

CCB105 Digital Platforms

To view more information for this unit, select Unit Outline from the list below. Please note the teaching period for which the Unit Outline is relevant.

Unit Outline: Semester 1 2026, Kelvin Grove, Internal

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Unit code:	CCB105
Credit points:	12
Equivalent:	CCB200
Coordinator:	Shubhangi Heda s.heda@qut.edu.au

Overview

Digital Platforms have a tremendous impact on how we interact and engage with the world, from social media and payment processors to streaming services. It is critical for communication professionals to understand the cultural, economic, political, social and technical contexts from which contemporary digital platforms have emerged and in which they are continuing to evolve. In this unit you will develop skills to critically examine the politics of digital platforms and contribute to debates about alternative digital futures. Each week we will focus on both critiques and resistance. You will draw on scholarly research to discuss how colonialism and capitalism shape platform logics and how we navigate, resist and reimagine them.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit you will be able to:

1. Identify, explain, and apply core concepts from digital platform scholarship
2. Carry out analysis of digital platforms in their political, economic, social, cultural and technological contexts
3. Communicate your understanding of contemporary platform debates in a variety of modes (written, oral and visual).
4. Use evidence and research to construct informed and persuasive arguments about digital platforms
5. Critically reflect on your own positionality and relationship to digital platforms

Content

This unit may address:

- The politics and cultures of contemporary digital platforms
- The business models, labour practices and data governance of digital platforms
- The logics of race, gender and sexuality underlying commercial platforms
- Ideas for building more ethical, revolutionary and liberatory alternatives

Learning Approaches

This unit is taught using a mix of online lectures, in-person tutorials, asynchronous learning activities and self-study. The live, online, lectures are designed to provide students with an overview of key concepts relating to each topic area. Students are expected to attend live lectures or watch them asynchronously before tutorials. In-person tutorials will allow students to explore concepts and materials associated with each topic area and apply them to real-world problems and debates. Some weeks, instead of tutorials, there will be online, asynchronous, independent learning activities for students to complete from home, such as formative quizzes and learning exercises. You will be expected to complete self-study, including readings out of class, in preparation for tutorials.

Feedback on Learning and Assessment

Feedback in this unit will be provided to you in the following ways:

- Self-reflection on your own demonstrations and contributions in class
- Peer feedback in the classroom (reflections, questions, thoughts on one another's ideas)
- Tutor feedback and engagement in the classroom
- Formative exercises in the classroom (e.g. quizzes and activities)
- Individual comments on your summative assessment work
- A clear rubric for each assignment to understand how you have performed in relation to the assessment criteria
- General overall comments for the whole student cohort via QUT Canvas.

Assessment

Overview

In this unit, you will evaluate core concepts, debates, and theories by applying them to real world examples and case studies. You will be required to complete three core assessment tasks. The first assessment involves critical reflection of your own positionalities, relationships, responsibilities and solidarities in relation to your engagement with digital platforms. This is an ongoing task that will be evaluated over the course of the semester based on your demonstrations in class. The second assessment requires you to explain key theories in the course through use of memes or comics. This is designed to support you to understand, unpack, clarify and qualify the academic literature in an accessible way, and be able to explain it clearly to others. The final assessment will require you to write an analysis of an alternative digital platform. This assignment will demonstrate your knowledge of contemporary critiques of existing platforms, and critical thinking about how platforms could be improved or reimaged.

Unit Grading Scheme

7- point scale

Assessment Tasks

Assessment: Critical Reflection and Collegiality

Throughout the semester, you will be asked to critically reflect on your own relationships to digital platforms and demonstrate this in class. This includes thoughtful reflection about your own privileges, relationships, assumptions, and ways of knowing about the world; reflection on your positionality in relation to place, land, race, gender, sexuality, class and ability; reflection on which platforms you participate in or boycott; and reflection on the impact of your own digital choices on sustaining or dismantling the current platform ecosystem. You will also be asked to actively contribute to a collegial, respectful and curious classroom environment. This includes being an active listener, amplifying the voices of quieter and more marginalised students, participating in constructive conversations, asking questions of one another and nurturing the learning of other students.

Specific task requirements and grading rubric are available on Canvas.

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is prohibited during this assessment.

Weight: 20

Length: 700 words

Individual/Group: Individual

Due (indicative): Progressive

Related Unit learning outcomes: [3](#), [5](#)

Assessment: Explaining Academic Theory with Cats

Drawing on unit readings, you will create a comic (or a series of memes) that identifies and explains key critiques of existing digital platforms. Your comic should demonstrate accurate research and referencing skills, but the aim of the assessment is to translate academic and critical perspectives on digital platforms in an accessible, innovative, and fun way. Your comic should be at least 4 A4 pages and cover all prescribed readings and lecture material from the first half of the course. Specific assessment guidelines and grading rubric are available on Canvas.

Specific task requirements and grading rubric are available on Canvas.

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is prohibited during this assessment.

This assignment is eligible for the 48-hour late submission period and assignment extensions.

Weight: 40

Length: 4 A4 pages

Individual/Group: Individual

Due (indicative): Week 6

Related Unit learning outcomes: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [5](#)

Assessment: Alternative Digital Platforms

For this assignment, you will need to choose one digital platform that aspires to operate differently or more ethically than corporate digital platforms. This could include an alternative social media platform, alternative music streaming services, alternative payment processors, alternative email provider, etc. Ideas and examples will be signposted in unit materials. By synthesising unit readings and supplementary research, you will write a critical essay that examines the politics, cultures, economics, social and technical logics of this platform. You will need to explain how your platform responds to the critiques of commercial platforms, and discuss some of the tensions and challenges of building alternative platforms. This assignment will build on manifestos, speculative dreaming, and world-building activities that we will do in class.

Specific task requirements and grading rubric are available on Canvas.

The ethical and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is authorised in this assessment. See the relevant assessment details in Canvas for specific guidelines.

This assignment is eligible for the 48-hour late submission period and assignment extensions.

Weight: 40

Length: 2000

Individual/Group: Individual

Due (indicative): Week 13

Related Unit learning outcomes: [1](#), [3](#), [4](#)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a commitment to undertaking academic work and assessment in a manner that is ethical, fair, honest, respectful and accountable.

The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) sets out the range of conduct that can be a failure to maintain the standards of academic integrity. This includes, cheating in exams, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion and contract cheating. It also includes providing fraudulent or altered documentation in support of an academic concession application, for example an assignment extension or a deferred exam.

You are encouraged to make use of QUT's learning support services, resources and tools to assure the academic integrity of your assessment. This includes the use of text matching software that may be available to assist with self-assessing your academic integrity as part of the assessment submission process.

Breaching QUT's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) or engaging in conduct that may defeat or compromise the purpose of assessment can lead to a finding of student misconduct ([Code of Conduct – Student](#)) and result in the imposition of penalties under the [Management of Student Misconduct Policy](#), ranging from a grade reduction to exclusion from QUT.

Requirements to Study

Requirements

All students are requested to visit and review the Health and Safety information on the [HiQ web pages](#).

You will be advised if a unit requires additional mandatory health and safety inductions.

Resources

Students will be given online access to all essential unit materials, including essential readings.

Resource Materials

Other

To enable your full participation in units that utilise virtual learning environments, for example participating in online activities and engaging with online learning materials, you will need access to a reliable computer with an internet connection, webcam, headset and microphone, as well as a learning environment where you are able to fully participate undisturbed when required.