



A-Level Media Studies

Course information

Why choose A-Level Media?

A Level Media Studies is a unique course that combines academic theory and research with practical, hands-on elements. Closely linked with English, Sociology, Art, History and Film Studies, Media Studies offers learners the opportunity to critically explore the effects of mass communication on the world around them and carry out in-depth study of a range of media texts from film and television to newspapers and interactive media.

Any student embarking on A Level Media Studies should have good written and analytical skills combined with a certain amount of creative flair, and of course some existing knowledge of or familiarity with the media whether that is a fascination with a certain film genre, an interest in political reporting in broadcast or print media, or a good eye for photography or the moving image.

Course Outline:

We follow the OCR syllabus for A Level Media Studies. From 2008, the syllabus will be as follows:

AS Media Studies

Unit G321: Foundation Portfolio in Media (50% of AS, 25% of A2)

A coursework unit where candidates produce two associated moving image productions, including the titles and opening sequence of a new feature film.

Unit G322: Key Media Concepts (50% of AS, 25% of A2)

This unit covers Textual Analysis and Representation alongside Institutions and Audiences.

In Section A students study TV Drama, examining how the technical elements of productions such as sound, editing and mise-en-scene work to create representations of individuals, groups, events or places and help to articulate specific messages and values that have social significance. Areas for study include gender, age, sexuality and regional identity.

In Section B students carry out a study of the British newspaper industry, looking at the ways in which technology is helping to make newspapers more efficient and competitive.

Both Section A and Section B are assessed by way of a single two-hour exam.

A2 Media Studies

Unit G324: Advanced Portfolio in Media (25% of A2)

A coursework unit where candidates research, produce and evaluate a media portfolio comprising of a short film, a poster advertising the film, and a page from a film magazine featuring a review of the film.

Unit G325: Critical Perspectives in Media (25 % of A2)

This unit requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates.

In Section A students evaluate their production skills developed over the course in relation to specific production practices (such as using conventions from existing media texts) and to specific media concepts (such as narrative or media language).

In Section B students will study a contemporary media issue such as Media and Collective Identity, focusing on two different sectors of the media and covering a range of texts, industries, audiences and debates.

Both Section A and Section B are assessed by way of a single two-hour exam.

Resources and facilities:

The Media Studies department at Samuel Ward is well equipped with the technical hardware and software necessary to deliver the AS and A2 course effectively.

Practical work is mainly focussed on the moving image, and a suite of PCs loaded with film editing software including Adobe Premiere Elements and Microsoft Movie Maker is available in the Media Studies classroom. The department also has two industry-standard Apple Macs at its disposal, loaded with i-movie and Final Cut. The department is also well equipped with good-quality video cameras and the associated equipment.

The classroom itself is fully equipped with a projector and interactive whiteboard, allowing easy screening of media texts for discussion and analysis. All the PCs in the classroom come with internet access providing good research facilities for projects.

Careers and progression:

Whilst A Level Media Studies on its own will not guarantee a career in the competitive world of the media, it is an excellent springboard into related higher education courses or for gaining valuable work experience placements.

Coupled with a complimentary A Level such as Art or English, a wide range of university courses are available, ranging from the fully practical such as courses specialising in film and video production, to the wholly academic such as degrees in media and cultural studies, with options such as journalism sitting somewhere in between.

Careers in the media open to students could include, amongst many others, jobs in advertising and public relations, television production, film production, media sales and marketing, broadcast journalism (either TV or Radio), print journalism, screenwriting, commissioning, new media, and media research.

Entry requirements:

A minimum of a C grade at GCSE English would normally be required.

A Level results:

This is a new course for September 2008.

Enquiries:

All enquiries regarding this course should be made to Mr N Hobbs (Head of Media Studies) via Samuel Ward Arts and Technology College or email: nhobbs@samuelward.suffolk.sch.uk