

Media Studies

General Information

Media Studies is a contemporary academic course that integrates theoretical and practical approaches to the media through a blend of coursework and exam assessment. Throughout the course, you will develop skills in critical and reflective thinking and analyse a range of media texts and forms from global and historical media. You will work with a range of academic ideas and arguments and apply them to set media products.

The course looks at the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, representations, industries and audiences. Throughout the course, you will study nine different media forms comprising of: television, film (with a focus on distribution), radio, newspapers, magazines, advertising and marketing, online and social media, video games and music videos. Our approach will allow you to engage confidently with critical and theoretical approaches from the perspectives of being a consumer and producer of media products. Media Studies should inspire you to continue learning beyond the confines of the classroom as well as developing employability skills that will serve you well both in Higher Education and in the workplace.

Examination details

In this two-year A-Level student assessment takes place through two examinations (70%) and the submission of coursework (30%) at the end of the second year of study.

Media Messages	Written Examination 2 hours - 35% of qualification
Evolving Media	Written Examination 2 hours - 35% of qualification
Making media	Non-Exam Assessment (coursework) – 30% of qualification

Media Studies

Course Content

Media Messages: 35% of total A Level

Section A: News

You will engage in an in-depth study of contemporary news in the UK, requiring you to explore how and why newspapers and their online counterparts are evolving as media products. You will also study the relationship between online and offline news. You will analyse set media products, The Guardian and The Daily Mail but a variety of quality and popular publications will be studied throughout the topic.

Section B: Media language and representation

You will explore the use of media language and representation in consumer branding and charity advertising, alternative magazines such as The Big Issue and music videos such as Unfinished Symphony by Massive Attack and Titanium by David Guetta.

Evolving Media: 35% of total A Level

Section A: Media industries and audiences

You will develop knowledge and understanding of media contexts, media industries and audiences through the study of radio with a focus on the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show, video games with a focus on Minecraft and film distribution through a comparative study of the Jungle Book 1967 and 2016.

Section B: Long form television drama

You will engage in an in-depth study of television as an evolving, global media form. You will study two specific long form television programmes. You will study one complete episode from one English language text - Stranger Things and one will be a non-English language text - Deutschland 83. You will look at how the television industry and audiences have changed and how television producers use media language to construct meaning for global audiences.

Making Media: 30% of total A Level

You will create a promotional cross-media production that includes two linked media products - print magazine and an associated website. You will respond to a brief set by OCR.

In-depth studies require you to apply and evaluate academic ideas and arguments across all four areas of the theoretical framework. You will work with theories of feminism, post-colonialism, gender performativity, identity, representation, postmodernism, narratology, structuralism, genre, semiology, audience, cultural industry and regulation.

Please note that set products are subject to change by the examination board.

Advanced Level

(Exam board – OCR)

(Specification code: H409)



Entry requirements

You should have at least a grade 4 in GCSE English. GCSE Media Studies is not required however if it has been taken we would expect a grade 5 or above. Students should also meet the general college entry requirements for Advanced Level study.

In this subject, particular skills and aptitudes will be required, many of which will be demonstrated by students' GCSE profiles.

Entry requirements might be changed in light of curriculum reform.

Advanced Level

How it is taught

Media Studies involves a blend of teacher-led introductions to key concepts and theories, student-led research and analytical activities, extended writing and practical productions using industry-standard software. 30% of the course centres on coursework with written examination accounting for the remaining 70%. There may be occasional study days outside of college including the opportunity for overseas travel.

Useful / common subject combinations

Media Studies combines well with a wide range of other subjects. There are potential links with Film Studies, Art and Design, English Language, English Literature, Criminology, Sociology, Psychology, and Politics, but Media Studies can also provide a refreshing balance to a programme of other subjects.

Careers / HE information

There is a wide choice of media-related courses in Higher Education, ranging from practical to theoretical, specialist to general. Many students from QE have progressed to undergraduate media courses while those studying other subjects in Higher Education have found the skills they have developed in research, analysis, presentation and extended writing particularly useful. To progress to future employment in the media, you will need to be able to show evidence of your creativity and technical ability, so it is important to develop a portfolio or showreel, as well as seeking practical work experience.

Other relevant information

You need to have a strong interest in learning about the media; its influence and role in society and culture, the institutions controlling and regulating them and the way in which they represent the world, and the role of audiences. You need to be creative and imaginative, be able to work independently, to think analytically and to write in an advanced academic style.