

A-Level Media Studies (AQA) at Plymstock School

Summer Guide (2017 – 2019)



A-Level Media Studies

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

Core content

1. Media language
2. Media representation
3. Media industries
4. Media audiences

Paper 1

What is assessed :

Questions will focus on issues and debates in the media. A topic will be released in advance of the exam. Students will be expected to use any relevant elements of the theoretical framework in order to explore the ideas in the paper

How it's assessed:

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 84 marks
- 35% of A-Level

Questions

- An argument relating to the theme.
- Short answer questions relating to the theme.
- 2x15 mark questions testing in depth knowledge of two areas of the theoretical framework.
- 2x25 mark questions assessing in depth knowledge of the two remaining areas of the theoretical framework.

Paper 2

What's assessed

Questions will focus on the analysis of media products, through the lens of the theoretical framework. Students will be expected to refer to the Close Study Products (CSPs) provided by AQA and other products they have studied. They will also be expected to demonstrate understanding of the contexts in which the products were created.

How it's assessed

- • Written exam: 2 hours
- • 84 marks
- • 35% of A-level

Questions

- Contrasting points of view relating to a particular CSP.
- Short answer questions assessing breadth and depth of knowledge of aspects of the theoretical framework in relation to particular media products.
- 2x30 mark questions assessing depth of knowledge of the theoretical framework and/or contexts in relation to media products

Non-exam assessment: Creating a media product

What's assessed

- Application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.
- Practical skills relating to the media format of their choice

How it's assessed

- A choice of topics related to the over-arching (annually changing) theme
- 72 marks
- 30% of A-level
- Assessed by teachers
- Moderated by AQA

Tasks Students produce:

- a statement of intent
- cross-media products made for an intended audience.

Media Language - Terminology

Content	Content Additional information
Semiotics including Barthes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign • Signifier • Signified • Icon • Index • Symbol • Denotation • Connotation • Myth • Ideology
Narratology including Todorov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative structure • Equilibrium • Disruption • Narrative codes • Narration • Diegesis • Quest narrative • 'Character types' • Causality • Plot • Masterplot
Genre theory including Neale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-genre • Hybridity • Genres of order and integration • Conventions and rules • 'Genre as cultural category' • Classical Hollywood genres • American indigenous genres
Structuralism including Lévi-Strauss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary oppositions • Ideological reading • Deconstruction.
Postmodernism including Baudrillard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulacra • Simulation • Hyperreality • Pastiche • Bricolage • Intertextuality.

We will go through these definitions in class but it might be useful if you begin to understand what some of them mean over the summer. Pick 5 of these words and research their meaning in regards to Media Studies.

Challenge: Apply some of the words to a film or T.V series you have watched.

Representation – Terminology

Content	Content Additional information
Theories of representation including Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and negative stereotypes • Countertypes • Misrepresentation • Selective representation • Encoding/decoding • Dominant ideology • Audience positioning • Constructed reality • Hegemony
Theories of identity including Gauntlett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed identity • Negotiated identity • Collective identity • Simulation.
Feminist theories including Van Zoonen and hooks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male gaze • Voyeurism • Patriarchy • Sexualisation • Post-feminism • Female gaze
Theories of gender performativity including Butler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and gender • Stylised repetition of acts • Gender as historical situation rather than natural fact
Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory including Gilroy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Imperialism • Diaspora • Multiculturalism • Imagines communities • Marginalisation • Orientalism • 'Otherness' (alterity)

Challenge: When watching adverts, T.V series, films or playing video games, consider how different types of people are represented. Is there a pattern?

Summer tasks:

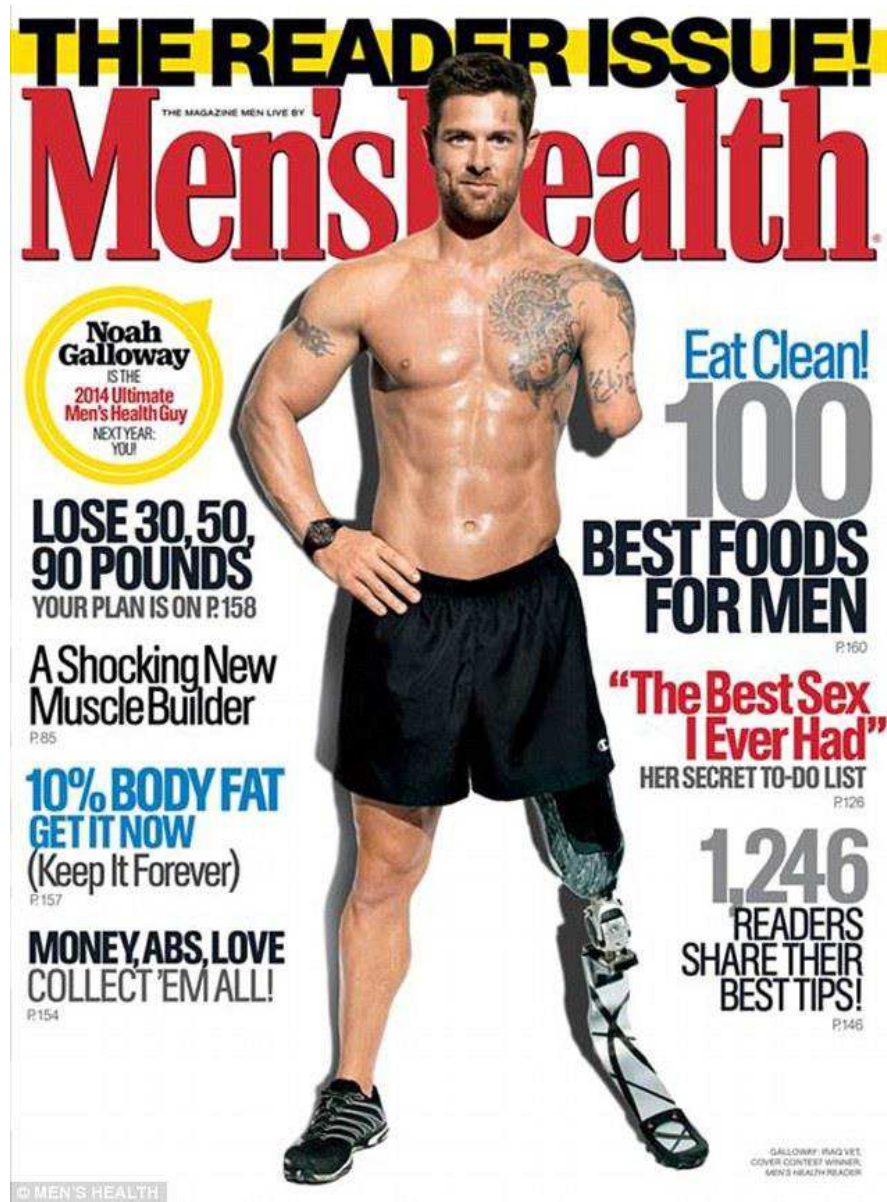
1. Watch some gritty T.V Dramas such as:

- The Casual Vacancy (BBC, 2014)
- And Then There Were None (BBC, 2015)
- Happy Valley (BBC 2016)
- Blue Eyes (Walter Presents, 2016)
- Dicte: Crime Reporter (Walter Presents, 2016)
- The Tunnel (Sky 2013)
- Marcella (ITV, 2016)
- Broadchurch (ITV, 2013)
- Luther (BBC, 2012)
-

Make notes on the following:

- What narratives are presented?
- How are characters presented? How are social groups, men, women, children represented? Think about their actions, dialogue etc.
- How is music (diegetic or non-diegetic) used?
- How is location represented?
- What types of camera angles and lighting are used throughout?
- Anything else of relevance.

2. Look at the following magazine covers for Men's Health magazine:



Annotate this magazine cover with ideas regarding how modern men are represented.



Annotate this magazine cover with ideas regarding how modern men are represented.

1. Keep up to date with current news regarding media.

To become a proficient student of the Media, you need to keep yourself informed about current issues, developments and debates. There are many ways of doing this: listening to the radio, watching and reading the news (online or on TV), surfing the internet, going to the cinema, watching TV, reading magazines and newspapers...

Look out for:

- Upcoming films or T.V series' and their advertising (trailers, billboards etc.)
- Social media (look at updates regarding Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
- Websites such as Netlfix, BBC Iplayer etc.
- Print news such as newspaper stories, magazine articles etc.
- Anything else relevant!

**If you have any questions about the study tasks or any other part of the course, please email me during the holidays:
mgrainger@plymstockschool.org.uk**