MEDIA STUDIES STEP UP TO POST 16 CHALLENGE

Minimum Subject Entry Requirements: There is no requirement to have studied Media at GCSE, but if you did you must have achieved at least grade 5 to study A Level Media.

Challenge 1 – The Investigative One

Below are just some of the key concepts that we study at A Level. Your first challenge is to be able to explain these concepts and some of the key terms related to the concepts.

1) **Narratology** including Todorov: narrative structure, narrative codes, narration, diegesis, quest narrative, ‘character types’, causality, plot, masterplot
2) **Genre** theory including Neale: sub-genre, hybridity, genres of order and integration, conventions and rules, ‘genre as cultural category’, classical Hollywood genres, American indigenous genres
3) **Semiotics** including Barthes: sign, signifier, signified, icon, index, symbol, denotation, connotation, myth, ideology
4) **Structuralism** including Lévi-Strauss: binary oppositions, ideological reading, deconstruction
5) **Postmodernism** including Baudrillard: simulacra, simulation, hyperreality, pastiche, bricolage, intertextuality

You can explain the concepts as you understand them (in your own words), but it will be more impressive if you explain them whilst applying them to some media products to exemplify your understanding. For example, you could use a film to demonstrate your understanding of narratology, including Todorov’s narrative structure and character types.

This work can be produced electronically or handwritten.

Challenge 2 – The Analysis One

You need to watch the episode of Black Mirror called “Nosedive” (Season 3, Episode 1) – this is available on Netflix. Once you have watched, you need to analyse and explain the themes, messages and ideologies presented in the episode. Use evidence from the episode to support your ideas.

Some questions worth thinking about...

*What is it saying about social media? What is it saying about human behaviour? How does it represent friendships and social interactions? How is capitalism presented? What aspirations are presented a ‘normal’? What does the episode make you think about representation of self? What does it make you think about how you see others? What do you think the producers wanted to audience to think/feel after watching? To what extent does reflect real life?*

This work can be produced electronically or handwritten.

With so much extra we highly recommend you watch some other episodes of Black Mirror as they can be very thought provoking and an interesting commentary on society and technology. Black Mirror is what we call an anthology series, meaning each episode contains different characters and a totally different narrative; you can watch any episode in any order.

If you cannot access Netflix please email Miss Lyttle for an alternative task.
Challenge 3 – The Reflective One

For this challenge you will have to think reflectively about the media and the role it has on shaping us, our views, our ideas about people, places, issues, events, and so on. There are a variety of approaching regarding the influence the media has on us which we will study in detail at A Level, but for now we want to see what your own ideas are.

‘We don’t truly know about the world around us, we just know what media producers want us to think. To what extent do you agree?’

Use the title about to write a minimum 800 word essay. Try to include examples/evidence to support your points of discussion. This work can be produced electronically or handwritten.

Some questions to help you formulate your ideas...

*Are audiences active or passive? What about fake news? Think about stereotypes – where do they come from? Where do you get your ideas from about groups of people you’ve never met or places you’ve never been to? What impact does new, e-media have on audiences and their ideas? Are media producers intentionally trying to manipulate audiences? How can audiences now be producers? Who has the most power, producers or audiences?*

Challenge 4 – The Creative One

Media language refers to the way media products communicate meaning. Media language includes: camera angles and framing, camera movement, editing, lighting, sound, graphics and special effects, costume, props, acting, make up, setting...plus more!

Your challenge is to take a mundane activity and film it in **two different ways**. For example, you could film making a cup of tea in a way that seems sad and another that seems tense. You could film doing some school work in a way that seems scary and a way that is presented as comical.

You can film and edit on any device, using any software or apps you have access to. These don’t need to be feature length films; just a minute or two will do so long and you are effectively demonstrating how media language choices create meaning.

You can use your own ideas, but here are some to help if you have a bit of a mental block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mood/tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choosing what to watch on TV</td>
<td>Funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking your social media</td>
<td>Sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a drink/snack</td>
<td>Scary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drying/styling your hair</td>
<td>Joyful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting out of bed/ready for bed</td>
<td>Dramatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting the bins out</td>
<td>Exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusting/polishing</td>
<td>Eerie</td>
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</tbody>
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School Email for Lead Subject Teacher:  stacey.lyttle@woodgreenacademy.co.uk