Finding and Using Media Issues and Debates
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What is a media issue or debate?

- Media issues and debates are the discussions, sometimes arguments, that surround contemporary media culture
- A media issue or debate will be directly related to the media but will also link to wider cultural issues
- There are countless media issues and debates and they shift and change with technology, politics, economics, fashion, ideologies etc.
What is a media issue or debate?

- In general terms an issue/debate would be a media topic that is both contemporary and is characterised by having no clear cut 'right' or 'wrong' way to think about the topic.
- Media issues and debates are those topics that relate to the media in some way but where opinions dominate the discussion because 'facts' are not as concrete as we may like.
What is a media issue or debate?

Media Issues and Debates can be
1. An issue raised about the media itself
2. A social issue raised (and represented) by the media
3. A social issue related to the media
4. Based on the media's response to an event
What is a media issue or debate?

An issue raised about the media itself
- These can be issues and debates around media products and institutional practises

A social issue raised (and represented) by the media
- attitudes to the multicultural nature of modern society

A social issue related to the media
- freedom of speech vs censorship in the debates around the rise of violent and abusive debate online

Based on an event and then the way the media responds to the event
- a violent act; a natural tragedy; a celebrity death; a scandal; a political event, a sports event etc.
What have been the big media issues of the past year or two?

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<th>Issues that are about the media</th>
<th>A social issue represented in the media</th>
<th>A social issue related to the media</th>
<th>An event that the media has responded to</th>
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Some Examples

1. Oscars so white; diversity of representations in film and TV; equal pay and opportunity in Hollywood;

2. Immigration and the refugee crisis; Sexism and equality of opportunity; Social mobility and economic inequality; Identity politics, Racism

3. Twitter, trolling and online misogyny; Social media and the news agenda; freedom of speech; censorship;

4. David Bowie, Prince, Victoria Wood and others; The 'threesome' celebrity injunction; The Queen's Birthday; The Panama Papers; Cheryl and Liam; Beyoncé's Lemonade
Finding Media Issues and Debates

- Students need to engage with media issues and debates
- Some can be discussed in class and related to the topics being studied
- Students will need to be encouraged to engage with the main source of issues and debates - the news.

For example:

- The Guardian
- The Media Section
- The Culture Section
- The Tech Section
- The Telegraph
- The Independent
- Wired
- The New Statesman
- The Spectator
- The MailOnline
- Vice
- BBC News
- Channel 4 News
- Sky News
Finding Media Issues and Debates

Sharing Good Practice: how do you encourage your students to stay up to date and engage with current affairs?

Twitter: @albionmill
www.facebook.com/albionmillmedia/
An example: cultural appropriation

- Over the past few years there have been several events that have led to debates and, in some cases arguments, based on the idea of cultural appropriation
- **Cultural appropriation** is defined as the use of elements or symbols of a specific (usually racial) culture by people who are not members of that culture
- This is usually perceived as an issue where the person using the symbol is a member of a group that is, or has historically been, more powerful than the culture whose symbol is being used
- The act of cultural appropriation is seen as an act that undermines the meaning of the cultural symbols of the culture and can be seen as an act that actively disempowers the original culture
An example: cultural appropriation

Dreadlock Row Video Investigated By College
Footage shows a man being forced to defend his hairstyle, before he is grabbed as he tries to leave the scene.

“People are annoyed cause when black people wear this style they are stereotyped as druggies and are “unkempt” look at Zendaya for example. She had fake dreads and she was stereotyped. But when people such as JB [...] wears them its suddenly ‘the latest trend,'” wrote one Instagram user.

While white Britons in India is “never a good look,” as my Telugu partner succinctly put it, it is worth pointing out that neither she nor Coldplay are positioned as the powerful center in the same way both Iggy Azalea and Må are the white loci amid brown women in their “Bounce” and “Lean On” videos.
Using Media Issues and Debates

• Students need to be able to engage with issues
• They don't necessarily need to be an 'expert' but they should be able to consider different points of view and engage with the arguments
• They should be able to consider the way the media contributes to the debate
  • By leading debate and encouraging discussion in news reporting/op-ed pieces
  • By giving audiences access to a range of voices in the debate on social media, via blogs etc.
  • By giving audiences the opportunity to engage in debates via social media
• They should consider theoretical/conceptual ideas and apply them to the issue/debate
Using Media Issues and Debates

• Students could use media concepts to analyse products that contribute to the issue/debate.
• They could consider how media language choices in the construction of media products construct representations that are provide an ideological perspective on the issue/debate.
• They could consider how products are constructed to appeal to the target audience - conventionally attempting to reflect their values back to them.
• They could consider how the values communicated in the product may be influenced by the producing institution.
Theory and Context

• Current media issues and debates are ways into considering the contemporary context - and the media's place within it
• Media issues can often be discussed using media theories. For example:
  • The issue of cultural appropriation can be discussed using Perkins and Hall's ideas on representation; Said's ideas on orientalism and Gauntlett's ideas about identity
  • The issue of sexualisation of women in pop and r&b can be discussed using Mulvey's male gaze, Dyer's ideas on representation, Walter's ideas on women as 'Living Dolls' and Levy's discussion on what she calls 'raunch culture'
Examples and Analysis

• Choose one of the issues you identified in the first activity
• What media products could you use to as examples of the media's involvement in the issue/debate?
• What theories/conceptual ideas could you use to discuss and analyse this issue/debate?
cultural appropriation resources

• To access the videos and a select bibliography/webography go to:
  
  • [http://www.albionmill.org.uk/?page_id=1886](http://www.albionmill.org.uk/?page_id=1886)

• When prompted add the password: 1617AMCApp