

HOW TO TEACH ...

These sessions are aimed at those new to Film and Media Studies but could also provide a useful refresher for more experienced teachers.

1. **How to teach Audiences**

Victoria Allen

Teacher, Media Studies, John Leggott Sixth Form College, Scunthorpe.

Defining audiences is a key concept in Media Studies at both GCSE and A Level as it forms the basis of understanding how and why media texts are constructed by their producers and deconstructed by different groups of people. This workshop will explore the concept of audience from a basic investigation of identifying how consumers of popular texts interact with the media to a more theoretical consideration of how audiences read and use a variety of media texts. The interactive workshop will focus around case studies based upon the module topics across syllabuses including lifestyle magazines, reality television programmes and public service advertising campaigns. In addition, the changing nature of audience consumption of texts in relation to access via new technologies will be explored via an in-depth look at current UK media texts using the BBC and News Corporation as case studies.

2. **How to teach Genre**

Fred Creasey

Freelance Film and Media Studies Lecturer

The session will begin with a consideration of what is meant by the term genre and an attempt at definition, stressing the dynamic, open-ended notion of genres and their development. The workshop will look at aspects such as recognition; common characteristics and iconography; inter-connections and overlaps between genres and genre's connection with certain production processes, particularly the Hollywood Studio System.

This will be followed by a consideration of genre's interlinking with other aspects of film study, e.g. narrative with different genres having particular narrative forms and the establishment of narrative expectations relating to these genres, and audience with 'brand loyalty' related to particular genres and the influence of changing audience age constructions.

Looking at genre as convention the session will compare the relative compartmentalisation of the Hollywood notion of genre and the popular Hindi 'masala' film which can be regarded as a variety of genres. It will also examine whether genre study is still as important in the context of present day film making. For example, genres that once seemed central to the study of the form (Western, Gangster, Musical) may no longer be of prime importance to present day audiences while recent films seem to fit uneasily into generic categories. The session will examine whether new genres are evolving or whether sequels, cycles and re-makes are more useful areas of study.

We will also consider the effect on genre of new technology, particularly CGI and more sophisticated special effects and the conditions in which films are viewed (TV, DVDs, laptops rather the cinema screen) and question whether this has affected genre production.

3. **How to teach Narrative**

Charlie Davies

Teacher, Film and Media Studies, Exeter College

Storytelling is a fundamental human activity across all cultures. Just as we are constantly telling stories about our world in the form of anecdotes, gossip and jokes, so all forms of media are structured into narratives that explain the world to us. Narrative is, therefore, a central concept in Film and Media Studies, which our students need to handle confidently when analysing media texts such as Hollywood blockbusters, television news or contemporary sitcoms. They need to be aware of how narratives are structured, how they construct meanings and how to relate the term to other key concepts such as Genre, Representation and Ideology.

The main emphasis of the session will be on practical delivery in the classroom, based around a complete scheme of work, organised around a number of case studies and key activities. Although the main focus will be on 'how', there will also be attention given to 'what', covering areas such as

narrative theories (but only insofar as these are useful in helping students to examine texts more critically), useful terminology and concepts (avoiding jargon wherever possible) and the different ways in which different media tell stories.

Case studies will be drawn from a range of genres in mainstream film and television, such as Action movies and soap opera. More specifically the session will focus on the fairy story in Classical Hollywood Narrative, the pleasures of High Concept movies and how soap opera represents time.

In the context of the 'unit' organisation of AS/A2 syllabuses, the session will also look at ways of implementing an integrated approach to Film and Media specs which restores an underlying conceptual framework to the study of media texts.

This session will offer some fresh approaches to organising a scheme of work and some enjoyable ways of implementing it with your students

4. How to teach Representation

Jeremy Orlebar

Freelance Lecturer and Writer; Senior Examiner in Media Studies for AQA

The way social groups and places are represented in the media indicates issues, messages and concerns beyond the literal value of the images. Representations have both positive and negative aspects that can be related to their contexts, and can be seen to change over time. Stereotypes shorthand a complex topic so that it can be understood by a general audience, but are these representations fair and accurate? Representations of people groups, and places which can be described as re-presentations of reality, exist in virtually all media texts. Some non-fiction texts may offer no more reliably accurate representations than dramatised scenarios.

This session will look at understanding and analysing representations, with copious examples, and at the ways students can study different groups and places as they are represented in a variety of media. Stereotypes may tend to reinforce misconceptions about certain groups such as the disabled, but audiences find stereotypes accessible. Some stereotypes persist and endure across media, but others wither away or are even reversed.

The way young people, for example, and particularly teenagers have been portrayed in print journalism, television, broadcast news and film texts continues to alienate and attract large audiences, even though these representations have changed considerably over the last 70 years. Referencing music, films, TV drama and magazines, young people will form the basis of the discussion. We will also look at how the representation of disability has changed over time. Several other groups will be considered including scientists, young men, gay men, young women, soldiers, and places such as Liverpool and New York. The session will offer ways to structure a course of study on representation and suggestions for coaxing sophisticated responses to representation questions at AS and A2.

The session will discuss effective ways to unravel the concepts behind representation, and discuss strategic approaches to help students with writing essays. These will include the importance of referencing a number of texts, and not choosing a group that is too large to study meaningfully. Ways of engaging with the question using the knowledge available, and the importance of introducing relevant factual contexts with dates and names, e.g. relevant laws passed by Parliament such as giving women the vote, or allowing same sex marriages, or to actually reference the act itself e.g. Disability Discrimination Act (1995). The importance of coherently cross-referencing contextual political/historical events and cultural activities will be emphasised.

5. How to teach Institution

Sarah Smyth

Head of Media and Film Studies, Woking College, Surrey

This session will tackle the topic of institutions by suggesting a number of different approaches to a study of institutions and will explore some of the key issues of the topic and look at the ways in which students can investigate them.

There will be suggestions on how to set up and structure research tasks such as finding out about the different media organisations including case studies of global organisations. There will be examples of how to present findings from this research and how to use the information found. There will be an emphasis on technological changes and how these effect ownership. There will be an emphasis on the link between these changes and what products audiences are offered with examples from the music, television and film industries.

A number of possible activities will be presented which the students can undertake in order to develop their knowledge of key issues such as globalisation, media imperialism and the impact of new technology in particular the internet. We will also focus on the ways in which students can be encouraged to build their knowledge and understanding of specific concepts such as convergence and terminology such as mergers, alliances, niche audiences etc. There will also be an emphasis on keeping up to date and how to encourage students to gather information about changes in the media industries.

There will be specific reference to the radical changes that have taken place in music, television and film formats. We will focus on how students can investigate the developments that have taken place and have discussions about the impact of these changes on the industry. There will also be suggested key focus areas with ideas for discussion tasks, sources of investigation, resources as well as tasks revolving around impact on audience, choice and availability and content.

Overall, the session will examine how this area can engage students by helping them to recognise direct effects on their own lives. A number of resources will be recommended and discussed. Suggestions as to revision practice will also be provided.