

Is this subject right for me?

Media Studies is a stimulating and challenging course. Are you open-minded and willing to look critically at a range of different media products (possibly outside your own personal tastes) including repeatedly watching film and television extracts to analyse how they are constructed and the meanings and messages they create?

Do you enjoy using a range of research methods, for example using books in the library, or conducting surveys and interviews for detailed study of audiences? Are you interested in the influence of media companies and new technology on society?

Media Studies is a popular and well-established subject in which you study a variety of media forms, including television, film, print and online media. Like all A-levels, it is primarily an academic course with a strong emphasis on research, but it does provide you with the opportunity to develop practical production skills in filming, editing and website or print design. We tend to focus on mainstream media, but you will find that examples of independent and alternative media are dealt with as well.

The course should give you an excellent introduction to the most important aspects of the media and the various career opportunities in this and related fields. If you want to continue with Media Studies in higher education, you will find a great number of degree and other courses offered. Most courses are largely theoretical in their approach, but an increasing number offer high quality practical experience. Many BHASVIC students have progressed on to media-related degree courses in recent years, and some of the most dedicated have gained employment in the media industries. You can take Media Studies at degree level. The subject is also valuable in helping develop critical thinking skills for other degrees and in offering breadth in your portfolio of subjects studied at AS level.

What is the course content?

AS Level

The AS Level is divided into two units:

Unit 1: MS1 Media Representations and Responses [50%] There are three compulsory questions which are assessed by examination.

Question 1: Requires an analysis of audio-visual or print based extract. Any media might be used e.g. advertisements, DVD or CD covers, newspaper front pages, magazines, comics, radio, film, tv or computer games.

Question 2 and 3 will be based on representation and audience issues.

Unit 2: MS2 Media Production Processes [50%]

This is a coursework unit where students produce a preliminary filming task for example; a storyboard, before moving onto create the opening title sequence of a television programme. The coursework will also require the presentation of research, planning and evaluation of the main product, in written report form (1200 - 1600 words).

A2 Level

You will carry out further research and practical work in a different genre and form. You will also critically evaluate your practical work and write a report. You will study at least two different contemporary media industries and their audiences.

How will work be assessed?

AS 50% Coursework and Presentation of Research, Planning and Evaluation
50% Exam [one 2-hour Exam]

A2 50% Coursework Individual Research Investigation, Practical Production and Evaluation
50% Exam [one 2-hour Exam]

What are the entry requirements?

The general entry requirements for studying at Advanced Level apply, and a minimum of grade C in English GCSE is preferred.

Media Studies

AS and A Level

Other information

All media students are expected to attend additional practical skills classes to support their AS coursework. This leads to an NCFE award in interactive media at level 2. The media workshop currently houses eight computer-based digital editing suites using Adobe Premier software and there are twenty digital video cameras which can be booked for use during project work. There are two technical assistants in the workshop to help with the use of the cameras and editing equipment. For website and print design we use Adobe and Microsoft software.

The main differences between Media, Film and Communication and Culture Studies are as follows:

Media Studies focuses on television, film, magazines and online media, and includes a major practical project at both AS and A2.

Film Studies focuses on film, but only includes a limited amount of practical film-making at AS.

Communication and Culture focuses on people in everyday life and in the mass media, studying all major forms of communication, while working practically on print-based and online forms of media.

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