



The Media Studies Conference 2005

Teacher-led sessions

These sessions are listed alphabetically by surname of the session leader

1. [Teaching Contemporary British Cinema](#) Sarah Casey Benyahia
2. [Approaches to teaching All About My Mother](#) Vivienne Clark
3. [Psychotic Reaction – Approaches to Popular Music](#) Cath Davies
4. ['Being a Man' – Masculinity in the Media](#) Matthew Hall
5. [Sound and Music in Film](#) Tanya Jones
6. ['Because we're worth it.' Teaching TV Advertising](#) Eileen Lewis
7. [Mind-mapping for Media Studies](#) Nina Moore
8. [Stars and Performance](#) Jill Poppy
9. [Teaching C4 as an Institution](#) Adam Ranson
10. [Teaching Magazines and Gender](#) Elayne Tucker
11. [The significance of Italian neorealist films in teaching A Level Film & Media Studies](#) Jan Udris
12. [Getting started with video film production for non-vocational courses](#) David Wharton

1. Teaching Contemporary British Cinema

Sarah Casey Benyahia

Lecturer Media and Film Studies, Colchester Sixth Form College

Particularly relevant to: WJEC Film FS2: Producers and Audiences; FS3: Messages and Values; OCR 2735: Media Issues and Debates; OCR AVCE Media: Communication and Production Film Studies 7400

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

A study of British cinema provides an opportunity to explore all the key concepts in Film and Media Studies in an integrated way. The session will focus particularly on film language, institutions and representation, structured around key debates in British film production, distribution and exhibition. The study of British cinema gives students the opportunity to discuss issues of national identity and their own experiences as consumers of British (often in contrast to Hollywood) culture. The renewed popularity of British film in recent years also means that this is an area which students are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about. In the study of British cinema, students are expected to be able to analyse particular film styles and representations as well as place films within their institutional and cultural contexts. This session suggests ways to develop these skills through student research, textual analysis and debate.

The main focus of the session will be on classroom teaching with examples of schemes of work, student activities and suggested films and extracts using case studies of British Cinema and Institutions (UK Film Council and Working Title) and Realism in Contemporary British Cinema.

2. Approaches to teaching All About My Mother (Pedro Almodovar 1999)

Vivienne Clark

bfi Associate Tutor; Freelance Writer/Editor, Teacher Trainer and Media Education Consultant, Kent

Particularly relevant to: WJEC Film – FS5: World Cinema and FS4: Auteur Project
Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

The recently released Pedro Almodovar Collection on DVD offers a good opportunity to consider his films for A Level film teaching. The workshop will provide an introduction to exploring Almodovar's 1999 film, *All About My Mother*, with reference to analysis of some key scenes from the film. We will also look very briefly at the broader career of Almodovar, both as a director and, more recently, as a producer.

I will aim to consider the following: analysis of messages and values/representation; consideration of issues and debates related to a study of World cinema; suggestions for approaches to a study of Almodovar as an auteur, with brief reference to other films, and guidance on availability of further resources.

It would be profitable for discussion if delegates attending could familiarise themselves with the film.

3. Psychotic Reaction – Approaches to Popular Music

Cath Davies

Lecturer in Popular Culture, Broadcast media and Popular Culture, University of Wales Institute Cardiff

Particularly relevant to: All Specifications
Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

This session will focus on approaches to teaching popular music, offering guidance on applying key concepts and debates to a specific study of the punk movement. Punk is an integral component of popular music that is alive and kicking in various forms in contemporary popular culture. It is therefore ripe for re-evaluation from an A Level perspective and will allow students to locate an understanding of media concepts within a historical context. Specific areas that will be addressed include punk imagery and postmodernism; feminism and gender legacies in music; moral panics to subcultural identity and a consideration of the development (disintegration?) of punk from anarchy to commodity. Assessing the legacy of punk in contemporary music offers opportunities for further study and student-based research.

This session is aimed at those who are looking for new approaches to a well-worn popular music scheme of work, or for the beginner needing ways into this often daunting area. There will be ideas for encouraging student research from this case study into other areas of the industry and ideas for suitable classroom resources.

4. 'Being a Man' – Masculinity in the Media

Matthew Hall

Head of Film and Media, Seven Kings High School, Essex

Particularly relevant to: OCR 2731: Textual Analysis; OCR 2735: Media Issues and Debates; AQA Module 5: Independent Study.
Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

Over the past twenty years, the expectations, criticisms and realities of what it means to 'be a man' have gone through radical changes. The decline of heavy industry, the triumph of capitalism and feminism's battle for equality have all impacted on the way men see

themselves and the ways in which they are seen in the media. The shift of Gay culture into the mainstream, the increasing empowerment of women, and the acceptability of men, like David Beckham, displaying feminine characteristics have created a much-publicised confusion as to what 'being a man' involves. It has also produced an array of different male roles which all have an interesting relationship with the traditional, stereotypical masculine traits.

This session will look at approaches to teaching about the changes in male roles, and how these are reflected (or, perhaps, inspired) by the media and will widen the discussion about changes in masculinity, going beyond cinema, to look at male roles in television, magazines and pop music. It will provide historical and cultural contexts for shifts in gender roles, such as the impact of feminism, Gay rights and capitalism on masculine identities. There will also be an examination of recent responses to the alleged 'crisis in masculinity' (which may actually be a crisis in how to **market** to men!) including the rise of 'male fundamentalism', androgyny and the 'metro sexual'. In addition, there will be some discussion of the differences – and the similarities – between homosexual male issues and those of heterosexual men, as well as the portrayals of homosexuality in popular media. The main focus will be on how to introduce and explore these potentially sensitive issues to young men and women. An array of texts will be discussed and will provide a focus for the more theoretical debates, as well as texts, which suggest alternative or fresh visions of masculine identity. There will also be teaching materials and ideas for further study.

Matthew Hall is the author of *Teaching Men and Film*, (bfi, 2005).

5. Sound and Music in Film

Tanya Jones

Subject Co-ordinator, A Level Film Studies, Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

Particularly relevant to: All AS and A2 specifications although the Film Studies modules will be the focus of the session.

Suitable for: New Teachers.

As one of the key stylistic features of cinema, an understanding of the role and function of film sound and film music is essential for any A Level Film or Media Studies student. This session will aim to offer different approaches to the teaching of film sound and music, demonstrating different lesson strategies and offering advice on useful materials.

Within such a visual medium, the function of sound and music is often left unexplored by students. This session aims to explore the ways in which sound can be used to generate meaning in film and offer strategies through which effective student exploration can occur. The varying ways in which sound can be used to engage the film spectator and create textual meaning will be discussed. The importance of sound within the study of representation (FS3) and the relationship between directors and film sound/ film composers (FS4) will also be considered. Film music and film sound are also crucial to any definition of 'national cinema' or film movement and the importance of sound to cinematic representations of nationality, the identification of key stylistic characteristics across films grouped by movement or historical period will also be debated (FS5). The evaluation of the role of sound within the generation of audience response and textual meaning will also be addressed (FS6).

The application of sound and music related knowledge within the students' own practical work will also be addressed. Whether the student is creating a screenplay or a short film, an informed knowledge of the different types of sound and their uses will only enhance work offered for assessment.

6. 'Because we're worth it.' Teaching TV Advertising

Eileen Lewis

Head of Media Studies, Maidstone Grammar School, Kent

Particularly relevant to: AQA Module 2: Textual Topics in Contemporary Media: OCR 2730: Practical Production; OCR 2732: Audiences and Institutions; WJEC Media ME2: Media Representations and Reception; ME5: Changing Media Industries.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

'Somebody introduced smallpox, bubonic plague and the Black Death. Somebody is minded now to introduce sponsored broadcasting ... Need we be ashamed of moral values, or of intellectual and ethical objectives? It is these that are here and now at stake.'

Lord Reith on the introduction of commercial television to Britain, 1954

Although we might not entirely agree with Lord Reith, there is a general belief today that ethics and advertising do not sit well together. Recent investigations into multinational brands, such as Morgan Spurlock's film on McDonald's, *Super Size Me*, have helped to raise public awareness and encourage debates about global advertising. Almost every day the press features stories about the concerns of parents and health professionals over our 'couch potato children', often implicating soft drink and confectionery advertising. Advertisers are perceived to have increasing power over television programming, while it can be argued that programmes only exist to provide the audiences for the advertisers.

Whatever your own views, these debates and controversies can help to make our teaching of TV advertising highly relevant to our students. Whilst many might argue that the advertising industry needs to be more tightly regulated and that it creates needs and aspirations in order to fuel our advanced capitalist economy, on the positive side advertising can be explored as a site for exciting innovative creativity.

Advertising has a place in all the AS, A2 and AVCE specifications. Although it can be very enjoyable to teach, it can also seem a rather fragmented topic, which can create difficulties when planning a course. This workshop will give you some ideas on how to approach the topic, with a discussion of some of the current debates outlined above, a case study on changing cultural representations in TV advertising and a case study on a specific advertising campaign. It will look at scheduling, presentation, regulation, the effect of new technologies, and how TV advertisements can be used for debates on bias and representation. It will also include a suggested unit of work and some ideas on how to use advertising for practical work.

7. Mind-mapping for Media Studies

Nina Moore

AST in Media, Film Education and Photography, Welling School, Kent

Particularly relevant to: All Media Studies courses at KS4 and KS5.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

A mind-map is a powerful graphic technique that empowers both the Media Studies teacher and their students to maximise innate potential in learning and teaching. Used by millions of people world-wide in education, business and industry, and often referred to as 'the Swiss army knife for the brain', mind-mapping has and continues to be celebrated as a ground-breaking creative tool that can lead to improved learning, clearer thinking and enhanced performance. Using language, imagery, logic, rhythm, colour and spatial awareness in a single, uniquely powerful manner, the mind-map can help you to animate the Media Studies curriculum and assist both yourself and your students in becoming more effective. In this fun, lively and active workshop you will learn about the fundamentals of mind-mapping as a technique, and explore its many applications in Media Studies at both GCSE and A/S and A

Level. Through participating in this session you will discover how mind-maps can be used as a dynamic and creative vehicle to enhance your professional acumen in planning Media Studies Units of Study, organising specific lessons and modelling best practice.

You will also explore how mind-mapping can be used in the Media Studies classroom to: support Media students with essay writing technique; improve their revision and exam preparation/technique; assist in the consolidation of topics, key-concepts or critical analysis and deconstruction of specific media texts; enable students to see the BIG picture and the specific detail at the same time; help students to understand the links and connections within a media text, media debate, topic or essay question; improve their memory, concentration and ability to recall information; encourage problem solving by showing them new creative pathways, and accelerate learning.

All this will be embraced within a contextualised case study on the generic key-concept of 'Audience' and be supported with examples of mind-maps by Media Studies students and those I have produced. The workshop will end with you creating a Media Studies mind-map to take back to school and share with colleagues.

8. Stars and Performance

Jill Poppy

Freelance Teacher Trainer, London, Principal Examiner for Film Studies FS3

Particularly relevant to: All Media and Film Studies specifications.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

Stars are the most visible part of the film industry and have always fascinated audiences from the Hollywood studio days. Information about stars comes to audiences in a variety of ways – through film itself and through other media constructions such as magazines, chatshows and websites. It is these fragmented images of the stars, which audiences try to make sense of to create a whole picture. We will look how we may define a star, at the ways in which stars are created, how audiences identify with them and how the industry sees them as marketing commodities. The session will also look at different styles of screen performance, particularly at how method acting challenged mainstream Hollywood styles. We will examine how 'stars' is also a useful topic which can springboard students into investigations of many specification areas: stars and their meanings; stars and genre; stars and their audiences/fans (spectatorship); stars and marketing; stars and Hollywood – then and now; stars and celebrity; stars and performance. There will also be the opportunity to investigate stars across a range of media texts.

Case studies will be offered as a way of examining these aspects.

9. Teaching C4 as an Institution

Adam Ranson

Filton College, Bristol, Learning Area Manager; AQA Examiner/ Moderator

Particularly relevant to: AQA Module 1: Reading the Media; Module 4: Texts and Contexts; Module 6: Comparative Critical Analysis; BND/GNVQ/AVCE Media Industries, but will be useful to anyone teaching media institutions.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers

Most students can grasp the difference between 'purely commercial' broadcasters such as Sky and the 'purely public service' BBC, but hybrid institutions such as C4 offer a more revealing case-study of competing institutional and ideological factors in the British media. This workshop will be useful for anyone teaching 'Institutions' or 'Audiences' as a module, study in depth or potential student research topic. The session will also be valuable for

anyone who wants to 'spice up' an introduction to 'Institutions' as a Key concept with some interactive ILT.

The workshop will focus on: how television is regulated by such bodies as OFCOM and the ASA; how programmes are commissioned and scheduled to meet the perceived needs of the C4 Audience (and Advertisers), and how C4 attempts to maintain its own distinctive 'Brand Identity' in the changing world of digital broadcasting. It will also cover the PSP, the 'publishing model' proposed by OFCOM and the validity of C4's self-declared 'alternative/independent' status.

The workshop will use the TV series *What's this Channel 4?* and the supporting website, specifically designed for media students and featuring a number of media education 'games' that allow students to engage in stimulating and interactive learning.

10. Teaching Magazines and Gender

Elayne Tucker

Head of Media and Film, Penwith College, Cornwall

Particularly relevant to: OCR 2735: Issues and Debates, but will be useful to anyone who teaches Magazines and/or Gender in any other Media or related Syllabus.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

The primary aim of the session will be to present suggestions for different methods to teach and assess the topics of Magazines and Gender and to offer advice on how to source and compile resources for both.

Gender is a Key Concept in Media Studies but it can be notoriously difficult for students to understand and challenging for lecturers (new and experienced) to teach in ways that can enable students to apply it to the analysis of media texts. This session will present a variety of approaches that will utilise everyday cultural artefacts as a starting point for demonstrating how gender can be both understood and explained. A consideration will also be given to how to select and utilise Gender Theory in ways that can be productive and dynamic. Because most magazines are gendered the session will begin with the topic of Gender and then lead into how gender can be analysed in magazines focusing on lifestyle magazines for men and women. The session will look at the wealth of resources available about the origins and development of women's magazines that can be accessed by teachers who want to situate their teaching in a historical context.

The final part of the session, linking gender and UK magazine production, will suggest why gender appears to be so important to both magazine producers and magazine readers and will be based on my current teaching practice, in which my students have compiled Case Studies of *FHM* and *Glamour*. I will use their findings, and the further areas of analysis and debate this has provoked, to conclude with suggestions for enabling students to plan and structure examination answers on typical questions about these topics.

11. The significance of Italian neorealist films in teaching A Level Film & Media Studies

Jan Udris

Film and Media Studies teacher/lecturer, Luton Sixth Form College

Particularly relevant to: WJEC Film FS5: Studies in World Cinema

Suitable for: New Teachers

- The structure of the session will be as follows:
- Objectives of the workshop in the Media Conference context.

- Introduction: the context(s) for teaching Italian and other neorealisms: the A2 year of WJEC Film Studies (FS5); the influence of neorealism on film and TV practice; possible influence on/rationale for practical/production work.
- The basics: what was/ is neorealism? Was Italian neorealism a movement or a 'tendency'? Extracts from films such as *Bicycle Thieves*, *La Terra trema*, *Umberto D.* will be shown, with a particular view to their potential for teaching.
- Relevance/ importance of Italian neorealism in relation to subsequent film and TV: documentary, British New Wave and TV drama, Ken Loach, Latin American Cinema, Satyajit Ray, Iranian cinema etc. Short extracts from *De Cierta manera*, *Pather Panchali*, maybe *Battle of Algiers*, *Kes*.
- An exploration of the relation between neorealism and documentary and of Bazinian ontological assumptions compared with the 'objectivity' of documentary: Bazin's problematic trust in the 'reality' of what can be shown, the mediating camera and decisions about what is shown and how, changing orthodoxies in documentary from Flaherty through Grierson to direct cinema, cinéma vérité and beyond to reality TV.
- Some teaching suggestions: questions and exercises to use, including 'preferred statements' exercise.

12. Getting started with video film production for non-vocational courses

David Wharton

Subject Co-ordinator: Film Studies; Gateway Sixth Form College, Leicester; Examiner for WJEC AS

Particularly relevant to: All Media and Film Studies specifications.

Suitable for: New and Experienced Teachers.

Because mini dv and computer-based non-linear editing have fallen significantly in price, the making of good-quality micro budget short films on digital video has become viable as A Level coursework. Increasingly, the 'make a film' option is seen as a requirement by students looking to take these courses. It is also a very popular extra-curricular activity. However, many teachers of the more academic Film and Media specifications have no practical background in moving image production. Consequently, they often look on the prospect of constructing videos with a degree of nervousness. This workshop is based on my experience in 2001-2002, starting up video production from scratch in a medium-sized sixth form college at a time when the Media and Film departments had four members of staff whose combined video experience added up to nil. I hope that the insights we gained during that year's trial by fire, and subsequently refined through delivering video production units to subsequent cohorts of students, will help teachers who are new to this exciting and challenging work.

The material is organised chronologically:

- Budgeting for cameras, choosing software and other essential equipment – also, what not to buy.
- Teacher preparation ideas – how to get used to the kit.
- Planning a production.
- Pre-production.
- Filming.
- Post-production – from capturing and storing the footage to authoring your final DVD.

We will also look at the different requirements of the genre-based productions expected by the Media specifications, as compared to the creation of more individual, artistic and 'auteuresque' films suited to a Film Studies programme.

Although we will discuss some of the basic elements of shooting on video and non-linear editing, this is not a workshop in film-making and editing techniques, nor in the use of any

particular equipment. Rather, it is designed to prepare teachers to prepare themselves, to make the right choices for their own institutions and students, and to avoid the various pitfalls that I didn't. I will also supply a webpage providing links to numerous useful (and free) sources of information, including a guide to shooting and editing. The focus of the workshop will be on constructing narrative cinematic products, in the form of short films and extracts from imagined movies. However, the skills we will develop are transferable to other types of production, such as mock advertisements, trailers, single-camera soap opera and music video. There will be practical exercises, and the workshop will be illustrated throughout with student work, good and bad.