Scheme of work:

A-level Media Studies (for 2024 exams onwards)

We have worked with subject experts to review our existing resources and made some changes. These changes will support our customers in delivering our current specifications in a way that maximises opportunities for breadth, diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum as well as improve the accessibility of our resources.

In this scheme of work (SOW) we have:

* removed tables so that it is easier to use with assistive technology.
* tried to keep to a specification point per page to make it easier to navigate and more convenient to use.
* made the contents page into clickable links.

There are more activities suggested than it would be possible to teach. Teachers should select activities appropriate to their students and the curriculum time available.

This SOW offers a route through the A-level Media Studies (7572) course.

It covers the specification in a logical order and suggests possible teaching and learning activities for each section of the specification.

The specification references are shown at the start of each section, whilst the learning outcomes indicate what most students should be able to achieve after the work is completed.

Timings have been suggested but are approximate. Teachers should select activities appropriate to their students and the curriculum time available.

The order is by no means prescriptive and there are many alternative ways in which the content could be organised.

The resources indicate those resources commonly available to schools, and other references that may be helpful. Resources are only given in brief and risk assessments should be carried out.

Any subject specific information we have highlighted opportunities to engage in practice for the issue of evaluation and fieldwork throughout.

Assumed coverage

It follows a two-year teaching plan and includes skills development for the NEA. The NEA could be approached in a block rather than the approach demonstrated here.

This example is based onapproximately 4 hours per week over 40 teaching weeks in year one and 30 teaching weeks in year two.

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Year 1

Overview for term one (15 weeks)

Prior knowledge

This assumes students have no specific prior knowledge.

It is suggested that the theoretical framework and an engagement with media products will take up much of the teaching time in the first term.

Knowledge can be tested regularly by using ‘pop quizzes’ and short written analysis tasks.

The first term focuses on the fundamental knowledge and understanding required at this level:

* an introduction to a range of media forms and platforms can be formalised by the application of the theoretical framework focusing on the named theorists and enabling ideas from the specification.
* in the development of knowledge of the theoretical framework, the targeted Close Study Products (CSPs) could be used as examples but students are encouraged to consider other media products in addition to these.
* the first term offers an opportunity to introduce students to production technologies and they can complete some short activities to help them develop their skills.

Learning objectives

* Familiarity with the theoretical framework.
* Engagement with media products – CSPs and others.
* Development of NEA related skills.

Theoretical framework (introduction to media forms and platforms)

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y12 1a

Media language

How the different modes and language associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings.

How the combination of elements of media language influence meaning.

How audiences respond to and interpret media language.

Semiotics including Barthes.

* Sign
* Signifier
* Signified
* Icon
* Index
* Symbol
* Denotation
* Connotation
* Myth
* Ideology

Students to engage with a number of media products and identify media language use, genre codes, narrative devices in a relatively informal way.

Practical analysis tasks identifying media platforms/genres and their conventions.

Targeted CSPs may be introduced to help formalise analysis.

Closer focus on media language to include formal approaches from Barthes leading to an engagement with genre (Neale) and narratology (Todorov) ideas.

Genre theory

* Conventions and rules
* Sub-genre
* Hybridity
* Genres of order and integration
* ‘Genre as cultural category’

Narratology:

* Narrative codes
* Narration
* Diegesis
* Quest narrative
* ‘Character types’
* Causality
* Plot
* Masterplot

Further engagement with general media examples and targeted CSPs to exemplify ideas covered.

Practical activity (NEA)

* Initial IT skills audit to identify individual strengths and weaknesses.
* DTP skills and basic design practices for print and e-media products.
* Equipment needed: access to computers and DTP software.
* Activities to develop camera skills using moving image and still cameras and to include use of images in DTP productions.
* Equipment needed: access to cameras and computer equipment.
* Activities to further develop practical skills using moving image and still cameras and to include use of images in DTP productions.
* Equipment needed: access to DTP and or editing software, still and/or moving image cameras etc.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content - Term Y12 1b

Media representation

The way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination.

The way media representations construct versions of reality.

Development of analysis to include representational ideas from Hall and Gauntlett.

Theories of representation

* Positive and negative stereotypes
* Countertypes
* Misrepresentation
* Selective representation
* Dominant ideology
* Constructed reality
* Audience positioning

Hall’s ideas and theories on representation

* Encoding/decoding

Theories of identity as summarized by Gauntlett

* Fluidity of identity
* Constructed identity
* Negotiated identity
* Collective identity

Targeted CSPs may be introduced to help formalise analysis.

Media audiences

How media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences.

How audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital.

The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, historical and cultural circumstances.

Formalisation of audience issues including discussions on Hall and Bandura.

Media effects including Bandura

* Uses and gratifications
* Hypodermic needle theory
* Moral panic
* Imitation
* Cumulation
* Media literacy

Reception theory including Hall

* Encoding/decoding
* Hegemonic/negotiated/oppositional
* Agenda setting
* Framing
* Myth making
* Conditions of consumption
* Media industries

Media industries

Processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context.

Power and media industries as summarised by Curran and Seaton

* Regulation
* De-regulation
* Free market
* Media concentration
* Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)
* Globalisation
* Conglomerates
* Neo-liberalism
* Surveillance
* Privacy
* Security

Regulation as summarized by Livingstone and Lunt

* Public sphere
* Governance
* Regulation
* Public interest/PSB
* Media literacy
* Power
* Value
* Transnational culture
* Globalisation.

Film – Industries only (introduction of CSP)

*Blinded by the Light* (Gurinda Chadha, UK, 2019)

This is a targeted CSP where you will need to focus on the media industries area of the theoretical framework.

Students are not required to watch the film for the assessment.

Media industries

* Identification of how Blinded by the Light is an example of an US/UK co-production.
* The industry context should be studied with a consideration of budget, distribution, exhibition.
* Low to mid-budget film (approximately $15m).
* Distribution techniques – reliance on new technology; VOD, streaming.
* Continued use of traditional marketing and distribution - trailers, posters, film festivals etc.
* The role of the use of Bruce Springsteen’s music in the financing of the film and in its marketing.
* Regulation of the industry through BBFC (British Board of Film Classification)
* Regulation including Livingstone and Lunt.

Social, economic and cultural contexts

*Blinded by the Light* is characteristic of contemporary cultural production in its use of new technology at production and distribution stages. It reflects shifting patterns of audience consumption. As a low-mid budget film, it can be considered in its economic context having a mix of independent and major production and distribution contexts targeting a different audience to that of ‘indie’ and high-budget films.

Overview for term two (15 weeks)

Prior knowledge

The second term focuses on developing and reinforcing the understanding of the theoretical framework as it applies to CSPs. In-depth CSPs can be used to help engage with broader issues and debates.

Students may need to be introduced to the idea of ‘unseen’ products as this will be a feature in the exam.

* Further ‘pop quizzes’ can be used to check knowledge and written analysis tasks can assess student understanding.
* In-depth CSPs can help ‘revise’ ideas discussed in the first term and develop student understanding of the theoretical framework further.

Learning objectives

* Familiarity with the theoretical framework.
* Engagement with media products – CSPs and others.
* Development of NEA related skills.
* Introduction to the use of ‘unseen’ products.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y12 2a

Advertising and marketing

These are targeted CSPs and need to be studied with reference to two elements of the theoretical framework (media language and media representation) and all relevant contexts.

* Sephora: *Black Beauty is Beauty* (online advert)
* Score hair cream print advert: *Get what you always wanted* (1970s)

Sephora advert

1. Media language

Detailed study of the Sephora *Black Beauty is Beauty* advert should enable students to develop an understanding of how conventions of advertising are socially and culturally relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way.

Analysis should include:

* Mise-en-scene analysis
* Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings
* How advertising conventions are socially and historically relative – the move from television to online platforms and how that shapes the form
* The way in which media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies

Narrative

* How do adverts construct a narrative – or story – around their product and/or brand?
* The ways in which the advert can attract a range of responses and interpretations
* How does this advert create desire for the product?

Techniques of persuasion

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the persuasive techniques used in the advert and issues surrounding brand values, brand message, brand personality and brand positioning should inform the analysis.

Media representations

Discussion of the advert is likely to focus mainly on representation of race and gender

* The way in which the media – through representation – constructs versions of reality.
* How and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively – particularly in the context of cosmetics advertising.
* The processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent social groups.
* The effect of social and cultural contexts on representations.

Social and cultural contexts

Analysis of the Sephora advert will enable students to enter discourses on race and gender within a commercial context. The use of progressive messaging around diversity as a form of marketing can be seen as characteristic of how brands are targeting contemporary consumers and some of the contradictions around this approach could be discussed.

Score advert

2. Media language

Detailed study of Score *Get what you always wanted* should enable students to develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products and audiences.

Analysis should include:

* mise-en-scene analysis
* production values and aesthetics
* semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings
* how advertising conventions are socially and historically relative
* the way in which media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.

Narrative

* How does *Score* construct a narrative that appeals to its target audience?
* How and why have audience responses to the narrative to this advert changed over time?
* How does this advert create desire for the product?

Techniques of persuasion

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the persuasive techniques used in the advert and issues surrounding brand values, brand message, brand personality and brand positioning should inform the analysis.

Media representations

Discussion of the Score advertisement will focus mainly on representation of gender including:

* the processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent social groups
* how audience responses to interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical attitudes
* the effect of historical contexts on representations
* theories of representation including Hall
* theories of gender performativity including Butler
* feminist theories including bel hooks and van Zoonen
* theories of identity including Gauntlett.

Historical, social and cultural contexts

The Score hair cream advert is an historical artefact from 1967, it can be examined productively by considering its historical, social and cultural contexts, particularly as it relates to gender roles, sexuality and the historical context of advertising techniques. 1967 can be seen as a period of slow transformation in western cultures with legislation about and changing attitudes to the role of women – and men – in society, something that the advert can be seen to negotiate. Produced in the year of decriminalisation of homosexuality the representation of heterosexuality could be read as signalling more anxiety than might first appear. The reference to colonialist values can also be linked to social and cultural contexts of the ending of *Empire*. The advertising techniques of fifty years ago are fundamentally similar to today – if more explicit.

Television

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (language, representation, industries and audience) and all relevant contexts.

Either *Capital* (Series 1, Episode 1) and *Deutschland 83* (Series 1, Episode 1)

Or

*The Responder* (Series 1, Episode 1) and *Lupin* (Series 1 Episode 1))

Or

*No Offence* (Series 1, Episode 1) and *The Killing* (Series 1, Episode 1)

Two set products

3, Media language – see *CSP booklet* for product specific guidance.

* Mise-en-scene analysis.
* Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings.

Narrative

* Narrative techniques used to engage the audience; enigmas, binary oppositions, narration techniques etc.
* Narrative conventions of the genre including analysing the appeals of the structure.
* Narratology including Todorov.

Genre

* Conventions of the TV mini-series and the way in which this form is used to appeal to the audience.
* Definitions of the series as belonging to the drama and crime genres.
* Analysing the current popularity of the crime genre – how might it work as metaphor for society?
* Genre theory including Neale.

Media representations

* Representations of national and regional identity.
* Representations of gender (refer to CSP booklet for further guidance.)
* Analysis of how representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world.
* Theories of representation including Hall.
* Feminist theories including bell hooks and Van Zoonen.

Media audience

Issues of audience are also relevant throughout the other theoretical frameworks. In media language, the use of different formal structures to position the audience to receive and interpret meaning is central, while the study of representations has at its heart the reinforcement of social and cultural values for audiences.

* The production, distribution and exhibition of the product that shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies by broadcast and digital technologies.
* The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances is evident in the analysis of the series which are explicitly linked to contemporary issues.
* The advertising campaigns (trailers, websites at home and abroad) for the series demonstrate how media producers target, attract and potentially construct audiences.
* Cultivation theory including Gerbner.
* Reception theory including Hall.

Media industries

How the product fits into market place trends including an analysis of the industries that have developed, created and exhibited the products (see CSP booklet for guidance on each product).

* The regulatory framework of contemporary media including a focus on PSB in UK.
* A case study of the industries involved in the production of the product.
* The transnational and global context of the product.
* Cultural industries including Hesmondhalgh.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Workshops to allow students to work on NEA production skills.
* Equipment needed: access to cameras and computer equipment.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y12 2b

Magazines

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

*GQ* magazine, March 2022

Media language

The magazine front cover and specified content should be analysed in terms of the composition of the images, positioning, layout, typography, language and mode of address, etc. This will then provide detailed evidence for application of the other theoretical frameworks.

Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings.

Narrative and genre

The genre conventions of the magazine cover will need to be studied. While narrative may be more familiar to students as an approach to apply to moving image forms, it can also be to print media as a way of examining audience targeting, positioning and interpretation.

* Consider the way the front cover creates a narrative about character and lifestyle in order to attract an audience.
* The way in which the cover stories create enigma and anticipation for the reader – to be fulfilled by reading on.
* Structuralism including Lévi-Strauss.
* Narratology including Todorov.

The cover and specified content can be analysed in the context of genre in terms of conventions of layout and composition – which will overlap with analysis of visual language – but also as part of the genre of men’s health and lifestyle magazines.

* Genre study would include an analysis of the conventions of magazine front covers – a study which would overlap with visual analysis and audience positioning.
* Students should extend their genre approach by analysing the conventions of content of the magazine.
* Genre theory including Neale.

Media representations

The key areas of representation suggested by the magazine are to do with gender, specifically. This area is also likely to include aspects of sexuality, race and class.

* The emphasis on male beauty and grooming challenges some conventions of traditional stereotypes of masculinity.
* The types of images selected refer to concepts of queer masculinity and gender as performance.
* Men as object of a homosexual and heterosexual gaze.
* Theories of representation including Hall.
* Feminist theories including bell hooks and Van Zoonen.
* Theories of gender performativity including Butler.

Media industries

The main focus for industry for this close study product is Condé Nast, the multinational conglomerate which publishes GQ and a range of other fashion and lifestyle magazines. This will provide a case study of a commercial media institution where the primary – though not sole – focus is print.

* Case study of Condé Nast as a conglomerate.
* Developments in new technology mean that many of their brands are now online as well as in print – including the *GQ* website.
* Institutional strategies for keeping print popular and relevant in the contexts of developing technology and competition from other brands.
* Cultural industries including Hesmondhalgh.

Media audiences

As ever the theoretical framework of audience intersects with the study of visual codes and genre crucial to analysing mode of address and techniques of persuasion with the front cover functioning as a form of advertising.

* The mode of address can be analysed through the visual and written codes.
* Study of target audiences in terms of demographics and psychographics for magazines – publishing companies provide a great deal of data online in relation to their audience research for specific publications.
* The way in which different audience interpretations over time reflect social, cultural and historical contexts.
* Reception theory including Hall.

Social and cultural contexts

*GQ magazine represents a notable social and cultural shift in expectations of*

contemporary masculinity (a shift which could be usefully compared with the advert for Score hair cream). The study of *GQ* can be linked to social and cultural contexts through reference to fashion, consumerism, body image and changes in what society deems acceptable and unacceptable representations of masculinity.

*The Gentlewoman* (issue 23)

Media language

The magazine front cover and specified content should be analysed in terms of the composition of the images, positioning, layout, typography, language and mode of address etc. This will then provide detailed evidence for application of the other theoretical frameworks. *The Gentlewoman* uses a deliberately alternative design to other magazines aimed at young women.

Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings.

Narrative and genre

The genre conventions of the magazine cover will need to be studied. While narrative may be more familiar to students as an approach to apply to moving image forms, it can also be very productively applied to print media as a way of examining audience targeting, positioning and interpretation.

* Consider the way the front cover creates a narrative about character and lifestyle in order to attract an audience.
* The *Gentlewoman* uses a minimal aesthetic for its cover design. It clearly values design as part of its identity, conforming to and subverting mainstream magazine conventions.
* Structuralism, including Lévi-Strauss.
* Narratology, including Todorov.

The cover and specified content can be analysed in the context of genre in terms of conventions of layout and composition – which will overlap with analysis of visual language – but also as part of the genre of women’s fashion and lifestyle magazines.

* Genre study would include an analysis of the conventions of magazine front covers – a study which would overlap with visual analysis and audience positioning.
* Students should extend their genre approach by analysing the conventions of content of the magazine.
* Genre theory, including Neale.

Media representations

* Primarily femininity is represented but also how this affects the representation of men.
* *The Gentlewoman* constructs an alternative representation of femininity in contrast with other women’s magazines
* The focus is on women as artists, entrepreneurs, athletes and innovators – female empowerment is a major theme
* Representation of social groups: *The Gentlewoman* constructs a lifestyle through its focus on culture and the environment. This analysis would offer the opportunity to evaluate and question some of the messages and values constructed by the magazine
* Theories of representation including Hall
* Feminist theories including bell hooks and Van Zoonen
* Theories of gender performativity including Butler

Media industries

In contrast to *GQ* magazine, *The Gentlewoman* is an independent magazine published by Dutch publishers, Gert Jonkers and Jop van Bennekom, who publish one other title, Fantastic Man.

* Case study of independent magazine publishing sector
* Developments in new technology mean that small companies can also use the internet to communicate and target audiences.
* Institutional strategies for keeping print popular and relevant – *The Gentlewoman*’s branding includes a commitment to print over other media forms.
* Cultural industries including Hesmondhalgh.
* Regulation through IPSO.

Media audiences

The theoretical framework of audience intersects with the study of visual codes and genre crucial to analysing mode of address and techniques of persuasion with the front cover functioning as a form of advertising.

* The mode of address can be analysed through the visual and written codes.
* Study of target audiences in terms of demographics and psychographics
* The Gentlewoman has a niche target audience of young(ish) women (median age 32) with very high disposable incomes, who are not addressed by other magazines
* The way in which different audience interpretations over time reflect social, cultural and historical contexts
* Reception theory, including Hall

Social and cultural contexts

*The Gentlewoman* is part of a development in lifestyle and environmental movements of the early twenty-first century which rebrand consumerism as an ethical movement.

Its representation of femininity reflects an aspect of the feminist movement which celebrates authenticity and empowerment. As part of the design-led, independent magazine sector, *The Gentlewoman* can also be seen as part of a movement responding to the idea of ‘internet fatigue’.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Workshops to allow students to work on NEA production skills.
* Equipment needed: access to cameras and computer equipment.

Overview for term three

10 weeks: Easter to July

The NEA briefs will be released on 1 June. The main focus of the second half of this term will be on the NEA.

The final half term needs to focus on the application of the theoretical framework using both targeted and in-depth CSPs*.* Students will need to present their knowledge and understanding in the completion of a mock exam which may include unseen media products.

Learning objective

* Familiarity with the exam requirements/structure.
* Development of revision and exam skills – the application of the theoretical framework and use of CSPs.
* Research and development of NEA products.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y12 3a

Video games

These are in-depth CSPs and need to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

*Horizon Forbidden West* (2022) – the game and PS5 edition game cover

* This game should be studies as an example of a contemporary action-adventure game in terms of the relevant issues of representation and its use of media language. It is not a requirement that students plat the game. Gameplay, which may be accessed online.

Media language

* A semiotic analysis of the visual style inevitably engages with the study of genre and narrative with the mise-en-scene of the game – apparent in the gameplay and the cover artwork – referencing fantasy and action adventure as well as the conventions of different types of game play.
* Mise-en-scene analyisis.

Narrative

* Building on the semiotic analysis, consider the way the gameplay works through narrative codes to construct narratives of adventure and enigma for the character.
* Analyse the way the video game’s artwork conforms to particular styles of fantasy and hyperrealism and how this might link to narrative and audience.
* Analyse the way narrative techniques such as binary oppositions and conflict are used to create meaning and to position the audience.
* Consider the ways in which the video game allows participation in and development of narrative.
* Narratology including Todorov.

Genre

The genre conventions of different types of games can be identified, such as:

* Third-person, action-role playing, open-world, single-player game.
* Action adventure, post-apocalyptic conventions which reference Hollywood cinema.
* The study of genre conventions will also overlap with issues of audience – such as mode of address and target audience.
* Genre theory, including Neale.

Media Representations

The game provides a range of representational issues to consider, including gender, race, the role of machines, place.

* By setting the game in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, the game designers have imagined a new society which explores a range of social and cultural meanings – some of which have been controversial Theories of representation, including Hall.
* Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen.
* Theories of gender performativity, including Butler.
* Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory, including Gilroy.

Media Industries

*Horizon Forbidden West* is published by Guerrilla Games.

The structure of Guerrilla Games and its parent company as an example of contemporary media practice in maintaining control of production, distribution and circulation.

Guerrilla Games is the result of a merger of three earlier companies (starting in 1993) which reflects gaming’s origins in small independent companies in contrast to its current status as a global, billion-dollar industry.

* How the industry structure creates control of the range of platforms a game is available on.
* Regulation of games through PEGI.
* Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh.
* Regulation.

Media Audiences

Discussion of audience in the game industry interconnects with the other areas of the frameworks to consider the relationship between audience and representation, construction of target audiences, as well as the experience of gameplay and fan cultures.

* Psychographics and demographics of the target audience for *Horizon Forbidden West.*
* Use of a female protagonist to target a female audience.
* Debates around active and passive audiences in relation to gameplay.
* Controversies around the playing of video games – moral panics.
* Cultivation theory, including Gerbner.
* Reception theory, including Hall.
* Fandom, including Jenkins.
* ‘End of audience’ theories, including Shirky.

Cultural context

*Horizon Forbidden West* is a sequel to *Horizon Zero Dawn*, developing a popular franchise. The sequel has been seen as an attempt to compete with the *Breath of the Wild* series developed by Nintendo. A study of cultural context would consider the debate around the role of women in gaming – both in terms of industry and character representation – as well as considering the increased diversity in gaming. It is still the case that while gaming can be considered a mainstream part of the industry, there are still concerns about the effects of gaming on its target audience.

*The Sims Freeplay* – the game, its facebook page and Twitter feed

This game should be studied using the four areas of the framework. It raises some specific issues. For example:

Media language

* How are the codes and conventions of a video game used in the product? How are these conventions used to influence meaning?
* Have developing technologies affected the media language? Some familiarity with the development of the *Sims* franchise (2000 – present) will be necessary.
* The way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies. As a life simulation game *Sims FreePlay* includes many normative codes and values.
* The application of a semiotic approach will aid the analysis of the way in which the website creates a narrative about the world it is constructing.
* The genre conventions of video games, particularly the sub-genre of life simulation or sandbox games, can be identified and discussed in relation to other CSP video games.
* How is the game’s narrative driven? What is the motivation for continuing engagement with the product and for the purchase of ‘premium’ content?
* Narrative in the context of online material can refer to the way in which the images and the selection of stories construct a narrative about the world – one which is likely to be ideological.
* *Sims FreePlay* provides a useful case study for the discussion of Baudrillard’s concepts including simulation, simulacra, implosion and hyperreality.

Representations

* Representation of particular social groups.
* Who is constructing the representation and to what purpose? (Stuart Hall).
* What are the values, attitudes and beliefs embodied in the representations found in The Sims FreePlay?
* Analysis of the construction and function of stereotypes.
* Representation of the real world and claims about realism.
* Audience response to representation and issues around identity (Gauntlett).

Industry

* The use of diverse digital platforms.
* How are video games rated and regulated in the UK? (Livingstone and Lunt).
* A study of the Sims franchise will also engage with the effect cultural producers have on media industries.

Media Audiences

* The role of fans and fandom in video gaming (Jenkins).
* How *The Sims FreePlay* is marketed to a predominantly youth audience.
* The interaction between audience, product and digital platform and the opportunities for audience involvement.
* Differing interpretations by different groups – those belonging to and outside the primary audience.

Social and cultural contexts

A discussion of the social and cultural contexts of *The Sims FreePlay* will focus on the rapid growth and development of the video game industry and the debates about representation and effects.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Workshops to allow students to work on NEA production skills.
* Equipment needed: cameras and computer equipment.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y12 3b

Mock exam to test knowledge and skills.

* NEA briefs available from 1June.
* Research, planning and development of NEA.
* Each student chooses one brief from a choice of six.

Year 13

Overview for term one (15 weeks)

Prior knowledge

Further knowledge and understanding of CSPs will be targeted with a focus on exam. Unseen texts should also feature as preparation for media two.

Work on NEA should be ongoing throughout this term.

Knowledge can be tested regularly by using ‘pop quizzes’ and short written analysis tasks and exam simulation questions to prepare for the final exams.

Learning objectives

* Familiarity with the theoretical framework.
* Engagement with media products – CSPs and others (unseen).
* Development of NEA products.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y13 1a

Music video *Old Town Road–* Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus

This is a targeted CSP and needs to be studied with reference to two elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

Media language

Analysis should include:

* Mise-en-scene analysis – including setting, props, costume, etc.
* Cinematography – including the cinematic style of the video.
* Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings – a central aspect of the construction of the contrasting meanings associated with country, rap and hip-hop.
* Postmodernism – relevant to the foregrounding of visual and musical hybrids.

Narrative

* Construction of a narrative through the reference to the western genre form, role of the hero, elements of conflict, etc, which link to issues of representations.
* The reference to Hollywood western genre constructs a contextual narrative around race.
* Narratology.

Genre

* How the music video genre uses intertextuality and hybridity to establish meanings – this is the central theme of the video and it raises questions about how genres create meaning through classification.
* What values and ideologies are linked to genre?
* The historically relative and dynamic nature of genre – to what extent are the conventions of different music video categories (such as performance, narrative, thematic, concept, etc) evident?
* Genre theory, including Neale.

Media Representations

Discussion of representation is likely to focus predominantly on race, gender, time and place.

* The effect of social and cultural contexts on representations of race – history of racial conflict in the US.
* How representations invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences.
* Representation of time and place within the video – the contrast between the ‘Old Town Road’ at different periods.
* Theories of representation, including Hall.
* Theories of gender performativity, including Butler.

The construction of representation in the video draws on mise en scene and semiotic analysis with the signifiers of black and white American culture and the values attached to them. The use of costume and roles – again linked to genre – construct representations of masculinity which could be read as performative and playful.

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

*Old Town Road* explores the relationship between genre and race, specifically in the country music industry but also, through the use of film genre conventions, the media more widely. The exclusion of Black artists from the US’s country billboard charts has been controversial and *Old Town Road* crystallises those concerns. Lil Nas X, known as a media influencer before his music career, came out as gay in 2019, which has also affected the way in which the music video has been understood.

The music video reflects aspects of society and contemporary cultural issues in its discourse on race, gender and musical categorisation. An interesting area of discussion might be to what extent the music video as a form can transmit political messages. The economic context would include the ways in which artists make money from music videos, in this case the different iterations of video and song can be seen as a strategy to maximise the audience and profit.

Product: Music Video – Ghost Town – The Specials (1981)

Media Language

Detailed study of *Ghost Town* should enable students to demonstrate appreciation and critical understanding of the historical development of music videos and allow for social, cultural and political comparison with contemporary CSPs.

Analysis should include:

* mise-en-scene analysis
* cinematography
* semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings
* postmodernism

Narrative

* Construction of a narrative and links to song lyrics.
* Narrative appeal and pleasures offered.
* Audience positioning and invited responses.
* Narratology.

Genre

* How the music video genre uses intertextuality and hybridity to establish meanings.
* The historically relative and dynamic nature of genre.
* How music videos serve the needs of media producers.
* How music videos meet the expectations of audiences.
* Genre theory including Neale.

Media Representations

* Analysis of *Ghost Town* can help develop an understanding of the processes of selection and combination which construct versions of reality.
* The effect of social, cultural and historical contexts on representations of ethnicity (British multiculturalism).
* How representations invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences.
* Representation of time and place within the video – England in the early 1980s, specifically London as shown in the video, but also Coventry, which is referred to in the song and was the home city of the band.
* Theories of representation, including Hall.

Context

*Ghost Town* by The Specials conveys a specific moment in British social and political history while retaining a contemporary relevance. The cultural critic Dorian Lynskey has described it as “a remarkable pop cultural moment’’ that “defined an era’’. The video and song are part of a tradition of protest in popular music, in this case reflecting concern about the increased social tensions in the UK at the beginning of the 1980s. The song was number 1 post-Brixton and during the Handsworth and Toxteth riots.

In 1981, opportunities for revenue directly from music videos were very limited and their economic value came as a marketing tool to advertise the single. This function was particularly important pre-Internet, with the popularity of broadcast pop shows such as *Top of the Pops*. (MTV was launched in 1981 but had limited availability in the UK initially). However, the *Ghost Town* video is now on YouTube with revenue opportunities through viewing and advertising. It also provides a link to The Specials YouTube subscription channel which has opportunities to purchase their back catalogue and new material.

Newspapers

Product: Newspaper *The Daily Mail*

This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:

* media industries
* media audiences.

Media industries

The *Daily Mail*, launched in 1896 offers opportunities for studying the relationship between ownership patterns, economic factors and political viewpoints. The history of the *Daily Mail* provides examples of the paper’s political influence including some high-profile clashes between the paper and its political opponents. In the context of declining print sales for all newspapers, the *Daily Mail* has been relatively successful, particularly by embracing the opportunities of digital technology, adjusting its style to an evolving target readership and by adopting popular campaigns.

Industries issues to be studied include:

* how processes of production, and circulation shape the *Daily Mail.*
* the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production and circulation.
* the impact and effects of technological change including digital convergence and the relationship between the print product and *Mail Online.*
* editorial control by owners and the influence of the editor (the effect of individual producers on media industries).
* the significance of economic factors.
* the regulation of the newspaper industry through the Independent Press. Standards Organisation (IPSO) Post-Leveson debates re Impress, Royal Charter.

Media audiences

The study of audience in the context of newspapers is of particular importance. The theoretical framework of audience intersects with the study of visual codes and representations. These are crucial to analysing the mode of address and techniques of persuasion used to create a consensus for a particular set of beliefs and values. Areas of investigation include:

* demographics and psychographics of target audience.
* how the *Daily Mail* reaches, addresses and positions its audience.
* how the content of individual news stories attract the audience.
* the effect that newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* have on audiences (media effects theory, reception theory).
* the uses made by audiences of a daily newspaper including aspects of identity and cultural capital.

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

The Daily Mail’s robust right of centre stance, the controversies arising from its campaigns and attitudes and its success in terms of circulation make it a useful case study of the social and cultural contexts of the media, particularly as part of a comparative study alongside the other CSP newspaper. From an economic perspective, it will be useful to consider how print newspapers have responded to declining revenue particularly considering the reach of its associated website.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Production of NEA ongoing throughout the term.
* Equipment needed: access to cameras and computer equipment.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y13 1b

Product:

Print: Newspaper - *The Guardian*

This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:

* media industries
* media audiences.

Media industries

The study of the position of *The Guardian* in the news industry will include the study of its development of digital technologies (websites, apps, podcasts) as ways of developing its brand and increasing readership. Industry issues to be studied include:

* How processes of production and circulation shape *The Guardian.*
* The impact and effects of technological change including digital convergence and the relationship between the print product and digital platforms.
* The effect of the Trust ownership on editorial position and the influence of the editor (the effect of individual producers on media industries).
* The significance of economic factors – how does *The Guardian* survive in a declining print market?
* The regulation of the newspaper industry through the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) post-Leveson debates re Impress, Royal Charter, etc.

Media audiences

The study of audience in the context of newspapers is of particular importance. The theoretical framework of audience intersects with the study of visual codes and representations which are crucial to analysing the mode of address and techniques of persuasion used to create a consensus for a particular set of beliefs and values.

* Demographics and Psychographics of target audience.
* How *The Guardian* reaches, addresses and positions its audience.
* How the content of individual news stories attracts the audience.
* The effect that newspapers such as *The Guardian* have on audiences (media effects theory, reception theory) – how does this relate to political affiliation?
* The uses made by audiences of a daily newspaper including aspects of identity and cultural capital.

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

*The Guardian*’s ideological position – its overall values and beliefs about the world – draw on a range of social, political and cultural contexts and reflect a progressive stance on a range of contemporary issues (which can cause controversy amongst its readership – such as in the recent debate around trans/gender critical positions). The political affiliation of the paper has shifted across left-wing parties, and it has a ‘critical friend’ approach to those parties rather than unconditional support for one organisation.

The economic context of the paper draws on issues which affect all organisations in an industry with a declining audience, but *The Guardian*’s differing response to that is a notable area of study.

**Product: Radio *War of the Worlds (1938)***

This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:

* media industries
* media audiences.

Media Industries

*War of the Worlds* provides an historical context for broadcasting, being produced at a period when radio was the only form of domestic media; the 1930s and 1940s became known as the ‘golden age’ of radio.

* *War of the Worlds* was broadcast by Columbia Broadcasting Company – an institution still in existence (in a very different form) today. In 1938 there were only two national broadcasting companies – known as the networks.
* Radio broadcasting was seen as direct competition to newspapers, which had previously been the only way of receiving news. *War of the Worlds* was drawing on new forms – and referring to its main competitor – by using the news format.
* The broadcast is typical of the way institutions are always looking for new styles in order to attract audiences.
* Regulation – radio broadcasting was regulated by the Federal Communications Commission and it investigated the broadcast to see if it had broken any laws. In the 1930s there were concerns over the power of radio to cause distress.
* The broadcast provides an excellent example to consider the effect of individual producers on media industries as this is the work of Orson Welles who can be seen as the author of the work, pushing the boundaries of what was thought to be possible in radio.

**Product: Radio – *Newsbeat***

This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:

* media industries
* media audiences.

Media Industries

*Newsbeat* as a BBC News product with bulletins are broadcast on BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 1Xtra and BBC Asian Network

The funding of BBC Radio through the licence fee, concept of hypothecated tax

Issues around the role of a public service broadcaster within a competitive, contemporary media landscape

* The distinctive nature of the programme connected to its public service remit.
* Arguments on the need for addressing a youth audience already catered for commercially.
* The influence of new technology on media industries – Newsbeat as a multi-platform media product, eg:
	+ Website
	+ Twitter
	+ Instagram
* The regulation of the BBC via Ofcom and the governance of the BBC.

Media Audiences

* The techniques the broadcast uses to target a youth audience and create audience appeal, eg:
	+ Presentation style
	+ News values
	+ Content selection
* The opportunities for audience interaction, participation and self-representation.
* The way external factors – such as demographics and psychographics – are likely to also affect audience response and produce differing interpretations.
* Cultivation theory, including Gerbner.
* Reception theory, including Hall.

Social and cultural contexts

*Newsbeat* is part of BBC News. The BBC has a unique place in society as the ‘national’ broadcaster with an expectation of impartial reporting of the news. There is an expectation that the BBC will be a reliable source of accurate reporting in the context of rising concerns about ‘fake news’.

The BBC is at the heart of political arguments regarding its social role, the content of its programming and the fact that it offers competition for commercial media industries.

Traditional news providers (radio, TV and newspapers) are in competition with a host of digital websites and social media platforms that have become the primary providers of news for many, especially young people.

Overview for term two (10 weeks)

Prior knowledge

The second term focuses on developing and reinforcing the understanding of the CSPs. In-depth CSPs can be used to help engage with broader issues and debates.

Students will need to be further developing their analytical skills regarding ‘unseen’ products as this will be a feature in the exam.

* Further ‘pop quizzes’ can be used to check knowledge and written analysis tasks can assess student understanding.
* In-depth CSPs can help ‘revise’ ideas discussed in the first term and develop student understanding of the theoretical framework further.

Learning objectives

* Familiarity with the theoretical framework.
* Engagement with media products – CSPs and others.
* Development of NEA products.
* Further development of analysis of ‘unseen’ products.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y13 2a

Online product: *Zendaya - social media: a range of examples from: Zendaya’s website, Instagram account, Tik-Tok account, Twitter feed etc.*

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

Media language

* Analysis of media language and genre conventions of a range of examples from Zendaya’s social media presence.
* Semiotic analysis of conventions including type face, images, colour, mode of address, overall structure and composition.
* It might be useful to analyse examples from a more formal site – such as the official website – in comparison to one with an apparently more personal or authentic address to consider reasons for decisions on framing, subject, composition, etc.
* How does Zendayause the conventions of social media platforms to project her persona?

Media Representations

Zendaya’s social media sites provide a range of areas of representation to study, including gender, race, ethnicity and celebrity.

* The different platforms differ in the selection of material, from the official website, which appears highly controlled, to the seemingly more personal representations found on Twitter and TikTok. How does this shape representation?
* How does Zendayaconstruct representations of race across her platforms? How do these relate to film, television, fashion, the ‘real’ Zendaya?
* One of the functions of the social media presence is advertising. How is this integrated into a range of posts?
* How do the representations address a particular audience – consider in relation to age, gender, race, etc.
* Theories of representation, including Hall.
* Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen.
* Theories of gender performativity, including Butler.
* Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory, including Gilroy.

Media Industries

The study of media industries will focus on at least two of the social media platforms used by Zendayain order to analyse the ways that platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok or Twitter are structured and funded.

* What is the ownership structure of the different social media sites? How do they relate to other media organisations, eg global conglomerates?
* How are social media sites regulated (and self-regulated)?
* How do the different platforms appeal to different categories of Zendaya’s fans?
* Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh.

Media Audiences

Discussion of audience in the social media industry connects with the other areas of the frameworks to consider the relationship between audience and representation, construction of target audiences, as well as opportunity for interactivity and fan cultures.

* Psychographics and demographics of the target audience for at least two of Zendaya’s social networks.
* Does a female celebrity address a gendered audience?
* Controversies around the effects of social media on the target audience.
* What opportunities are there for audience interaction? How controlled are these?
* Cultivation theory, including Gerbner.
* Reception theory, including Hall.
* Fandom, including Jenkins.
* ‘End of audience’ theories, including Shirky.

Social, political, cultural and economic contexts

Zendayareflects several social and cultural developments in contemporary society around diversity in celebrity culture, young female empowerment (or the extent of it) and the emergence of Gen Z/millennial culture. Although clearly not the first or only celebrity to use social media, Zendaya’s reach across the platforms and its importance in constructing her brand does make her a notable figure, suggesting a new kind of celebrity power.

The effect of celebrity social media is arguably a new iteration of the traditional aim of the star persona – to appear both knowable and distant. Zendaya’s interests and advocacy (which can be seen to have replaced the more obviously commercial endorsements) reflect the political interests of her young adult audience. This aspect of celebrity culture relates to economic contexts through the business model of the platforms and the new ways in which celebrities make money and demonstrate their power and influence across a range of industries.

Product: *The Voice* website

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

Media language

* How are the codes and conventions of a website used in the product? How are these conventions used to influence meaning?
* The website should be analysed in terms of the composition of the images, positioning, layout, typography, language and mode of address.
* The application of a semiotic approach will aid the analysis of the way in which the website creates a narrative about the world it is constructing – often to do with race, ethnicity and age.
* The genre conventions of news websites will need to be studied and the genre approach should also include reference to news values.
* Narrative in the context of online material can refer to the way that the images and the selection of stories construct a narrative about the world – one which is likely to be ideological.

Media representations

The choice of online product provides a wide range of representational issues. These include the representation of the target audience – black Britons – but also the selection and construction of news stories and their subjects. The analysis of representation will build on work done in the analysis of visual images and can be used to explore target audiences and ideological readings.

* Representation of particular groups (race, gender), construction of a Black British identity in *The Voice*.
* Who is constructing the representation and to what purpose? (Stuart Hall).
* Analysis of the construction and function of stereotypes.
* Representation and news values – how do the stories selected construct a particular representation of the world and particular groups and places in it?

Media industries

*The Voice* is a commercial media product but could also be seen as fulfilling a public service through its targeting of an ethnic minority audience. The website also demonstrates the way that news institutions have had to respond to new technology through *The Voice’s* bi-media presence and use of convergence.

*The Voice* provides a case study for the specialised nature of media production, distribution and circulation within a regional and national context.

The use of digital platforms to expand the output and reach of the products demonstrates how institutions have responded to the impact of new technology.

Media audiences

The close study product provides an example of a clearly targeted, primary audience through demographics of ethnicity, race and age which should encourage the study of issues of identity. Related to this would be a discussion of the changing relationship between producers and audiences – is there a need for media aimed at specialised audiences in the context of audience as producer? (Clay Shirky ‘End of audience’ theories).

* Definitions of mass and minority or specialised audiences.
* Debates around the idea of targeting specialised audiences (by race, age, lifestyle etc) and how successful that targeting is in reality.
* Differing interpretations by different groups – those belonging to and outside the primary audience (Stuart Hall – reception theory).
* Opportunities for audience interactivity and creativity.

Social, political, cultural and economic contexts

The Voice as an institution has historical and cultural significance in its origins (1982) as the UK’s first (and only) newspaper aimed specifically at a black British audience, dealing with relevant political and social issues. The website continues this function but is perhaps considered more mainstream and less political than in the past. The economic context can be explored through a consideration of the nature of the production and distribution and move to online content to reach a wider audience and attract advertisers

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Production of NEA ongoing throughout term. Deadline for completion to be set internally by centres. All marks submitted to us by 15 May.
* Colleges may decide to allocate more lesson time in the week to NEA completion in this term.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y13 2b: Exam preparation using targeted and in-depth CSPs to focus on exam skills.

Mock Exam and target setting.

Revision plans.

Possible teaching and learning activities

Production of NEA ongoing throughout term. Deadline for completion to be set internally by centres but ideally to be completed before/just after Easter. All marks submitted by mid-May.

Overview for term three (5 weeks)

The NEA needs to be completed and marks submitted for mid-May so it is possible to continue working on the production work into term three if necessary. The final NEA deadline should allow time for marking and internal standardisation of marks before the deadline.

The final half term needs to focus on the application of the theoretical framework using targeted CSPs and the in-depth CSPs in the ways identified in the specimen papers*.* Students will need to consider presenting their knowledge and understanding in the exam and will need some practice using unseen print media products.

Learning objective

* Familiarity with the exam requirements/structure.
* Development of revision and exam skills – the application of the theoretical framework and use of CSPs.

Specification reference

3.4.1, 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.2

Specification content – Term Y13 3a:

Revision.

Further exam preparation.

Possible teaching and learning activities

All marks submitted to us by 15 May.