

Why study Media Studies?

'If people in the media cannot decide whether they are in the business of reporting news or manufacturing propaganda, it is all the more important that the public understand that difference, and choose their news sources accordingly.'

Thomas Sowell – American economist and social theorist

In 2019 the importance of the media cannot be underestimated. We are creatures who feed off of the media. It shapes our views on the world we live in, it helps connect and disconnect. It insights violence and hatred, but also spreads love and wonder. It wins and loses elections. It widens our horizons and narrows others. It helps us choose what to eat while telling us what we should look like and how we should feel. It saves us time as well as wastes our time. It is the way we meet like minded people, the way some find love. It turns us into chefs, make-up artists, body coaches, social commentators, celebrities, political activists, experts, fools, pranksters. It gives us all a voice; a chance to be citizen journalists, have our own channel and create an income. It provides validation while also singles people out. It has blurred the lines between wrong and right, real and fake.

How can we not study the media and the effect it has on us? To study the media is to study how it works, why it works and the way it changes people. It gives us the ability to question what we see and how we interact. Studying the media will hopefully change the way you think and provide you with new theories and ideas which will help make sense of the influence the media has on us.

Course Structure

Summary of Assessment

The examination assesses media language, representation, media industries, audiences and media contexts. It consists of two components

Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences.

Section A: Investigating Media Language and Representation

This section assesses media language and representation in relation to **two** of the following media forms: advertising, marketing, music video or newspapers. There are **two** questions in this section:

- **one** question assessing media language in relation to an unseen audio-visual or print resource
- **one** extended response comparison question assessing representation in one set product

and an unseen audio-visual or print resource in relation to media contexts.

Section B: Investigating Media Industries and Audiences

This section assesses **two** of the following media forms – advertising, marketing, film, newspapers, radio, video games - and media contexts.

It includes:

- **one** stepped question on media industries
- **one** stepped question on audiences

Component 2: Investigating Media Forms and Products

This examination assesses knowledge and understanding of media language, representation, media industries, audiences and media contexts. The exam consists of three sections:

Section A – Television

There will be **one** two-part question **or one** extended response question.

Section B – Magazines

There will be **one** two-part question **or one** extended response question.

Section C – Online Media

There will be **one** two-part question **or one** extended response question.

An **individual** media production comprising a single media product created in response to a **choice of briefs set by WJEC**, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

Course Content

The new AS Level in Media Studies is designed to broaden your understanding of how media products have an impact and influence society. You will be studying across the media and investigate a range of forms and conventions such as:

- film
- television
- radio
- music Video
- advertising
- video games

Assessment Objectives

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the theoretical framework of media
- contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

AO2

Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the

- use of academic theories
- evaluate academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions

AO3

Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

As the course is a linear subject these skills are assessed via summative exams at the end of the year. Throughout your studies you will be given formative assessments to check your understanding and progress against these assessment objectives. These assessments may take the form of:

- extended essays
- case studies
- presentations
- student-led teaching / student-led activities
- group/team assessments
- exam style questions

You will receive regular feedback and guidance on your progress against the assessment objectives.

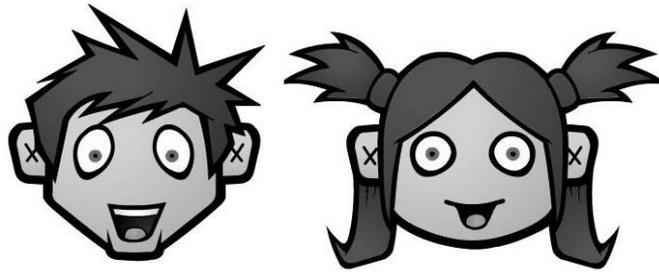
Summer Task 1

Media & Me

Task

Produce a mind map detailing all the different forms of media that you encounter/use in your life. Order or number the media you use in terms of how influential it is in your everyday life.

(1 – has little impact of influence 10 – shapes my way of thinking about the world)



Summer Task 2

'The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.'

Malcolm X – American-Muslim minister and human rights activist

How do you feel about this statement?

Write a response of approximately 500 words about the power of the media. You should bring in examples from your own interactions with the media from the previous task.

Media and Cultural Theory

Studying media doesn't simply involve studying a text or artefact; it also requires you to apply media texts to theoretical ideas and perspectives. Secondary reading and research will help to deepen your understanding and appreciation as well as be able to critique the texts under theoretical scrutiny. It is also preparing you for undergraduate life!

Here are a few theorists and theories you will encounter over the course of your study:

Audience Reception Theory	Stuart Hall
Power and Media Institutions	Curran and Seaton
Semiotics	Roland Barthes
Theory of Representation	Stuart Hall
Gender Performativity	Judith Butler
Theory of Identify	Richard Gauntlett

You may wish to start to familiarise yourself with some basic media theory over the summer. You can access overviews and summaries via the internet.

Summer Task 3

The Hypodermic Needle Theory

Dating back to the 1920s, this theory provides an interesting insight into how audiences react to mass media. The theory suggests that audiences passively receive information from the media. That is, we never question it and always assume that it is truthful and correct and never challenge the message. This suggests that we are brainwashed by the media we consume. It doesn't matter how intelligent we are or what experiences we have had, we all respond in similar ways to media texts. The theory suggests that as audiences, we are manipulated by media producers and our behaviour changes in response to what we have seen or heard. In summary, if we watch violence on television we are more likely to commit a violent act. If we watch an advert we are likely to buy a product. If we are told that we should stay indoors, we will stay indoors.

How relevant is the Hypodermic Needle theory in 2019?

You will need to read a little more about the theory and develop your own critique of the theory. Aim for approximately 500 words.

Have a good summer – and please bring the work to our first lesson in September.