



## Media Studies Sixth Form Handbook

Welcome to Media Studies. Over the next two years you will focus on practical and analytical skills which will help you to better understand the society that we live in. The world and the ways we communicate are constantly evolving and changing. Media Studies is the study of texts that students are exposed to on a daily basis, be they adverts, films, websites, newspaper articles, podcasts, or any of a seemingly never-ending list of methods of communication.

A forward thinking subject in forward thinking times.

### The Course

#### **Year 12**

##### **G321 – Foundation Portfolio in Media** [25% of overall grade]

We start off with the first of two practical units. Your task is to research, plan, film, edit and evaluate a two-minute introduction to a thriller film in a group of no more than 4 students.

##### **G322 – Key Media Concepts (TV Drama)** [25% of overall grade]

A two-part examination which you sit in June. Section A of the examination involves the close analysis of a clip from a TV Drama set by the exam board. You are then expected to answer questions on the clip based on the representations of the characters within it. Section B is based on Hollywood and you will study various film companies and films looking at issues that affect audiences and institutions within the film industry.

#### **Year 13**

##### **G324 – Advanced Portfolio in Media** [25% of overall grade]

The second of your practical units. You again work in groups of 4 people and will be expected to produce a short film in its entirety, a poster for the film and a radio trailer. As with G321 you are marked on the research, planning, filming, editing and evaluation of these products.

##### **G325 – Critical Perspectives in Media** [25% of overall grade]

Another two-part examination which you sit in June. Section A is an analysis of the practical projects that you have completed on the course in which you reflect on how your skills have improved and how you can analyse your films in relation to real media output. Section B relates to issues and representations in the media and is based on a Case Study that you have prepared over the course of the year.

Key Assessment Pieces – Year 12

Teachers: SCN / KKI / JTN					
		Assessment task and details of its relationship to 'official' assessments	Under what conditions was task completed & how much time was allowed?	Teacher responsible	Date by when assessment will be completed
INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS	1	Essay: How does the introduction to Se7en communicate through its use of Media Language?	Lesson Preparation + Controlled Conditions in lessons	SCN	29/09/11
	2	Research: PowerPoint on Thriller genre analysing films watched in class.	Lesson & H/W prep + Controlled Conditions in lessons	JTN/KKI	14/10/11
	3	Research: Initial Blog grade	Lesson work & H/W	All	19/10/11
	Parents / students / tutors will receive grades 1-3 (minimum) at Progress Review 2 in November 24/11/11				
	4	Foundation Production Research – Group Project (to include storyboard & filming schedule)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	11/11/11
	5	Foundation Production Film – Group Project	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	18/01/12
	6	Foundation Production Evaluation (To include audience feedback on Fronter)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	27/01/12
		Mock Results			
	Parents / students / tutors will receive grades 1-6 (minimum) at Parents' Evening 7/2/12				
	7	G321: Final Grade for Foundation Production (Research, Planning, Filming, Evaluation)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	10/02/12
8	Essay: Doctor Who – how is gender represented?	Exam Conditions 1h15m – in lesson	JTN / KKI	08/03/12	
9	Essay: The Dark Knight – how did Warner Bros. Target different audiences to market the film?	Exam Conditions 45 minutes – in lesson	SCN	26/04/12	
10	Exam Practice: June 2010 G322 Paper	Exam Conditions 2 hours – in lesson	All	18/05/12	

Key Assessment Pieces – Year 13

Teachers: SCN / TSD / EMD / JMY					
	Assessment task and details of its relationship to 'official' assessments	Under what conditions was task completed & how much time was allowed?	Teacher responsible	Date by when assessment will be completed	
INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS	1	Case Study Booklet on Collective Identity, Media in the Online Age or Postmodernism	Lesson Preparation + Homework – 2 weeks	EMD / JMY	14/10/11
	2	Essay: Explain how a theoretical approach can be taken towards the media you have studied within your case study.	Lesson Preparation + Homework – 2 weeks	SCN / TSD	21/10/11
	3	G325: January 2010 Section B	Exam Conditions – 1 hour in lesson	SCN / TSD	11/11/11
	Parents / students / tutors will receive grades 1-3 (minimum) at Progress Review 2 in November 24/11/11				
	4	Research: PowerPoint on short film medium analysing films watched in class.	Lesson Preparation + Homework – 2 weeks	EMD / JMY	24/11/11
	5	Research: Survey and Presentation of results of initial film ideas initial Blog Grade)	Lesson work	All	18/01/12
	6	Advanced Production Research – Group Project (to include storyboard & filming schedule)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	03/02/12
		Mock Results			
	Parents / students / tutors will receive grades 1-6 (minimum) at Parents' Evening 7/12/12				
	7	Advanced Production Film – Group Project	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	23/03/12
8	Advanced Production Evaluation (To include audience feedback on Fronter)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	20/04/12	
9	G324: Final Grade for Advanced Production (Research, Planning, Filming, Evaluation)	Ongoing lesson work and Homework	All	27/04/12	
10	Exam Practice: June 2010 G325 Paper	Exam Conditions 2 hours – in lesson	SCN / TSD	18/05/12	

### What we expect of you

- We expect you to attend all lessons and arrive to lessons on time.
- All homework must be handed in on time. Your teacher will inform you where the homework should be handed in. Most written work should be handed in in the Sixth Form Learning Centre. Practical work will generally be handed in online.
- Your teachers **will not** grant you extensions to coursework deadlines. If your coursework is late for any reason you will need to complete the work as soon as possible and fill in a **Late Coursework** form from the Learning Centre. I will assess the form along with the Sixth Form Management team and will decide on mark deductions as appropriate.
- During the practical assignments you will be trusted with expensive equipment. You will be required to sign a form to borrow the equipment and will be asked to pay for it should you not return it.
- You will be expected to read/watch around the subject as much as possible – a broad knowledge of critical theories/film/TV/media institutions and audiences is absolutely essential to succeed in the subject. The library and Media Office (L3J) have books and films available to you should you wish to borrow them. The library subscribes to *Sight and Sound* which is always worth looking at.
- Finally we expect you to work hard and have fun. We want your experience to be as interesting and enjoyable as possible.

### What you can expect of us

- Informative, well-planned and (hopefully) fun lessons.
- A clear focus on Assessment for Learning so that you know how to achieve the grade you want in the subject.
- Your work to be marked promptly and clearly with ways to improve your grade.
- Subject experts who know how you can succeed in the subject.
- Use of industry-standard technology throughout the practical sections of the course.
- Help and guidance through all aspects of the Media Studies curriculum especially with the provision of extra help in the practical sections of the course.

## How to think about writing a Media essay

A Media essay should be just like an English essay. You still need to use PEA and you still need to develop your ideas beyond simply stating what you observed when looking at a media text.

Think about the following points:

- What is the question asking? Highlight the key words. Most questions in exams sound more complicated than they actually are so try to get a full understanding of exactly what you are being asked before starting.
- Keep referring back to the question. Always explain why your point is relevant to the question you are answering.
- Use key terms. Every unit of work over the next two years will come with a list of key terms. Use them! You should consistently be using terms like 'mise-en-scene', 'convergence', 'dissolve', high angle shot' in your essays. You must also make sure that you use these terms correctly (significant marks are attached to this)
- If you're being asked about a film don't waste time recapping the plot. A side of writing about what's happening in the extract will not get you marks. One or two sentences so the examiner knows which section of the extract that you're talking about are fine.
- Treat a film as you would a book. Talk about the director in the same way that you would talk about a writer; e.g. In this sequence Spielberg seems obsessed with wanting to point out that war is personal. He engages the viewer on a grand scale with high, wide-angle shots to show the audience how the scene is progressing, then makes the extract intensely personal by highlighting the girl in the red dress in a swathe of black and white. Equally, try to talk about characters rather than actors – talk about Jules Winnfield rather than Samuel L. Jackson for example.
- If you are able to try to add critical theory to your essays whenever possible. Read around the media text – if you're studying it, chances are that it's been inspired by someone else's thinking or that someone else has written on it extensively. If you were studying *The Matrix* for example you would be remiss if you didn't include details of the philosophical nature of the films (look up Kant if you're interested). Use the library in the media office when you can (QK Library also has some good reference books on aspects of the course).
- Most of all remember what key components of texts are and deal with them. If you're writing about mise-en-scene don't just look at setting – remember you should be including details on costume, lighting, make-up etc. as well.

Most importantly, if you are in any doubt about the structure of an essay or the main point of it – just ask! It's what we're here for.

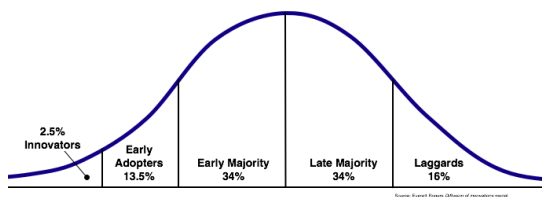
## Useful Terms and Techniques

**Media Text** (e.g) Film, TV Show, Newspaper, Website, Bus Stop advert, Billboard, Podcast, Blog etc.

**Audience** The consumers of a media product or text.

**Audience Behaviour** How an audience reacts to/interacts with a media product or text.

**Patterns of Consumption** General trends in terms of the way products are consumed (e.g. the 'normal distribution curve' when applied to technology adoption)



**Institution** The company that produces the media product or text.

**Media Industry** The idea of the 'Mass Media' – media designed to reach a large audience.

**Media Ownership** People who own, control or influence a given medium as well as those who are exposed to, affected by, or influenced by, that medium.

**Cross Media Convergence** Different types of media coming together to promote the same product/message.

**New Media Technologies** Modern mediums that are capable of reaching mass audiences. Examples would include the internet, social networking, blogs and podcasts.

**Distribution** The process of getting a media text (e.g. a film) into places it can be seen (e.g. into cinemas, onto DVD etc.)

**Production** The process of putting together a film (**Post-production** is the editing process).

**Editing** The type of cut used between shots./The way the cuts make the scene feel.

**Rushes** Unedited film footage.

**Rough Cut** The first attempt at putting a film in chronological order.

**Final Cut** The finished product with sound etc. added in.

**Marketing** The process of getting a product/text in the public eye (e.g. by advertising, public relations, cross promotion etc.)

**Exchange** The process of setting prices for goods and services.

**Targeting** Methods that companies use to attract consumers.

## Useful Terms and Techniques cont.

**You will always be expected to state how camera, editing, sound and mise-en-scene affect the scene you are watching. Below are some tips to help you with this.**

### **Camera**

#### Types of Shots

Always try to think about the following key points:

- What angle has the subject been shot from? Does this change your opinion of them?
- How much of the frame does the subject take up? Does this make them the focus of the shot?
- What do the shots reveal about a character? Close-up shots, for example, tend to reveal feelings/emotions. If there are no close-up shots on a character does this mean that as an audience we are not supposed to care about their feelings/emotions?
- Always think about things from the audience's perspective. What do you (or what did the Director) want them to think?

#### Composition

In order to look at this you need to look at how a shot is framed and composed. What is in the foreground? What is in the background? Why? Has anything been left out of the shot? Why? Is everything in focus?

Deep focus – everything in the shot is in focus, no matter how far back you go (this is also called depth of field.) The image below on the left is an example of shallow focus (the character at the back is blurry) whereas the image on the right is an example of deep focus (you can make out the features of all of the characters in the shot.)



## Editing

In the main the types of edits you will look at are **cuts** and **transitions**.

### Cuts

In the main you need to look at how fast cutting is (the faster the cuts generally the more exciting the sequence) **as well as** what a scene cuts from and to. A cut to a different scene, for example, can associate the character in the previous scene with the character in the next scene. Soap operas use this technique all the time when they want to reveal to the audience who a character is thinking about or which character is likely to pose a threat to someone's scheme.

### Transitions

An effect that takes you between scenes. This could be a **fade** (usually to/from black/white), a **dissolve** (where two scenes appear to dissolve into one another) or a **wipe** (where one scene appears to push the other scene off the screen).

## Sound

Sound generally falls into two categories **Diegetic** (natural sound) and **Non-diegetic** (sound that has been added on). You will need to think about use of **Voice-over** and the **soundtrack** of the piece you are watching. The main things to think about are whether the sound is from a particular characters perspective and what it might connote. Try to work on descriptive words that you can use to talk about certain pieces of music.

You will also need to think about **dialogue**. Does the dialogue affect your views of the characters and why is this? *Skins*, for example, uses an enormous number of 'classical' references mixed with more modern 'pop-culture' references. When Tony was talking about Sid going out with Michelle he called them "Anthony and Cleopatra" (Shakespeare) as well as "Bert and Ernie" (The Muppets).

## Mise-en-Scene

Look at **settings**, **costume** and **lighting** in this section. Simply ask yourself whether they help to develop characters further or whether they affect how we think about them in any way.