



A-level MEDIA STUDIES

Close Study Products

For candidates entering for the 2025 examination.
To be issued to candidates at the start of their course of study.

Information

As the Specification makes clear, the focus of study and assessment in A-level Media Studies is the theoretical framework and the contexts of media. However, students will be expected to answer exam questions with reference to, or analysis of, relevant Close Study Products (CSPs). These products should be seen as a vehicle for the delivery of the specification, rather than products to be 'learned' in detail.

The primary purpose of this booklet is to list and describe the products that must be studied as part of the course. In addition to this, there are some suggestions about how to link the CSP to the theoretical framework and the contexts of media - but these are not exhaustive and questions may focus on applying aspects of the theoretical framework to CSPs not explicitly stated in this booklet.

It is essential that students study all of the CSPs, but it is advised that they are supplemented by further examples of age appropriate media products. This will aid the development of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical frameworks and contexts of the media, as well as helping students to make judgments and draw conclusions. This will also help preparation for the exam as at least one media product in each paper will be included that is *not* a CSP.

Reminder:

9 new products were introduced for study from September 2022 for first assessment in summer 2024. For these new CSPs we have included a section at the end of this booklet with helpful links and additional information.

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Frequently asked questions

What are Close Study Products?

Close Study Products (CSPs) are a range of media products that must be studied in order to meet the requirements of the specification and prepare for the exams. A 'product' means something produced by a media industry for a media audience; for example, a television programme, a website or a video game.

While CSPs are important in themselves as examples of the contemporary – and historical – media landscape, they are particularly significant to the study of the theoretical frameworks; a way of exploring the theories and debates required by the subject content.

The choice of CSPs will be reviewed regularly by the exam board.

How are the CSPs chosen?

The CSPs are chosen by the exam board and enable the study of all the following media forms:

- television
- film
- radio
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertising and marketing
- online, social and participatory media
- video games
- music video.

Some of these forms must be studied in depth: including at least one audio/visual form, one print form and one online, social and participatory media form.

What does 'in-depth study' mean?

The forms you will study in depth are:

- Television (audio/visual)
- Magazines (print)
- Online, social and participatory media
- Video games.

For this specification you will study some linked online, social and participatory media products in conjunction with associated video games.

These forms and the associated CSPs will be studied in relation to all four elements of the A-level Media Studies theoretical framework:

- Media Language
- Media Representations
- Media Industries
- Media Audiences

What about the forms and products that aren't studied 'in depth'?

The other forms and products must be dealt with just as thoroughly, but only in relation to one or two of the elements of the media framework, as follows:

Media Language and Media Representations

- Music videos
- Advertising and marketing

Media Industries and Media Audiences

- Radio
- Newspapers
- Film (industries only)

As with the in-depth CSPs, you will also need to study the ways in which these CSPs reflect the social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts in which they were produced.

How will CSPs feature in the exams?

The first exam, **Media One**, has sections on Media Language and Representations (Section A) and Media Industries and Audiences (Section B).

Section A features questions on the following forms: advertising/marketing, music videos.

Section B features questions on any two of radio, newspapers and film.

The questions themselves will focus on the theoretical framework and contexts of the media, but you will be expected to answer by reference to the relevant CSPs. Section A will also feature an unseen media product to be analysed.

The second exam, **Media Two**, features questions based on all the in-depth studies (Television, Magazines, Online, social and participatory media, Video games).

As with Media One, the questions themselves will focus on the theoretical framework and contexts of the media, but you will be expected to answer by reference to the relevant CSPs. There is also one unseen product on this paper.

Are the CSPs linked to the coursework (Non-Exam Assessment)?

Yes, the range of production briefs to choose from are linked the CSPs. The knowledge and understanding built up in the study of the CSPs will help you to create your own cross-media production.

For the television in-depth study, you must only study one pair of television programmes:

Either *Capital* **and** *Deutschland 83*

OR

The Responder **and** *Lupin*

OR

No Offence **and** *The Killing*

Product: *Capital* TV series

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – A product which will provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis.

This product can be accessed via DVD or iTunes.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

Capital is a complex mainstream television product in which the codes and conventions of the crime drama are intertwined with aspects of social realism. Detailed analysis of this media form, including the process through which media language develops as genre will provide students with an opportunity to understand and reflect on the dynamic nature of genre. Analysis should include:

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

Narrative

- Which narrative techniques are used to engage the audience in the opening episode of *Capital*?
- How does the use of the narrative conventions of the crime drama – use of enigmas, restricted narration, etc – position the audience?
- *Capital* is characteristic of contemporary TV narrative style in its use of multiple story structure
- The ways in which the narrative structure of *Capital* offers gratification to the audience
- Narratology, including Todorov

Genre

- Conventions of the TV mini-series and the way in which this form is used to appeal to audiences; how it is distinct from, but related to, series and serials
- Definition of the series as a hybrid genre, belonging to the drama, social realism and crime genres
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

Capital provides a wide range of representational areas to explore: the family, place, nation, class, ethnicity, race and other issues.

- Negative and positive use – or subversion – of stereotypes
- Representations of family and their ideological significance – *Capital* constructs its representation of nation in part through contrasting images of the family
- Representation of place – London and, by implication, the nation
- Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world
- Theories of representation, including Hall

Media Industries

The central way into an institutional approach is to consider *Capital* as a BBC programme and to examine how it can be seen to fulfil the demands of Public Service Broadcasting. In addition to

the remit to 'inform, educate and entertain' this could also be examined as part of the need to represent different groups, nations and regions.

- *Capital* is a Kudos production for the BBC, an independent company which also produces successful programmes for other broadcasters
- Kudos specialises in TV series which can be sold or remade for the US market, making it typical of contemporary media institutions which operate globally rather than nationally

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *Capital* shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to transnational through broadcast and digital technologies
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances is evident in the analysis of *Capital* which is 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

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

Capital was promoted specifically as a 'state of the nation' series, reflecting the BBC's status as an institution with a unique remit to represent the country. The series – an adaptation of a best-selling novel – deals with pressing contemporary issues relevant to British society and culture; the financial crash and its repercussions, divisions in society based on wealth, Britain as a multi-cultural society, Britain as a European nation (or not), threat of terrorism and its effects. The economic context can be explored through patterns of ownership and production and how the product is marketed nationally and globally.

Product: *Deutschland 83* TV series

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – product not in the English language.

This product can be accessed via DVD or as a download via the Channel 4 website:

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/deutschland-83/on-demand/62893-001>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

The series is visually interesting, constructing a stylised representation of ‘real’ places which transmit meanings about characters, places and issues. A detailed analysis of different aspects of mise-en-scene will provide students with a strong foundation to build on in terms of analysing representations, ideological meanings and audience positioning. Analysis should include:

- Mise-en-scene analysis
- Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings
- Postmodernism: Use of pastiche and bricolage

Narrative

- How does the use of the narrative conventions of the spy thriller and crime drama – use of enigmas, binary oppositions, restricted and omniscient narration, etc – position the audience?
- The narrative of *Deutschland 83* has been controversial – particularly in Germany – through its use of binary oppositions to contrast East and West Germany
- The role of the hero and effect of audience alignment with Martin Rauch, a Stasi Officer
- The narrative of *Deutschland 83* can be defined as postmodern in its self-reflexive style
- Narratology, including Todorov

Genre

- Conventions of the TV series and the way in which this form is used to appeal to audiences
- Definition of the series as belonging to the spy thriller genre
- Conventions of the period drama and reasons for its popularity
- Analysing the use of specific genres to discuss wider issues in society
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

Deutschland 83 provides a range of representational areas to explore from the national and regional to political structures and gender roles. All of the areas tend to overlap with representations of a nation’s historical past allowing students to consider how representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances:

- Representation of national and regional identity (East and West Germany (Europe))
- Representation of gender: male hero and spy, the female ‘love interest’ etc, the way characters signify wider issues in society
- Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world – both contemporary and past
- Theories of representation, including Hall

- Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen (role of women)

Media Industries

Deutschland 83 is part of a recent trend – which really started with BBC4’s showing of *The Killing* – for foreign language series to perform well critically and commercially with particular UK audiences. It can be argued that *Deutschland 83* was a deliberate attempt by the German media industry to develop a prestige series which could take advantage of the new openness to ‘foreign’ products abroad.

- It is a co-production of AMC Networks’ SundanceTV and RTL Television (German and American), positioning it to exploit the national and global market
- Bought by Channel 4 in Britain as part of their ‘Walter presents...’
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *Deutschland 83* shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to transnational through 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 is explicitly linked to contemporary issues
- The reception of the series in Germany, Europe and the US
- 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

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

Deutschland 83 is part of a cultural phenomenon of the early twenty-first century which, for the first time, saw TV series not in the English language become part of mainstream UK broadcasting. It deals with the political past of Germany through the setting of the last decade of the Cold War. This political past is explored through a revisionist approach to German and European history which questions some of the previous certainties about that period. This is a useful product to explore the vital issues of how nations explore their past through popular culture and how this is also a way of commenting on contemporary society. The economic context can be explored through patterns of ownership and production and how the product is marketed nationally and globally.

Product: *The Responder* TV series

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – A product which will provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis.

This product can be accessed via DVD, a variety of streaming platforms and (at time of publication) from BBC iPlayer

Content advisory: This episode – and the series as a whole – deals with challenging and serious issues including drug addiction, mental health issues, violence, police corruption and the death of an older character, and contains repeated swearing. The DVD has a 15-age certificate.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

The Responder is a demanding mainstream television product which draws on the theme of police corruption, a sub-genre of the crime drama. Detailed analysis of this media form, including the process through which media language develops as genre, will provide students with an opportunity to understand and reflect on the dynamic nature of genre.

Analysis should include:

- Mise-en-scene analysis – (including characterisation through costume, the signifiers of the police and the city setting)
- Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings

Narrative

- Which narrative techniques are used to engage the audience in the opening episode of *The Responder*?
- How are the audience positioned in opposition to particular characters? How does this link to the meaning of the programme?
- How is the narrative structured to integrate the crime plot with the personal and social issues explored?
- Crime dramas often use the reassurance and predictability of narrative to contrast with the chaos of the crime world – does that apply in the case of *The Responder*?
- Narratology, including Todorov

Genre

- Conventions of the TV drama series and the way in which this form is used to appeal to audiences
- Definition of the series as belonging to the drama and crime genres – this might focus on conventions of the sub-genres of the police procedural, as well as the characteristics of social realism
- Analysing the current popularity of the crime genre – what are the appeals to the audience? How does the genre use crime to discuss contemporary issues in society?
- The relationship between genre and myth
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

The Responder provides a range of representational areas to explore in addition to the police and criminals, including gender, the family, place, mental health, class and age.

- Use of stereotypes – does the programme reinforce, subvert or explore representational issues? As a genre piece, *The Responder* draws on recognisable tropes in the construction of the hero, but does it also develop these?
- How does the mix of aesthetic styles – realism mixed with a noir influence – shape representations?
- There are opportunities for discussion of performative identities in the representation of gender in *The Responder* – Judith Butler
- Feminist debates – in addition to the representation of women in stereotypical roles (wife and mother) there is also the introduction of a female police officer (whose role becomes developed later in the series)
- Representation of place – how do the signifiers of Liverpool draw on recognisable characteristics?
- Representations of family and their ideological significance
- Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world. How could these constructions be discussed in the context of genre conventions, realism, the ideological position of the programme?
- Theories of representation, including Hall
- Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen

Media Industries

The Responder is a prestige BBC drama, scheduled for Monday evenings at 9 pm, a slot which has featured other adult dramas such as *The Split* and *Killing Eve*. It was also released as a full series on iPlayer. The BBC has previously had critical and ratings successes with shows of a similar genre such as *The Bodyguard* and *Line of Duty*, which *The Responder* resembles in some ways.

- The regulatory framework of contemporary media, with the focus on PSB in the UK
- Dancing Ledge Productions, a British production company, from which *The Responder* was bought by the BBC, provides a case study of this form of commissioning which is characteristic of the BBC production process – relying less on originating work in-house
- Understanding of how media products are shaped by the processes of production, distribution and circulation. *The Responder* was distributed globally – across Europe, Canada, North America and parts of Africa
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *The Responder* shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to transnational through broadcast and digital technologies
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances is evident in the analysis of *The Responder* which is explicitly linked to contemporary society through its issues

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- The advertising campaigns for the series demonstrate how media producers target, attract and potentially construct audiences. The marketing of the series was produced by Milk Productions
 - Cultivation theory, including Gerbner
 - Reception theory, including Hall

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

The Responder's focus on the character of the morally compromised police officer and wider police corruption refers to contemporary concerns about racism and misogyny in the police force (reflected in the resignation of Cressida Dick from the Metropolitan police in 2022). Unlike other series, such as *Line of Duty*, which has a clear dividing line between the corrupt and good police, *The Responder* complicates this position, asking whether the expectations that society has of the police are unrealistic. The effect of work on an individual's personal life is explored (in some ways this is a cliché of the police drama), reflecting more openness in society about mental health issues.

The family at the centre of the series represent a range of contemporary social norms – blended structure, older parent in a care home. The economic context can be explored through patterns of ownership and production and how the product is marketed nationally and globally.

Product: *Lupin* TV series

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – a product not in the English language.

This product can be accessed via Netflix.

Lupin is a notable French production for Netflix, becoming the first French series to enter the top ten on the Netflix US site and is part of a resurgence of French drama series which have found international popularity via streaming services. *Lupin* is also culturally and socially specific to France; it is based on a famous literary 'gentleman thief' character (Arsène Lupin in the books; Assane Diop in the series) created by Maurice Leblanc in the early twentieth century, which has a similar position in French culture as Sherlock Holmes does in the UK (albeit on the other side of the law). One of the ways in which it updates the series, which is over a hundred years old, is to set it in present-day Paris and integrate contemporary issues around race and immigration.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language**Analysis should include:**

- Mise-en-scene analysis – including characterisation through costume, the signifiers of the city setting
- Semiotics: how images signify cultural meanings – Paris as international symbol of romance and glamour

Narrative

- Which narrative techniques are used to engage the audience in the opening episode of *Lupin*? The central character is initially an enigmatic figure – how does the audience respond to this?
- How are the audience positioned in opposition to particular characters? How does this link to the meaning of the programme?
- The development of the heist narrative as well as elaborate cons are part of the pleasure of the series and can be studied as puzzle narratives
- Narratology, including Todorov
- Postmodernism – *Lupin* can be considered as a postmodern text in its intertextual reference to the *Lupin* series of novels

Genre

- Definition of the series as belonging to the drama and crime genres – this might also focus on conventions of the sub-genres of the heist, con and action forms
- Analysing the current popularity of the crime genre – what are the appeals to the audience? How does the genre use crime to discuss contemporary issues in society?
- How can the characters be understood as being a product of the demands of genre and narrative?
- The relationship between genre and myth – consider the ways the episode draws on cultural expectations and meanings of a range of characters associated with the genre
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

Lupin provides a range of representational areas to explore including gender, race, immigration, the family and place.

- To what extent does the central role subvert and/or reinforce racial stereotypes?
- What are the key representations of place? How is Paris represented in terms of stereotypes? Political, social and cultural contexts?
- How might the construction of masculinity in society be applied to the lead male character (Butler and performative gender)?
- Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world
- Theories of representation, including Hall
- Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen

Media Industries

Lupin is a Netflix series commissioned from the French company Gaumont Television, a production company with a long history of producing French films and television. *Lupin* is part of a renaissance in French television production (often considered a secondary media due to the cultural importance of French cinema).

- The regulatory framework of contemporary media, with the focus on issues around regulating international services
- Understanding of how media products are shaped by the processes of production, distribution and circulation
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *Lupin* shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to transnational through broadcast and digital technologies
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances is evident in the analysis of *Lupin* which is explicitly linked to contemporary society through its issues
- How media producers target, attract and potentially construct audiences
- A range of audience theories can be applied to this CSP

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

Lupin's updating of a twentieth-century literary classic through swapping the race of the central character is a radical move in the context of French debates about race, immigration and its colonial past. As such it can be seen to reflect a more progressive approach to representation in the French media – which arguably has also made it popular internationally. The family at the centre of the series represent a range of contemporary issues around a mixed-race family unit and the effects of separation. In addition to the discussion of the role of race in French society, *Lupin* also highlights the inequalities in France – particularly around insecure work, treatment of immigrants and the dominance of an elite. The economic context relates to the role of streaming services as an increasingly dominant force in the contemporary media landscape, considering how Netflix has developed a global audience to increase revenue.

Product: *No Offence* TV series

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – A product which will provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis.

This product can be accessed via DVD or as a download via the Channel 4 website:

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/no-offence>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

No Offence is a mainstream television series in which the codes and conventions of the police procedural crime drama are intertwined with aspects of social realism. Detailed analysis of this media form, including the process through which media language develops as genre, will provide students with an opportunity to understand and reflect on the dynamic nature of genre.

Analysis should include:

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

Narrative

- Which narrative techniques are used to engage the audience in the opening episode of *No Offence*?
- How does the use of the narrative conventions of the crime drama – use of enigmas, restricted narration, etc – position the audience?
- The ways in which the narrative structure of *No Offence* offers a range of gratification to the audience
- Narratology, including Todorov

Genre

- Conventions of the TV drama series and the way in which this form is used to appeal to audiences
- Definition of the series as a hybrid genre, belonging to the drama, social realism and crime genres
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

No Offence provides a wide range of representational areas to explore; gender, place, class, ethnicity, race, etc.

- Negative and positive use – or subversion – of stereotypes, particularly around the representation of women and the police
 - *No Offence* is unusual in popular television series due to the dominance of female characters.
 - Representation of place – Manchester – and, by implication, the nation?
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- Representation of issues – series 1 deals with the disappearance and murder of children with Down's Syndrome and raises questions about attitudes to and treatment of people with disabilities
- Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world
- Theories of representation, including Hall

Media Industries

The central way into an institutional approach is to consider *No Offence* as a Channel 4 programme and to examine how it can be seen to fulfil the demands of its public service remit. *No Offence* can be studied in the context of Channel 4's commitment to be innovative and distinctive.

- *No Offence* is an AbbottVision production, an independent company founded by the writer Paul Abbott, who also wrote *Shameless*
- *No Offence* was a critical and commercial success in the UK; it was also a ratings success in France, where it was shown on the national broadcast channel, France 2
- Channel 4 uses series such as *No Offence* to add value to the channel through the availability of the 'box set' on All 4

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *No Offence* shows how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to the transnational through broadcast and digital technologies
- *No Offence* was broadcast on Channel 4 and can still be accessed on All 4; it was also broadcast in France
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances is evident in the analysis of *No Offence*, which is explicitly linked to contemporary issues
- Audience positioning through the construction of characters who are morally ambiguous
- 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

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

No Offence deals with a range of social, cultural and political issues arising from contemporary contexts. The Manchester police force is used as a microcosm of society through which to examine changing gender roles. The focus of the case which features children and adults with Down's syndrome examines the position of people with disabilities in the wider society. Political contexts are evident in the nature of the approach to police work which refers to a history of corruption and the role of police power in society. The economic context can be explored through patterns of ownership and production and how the product is marketed nationally and globally.

Product: *The Killing* TV series – Danish version

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts. **Series 1, episode 1** must be studied in detail.

Selection Criteria

Television – product not in the English language.

This product can be accessed via DVD.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

The use of a noir visual style, conventions of the police procedural and multiple narrative strands, *The Killing* provides a rich area of study for media language, which would form the foundation for work on the other theoretical frameworks.

Analysis should include:

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

Narrative

- How does the use of the narrative conventions of the crime drama – use of enigmas, binary oppositions, restricted and omniscient narration, etc – position the audience?
- A narrative approach to crime drama could include analysing the appeals of the structure as reassuring and predictable – even when dealing with difficult subject matter
- Focus on multiple plot lines related to the central crime
- Narratology, including Todorov

Genre

- Conventions of the TV series (*The Killing* had three series which had links but were also stand-alone series) and the way in which this form is used to appeal to audiences; how it is distinct from, but related to series and serials
- Definition of the series as belonging to the drama and crime genres
- Analysing the current popularity of the crime genre
- Genre theory, including Neale

Media Representations

The Killing provides a range of representational areas to explore, including gender roles, family structures and the political class. It can be argued that these are innovative representations which have been influential in the development of the genre. Part of *The Killing's* original appeal was in its representation of Danish culture to a UK audience.

- Representation of gender: the woman as police detective, representation of marriage, gender stereotypes, etc
 - Feminist debates – violence and the representation of gender. This could include the controversy around using violent crime against women as popular entertainment
 - Representation of national identity – Denmark, including issues of multiculturalism
 - Analysis of how the representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world
 - Theories of representation, including Hall
 - Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen
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Media Industries

The Killing was the catalyst for the wider distribution of foreign language crime programming on UK television, its unexpected success influencing BBC4's scheduling but also that of other UK channels. *The Killing* was produced by the Danish national public service broadcaster DR, providing the opportunity to study PSB in a different national context.

- The regulatory framework of contemporary media, with the focus on PSB
- *The Killing* provides a case study for the specialised nature of media production, distribution and circulation within a transnational and global context
- *The Killing* represents a successful transnational, contemporary media product with long duration (it was broadcast in the UK nearly five years after its success in Denmark) and has been shown in its original form across Europe and remade by Turkish and US television (AMC)
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh

Media Audiences

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 study of institutions is also indivisibly linked to the need to define and attract specific audiences.

- The production, distribution and circulation of *The Killing* show how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms, moving from the national to transnational through 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 – often related to gender and feminist issues
- New types of characters to construct alignment for the audience/audience positioning
- The advertising campaigns (trailers, websites at home and abroad) for the series demonstrate how media producers target, attract and potentially construct audiences
- Audience behaviour in response to the series – the interest in Scandinavian culture and lifestyle
- Cultivation theory, including Gerbner
- Reception theory, including Hall

Social, political, economic and cultural contexts

The Killing is part of a cultural phenomenon of the early twenty-first century which, for the first time, saw TV series not in the English language become part of mainstream UK broadcasting. That these series were dominated by the crime genre was part of a wider cultural phenomenon which saw the crime genre become the key form for exploring social contexts – particularly changing gender roles. *The Killing* was also a key factor in the surge in interest in Scandinavian culture in the UK. *The Killing* also uses the crime genre to explore contemporary political contexts of multi-culturalism and debate the effects of immigration. The economic context can be explored through patterns of ownership and production and how the product is marketed nationally and globally.

For this course, the study of Online, Social and Participatory media and Video Games is linked. You will study some Online, Social and Participatory media products (*Zendaya* and *The Voice*) and you will study some video games: *Horizon Forbidden West* and *The SIMs FreePlay*. For *The SIMs FreePlay* you will study both the game and its Online, Social and Participatory media products. This will help you develop your understanding of the digitally convergent nature of media products. The grids below make it clear what you need to study.

Product: Social Media presence for *Zendaya*

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 Audiences) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Online, social and participatory: the study focuses on a range of social media sites which promote the American actor, model and singer, *Zendaya*. These examples will offer ample opportunity to explore those elements of the theoretical framework which are detailed below.

<https://www.zendaya.com>

<https://twitter.com/zendaya>

<https://www.instagram.com/zendaya/?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/Zendaya>

You are not expected to study every aspect of every social media site but students should engage with a range of examples to enable them to discuss the different theoretical frameworks. The official website should be the starting point for analysis (first link in the list above).

Zendaya is a celebrity who bridges Gen Z and millennial generations (born in 1996). Her career began as a child star in Disney sitcoms and she produced and starred in the spy series *K.C. Undercover* for the channel. Her persona shifted with her role in the HBO series *Euphoria* where she played a teen drug addict. Recent films have included *Spiderman: Homecoming*, *Dune* and *Malcolm and Marie*.

Zendaya is known for her advocacy for a range of charities, describes herself as a feminist and discusses her identity in terms of her African and European heritage. Her output on social networks can be seen as a way to construct and protect her persona as well as a form of marketing for her career.

The following provides an accessible – but academic – account of the ways in which social media can be used, which might be a useful introduction to the topic area. It begins by considering how social media constructs ‘ordinary people’ as celebrity before looking at the ways in which celebrities have utilised it. Includes useful links to a range of relevant sources:

<https://daily.jstor.org/with-social-media-everyones-a-celebrity>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language and Genre

- 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 *Zendaya* use 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. How does this shape representation?
- How does *Zendaya* construct 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 *Zendaya* in order to analyse the ways that platforms like Instagram, Facebook 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, economic and cultural contexts

Zendaya reflects 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

<http://www.voice-online.co.uk/>

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Online, social and participatory – news website, produced by and targeting a minority group.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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, economic and cultural 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.

Product: *Horizon Forbidden West* (2022)

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 Audiences) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Video Game

The study focuses on:

- the game: the official website for the game has a collection of relevant resources including walk-throughs: <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/games/horizon-forbidden-west>

For *Horizon Forbidden West* (PEGI-rated 16) you should have knowledge and understanding of this product as a contemporary action adventure game in terms of the relevant issues of representation and its use of media language. To develop this awareness, you should consider a range of examples of gameplay, which may be accessed online. You may decide to play the game, but this is not a requirement.

- the game cover for the PS5 edition: <https://direct.playstation.com/en-gb/buy-games/horizon-forbidden-west-ps5> (Note: This link is an indicative example of the cover art from the PlayStation website but you can use any example of the cover art for PS5.)

These examples will offer ample opportunity to explore those elements of the theoretical framework which are detailed below.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

Analysis must include:

- Mise-en-scene analysis
- Semiotics: how images convey cultural meanings – 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 art work – referencing fantasy and action adventure as well as the conventions of different types of gameplay

Narrative

- Building on the semiotic analysis, consider the way in which 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 hyper-realism and how this might link to narrative and audience
- Analyse the way in which narrative techniques such as binary oppositions and conflict are used to create meaning and to position the audience
- Consider to what extent the video game allows participation in and development of narrative
- Narratology, including Todorov
- Structuralism, including Lévi-Strauss

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.

Product: *The Sims FreePlay*

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Video game with online, social and participatory links. The game provides rich and challenging opportunities for analysis and study in relation to all four elements of the theoretical framework.

You will need to study:

- the game
- its Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/thesimsfreeplay/>
- its Twitter feed <https://twitter.com/TheSimsFreePlay>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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

Media Representations

This product provides a wide range of opportunities to study representation. These include self-representation and representations of reality. The representations of gender (van Zoonen), ethnicity (Gilroy), religious affiliation and age in the *Sims* franchise have been an ongoing subject of debate and there have been notable changes as the series has evolved.

- 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)

Media Industries

The Sims FreePlay is a spin-off from the highly popular and successful *Sims* franchise (Electronic Arts). It is an example of the 'freemium' commercial model – increasingly popular for app

developers – in which the basic content is free but premium content is a paid-for supplement. This game is a case study example of diversification and technological change as the video game industry has started to shift away from a reliance on hard-copy console and PC products to streaming and (as here) to apps for tablets and mobile phones.

- 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

This CSP can be discussed in relation to some general trends in the industry such as the gradual shift away from a heavily male-dominated target audience. Also, the reaction of some reviewers and regulators to *The Sims FreePlay* is indicative of wider concerns about the potentially negative influences that video games are claimed to exert on players, particularly young players. These debates can be seen in the context of competing theoretical approaches to the audience, eg effects theory (Bandura), cultivation theory (Gerbner) and reception theory (Hall)

- 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.

Product: GQ Magazine

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Print: Magazine. The magazine should be studied in depth – the front page and extracts from the March 2022 edition which must be studied are shown on the pages following this information. The study of Media Industries and Media Audiences will entail looking beyond the specific edition to consider issues of ownership, production, funding, technologies and regulation (Media Industries) and targeting, marketing, sales and readership, audience interpretation, fulfilment, uses and gratifications ideas and theories (Media Audiences).

While the print magazine is the focus of study, the accompanying website is also a useful resource: <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/?international>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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 very productively applied to print media as a way of examining audience targeting, positioning and interpretation.

- Consider the way in which 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 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

Clearly, the key areas of representation suggested by the magazine are to do with gender, specifically masculinity. 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 (Condé Nast has an increasing presence on broadcast platforms).

- 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

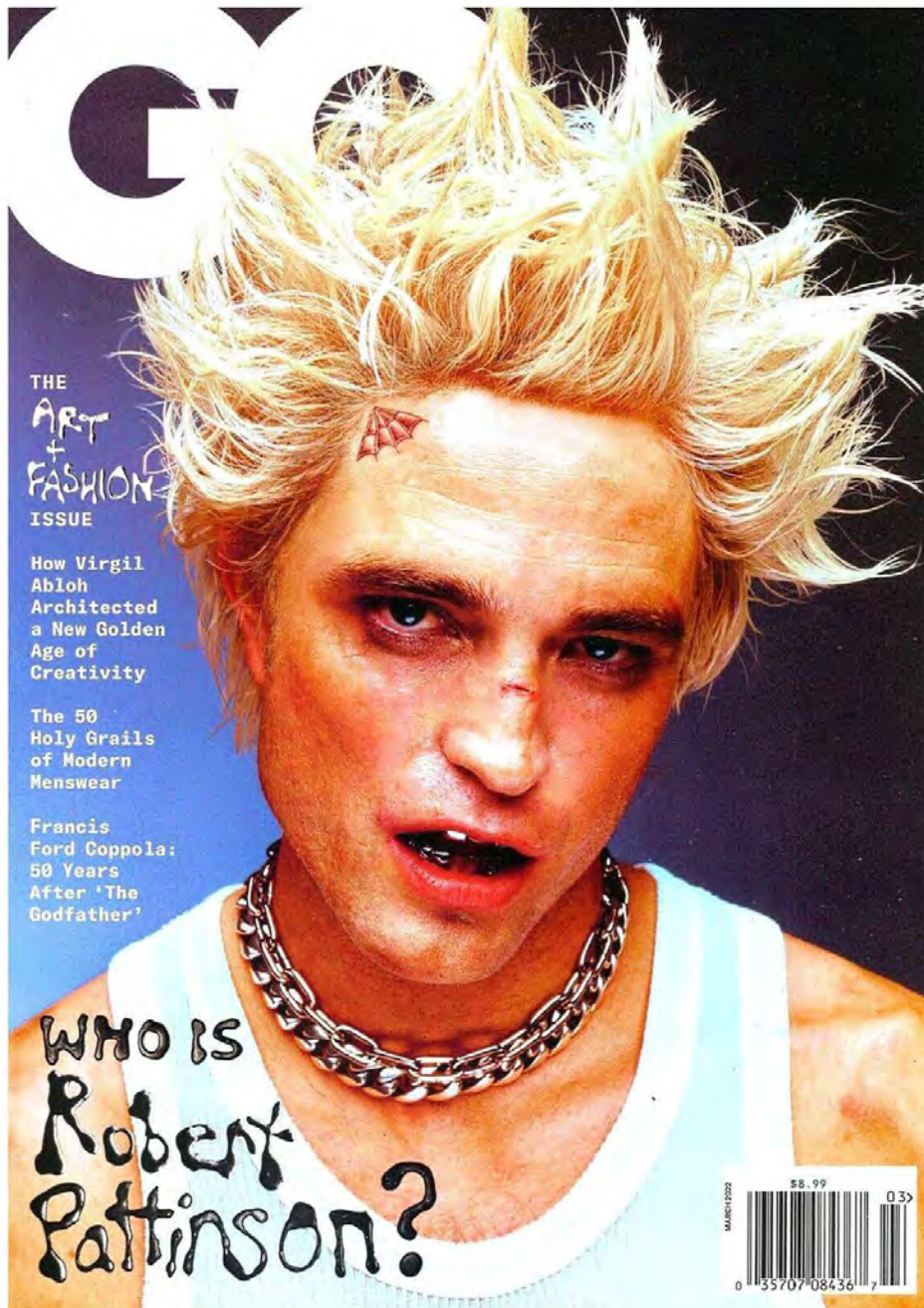
Media Audiences

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
ART
+
FASHION
ISSUE

How Virgil
Abloh
Architected
a New Golden
Age of
Creativity

The 50
Holy Grails
of Modern
Menswear

Francis
Ford Coppola:
50 Years
After 'The
Godfather'

WHO IS
Robert
Pattinson?

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JONATHAN BAILEY FELT lost and didn't know what to do with himself. It was March 2020, and for nearly a year, the British actor had been immersed on the set of *Bridgerton*, Netflix's horny and ornate period drama set in a fictional and fantastical 19th-century London. The show's debut was months away, but working on it was consuming just about every conscious moment of Bailey's life; his usually modern, slicked-back hair had been permed into the style of his character, Lord Anthony Bridgerton, a lothario of landed gentry, with two sharp muttonchops stroked against his cheek. "It was like being a part of some social experiment," he thought. A wonderful abduction in which he'd be lifted from his normal life and sent tumbling like a stray astronaut into space, crashing into a new planet.

Here, on planet *Bridgerton*, gracious ringlet-haired women danced in ballgowns to string quartet covers of Billie Eilish, charming potential suitors who were fucking and flirting their way through the city, while an anonymous columnist would chronicle everybody's secrets and stir up drama for London's aristocracy. Until *Bridgerton*, Bailey's own modest fame had stemmed from nearly three decades in theatre and television: popular prime-time detective drama *Broadchurch*, programmes from prestige talents, including Michaela Coel's *Chewing Gum* and Phoebe Waller-Bridge's *Crashing*, as well as prolific spells on West End stages, most notably in a gender-swapped reimaging of Stephen Sondheim's classic *Company*, for which he won a best supporting actor Olivier Award.

"When you do a play, you share it with the audience every night," says Bailey of his fondness for the stage. But then you're done. Working on a period set such as *Bridgerton* was all-enveloping. After season one wrapped, Bailey should have been able to rest and recharge. But weeks later, the pandemic shut down the UK and, like everyone else, he found himself stuck in that gloomy malaise.

And then *Bridgerton* landed like a confetti bomb posted through his front door when it hit Netflix on Christmas morning. Suddenly, Bailey was on video calls with breakfast television



and *E! News* from his bedroom. The first season of the Shonda Rhimes production went massive: some 82 million households watched the show over the festive season and into January 2021, a chart-topping figure only recently surpassed by *Squid Game*. The show's second season, out in March, will be loaded with the expectation of a large and attentive audience, and for Bailey, there's an added layer of pressure: Anthony will take the centre as the season's main character. "The idea that [*Bridgerton*] is coming out again is a bit of a rug pull," he says. "It's quite scary."

Bailey and I meet in Hyde Park during that strange limbo week between Christmas and New Year. He blends in well with his surroundings, wearing a black Gore-Tex jacket and green corduroy trousers. The signature muttonchops, which he grew himself for the show's first season, are dialled down this time around - "a glow-up" for the character, he says with a laugh. Bailey had just returned to London after a holiday in Switzerland, though he's

spent much of his free time recently at a quiet spot in Sussex. It shielded him somewhat from the hysteria of the show's success, which propelled its last two leads into new spheres of fame: Phoebe Dynevor, who plays Bailey's onscreen sister, Daphne Bridgerton, will executive produce and star in the buzzy Amazon series *Exciting Times*. (Tabloids suggest she also dated Pete Davidson last year, shortly before his headline-stirring relationship with Kim Kardashian.) And the man who played her onscreen lover Simon Basset, Regé-Jean Page, will appear in 2023's *Dungeons & Dragons* reboot.

We sit with our coffees on a bench by the Italian Gardens. At 33, Bailey doesn't seem eager to get noticed on the street. Dispositionally, he's one of those actors who'd rather work than be famous, who is more comfortable reciting Dickens for a small audience than he is wearing designer clothes on the red carpet. That he's in this position at all feels both like a fluke and completely serendipitous.

OPENING PAGE
AND THIS PAGE
Jacket, £2,470,
and trousers,
£780, by **Louis
Vuitton**.
Sweater, £580,
by **Dsquared2**.
Belt, £850,
by **Hermès**.
Gloves, £38,
by **Reiss**.
Boots, £750,
by **Jimmy Choo**.



Coat, £820,
by John
Lawrence
Sullivan.
Shirt, £445, by
S.S. Daley.
Trousers, £460,
by Paul Smith.
Belt, £134.50,
by Elliot
Rhodes. Chain
necklace, £220,
by Dsquared2.
Pendant
necklaces,
£950 each, by
Bleue Burnham.
Shoes, £295, by
Russell &
Bromley.

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Bailey grew up in Benson, a South Oxfordshire village of fewer than 5,000 people. When he was a child, his parents sent him to dance classes after he was inspired by a stage version of *Oliver!* he'd seen age four. He won his first part three years later, playing Tiny Tim in a Royal Shakespeare Company production of *A Christmas Carol*. (When reached for comment, the show's director, Ian Judge, admired his success but couldn't really remember him. "Humbling! Put that in there," Bailey says.) Around the same time, his older sisters, who'd left home for university, would return for odd weekends, armed with stories of city nightlife. They would play Bailey pop and disco classics from a compilation CD called *Dance to the Max*—“queer anthems”—by artists such as Freddie Mercury and Frankie Goes to Hollywood. “I'd have to go up to my room and perfect the performance,” he says, before coming downstairs to sing and dance for his family.

Historically, he's played valuable supporting roles that bolster a show's

narrative but has rarely occupied the main spotlight. Until this season of *Bridgerton*, one of his only other lead television roles was in a BBC children's show based on the life of Leonardo da Vinci. “I've never gone into a screen test and had the ‘That's him!’ reaction,” says Bailey. “I've always crept round through the back door.”

IT WAS DURING his teen years that Bailey learned how to perform as someone he wasn't, as many queer people do growing up outside big cities. He attended Magdalen College School in Oxford, a nearly 550-year-old institution that counts saints, sirs, and the composer Ivor Novello as past alumni. Bailey came out to family and friends in his early 20s and is, today, one of the few gay British actors working onscreen whose roles don't seem defined wholly by their sexuality. *Bridgerton* has made him a sex symbol to many men and women, but he doesn't like to talk about it. “Any actor who thinks they're a sex symbol? Cringe,” he says.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Jacket, £2,100,
trousers,
£1,100,
by Giorgio
Armani.
Turtleneck,
£149, by Boss.
Belt, £134.50,
by Elliot
Rhodes. Socks,
£13, by Falke.
Shoes, £910, by
Salvatore
Ferragamo.

BELOW
Jacket, £635,
by Ami Paris.
Sweater, £485,
by Dsquared2.
Trousers, £535,
by Vivienne
Westwood.
Boots, £655, by
Dsquared2.



I wonder whether his career decisions and his sexuality have stood in direct opposition to each other; if he ever felt the need to suppress that side of himself to get ahead. He recalls a story concerning a callous word of advice that someone once gave an actor friend during pilot season. “At the time he was told, ‘There's two things we don't want to know: if you're an alcoholic or if you're gay.’” The words stuck with Bailey. “All it takes is for one of those people in that position of power to say that, and it ripples through,” he says. “So, yeah, of course I thought that. *Of course* I thought that in order to be happy I needed to be straight.” The thing that's always led Bailey's decision-making in his career has been his own happiness, which is why it took so long for him to talk publicly about his own sexuality: “I reached a point where I thought, ‘Fuck this! I'd much prefer to hold my boyfriend's hand in public or be able to put my own face picture on Tinder and not be so concerned about that, than getting a part.’”

That instinct to stay true to himself is part of what makes him good at his job. “Jonny operates at a different voltage,” says Phoebe Waller-Bridge, his *Crashing* co-star. “He's a meteorite of fun with an incredible amount of energy and playfulness. Smouldering at one turn and then utterly innocent at the next, but all the time playing with this sense of untapped danger. That is the quality I love most about Jonny as a person and as a performer: his danger.”

Bridgerton is based on a series of *New York Times* best-selling romance novels by American author Julia Quinn, and Bailey treats the source material with the same level of tact and seriousness as he would *King Lear*. What might seem like a straightforward, frothy show about scandal and romance in Regency-era England harbours a deeper meaning to Bailey, specifically in playing a philanderer such as Anthony. As a teenager, period dramas were a Bailey household staple, but “you never really got behind the men,” Bailey observed, “or know *why* they're avoidant and toxic.” This season, Bailey gets to dig into the show's narrative, exploring exactly why the show's men are avoidant and toxic. Anthony yearns to settle down, but struggles to find a woman deserving of the title of Lady Bridgerton. The shots of Anthony's post-coital buttocks and his flippant remarks about women's inadequacies could be seen as signs of a crass and shallow character. But Bailey sees them as symptoms of a man grieving the loss of his father, and who is struggling to assume the patriarchal position. “Going into the first season, I wanted to fully break Anthony,” the show's creator Chris Van Dusen says, “so that we could put him back together in the second.”

Product: *The Gentlewoman Magazine*

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Print: Magazine (Independent). *The Gentlewoman* is an alternative magazine, aimed at a niche audience.

The front page and extracts from issue 23 which must be studied are shown on the pages following this information. The study of Media Industries and Media Audiences will entail looking beyond the specific edition to consider issues of ownership, production, funding, technologies and regulation (Media Industries) and targeting, marketing, sales and readership, audience interpretation, fulfilment, uses and gratifications ideas and theories (Media Audiences).

While the print magazine is the focus of study, the accompanying website is also a useful resource: <https://thegentlewoman.co.uk/magazine>

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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 a similar audience and this is evident from the front cover and throughout the magazine.

- 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

Clearly the key areas of representation suggested by the magazine are to do with gender, but issues around environmentalism and national identity could also be relevant.

- *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, evident in their design focus
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh
- Regulation through IPSO

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
- *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'.

the gentlewoman

Issue n° 23, Spring and Summer 2021



UK £8
USA \$18

Scarlett Johansson

Modern Punches

Interview
Richard O'Mahony

Portraits
Anton Gottlob

On 31 October, Ramla Ali stepped into the ring at Wembley Arena to make her professional boxing debut. Her swift, dominant points victory came as no surprise to fans: lightning speed and exceptional footwork have taken the super bantamweight from Boxercise classes in east London to Nike global athlete status. Now – surrounded by a team that includes Anthony Joshua OBE, her manager – Ramla, 30, is out to put women's boxing on the map, one punch at a time.

Richard: How was last week's match? Is it a match or a fight?

Ramla: You can say either. When I was amateur boxing, doing tournaments and competing back to back for five days, I would call it a bout. But if it's a one-off, it's a fight.

RO: And how did it go on Saturday?

RA: I've still got some brain cells. It was my professional debut and I feel great. I've been wanting to compete professionally for a long time, and I was hoping to do so after the Tokyo Olympic Games last summer, but obviously that was put on hold. So I was just itching to get in the ring and compete, and this chance came along and I thought, Let's just do it. With professional boxing, especially the female sport, you've got to grab every opportunity because they're so few and far between.

RO: Who were you up against?

RA: A girl from Germany, Eva Hubmayer. She'd already had one professional fight and had KO'd her opponent in 30 seconds.

RO: Obviously a concern.

RA: One hundred per cent! But if those are things that scare you then you shouldn't be getting into a ring. I knew what I was letting myself in for: the headguard was finally coming off and the gloves were getting smaller. I was ready to test myself.

RO: What first brought you to boxing?

RA: It didn't come easily to me. I came across a Boxercise class when I was 13

– I'd put on weight and was being teased at school. And I was awful at it. Horrible. Boxing's a very hard and technical sport and I had no technique – nothing. But I just really enjoyed it and stuck with it. I also ran as a kid – 1,500 metres and 800 metres – and played netball. I grew up in Manor Park, in east London, with three brothers and two sisters, and we were always playing outside, kicking a ball. I was a total tomboy; I'd pick trainers over make-up any day.

RO: Where were you training then?

RA: First it was at a leisure centre in East Ham. Then I joined Peacock Gym in Canning Town, where Frank Bruno and Lennox Lewis trained, and Palmer's boxing academy in Catford, with Terry Palmer. I sparred with both professional men and women. There's a respect in a boxing gym; everyone is equal.

RO: But how did you feel about punching someone? Were you comfortable with it?

RA: You either are or you aren't. There are lots of people who'll say, "I don't like the idea of hitting someone," and that's fair enough. That's just a personality trait. You'll know if you're comfortable with it immediately when you get into the ring for the first time.

RO: Do you remember when you were first hit?

RA: It was my first spar; I can't remember the exact date. I mean, being punched wasn't something I particularly enjoyed. But even though I was getting beaten up in the ring, I had way too

much pride to give in to the pain and stop. So I just continued taking it. And yes, it hurts. But you know how people say you need to wake up with a purpose, you need to enjoy your job and things like that? It's the same with boxing. You need to enjoy the sport to be able to get in the ring and get hit in the head.

RO: How do you manage your nerves in the build-up to entering the ring?

RA: Fear is a powerful motivation if it's used positively. It's what makes you work harder, do that extra lap round the track or that extra round in sparring. You shouldn't, obviously, let fear consume you so much that you never do anything.

RO: And how do you do that?

RA: You have to be completely in the now. The moment you lose focus is the moment you get hurt. But I can always hear my coaches shouting instructions, telling me what's working well and what isn't. "Get behind the jab!" "Keep it long!" "Use your feet to get in and out!"

RO: What's your signature style?

RA: I'm quite long and rangy, and I have good footwork. I like to move a lot to get myself in and out of trouble.

RO: What else can you do to stay out of trouble?

RA: If you're fuelling and hydrating your body right, you can protect yourself.

► Opposite, Ramla is wearing a blue-and-gold NIKE Leon Clash tracksuit with black-and-white VaporWaffle trainers by SACA | x NIKE and a steel Pasha de Cartier watch by CARTIER.

Ramla



Ali

67

At Knepp Castle Estate, England's first lowland rewilding project has proved that if nature is allowed to take its own course, magic happens. Nightingales, white storks, violet dor beetles are all back. Isabella Tree, 56, now has her sights on our manicured gardens.

Photography by Jamie Hawkesworth



Isabella Tree

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The Knepp Oak

◀ In 1999, before the rewilding project started, the tree expert Ted Green visited the estate to look at the ancient Knepp Oak, which is next to the castle. He told Isabella that it was about 550 years old and should live for another 400, but that the ones adjacent to it in the Repton-designed park were under threat, their roots having been damaged by intensive ploughing and chemical use since the Second World War.



Isabella Tree



120

Thorny scrub

◀ In less than 20 years, Knepp has become home to one of the densest populations of songbirds in Britain. The thorny scrub – which includes dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, gorse and bramble – is important as nesting protection and also as a food source. There was a bumper crop of berries last year. “I think we’ll see farmers who are farming marginal land, where it just doesn’t pay, doing more wilding,” Isabella says.

**Tamworths**

▲ There was a massive acorn drop last autumn. “The pigs gorge on them,” Isabella says. “They put on so much fat, it’s phenomenal. They just balloon. Last spring before the new grass came up, we were seeing all these pigs in the ditches full of water with their heads under, blowing bubbles, and coming up crunching acorns that had fallen from overgrowing oaks. They really are ingenious creatures.”

The house of Stella McCartney has just sold its millionth Falabella, a chain-edged It bag made from

Blazing the fashion frontier

fake leather. This is a watershed, but its visionary designer is passionate that customers needn't know

STELLA McCARTNEY

they are carrying a vegan handbag – the same aesthetic standards still apply to anything done in



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

You will need to be familiar with the *Daily Mail* newspaper as an institution and have knowledge and understanding of the newspaper as a media product in terms of the relevant newspaper industry and audience issues it illustrates. In order to develop this knowledge and understanding, you should consider **one complete print edition of the newspaper** chosen by your teacher and **selected key pages from the newspaper's website**, including the **homepage** and **at least one other page** as context for the role of newspapers in the contemporary media landscape.

Selection Criteria

Print, Newspapers

The *Daily Mail* is a national daily tabloid newspaper that has historical, social, cultural and political significance. This product offers opportunity for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis and invites close comparison with *The Guardian*. These two newspapers operate within contrasting political and economic contexts with clear differences in style, address, ideological viewpoint and target audience.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Industries

The *Daily Mail*, launched in 1896, offers many opportunities for studying the relationship between ownership patterns, economic factors and political viewpoints. The history of the *Daily Mail* provides many 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.

Industry 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, 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. 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 attracts 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.

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

The study of *The Guardian* newspaper entails knowledge and understanding of its institutional structure and strategies to target a national and global readership as well as its position within the newspaper industry. Students should be familiar with **one complete print edition of the newspaper** (chosen by the teacher) and **selected key pages from the newspaper's website** including the **homepage** and **at least one other page**. The study of the digital presence of *The Guardian* is an important context for analysing the position of newspapers in the contemporary media landscape.

Selection Criteria

Print – *The Guardian* is a centre-left, compact broadsheet, national UK newspaper.

Key Questions and Issues

This newspaper product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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, self-regulation, 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: Music Video – *Old Town Road* (official movie) – 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 (Media Language and Media Representation) and all relevant contexts.

The official version of this video can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2Ov5jzm3j8>

Selection Criteria

Music Video – *Old Town Road* is a product which possesses cultural and social significance in its use of representations and genre categorisation.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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)

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

The official version of this video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ2oXzrnti4>

Selection Criteria

Music Video – *Ghost Town* is a product which possesses cultural, social and historical significance. It will invite comparison with the other CSP music video allowing for an analysis of the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

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 (the journey through a deserted landscape, lyrics which refer to effects of political and economic conditions)
- 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

Directed by the graphic designer Barney Bubbles (there's an interesting overview of his work at <https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2015/03/barney-bubbles-feature>), the video combines eerie shots of a deserted East End of London with the band in a 1962 Vauxhall Cresta lip-syncing. The mise-en-scene and cinematography seem to reference a range of film styles, including British social realism, thriller and horror genres, with the expressionist lighting drawing attention to the different meanings of the lyric 'ghost town'. The hybrid mix of references and music video forms – an experimental combination of narrative (the journey), performance and concept – means that the video can be read through a postmodern approach with reference to intertextuality and hybridity.

The strong political message of the video is a challenge to the audience with a direct mode of address which is both angry and plaintive. The video was unusual for the time in conveying a strong social message (in contrast to the dominant style of pop music in the charts at the time), meaning that the audience of the time might well have been shocked or discomfited by it.

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

The aesthetic of the music video, along with the lyrics, represents an unease about the state of the nation, one which is often linked to the politics of Thatcherism but transcends a specific political ideology in its eeriness, meaning that it has remained politically and culturally resonant.

The representations in the music video are racially diverse. This reflects its musical genre of ska, a style which could be read politically in the context of a racially divided country. This representation of Britain's emerging multiculturalism is reinforced through the eclectic mix of stylistic influences in both the music and the video.

The following articles provide a useful overview of the development of ska music in the UK:

- *Ska story: the sound of angry young England*: (<https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/ska-story-the-sound-of-angry-young-england/Content?oid=875398>)
- *Reggae: the sound that revolutionised Britain* (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/jan/30/reggae-revolutionary-bob-marley-britain>)

Historical, social, political, economic and cultural contexts

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.

The continued relevance of *Ghost Town* (particularly in light of the 2011 London riots) and its political context of Thatcherism is discussed in the following articles which would be useful for study:

- *The Specials: How Ghost Town Defined an Era* (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13780074>)
- Abigail Gardner (an academic specialising in pop music and the media) *Ghost Town: A Haunting 1981 Protest Song That Still Makes Sense Today*: <https://theconversation.com/ghost-town-a-haunting-1981-protest-song-that-still-makes-sense-today-88733>
- Alexis Petridis (Guardian music journalist) *Ska for the madding crowd: The Specials and the story of the UK's most remarkable chart-topper* | Culture | The Guardian

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.

An overview of the different ways music videos can make money in the contemporary economic context is discussed in this article from the US *Rolling Stone* magazine:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/seven-ways-musicians-make-money-off-youtube-192629>

Product: Advertising and Marketing – Score

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

Selection Criteria

Advertising and Marketing – Score pre-1970 product. It will invite comparison with other CSP adverts allowing for an analysis of the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

Get what you've always wanted

the great grooming action
of a hair cream from a liquid.

If you haven't been getting all you want from a liquid hair groom, get new Score Liquid. Gives you the great grooming action of a cream. That's because new clear Score Liquid is made by the men who make clear Score Hair Cream. So you get great grooming action. And you also get Score's famous greaseless look, Score's famous masculine scent.

Score[®] Liquid Hair Groom

Score—Three Ways.[™] Hair Cream. Spray Deodorant. Liquid Hair Groom.

© 1967 Bristol-Myers Co.

© Bristol Myers Co. 1967

Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language

Detailed study of *Score* 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 which appeals to its target audience?
- How and why audience responses to the narrative of this advert may have 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* advert 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 bell 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; as such, 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 signaling 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.

Product: Advertising and Marketing – Sephora *Black Beauty is Beauty* (online advert)

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

Selection Criteria

Advertising and Marketing – the Sephora advert possesses cultural and social significance and provides opportunities for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis.

A copy of the advert is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0iOdVGzNVaI>

Key Questions and Issues

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.

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Language
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
- Theories of representation, including Hall
- Theories of identity, including Gauntlett
- Theories of gender, including Butler
- Theories of race and ethnicity (Gilroy)

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.

<p>Product: Radio – <i>The War of the Worlds</i> (1938) Broadcast available at: https://archive.org/details/OrsonWellesMrBruns</p>
<p>This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Industries • Media Audiences <p>You will need to listen to excerpts from the broadcast but the main focus will be the technological development of radio as an institution.</p>
<p>Selection Criteria</p> <p>Radio – <i>The War of the Worlds</i> is an early example of a hybrid radio form, adapting the HG Wells story using news and documentary conventions. The broadcast and the initial response to it has historical significance as an early, documented example of the mass media apparently having a direct effect on an audience’s behaviour. The academic research carried out into the broadcast (and the ongoing dispute about the extent of the effect) provided some of the early media audience research and the findings have been extremely influential in the media, advertising and political campaigning.</p> <p>A useful overview and discussion of the context can be found here (not part of the CSP for assessment): https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/war-worlds</p>
<p>Key Questions and Issues</p> <p>This radio product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:</p> <p>Media Industries</p> <p><i>The War of the Worlds</i> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The War of the Worlds</i> 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. <i>The War of the Worlds</i> 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 <p>Media Audiences</p> <p><i>The War of the Worlds</i> has become a real-world test case for a variety of audience theories, although the exact nature of the audience response is still disputed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What techniques does the broadcast use to convince the audience that what they are hearing is really happening? • Consider the way in which external factors – global political context, gender, religion, education, etc – are likely to also affect audience response

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- The ways in which audiences interpret the same media product differently – at the time of broadcast and now. Would audiences react in the same way today?
 - Cultivation theory, including Gerbner
 - Reception theory, including Hall

Historical, social, political and cultural contexts

The War of the Worlds can be considered in an historical context as it provides an interesting study of the power and influence of radio as a form during its early days of broadcasting. It is also useful to consider the product in a social, cultural and political context when considering audience responses to the programme. It was first broadcast on the eve of World War II and reflected fears of invasion in the US and concerns about international relations.

<p>Product: Radio – <i>Newsbeat</i> Broadcast available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006wkry</p>
<p>This is a targeted CSP for which you will need to focus on the following areas of the theoretical framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Industries • Media Audiences <p>You will need to listen to excerpts from the broadcast, but the focus will be on considering industry and audience issues.</p>
<p>Selection Criteria Radio – <i>Newsbeat</i> is an example of a transitional media product which reflects changes in the contemporary media landscape. <i>Newsbeat</i> is both a traditional radio programme with regular, scheduled broadcast times, and is also available online after broadcast. The broadcast itself and the use of digital platforms provide opportunities for audience interaction. <i>Newsbeat</i> also exemplifies the challenges facing the BBC as a public service broadcaster that needs to appeal to a youth audience within a competitive media landscape.</p>
<p>Key Questions and Issues</p> <p>This radio product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:</p> <p>Media Industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Newsbeat</i> 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 – <i>Newsbeat</i> as a multi-platform media product, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Website ○ Twitter ○ Instagram • The regulation of the BBC via Ofcom and the governance of the BBC <p>Media Audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The techniques the broadcast uses to target a youth audience and create audience appeal, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 <p>The following articles provide some useful information on presentation style: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/newsbeat-debbie-ramsay-radio-1-jargon-7jrt3d8t https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/oct/12/radio-1-newsbeat-youngsters-news</p>

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'.

<https://www.bbc.com/academy-guides/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-the-bbc>

<https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/governance/mission>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/04/180427144724.htm>

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.

<http://www.newsmediauk.org/Current-Topics/Public-Sector-Competition>

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/02/how-bbc-can-defeat-grave-threat-conservatives>

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.

Product: Film – *Blinded by the Light* (Gurinder Chadha, UK, 2019)

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

- Media Industries

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

Selection Criteria

Film – *Blinded by the Light* is an example of low-medium budget film-making. Students do not need to watch the film but will need to be familiar with the production context and distribution materials including:

- [website](#) (Bend It Networks)
- [website](#) (Warner Bros.)
- [posters](#)
- [trailer](#)
- social media presence ([Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [facebook](#), etc).

The film should only be studied in relation to Media Industries.

Key Questions and Issues

This film product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

Media Industries

- *Blinded by the Light* is a low-mid budget production (\$15m) co-funded by [New Line Cinema](#) (an American production studio owned by Warner Bros. Pictures Group) and independent production companies including [Levantine Films](#), [Bend It Films](#) and [Ingenious Media](#)
- Identification of how *Blinded by the Light* is characteristic of a low-mid budget release, considering production, distribution and circulation
- The role of the use of Bruce Springsteen's music in financing the film and in the marketing of the film
- The use of film festivals in finding distribution deals for films
- Use of traditional marketing and distribution techniques: trailers, posters, film festivals, etc
- Marketing techniques such as use of genre, nostalgia, identity, social consciousness
- Distribution techniques – reliance on new technology: VOD, streaming
- Regulation of the industry through BBFC ([British Board of Film Classification](#))
- Regulation, including Livingstone and Lunt

Blinded by the Light is an example of a US/UK co-production and distribution. Its distributor, New Line Cinema, is associated with 'indie' films although it is a subsidiary of Warner Bros. Pictures, part of the global conglomerate, WarnerMedia.

The following link discusses the use of a film festival to secure a distribution deal:

<https://deadline.com/2019/02/blinded-by-the-light-new-line-15-million-dollar-sundance-deal-bruce-springsteen-gurinder-chada-1202543683/>

Blinded by the Light has been described as a feel-good jukebox musical film using the music of Bruce Springsteen.

The following links offer ideas about the importance of genre and the use of recognisable music in the marketing of the film:

<https://variety.com/2019/film/news/blinded-by-the-light-movie-bruce-springsteen-music-director-gurinder-chadha-interview-1203304893/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/blinded-by-the-light-review-bruce-springsteen-musical-cast-gurinder-chadha-a9045696.html>

It was directed by Gurinder Chadha, a British director known for *Bend It Like Beckham*.

The following videos show how directors, their past work and the ideas they aim to communicate can be important in film marketing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4kX_N1y3u4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWv3Z8fucvE>

It is based on the 'true story' of a Pakistani boy growing up in the UK in the 1980s.

The following links demonstrate how the historical context, nostalgia and British-Asian identity is used in the promotion of the film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkeC-IYBr-w>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/29/my-film-blinded-by-the-light-memoir-british-pakistani-cinema>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jul/27/sarfraz-manzoor-bruce-springsteen-and-amolak-changed-my-life>

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, reflecting 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.

Additional Notes for Teachers

Availability and age suitability of CSPs

AQA has provided links to online versions of the majority of the CSPs. Some products will, however, need to be purchased by centres. Where this is the case, we have made it clear where they can be accessed. Further information is provided below.

At the time of selecting each CSP, the content was checked to be age-appropriate; however, media content is not static and therefore it may become inappropriate. If you identify any inappropriate content please notify us so we can investigate this and take any necessary action. Teachers should use their discretion in previewing and selecting suitable material, but it should be noted that all age-rated CSPs are suitable for A level students.

Television

Capital can be purchased on DVD.

Deutschland 83 can be accessed at <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/deutschland-83/on-demand/62893-001> or can be purchased on DVD.

The Responder Series 1 can be accessed at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p0b61z9j/the-responder> or can be purchased on DVD.

Lupin can be accessed via Netflix.

No Offence can be accessed at

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/no-offence/on-demand/56409-001> or can be purchased on DVD.

The Killing can be purchased on DVD. Please note that this should be the Danish version of the series and not the American re-make.

An outline knowledge of the series will be sufficient to place narrative, plot and genre elements of the specified episodes in context.

Online, social and participatory media

Links to *Zendaya's* social media presence are available in the CSP booklet.

A link to *The Voice* website is available in the CSP booklet.

Video games

Horizon Forbidden West is available on PlayStation and *The Sims FreePlay* is available as a PC game and on a range of consoles or as an app. Students should have knowledge and understanding of these products in terms of the relevant issues of representation and use of media language. In order to develop this awareness, learners can either play the game or consider extracts of gameplay that are available online. Links to appropriate extracts of gameplay are provided in the CSP booklet.

Newspapers

Centres should choose an edition of *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* and also study the websites of both of these newspapers.

Adverts

A link is provided in the CSP booklet to the online advert for this course. A digital version of the print advert is available in the CSP booklet.

Radio

A link to *The War of the Worlds* is provided in the CSP booklet. An additional link to a podcast about *The War of the Worlds* is also provided. The podcast is not a product to be studied for assessment but will provide interesting additional information on the way the product was received.

Newsbeat can be accessed online and a link to the website is provided in the CSP booklet.

Film

Film is an inextricable part of the wider media landscape and is intimately connected with other media, such as television, video games and online media. However, to avoid overlap with A-level Film Studies, film should not be a primary object of study in this context. Students may study individual feature films but, for this specification, this must only be in the context of the study of media industries.

Students do **not** need to watch the film CSP.

A link to an age-appropriate trailer for the film is available in the CSP booklet. The study focus should be on media industry aspects of this CSP: the nature of production, distribution and circulation.

Magazines

Digital versions of the magazine cover and pages to be studied are available in the CSP booklet.

Music Video

Links to online versions of the music videos are available in the CSP booklet.

The table below shows each of the CSPs, the areas of the framework in relation to which they must be studied, the contexts in which they should be studied and where they will be tested.

CSP	Framework areas	Contexts	Question Paper/Section
<i>Capital</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>Deutschland 83</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>The Responder</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>Lupin</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>No Offence</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>The Killing</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>Zendaya</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>The Voice</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 2
<i>Horizon Forbidden West</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Cultural	Paper 2
<i>The Sims FreePlay</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, cultural	Paper 2
<i>GQ</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, cultural	Paper 2
<i>The Gentlewoman</i>	Media Language Media Representations Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, cultural	Paper 2

<i>The Daily Mail</i>	Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 1 Section B
<i>The Guardian</i>	Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 1 Section B
<i>Old Town Road</i>	Media Language Media Representations	Social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 1 Section A
<i>Ghost Town</i>	Media Language Media Representations	Historical, social, political, economic, cultural	Paper 1 Section A
<i>Score</i>	Media Language Media Representations	Historical, social, cultural	Paper 1 Section A
<i>Sephora</i>	Media Language Media Representations	Social, cultural	Paper 1 Section A
<i>The War of the Worlds</i>	Media Industries Media Audiences	Historical, social, political, cultural	Paper 1 Section B
<i>Newsbeat</i>	Media Industries Media Audiences	Social, cultural	Paper 1 Section B
<i>Blinded by the Light</i>	Media Industries	Social, economic, cultural	Paper 1 Section B

Links to products

Where possible, we have provided links to the media products. If any of the links do not work when you are using this booklet, please email mediastudies@aga.org.uk and we will provide you with an alternative link to the product.

New CSPs for 2024 assessment onwards – links and resources

The following table includes some helpful links and additional information that might aid you in preparing resources/lessons involving the new CSPs.

CSP	Links and additional information
<i>The Responder</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to official trailer and website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dutsjEpgkXs https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0b61z9j Another BBC production, the documentary series <i>Bent Coppers</i> (BBC 2021) examines the work of the real-life anti-corruption unit. Article in The New York Times discussing the reasons for popularity of BBC crime series: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/16/arts/television/bodyguard-line-of-duty.html (access three stories a month without subscription) Dancing Ledge Productions website: https://www.dancingledgeproductions.co.uk Another BBC programme due from Dancing Ledge Productions: https://tbivision.com/2021/08/02/bbc-orders-crossfire-thriller-with-dancing-ledge-keeley-hawes This and other examples could aid looking at the lessening in-house production at the BBC, from the view of it being a result of the cost-cutting reforms made by the then Director-General, John Birt, in the late 1980s.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the distribution by Fremantle: https://fremantle.com/fremantle-goes-global-with-bbcs-the-responder Fremantle are part of RTL Group, owned by Bertelsmann, which is comprised of the world's largest book publisher, Penguin Random House, and leading music company, BMG • Twitter feed #TheResponder includes comments from national and international viewers. The following provide a roundup of audience comments – including discussion of the representation of Liverpool: https://www.hellomagazine.com/film/20220126131677/the-responder-viewers-doing-same-thing-episode-two https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/tv/bbc-responder-viewers-switch-off-22864538 • A selection of Milk Production work is available on their website: https://www.milkpublicity.com/projects/the-responder
<i>Lupin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following article provides a good introduction to the programme: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/jan/19/lupin-netflix-surprise-hit-france-omar-sy • The following reviews are typical of the mostly positive critical response to the series and provide some thoughtful, analytic approaches: https://www.rollingstone.com/tv/tv-reviews/lupin-netflix-review-117338/ https://slate.com/culture/2021/01/lupin-review-2021-netflix-series-omar-sy.html • The series stars Omar Sy, a French actor of Senegalese descent who is a star of French and Hollywood film – an unusual figure in the French creative industries (https://www.france24.com/en/20180504-do-you-speak-african-black-actors-blast-racism-french-film-industry) • The following article discusses some of the appeals of the narrative: https://www.digitalspy.com/tv/a36738795/lupin-netflix-ratings • Paris is, of course, an iconic setting in TV (and film) and one of the pleasures of the programme is the location – consider the meaning of this representation – does it reinforce traditional stereotypes of the city or try to represent it in a more contemporary way? (The representation in another Netflix series <i>Emily in Paris</i> has been greatly criticised and might be an interesting comparison) • Home page of Gaumont production company: https://gaumonttelevision.com/movie/arsene-lupin • A study of Netflix as an organisation would include its funding system and use of algorithms to predict audience behaviour (see Audience framework for more on this) as well as the company's growth over time. An interview with two executives from Netflix at the Edinburgh TV Festival provides information on some of the key areas to look at: https://deadline.com/2021/08/netflix-uk-film-tv-commissioning-strategy-potential-overall-talent-deals-edinburgh-1234819743

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following articles discuss the role of Netflix in popularising international TV content: https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2021/01/24/netflixs-lupin-marks-rise-of-international-tv-content.html https://qz.com/1971104/netflix-is-bringing-great-french-tv-shows-to-global-audiences • There are useful statistics about the position of streaming services in the UK on the Ofcom website, including: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2021/pandemic-influenced-viewing-habits • The strategies that Netflix use to target audience viewing habits are discussed here: https://theconversation.com/how-netflix-affects-what-we-watch-and-who-we-are-and-its-not-just-the-algorithm-169897 • In this example, most of the advertising is produced in-house by Netflix with most of the advertising limited to the site itself: https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/80994082 • The series was sold via the star persona of Omar Sy – some examples here of a variety of interviews with him discussing the series (there are many more!): First four minutes of this France 24 segment (in English) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOIQQQRMD0I Profile in <i>The Guardian</i>: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/may/30/omar-sy-star-of-lupin-on-hollywood-racism-and-his-big-break Profile in GQ: https://www.gq.com/story/omar-sy-lupin-netflix-profile • In studying regulation in relation to Netflix, note that the company is currently not under Ofcom’s jurisdiction as it is based in the Netherlands. In June 2021 the UK government announced plans to bring forward changes to the regulation system for streaming services as part of its Media bill, but there are questions as to whether this would be possible in practice: https://mediatel.co.uk/news/2021/06/23/governments-ofcom-plan-to-regulate-netflix-fraught-with-problems
<p><i>Zendaya</i> social media presence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aim of a celebrity social media presence is to hide the levels of control around the representation so as to appear personal and authentic (a theoretical discussion central to the analysis of the star persona in more traditional media as well). The following article gives an insight into how stars control their branding on social media (produced by a company who develop the social media presence of industries): https://sproutsocial.com/insights/celebrity-social-media-management • A useful – if largely uncritical – summary of the different ways <i>Zendaya</i> has used social media: https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/7/15/20692091/zendaya-celebrity-explained-oscars-2015-dreadlocks-euphoria-spiderman-far-from-home

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debates around the possible regulation or self-regulation of social media networks – currently a contentious issue and one being discussed in the government’s proposed Online Harms Bill. An overview of the difficulties involved in this type of regulation is given here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54901083 • Revenue streams via social media – what is the relationship between the celebrity and the website? How do both parties make money? There are some useful points about how social media sites make money at: https://www.investopedia.com/stock-analysis/032114/how-facebook-twitter-social-media-make-money-you-twtr-lnkd-fb-goog.aspx • The range of <i>Zendaya</i>’s social media posts means that she is targeting different audiences associated with different platforms. This includes segmentation to do with age and gender, but also psychographics. This is evident as <i>Zendaya</i> develops her persona from child to adult star but also from mainstream blockbusters to more ‘serious’ work which is seen to have more cultural significance. As a progressive figure who is an advocate of female empowerment, <i>Zendaya</i> has had to address the concerns about the damaging effect of social media on the group that is likely to be her target audience (young adult women). The charges of complicity in this context are also something which the <i>Zendaya</i> brand has to deal with – through mode of address and representation. The following articles debate whether social media – and particularly celebrity posts – are damaging to the audience: https://people.com/beauty/zendaya-on-importance-of-taking-time-away-from-social-media https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/jul/23/social-media-and-celebrity-culture-harming-young-people
<p><i>Horizon Forbidden West</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Horizon Forbidden West</i> is an action role-playing game which is played from a third-person perspective – this means that the player controls Aloy, a female hunter who has to survive against opponents who are animal–machine hybrids. In an open world (ie one with minimal structure for the player) she explores the frontier known as the Forbidden West, a post-apocalyptic version of the United States. • The following review analyses the PS5’s use of graphics to create a new level of realism: https://www.ft.com/content/383609c2-8fee-4c60-b40c-7f1a8f74a8a4 (free access) • The following review provides some relevant analysis of the use of narrative and genre in the game: https://www.denofgeek.com/games/horizon-forbidden-west-review-formula-new-features/ • The following article focuses on playing an open-world game (could also be used in the context of audience): https://www.wired.com/story/horizon-forbidden-west-ope-worlds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A useful introduction to issues of representation and how they relate to the nature of the gameplay and setting of <i>Horizon Forbidden West</i> is available here: https://www.polygon.com/23002044/horizon-forbidden-west-tremortusk-orientalist-tropes • The representation of race and ethnicity in the game has proved controversial with accusations of cultural insensitivity in the portrayal of the Tenakth tribe, who, it has been argued, have been coded to signify indigenous people of the US. An interesting discussion, including the response of Guerrilla Games, is here: https://www.cbc.ca/radio/horizon-video-game-indigenous-appropriation-1.6372323 • The game has, though, also been praised for its representation of Black characters both in terms of the number of characters and the development of more realistic artwork. Further analysis of this here: https://www.playernature.com/2022/02/horizon-forbidden-west-praised-for-its.html • The representation of gender has focused on the central character, Aloy, in the context of other gender representations across gaming, but also in terms of issues around misogyny in the gaming industry and its effect on representation. There is a discussion of these issues here: https://www.forbes.com/sites/paultassi/2021/12/28/maybe-lets-stop-debating-the-attractiveness-of-aloy-from-horizon-forbidden-west/?sh=634366f55b18 • Guerilla Games (https://www.guerrilla-games.com/) a Dutch company based in Amsterdam, which also produces the <i>Killzone</i> series. Guerrilla Games is owned by PlayStation Studios (which is part of Sony): https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/corporate/playstation-studios • The following articles from the gaming magazine <i>Gamesradar</i> provide a range of examples of how players have responded to the game: https://www.gamesradar.com/uk/horizon-forbidden-west-players-debate-aggressive-enemies-and-difficulty-levels/ https://www.gamesradar.com/horizon-forbidden-west-players-arent-impressed-by-nerfs-to-legendary-weapons/
GQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GQ magazine began publication in 1957 and focuses on fashion, style, politics and culture for men. It has recently been through a re-branding and restructuring process in response to declining sales across the magazine industry. The following article provides a useful overview of the recent developments at the magazine and its future aims: https://pressgazette.co.uk/dylan-jones-gq-conde-nast • Official website: https://www.condenast.com/about

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GQ media pack provides an overview of the demographics and psychographics of the target audience: https://cnda.condenast.co.uk/static/mediapack/gq_media_pack_latest.pdf • Discussion of some of the issues facing the magazine industry in a period of declining sales: https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/magazine-abcs-home-garden-titles-surge-gq-hearst-suffer/1740980 • Overview of the print magazine sales: https://pressgazette.co.uk/magazine-circulation-uk • Regulation – IPSO website: https://www.ipso.co.uk/what-we-do • Interesting overview of changing representation of masculinity in men’s fashion magazines: https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20210707-what-does-the-perfect-man-look-like-now
<i>The Gentlewoman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Gentlewoman</i> has been described as ‘an intelligent take on fashion and culture aimed at smart and tasteful women’. An interview with the editor-in-chief gives a sense of the aims of the magazine: https://www.thecut.com/2018/10/penny-martin-the-gentlewoman.html • The following articles provide an overview of the independent magazine market: https://writersedit.com/self-publishing/look-independent-magazine-publishing/ https://www.thedrum.com/news/2018/06/13/rage-against-the-magazine-behind-the-resurgence-independent-mag-publishing https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/finance/how-independent-magazines-make-money/ • Some details of how <i>The Gentlewoman</i> publishing model is structured: https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/the-gentlewoman-a-magazine-thats-also-a-club/ • Press kit provided by the magazine for advertisers, which provides information on target audience: http://press.rockmedia.it/mediakits/The_Gentlewoman_MediaKit_2018.pdf
<i>The Guardian</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Guardian</i> – in contrast to any other UK newspaper – is owned by a trust, rather than a commercial company. <i>The Guardian</i> (and its ‘sister’ paper, <i>The Observer</i>) is owned by The Guardian Media Group, which in turn has one shareholder, The Scott Trust. This structure, <i>The Guardian</i> argues, frees the newspaper from the domination and influence of an individual owner and from the need to respond to short-term business interests. An argument for why this is a positive form of ownership can be found here: The Scott Trust: why the Guardian is unique Membership The Guardian • The newspaper’s left-wing political sympathies make it unusual in this right-wing dominated newspaper market. <i>The Guardian</i> is a notable newspaper

to study due to its unique institutional structure, approach to developing revenue strategies and use of digital technologies in conjunction with its print platform. *The Guardian* has a particular place in British culture, with the term 'Guardian reader' used – either positively or negatively – to signify a certain type of left-wing political beliefs. *The Guardian's* mission statement emphasises investigative journalism such as The Windrush scandal and Cambridge Analytica.

- As with any media industry, issues of audience are often inseparable, and *The Guardian's* strategies to remain profitable in a declining industry are focused on finding a different kind of subscription model (which doesn't include a paywall) and developing its global audience (see *Guardian US* and *Guardian Australia*).
 - Overview of the funding strategies nationally and globally across print and digital:
<https://wan-ifra.org/2021/07/how-the-guardian-plans-to-hit-2-million-paying-supporters-by-2022> (which overlap with issues of audience)
 - Study of the effects of a major rebranding in 2018 could be useful:
<https://www.marketingweek.com/guardian-journey-become-supporter-led-organisation>
 - A former editor of *The Guardian* outlines the issues involved in developing a global brand, including the relationship between print and digital:
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/may/06/guardian-200-it-was-exhilarating-how-went-digital-and-global>
 - *The Guardian's* branding has focused on targeting audiences through its commitment to centre-left ideas and committed journalism – evident in its *Hope is Power* advertising campaign:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5NUSksz7ZY>
- This kind of targeting is a deliberate attempt to develop an emotional commitment to the newspaper in its readership. *The Guardian's* more progressive position on social, political and cultural issues (diversity, gender, international perspective) is more in tune with a younger demographic than some other national newspapers (evident in the series of guest editorships of the Saturday edition:
<https://www.theguardian.com/membership/2018/aug/18/gal-dem-guardian-takeover-proves-diversity-breeds-creativity>
- Demographic and psychographic profile information:
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/380687/the-guardian-the-observer-monthly-reach-by-demographic-uk>
<https://www.hurstmediacompany.co.uk/the-guardian-profile>
 - Analysis from a business strategy perspective, looking at motivations for readers to pay for content:
<https://speciall.media/2019/05/31/beyond-subscriptions-what-prompts-readers-to-pay>

<p><i>Old Town Road</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Old Town Road</i> 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 <i>Old Town Road</i> crystallises those concerns. The following article and podcast provide some background to the controversy around categorisation of the song and video: https://www.vox.com/2019/8/23/20826730/lil-nas-x-old-town-road-vma-podcast • A discussion of how music genres are linked to racial categories – as explored in the video: https://entropymag.org/how-old-town-road-exposed-country-musics-racial-boundaries • 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: https://www.salon.com/2019/07/02/lil-nas-xs-old-town-road-star-power-and-countrys-queer-visibility
<p>Sephora</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sephora is a French, international luxury cosmetics brand. It has recently stated its intention to become a more ethical company, which included signing the '15% Pledge' – a promise to ensure that at least 15% of their products were from Black-owned brands. The following provides some background to the reasons businesses move to more ethical positions: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/sephora-black-owned-brands.html • Cinematography and aesthetic – the advert is directed by Garrett Bradley, the first Black woman to win the best director award at the Sundance Film Festival (for her documentary <i>Time</i> (2020)) and the advert has a cinematic aesthetic.

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The Gentlewoman p66, p67

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