involve the audience, use many aids and evaluate what the class has learned (the second, third and fifth assessment criteria). You show understanding of the case study and theory (the first assessment criterion) by the content and organisation of materials used.

#### Sample 1

Students are put into groups of three according to the team's prearranged plan. The groups deal with a series of tasks: studying a handout and filling in a questionnaire; drawing a diagram; watching a two-minute video clip and writing a critic's summary comment; playing a game; and preparing questions for the other groups. At the end, each student answers a single probing question; the team picks up the answers.

#### Sample 2

Each student, on entering the classroom, is given an animal token and a questionnaire. After filling out the questionnaire and depositing it in a box, students go to one of four groups according to their token. Each group spends 12 minutes at each of four stations around the room. At each station, one of the team members runs an activity: a video followed by discussion, a game, a set of handouts followed by a quiz, and construction of a diagram. At the end, students fill out the same questionnaire in order to see how much they learned.

### Sample 3

Each student is given a workbook, with text, pictures, cut-outs and quizzes. Slides are automatically projected on the screen; posters are on the walls; music is playing; a pile of cards is on a table. Some of the workbook exercises require use of information or clues from the slides, posters, songs and cards. Team members are available to answer individual queries. At the end, the team collects the pages of the workbooks filled out by students, leaving the main content of the workbooks for students to take away.

### Guidelines

- *Don't* talk to the class about the case study or theory.

*Why not?* Because it's low on audience involvement, and it's inefficient.

*Instead,* use a handout with the same information. People can read text in a fraction of the time it takes to say it out loud.

- *Don't* give verbal instructions.

*Why not?* Because half the class won't be listening and some people won't hear them correctly.

*Instead,* provide written instructions in a handout, on a poster or a slide. Only give instructions verbally, if necessary, to explain or reinforce written instructions.

- *Don't* show a video for more than a minute or two at a time.

*Why not?* Because it's low on audience involvement. Viewers quickly switch into passive entertainment mode.

*Instead,* have a quiz or other exercise to fill out during the video, or show a minute's worth of the video, have a break for discussion, then show another minute, etc.

- *Don't* tell the class to "get into groups."

*Why not?* Because self-selected groups may not be the size or composition that you want.

*Instead,* decide in advance the size of groups and — possibly — who you want in each one. You can allocate people to groups by some arbitrary criterion, such as birthdays, height or random numbers. Or you can allocate people according to their views about specific issues, such as about war. Or you can select the groups in advance, to get a desired mix of personality types. For example, to foster balanced participation, you might put the most talkative students in a group together, and the quietest ones.

### Group marks

We'll assume you want each member of your group to have the same mark. Most groups do. But if not, here's an option. Suppose the mark for a group of three is 67. That's a total of 201 marks (3 x 67). You

can allocate them in some non-equal way (e.g., 64, 64 and 73). For suggestions for making this decision, see [www.bmartin.cc/classes/groupgrade.pdf](http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/groupgrade.pdf). Working in groups is a vital skill; don't avoid it because of the marks issue.

### Bonus marks!

Your personal class activity mark will be increased if you get a higher mark on your project report.

To be specific: if your project report mark is higher, we'll increase your individual class activity mark by half the difference. For example, if your class activity mark is 75 and you get 85 on your project report, we'll raise your individual class activity mark to 80, half way between 75 and 85. On the other hand, if your project report mark is lower, nothing changes.

The rationale: some students feel held back by group work. So if you do really well in the major assignment, it can pull up your group-work mark.

This applies only to the class activity, where we strongly encourage you to work in a group, and only for those who actually work in a group.

### Project plan

---

**Due date:** Monday 16 May, at least 24 hours before the beginning of your week 11 tutorial

Weighting: 10%

**Length:** 100 words

**Submission:** email your plan to your tutor (Brian or Ian)

The project plan is a summary of what you plan to do in your project. Describe your case study, your theory and how you'll carry out the project.

If it's submitted on time, your mark for the plan will be the same as for the project report. If it's late, you lose 10% per day. If you don't hand it in, you get zero for this component. If it's not satisfactory, we'll ask you to prepare a revised version, and you'll receive the same marks.

The main purpose of the project plan is to get you thinking about the project early. By all means submit your plan before the due date!

### Project report

---

**Due date:** 2pm, Wednesday 8 June

Weighting: 40%

**Length:** 2500 words

**Submission:** Either

(1) send by express post (posted by 2pm Wednesday 8 June) to Brian Martin, Arts Faculty, University of Wollongong, NSW 2522, or

(2) put under the door to Brian's office (19.2016).



No special cover sheet is needed.

Put your student number on the report.

Put your tutor's name (Brian or Ian) on the report.

Do **not** put your own name on the report.

In the dialogue, use a pseudonym for yourself and any other MACS390 student.

**Project report assessment criteria**

- Understanding of the case study
- Understanding of theory
- Use of sources (about case study and theory)
- Use of de Bono methods; creativity
- Expression and appearance

Prepare an information pack for the general public to help people understand the portrayal or non-portrayal in the media of an issue concerning war, peace, violence or nonviolence.

Use a theory or concept covered in the subject, or another theory with Brian's approval. Include a case study to illustrate the application of the theory or concept. Use a creativity technique, such as one of Edward de Bono's, in doing the project or presenting your findings.

The information pack can be a written text, slide show, leaflet, poster, website, video or any other suitable format. For a written text, the maximum length is 1000 words. Other formats should cover the equivalent of 1000 words. Use footnotes to give references and to explain points that are complex or not fully treated in the text. (Footnotes do not count in the word total.) When using graphics, include acknowledgement of sources (e.g. web addresses).

Your case study can be historical or contemporary.

For example, you might examine war reporting on the Afghanistan war using Cerulo's framework. Or you might explain the low level of reporting on nonviolent protests in Israel/Palestine using nonviolence theory. You may wish to supplement the war/peace theory with media theories, for example agenda-setting theory re Israel/Palestine protests.

After developing an initial version of your information pack, you should test it out on some members of the public — this includes anyone not at the university — and modify it in light of their comments.

Supplement the pack with a 1500-word dialogue between you, your group members and anyone else relevant about how you chose your case study, how you gathered materials, how you used de Bono, the response to the initial version of your pack, what you discovered about the strengths and weaknesses of

your theory, any unexpected findings, difficulties, future topics for investigation, etc. The dialogue should be interactive, like a conversation. It is fictional: you write the dialogue rather than recording an actual one. Have a look at good dialogues at [www.bmartin.cc/classes/](http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/).



We encourage you to work in a team on the project, sharing information collected about case study, theory, de Bono and interviews. You may choose to write your own individual report. Alternatively, two or three team members may submit a jointly written pack and separate dialogues or submit separate packs and a jointly written dialogue. Jointly written packs and dialogues should be the same length as individually written ones.

**Afterwards**

Brian will email you comments on your report and will keep project reports in his office until the end of spring session.

**Sources for cartoons**

Polyp (Paul Fitzgerald), *Big bad world: cartoon molotovs in the face of corporate rule* (Oxford: New Internationalist Publications, 2002).

Ted Rall, lies: in *Extra!*, May/June 2005, p. 13.

Rothco, "We're looking ...": *Punch*, reproduced in Em Griffin, *Making Friends*, p. 117.

Sipress: *Wishful thinking*, Cartoons by David Sipress (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

The box, <http://sha3teely.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/08/box>.