

### Why study media

1. Is it simply because the media exist and warrant attention that we should study them?
2. We could point to the economic activity – such as the large amounts of money that is spent on advertising, the market for various magazines and the decline of print newspapers, or the use of Facebook or twitter, in political uprisings
3. or the publicity surrounding phone hacking and media empires such as the Murdoch empire
4. Hence, we could argue that the media gives an indication of social and cultural activities and the consequences of media in our lives and that

### Defining media: what are the media of media studies?

1. Media is the plural of medium
2. A medium refers to one thing between two others
3. It is a medium of communication
4. A conduit or channel through which messages are channelled and pass between people.

### Media refers

1. As well as referring to many different industries
2. media forms first fully founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century
3. Include newspapers, magazines, photography and film
4. As well as the broadcast media of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – radio, television, popular music, the internet
5. And the developing new media.
6. There are also practices which operate across various media e.g. advertising
7. There is a huge variety and range and various different approaches to studying the media
8. And we will explore some of these on this module.

### Media studies

1. Media studies is also a set of practices for defining the study of media
2. There have been students of the media long before it became known as media studies
3. Hence there are different approaches and dialogues, interactions and disagreements in media students
4. All linked by the central object of study
5. Media studies can be thought of as a field of study
6. Rather than a discipline with its own discrete concepts, traditions and methods
7. For doing research
8. It is also dynamic as it interacts with intellectually similar fields of study from Sociology, Film to Journalism

### The context of media studies

1. Media studies might look at the influence that consuming media messages has on society or individual members or certain sections of society

#### Context

1. The context – refers to a setting
2. We can locate media output, media organisations, media audiences, media practices and media policies
3. Against those aspects of society that have a bearing upon the ways in which these aspects are meaningful
4. We are interested in the way in which societies are organised, how ideas are established, accepted and distributed

### Questioning our assumptions

1. We need to consider how our own questions might have been anticipated and dealt with already
2. Academics have been investigating and writing about the media
3. Some of the questions and issues we think of as modern and pertinent to the media

4. Were being asked by ancient Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Plato over 2000 years ago

### Debates

1. Many media theories or theories employed by media scholars
2. Can provoke controversy and debate

### Writings

1. Academics aim to convince others of an interpretation and argument
2. Some theorists can be quite obscure in their writing
3. And they deliberately use difficult concepts and words
4. Students sometimes deploy terms in their writing that are complex but often don't understand these
5. Accurate language and precision
6. Explain things simply but in formal language
7. Will aid the development of scholarly work

### What is Culture (previously Cultural Studies)

1. We can begin by trying to define Culture/Cultural Studies but actually it is hard to define because, like Media Studies, it is multidisciplinary in nature
2. It is concerned with the study of culture and how culture shapes society and individuals – but what exactly do we mean by culture?
3. Culture has been defined in various ways. For example, the classic anthropological definition is culture as a way of life
4. There are also cultural practices such as the things people do e.g. celebrating a special occasion
5. And also cultural texts – the products of culture which can include such things as music, sport, literature.

### Defining Culture/ Cultural Studies

1. Culture/Cultural studies focuses less on institutions and economics and more on texts and audiences.
2. It is broader in scope than media studies
3. So we can look at literature, sport, music, food amongst other things – in themselves
4. So Culture/ Cultural Studies investigates the activities of everyday life which can include such things as shopping, fandom and sporting participation.

### Origins and development

1. There are different ideas about what is culture and how culture has been perceived.
2. 'Culture and Civilisation' tradition – the best that has been thought and said' – Matthew Arnold (mid c.19), F.R. Leavis (mid .20<sup>th</sup> century) – what represents culture.
3. 'Culture is ordinary' – all activities are cultural – encompasses working-class culture – and (therefore) popular culture – Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson (mid 1920 – 1980s)
4. Culture as resistance – study of subcultures which we explore in more detail in year 2 – Dick Hebdige, Birmingham school (1970s/80s)

### Origins and Development

1. Cultural identity – expanded studies of class to gender (Angela McRobbie), and race (Paul Gilroy), and sexuality (Jeffrey Weeks) (1980/90s)
2. 'Cultural Populism' – insistence that what is popular must good and worthy of study – John Fiske (1980s)
3. 'New Cultural Studies' – political dimension – links culture to new social movements e.g. environmentalism – Joanna Zylynska (2000s)

4. As you can see from the list above study of culture in the UK context has its own history and development (it has a slightly different history and development in the US context).

### Focus

1. So the focus of culture/cultural studies is about shared social meanings that are generated by culture.
2. And how culture helps us make sense of the world around us
3. In doing this, culture/Cultural studies is also concerned with issues of power and ideology – some have suggested that culture/ Cultural Studies could actually be called ideological studies!
4. The tradition of thought that culture/Cultural Studies is associated with has a Marxist emphasis.
  - a) ideas and values are embedded in popular culture i.e. culture is related to the social structure
  - b) these are often the ideas and values of mainstream society
  - c) Culture influences the audience to accept those values
  - d) Meanings are created; we repeat them; meanings are reinforced, become 'common sense', and are then seen as 'natural' (examples given on slide 11)

### Focus of cultural studies/Culture

1. However, Popular culture [ is an arena of consent and resistance (Stuart Hall)
2. So Stuart Hall highlights how we might agree or disagree with interpretations of cultural texts (for example).
3. The emphasis is on audiences where
  - Different groups interpret texts differently
  - There is a resistance to/negotiation of the ideological meaning carried in the text
  - This is Halls encoding/decoding where people may either accept the preferred meaning, or reject the preferred meaning that is embedded into a text
  - People might also have a negotiated response – accepting some and rejecting other elements.
4. It is suggested that we also generate our own forms of culture – such as subcultures.
5. Popular culture (Hall), and other forms of culture, are, then, where both 'incorporation' and 'resistance' take place
6. This is what is Cultural Studies

### Session 1: Part 2

#### Three core areas

1. I just thought it would be useful to highlight the three core areas that we tend to look at in Media and Culture
2. As this is the context in which we have developed the modules and topics that you will study on this course.
3. So although this week we are focusing on media studies, and next week , John is focusing on Cultural studies
4. These three core areas form the basis of the course throughout the three years of study.

#### Texts and Representations

1. One of the core areas that we focus on is actually looking at the texts – so this could mean the television programmes, the magazines, the radio programmes, the internet etc.
2. And we analyse these in terms of their significance in Media and culture
3. We often focus on representations – so how for example, gender, race, class, age, etc. are represented in various texts

#### Consumption and audiences

2. Another key area is that of the audience
3. So we discuss relevant theories in relation to audiences – such as the audience being active and using media for their own purposes

4. We also highlight the importance and symbolic significance of the things we consume and purchase – such as food, clothing, games etc.

### **Production and institutions**

1. When we focus on production and institutions we might look at Hollywood production systems and distribution systems – for example and how they tend to dominate the market
2. Or how advertising might dictate the kind of programmes we see on television.
3. We also might look at various media institutions and media moguls and the impact these might have on, say what news focuses on.
4. We are concerned with how media institutions might convey certain ideology (a term which you will become familiar with as you progress on this course)

### **Writing skills/Referencing**

- You will need to organise your work so that it is coherently presented
- You cannot write all you know in relation to a topic, but you have to address the specific question.
- You will need to have a clear introduction to the topic, highlighting what you will be focusing on
- You must draw on academic sources for any definitions of key terms.
- Keep focused on the question – do not digress or answer a different question.
- You will also need a good conclusion – this is where you present and comment on what you believe are the most important points

### **Reading**

- You need to read academic textbooks and journal articles.
- You can use handouts that I have given to you in your assignments.
- Rather than accepting theories or viewpoints you need to think about where weaknesses might be – and to think about how to justify those criticisms
- You need to place your ideas into the context of your reading on a topic.

### **Expression**

- The key to good academic writing is the use of clear English, correct spelling, grammar and punctuation

### **Harvard Referencing in the text/essay – See the Handout for examples**

- Paraphrasing means putting the source material into your own words. This demonstrates that you have understood the meaning and context of what you have read
- You must always reference when paraphrasing

### References

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- Branston, G. and Stafford, R. (2010) *The Media Student's Book*. London: Routledge.
- Thwaites, T., Davis, L., and Mules, W. (2002) *Introducing Cultural and Media Studies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Tomaselli, K. (2012) Alter-egos: Cultural and Media Studies. *Critical Arts*, Vol. 26(1), pp.14-38.