

Media Literacy

Teacher Manual



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Introduction

Does what you think, what you believe, how you act, and what you want out of life all come from you? Were you the driving force behind the formation of who you are and what you believe? Without giving it much thought, you might answer this question with a resounding “Yes, of course!” or you might acknowledge the powerful role your parents, family, and friends play in your life. And yet, consider the amount of time we all spend browsing the internet; watching TV, videos, and movies; texting; and listening to music. You might wonder just how much influence these sources of information have. Could it even be said that these media are so pervasive that they play a primary role in shaping who we are? Is there even a *you* in you?

These questions are the first of many compelling questions that your student will encounter in this course. Media literacy is about learning how to critically engage in and make sense of the media we are inundated with nonstop. In addition to introducing students to the history and use of media, this course will help them develop analytical tools that they can use to examine media’s content, intent, context, and subtext. In a media studies context, the word *text* includes not only written words but also visual or audio messages; it includes everything from books, magazines, and newspapers to the TV we watch, to the logos on our clothes, to the songs we hear, and to the pop-ups we see when viewing a YouTube video.

Media literacy is about social activism; it is inherently an activist method of study. When we study media critically, we are compelled to make change within ourselves, within our families and communities, and within the wider world. Understanding this will help you better support your student’s learning in this course as well as the personal growth and development that springs from this meaningful learning.

What to Expect

Throughout the course, students will be working with four key concepts, as outlined in David Buckingham’s *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture* (Polity Press, 2003):

Production: All media texts are consciously manufactured.

Language: All media texts use a combination of languages to communicate meaning. Languages are the codes and conventions familiar to us that help us make sense of media texts.

Representation: Media production involves selecting and combining moments to make stories and create characters. Representation invites us to see the world in particular ways.

Audiences: All media texts are made for an audience. To study the audience is to study our role as media producers and consumers.

You can refer to the student coursebook for more information on these foundational concepts. Students will also be reading select passages from *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* by David Croteau and William Hoynes (Sage Publications, 2019).

In each lesson, you will find the following:

An **Assignment Summary** is included at the beginning of each lesson so that you can see all the assignments at a glance. Students are encouraged to check off assignments as they are completed. Assignments are fully explained in the lesson.

The **Lesson Objectives** outline the main goals of the lesson. These can be used to help assess your student's progress and comprehension of the material.

The **Viewing** and **Reading** sections list the films students will watch and outline the reading assignments. You are strongly encouraged to watch the films, either with your student or separately, so that you can engage in a more meaningful analysis of the material. Many of the films introduce and frankly discuss challenging and difficult topics; co-viewing is highly recommended so that your student has someone with whom to discuss the films as well as thoughts, feelings, and questions that arise from the films.

The **Writing Assignments** are designed to help students think deeper about the material and make important connections by applying their knowledge and reasoning skills. Responses may vary from short answers to full-length essays and reports. In the appendix of the student coursebook, you will find writing instructions regarding the different types of assignments. These guidelines can help you assess your student's work.

Activities provide a wide range of hands-on ways to explore the topics in this course. Each lesson includes instructions for one or more activities.

Think About It includes questions for discussion with family and friends. By discussing issues, expressing opinions, and listening to the opinions of others, students will come to a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the topics in each lesson.

A section called **For Enrolled Students** is found at the end of most lessons. This section provides reminders and information for students who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and are submitting work to their Oak Meadow teacher.

Throughout this course, students will view an extensive array of award-winning films from Kanopy, formerly called the Media Education Foundation (MEF). Whether you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School or have purchased this course independently, the Oak Meadow office will provide a private access link to Kanopy. By clicking on the link and entering your email address, you can request a

password that will give you access to the list of films specifically chosen for this course. Students who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and using an OM email address will be sent a password immediately; for all others, the password will be sent after a brief verification process.

Supporting Your Student

If you are homeschooling independently, this teacher manual can serve as your support as you guide and evaluate your student's work. In this teacher manual, you will find the full text for all assignments and activities. Teacher manual answers are seen in color. Not every assignment will have a teacher manual answer since many assignments are self-explanatory and the student's response is likely to be fairly straightforward and relatively easy to evaluate. The teacher manual answers often focus on ways you can support your student in exploring this material or what to look for in a student response, rather than providing a correct answer (since there are many possible ways a student might respond). There are reading passages at the beginning of each lesson in the student coursebook that explain and discuss the lesson topic; these reading passages are not included in this teacher manual. If more information is needed about any concept or assignment, you can refer to the textbook or student coursebook.

When a student gets a factual answer wrong, you can share the correct answer and address any underlying misconceptions. The focus should always be on the learning process rather than on a sense of judgment. Several incorrect answers related to a particular concept point to an area the student will benefit from revisiting.

However, you will find that most of the assignments in this course are more open-ended. There are many possible ways a student could respond, and no answer is right or wrong. These assignments require a different type of assessment. In this teacher manual, you will find some tips for assessing student work, but in general, the goal is for students to carefully consider new ideas, and to develop critical thinking, clear reasoning, and strong communication skills. We want students to reflect on and clarify their opinions, and to express their opinions and beliefs with confidence and conviction. It is also important for students to develop techniques for giving critical feedback, engaging in respectful debates, and composing thoughtful rebuttals. These are the skills you will be looking for as you assess your student's work.

For obvious reasons, it is best not to share this teacher manual with your student. Each student is expected to produce original work, and any incidence of plagiarism should be taken very seriously. If you notice a student's answers matching those of the teacher manual word for word, a discussion about plagiarism and the importance of doing original work is necessary. While students in high school are expected to be well aware of academic honesty, any discussion about it should be approached as a learning opportunity. Make sure your student is familiar with when and how to properly attribute sources.

Media literacy is a vital skill for today's global citizens. We wish you and your student a challenging and insightful experience in this course!

Lesson

1

Making Sense of Mass Media

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the scope and technology of media
- Explore how mass media affects family life
- Gain a better understanding of the self through media-use analysis

Complete the Media Literacy Pre-Course Survey. You'll find it in the back of this coursebook. You can write directly in the book or copy the survey and fill it out. You'll need to refer to your survey at the end of the course, so if you make a copy to fill out, be sure to keep track of it.

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society* (Croteau and Hoynes), read pages 2–14, which includes the following sections:

- Introduction to chapter 1, “Media/Society in a Digital World”
- The Importance of Media
- Models of Communication Media
 - ◆ Interpersonal and “Mass” Communication
 - ◆ Variable Boundaries and Active Users
 - ◆ Communication Today: A First Look
- A Sociology of Media
 - ◆ The Sociological Perspective

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Fill out the Media Literacy Pre-Course Survey.
- ☐ Read pages 2–14 in *Media/Society*.
- ☐ View *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family*.
- ☐ Identify a real-life example that illustrates the concept of media.
- ☐ Give an opinion on the quantity versus quality of media.
- ☐ Write about yourself in a one-page freewrite.
- ☐ Activity A: Media-Free Zone
- ☐ Activity B: Counting on Media

- ◆ Structural Constraint and Human Agency
 - Structure
 - Agency
- ◆ Structure and Agency in the Media

Pay particular attention to the charts, which show important data.

Viewing

Watch the short film *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family* (Media Education Foundation, 2007). (Follow the instructions in the introduction of this coursebook to access this and other Kanopy/Media Education Foundation films.) This film explores the quantity of media young people and families consume and raises concerns about the content as well. (Film length: 38 minutes)



Think About It

The film *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family* references a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation study that found young people spend an average of 6 hours and 45 minutes a day with media, 7 days a week (Rideout et al. 2005). By 2010, studies showed that young people spent nearly 11 hours a day with media, which they packed into 7 hours and 45 minutes through media multitasking (using more than one medium at a time) (Rideout et al. 2010). While watching the film *Remote Control*, think about your own media use. How much time do you spend on media per day? Do you media multitask? Does your family? Do an informal poll and ask your friends and family members to estimate how many hours a day they spend with media. Challenge them to actually keep track of their media use for 24 hours—they may be surprised by what they find.

Written Assignments

1. Throughout the course, you will be using media to define media literacy concepts. For this assignment, find a real-life example that illustrates the concept of *media*. The example can be a photograph or drawing, an advertisement, a graphic image, etc., or you can write a description. Make sure the example clearly shows the meaning of the word. Be creative! Feel free to combine media in your example. Cite all your sources (refer to the appendix of this coursebook for details about proper citation).

Make the Connection

Watch the following video clip to get a quick overview of media.

“A Brief History of Media—Dan Gillmor” (YouTube)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWOBRKx38fo

There are many assignments in this course that ask students to interact with the material in creative ways. Students who are not used to thinking of themselves as creative or artistic might need some help generating ideas. Sometimes doing a project like this alongside your student will help jump-start ideas and encourage your student to explore new ways of looking at media. This is not the same as doing the project for your student; in fact, the way you view media and the way your student does are likely to be very different! Doing the project side by side, each working on your own interpretation, might lead to interesting conversations.

2. Do you think it is important to monitor the quantity of time spent with media or the quality of the content watched? Is either quantity or quality of concern to you? Why or why not? Explain your answer and give specific examples to support your ideas.

Throughout the course, your student will be asked to give an opinion on a variety of topics. The goal in supporting your student in this work is to provide a safe space for all opinions to be aired. When assessing the work, you will not be judging the student’s opinion but rather how it was expressed. Look for the student to communicate ideas clearly and logically, backing them up with specific examples or sound reasoning.

3. Write about yourself in a one-page freewrite. A freewrite is a writing technique where you write down anything that comes to mind, without worrying about grammar, complete sentences, or anything else. (For more information on how to do a freewrite, see “Prewriting Exercises” in the appendix of this coursebook.) Don’t try to edit or analyze what you are writing; just write about yourself for at least 15 minutes: your age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity/race, community, family, friendships, career goals, interests, hobbies, fears, likes/dislikes, values, politics, dreams, etc.—anything you believe frames or defines who you are. Your writing might take the form of notes, disjointed phrases and words, art, bullet points, poetry, free verse, or an essay. It’s up to you. Set a timer for 15 minutes so you don’t have to keep checking the time. As you explore the question of “Who am I?” you might also ask yourself, “What do I have in common with other people? How are we different from one another?” You will not be judged or graded on the content of your freewrite but rather on your participation in the process of reflecting on your identity.

This is the first of many assignments that you may want to complete at the same time as your student in order to gain a fuller understanding of the material. By experiencing firsthand some of the assignments, you may be better able to respond to, support, and

evaluate your student's work, which in turn would allow you to more easily identify areas in which your student would benefit from discussion, additional explanation or resources, or further study.

Activities

Complete both of the following activities.

The activities in this course give students a wide variety of ways in which to explore the material. You are encouraged to discuss the activities with your student. If a student feels stuck or needs guidance with a particular activity, discussing the goal (What will it look like in the end?) and the purpose behind the activity (Why am I doing this? What will I get out of this?) can help the student generate new ideas and get moving again. Joining your student in exploring the activities may also inspire more thoughtful and creative work.

Many of these activities have a creative element. All students are encouraged to fully engage in the activities, regardless of whether or not they consider themselves a creative person. These activities are an important part of the course and allow students to express themselves in different ways while demonstrating their awareness of the significance and interrelatedness of key elements of media literacy. Students should never be marked down for “bad” artwork or poetry; rather, their creative work should be evaluated on the basis of sincere effort, self-expression, and awareness of the theme or topic.

Activity A: Media-Free Zone

Challenge yourself to see how long you can go without media. You might find it easier to start by setting a goal of four hours, for instance, or perhaps one day. You might want to challenge yourself further to go as long as possible past your goal. There will be no judgment on how long you can go without media. This exercise is designed to raise your awareness of how prevalent media is in your life. For the purpose of this challenge, media includes intentionally viewing any form of communication or information—books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, videos, the internet, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and any other form of mass communication. A personal letter or email doesn't count (that's personal communication), but a blog post or an email sent to dozens of people at once does (mass communication). Of course, you can't help it if you pass a billboard or if you see a magazine lying open on the table, but that's not intentional viewing on your part so those instances don't count. Once you have finished your media-free experiment, write a short reflection. How long did you go without media? What media/medium broke your “fast”? What was the lure, if any?

Activity B: Counting on Media

For 24 hours, document **all** media you are exposed to, both by choice and by happenstance. As with the previous assignment, there is no judgment. Just document your exposure as objectively as possible. What media sources were you exposed to? What was the content? How much of your attention and energy did the media require? How much time did you spend on each type of media? You may find it easiest to create a simple chart to record this data. Afterward, write a brief summary of your exposure and your thoughts about the experiment. Were there any surprises?

Lesson

2

Meta Media: Media's Mirror

Learning Objectives

- Analyze how one medium addresses the content and meaning of another
- Collect and analyze anecdotal data on meta media
- Explore the self and your relationship with media

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 67–78, which includes the following sections:

- Changing Patterns of Ownership
 - ◆ Concentration of Ownership
 - Products
 - Platforms
 - Pipes
 - ◆ Conglomeration and Integration

Written Assignments

1. Find a real-life media example of *meta media*. The example can be a blog or video link, photo, advertisement, television show, film, etc., or you can write a description. Make sure the example clearly shows the meaning of the word. Be creative, and feel free to combine media in your example. Cite all your sources (refer to the appendix for details about proper citation).

Meta media refers to any media that references another. For instance, examples of meta media might include a talk show that focuses on interviewing actors who are promoting

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read pages 67–78 in *Media/Society*.
- ☐ Provide an example of meta media.
- ☐ Keep track of instances of one media referencing another.
- ☐ Activity: Media Production of a “Self Map”

upcoming films, a television sitcom that centers around a radio show, or a comedy show that lampoons current events in the news.

2. As you spend time with media this week, make note of any time one medium references another. For example, do TV characters comment on what is in the news? Do newspaper articles make reference to what is reported on TV news, film, or the internet? How many times does an ad or a name-brand product show up in a film? How many times do you see a blog refer to something that appeared in a film, YouTube video, television show, or another blog? Keep a notebook with you throughout the day and jot down all instances that come to your attention. At the end of the week, review your notes and see if you notice a pattern. Does one medium promote or blame another medium? Do certain types of media seem to “get along”? Write a brief summary of your findings, citing specific examples from your data.

If your student’s list is short—either because they have trouble identifying connections between media or because exposure is limited—you can help by noticing meta media references throughout the week and having your student add them to the list.

Activity

Complete the following activity.

Media Production of a “Self Map”

Gather images, mementos, and/or messages that reflect your sense of self, and then gather images, mementos, and/or messages from the media about the concept of self. Using these images, create a collage, diorama, poster, or computer-based slideshow presentation based on the theme “Me and the Media.” Take special note of where there are overlaps between your concept of self and the media’s messages about self. Where are there disconnects? What does this show you about yourself, the media, and the relationship between the two? Make sure to include your responses to these questions either visually or by incorporating explanatory text. Note: The mementos, images, and messages will be cut up, glued, and manipulated, so make sure to copy any originals and use the copy for your project.

We will return to this activity and expand on it later in the course, so make sure to keep it intact. Take a photo of it now to document its original form.

This “Me and the Media” self map will be a recurring theme in the course, and students will return to it repeatedly to update their self map as they learn more about media’s subtle influences. Don’t worry if your student’s self map seems a little thin at this point; that will change as the course progresses. Most students are not used to critically recognizing media messages, so at this point they may have few tools with which to create relevant comparisons between their own self-image and media’s image of self.

Please note: The mementos, images, and messages will be cut up, glued, and manipulated, so students should make copies of anything considered valuable and irreplaceable.

Lesson

6

A Culture of Consumption: Advertisement Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the basics of advertising
- Examine ways in which advertising is directly connected to youth and consumption
- Conduct an advertisement analysis

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 98–105, which includes the following sections:

- The Impact of Advertising
 - ◆ The Advertising-Content Connection
 - ◆ Advertising and the Press in the 19th Century
 - The British Press
 - The U.S. Press
 - ◆ Advertising and the Contemporary News Media

Also read pages 216–224, which includes the following sections:

- Advertising and Consumer Culture
 - ◆ Selling Consumerism in the Early 20th Century
 - ◆ Women's Magazines as Advertisements
- Advertising and the Globalization of Culture
- Internet Ideology

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read pages 98–105 and 216–224 in *Media/Society*.
- ☐ View *Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood*.
- ☐ View *Advertising and the End of the World*.
- ☐ Find examples of positive and negative marketing.
- ☐ Identify the assumptions made about a target audience.
- ☐ Choose an assignment related to targeted marketing.
- ☐ Complete an advertisement analysis.
- ☐ Activity: Retell the Story of Stuff

Viewing

Watch both of the following films:

Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood (Media Education Foundation, 2008)

Taking a hard look at the multibillion dollar marketing industry aimed at children, this film illuminates the industry's tactics and its effects on children's health and well-being. (Film length: 67 minutes)

Advertising and the End of the World (Media Education Foundation, 1997)

This visual presentation focuses on the culture of consumption and how individuals willingly feed into it to the detriment of humanity's and Earth's long-term collective good. (Film length: 46 minutes)



Think About It

Based on what you learned from watching the film *Consuming Kids*, how do you feel about marketing directed at children? Should there be an age limit for child-directed marketing? Should there be limits on the quantity, content, or availability of child-directed messages? Discuss this topic with someone who has a young child.

Written Assignments

1. Find a media example of a positive message about self and a negative message about self. These messages can be aimed at any target audience (athletes, parents, women, the elderly, adolescent boys, etc.), but find both a positive and negative message for one single target group. Explain which message is likely to be more effective to that target group and why.

Students are expected to not only state an opinion but to back up their opinion with a logical argument. Personal experience and anecdotes can also inform and be used to support an opinion.

2. Give a specific example of how a marketing campaign makes assumptions about its target audience. Choose an ad and try to determine what assumptions the media producers made about the audience. Identify the target audience and list the underlying assumptions, and then give your opinion about how effective this marketing strategy is and why. Make sure to include or give a description of the ad.

Students may mention underlying assumptions related to health, fashion preferences, interests, food preferences, etc. Encourage them to think broadly, using cues from the models' or actors' poses, clothing, hairstyles, and physiques to the background setting or situation. All of these elements are carefully considered by the marketers and intentionally included, and each detail gives information about the underlying assumptions about the target audience.

3. Choose one of the following assignments related to targeted marketing:
 - a. If there is a mall or shopping center near you, visit it and make a list of five to ten stores. Then, identify the target audience of each based on the window displays and media messages. Note whether or not you fall into this target audience, and if so, give specific examples of how the store(s) reached out to you. Indicate whether or not this marketing was successful (did you want to go inside and buy something?).
 - b. Do a simple review of social media sites on the internet and describe the different tactics used to reach audiences of different ages. Give specific examples of how media messages are altered to reach children, teens, young adults, and older adults.
4. Choose one advertisement that appears in each of these media: newspaper, magazine, radio, TV, and the internet. Analyze them using the questions below. You are encouraged to choose the same product advertisement across media and analyze the similarities and differences. For instance, you might choose a Levi's ad and look at how the product is marketed for different media outlets. Write a brief description of each type of ad, and then answer the following:
 - a. Language meaning: How is language used differently according to the medium? Does changing the language change the meaning?
 - b. Language conventions: Does the language include any familiar or generally accepted forms, such as slang, pop culture references, or terminology known only by those in the target audience? What effect does this have on the audience?
 - c. Representation of the truth: How does each medium put forth the "truth"? How does each try to seem authentic?
 - d. Target audience: How does each medium appeal to the target audience? How does the target audience differ across the media channels?

Activity

Complete the following activity.

Retell the Story of Stuff

Watch the following 21-minute video:

"The Story of Stuff" (*The Story of Stuff Project*, 2007)

Choose one of the following options to complete for this activity:

- a. Create a visual summary of the video using your own original words and images to tell the story. You can design a poster, create a drawing, make an online graphic or flowchart, etc.

- b. Choose one of the sustainable solutions mentioned at the end of the video and find three companies or businesses that exemplify it. Write a brief description of how each sustainable solution plays out in real life.
- c. Write a children's book that explains the topics covered in the video in a simple way that will help children be empowered to be part of the solution. You can illustrate the book or use graphics and/or photos.
- d. Compose a poem or song that summarizes "The Story of Stuff." Record the song or poem.

Lesson

9

Babe or Bro: Constructions of Gender

Learning Objectives

- Explore the portrayal of gender in media, especially visual media
- Recognize harmful media constructions of gender
- Identify how gender identity is supported in positive ways in media

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 246–251, which includes the following sections:

- Gender and Media Content
 - ◆ Women: Presence and Control in the Media
 - ◆ Changing Media Roles for Women . . . and Men
 - ◆ The Case of Women's Sports

Viewing

Choose one of the following films to watch. Each explores harmful media constructions of gender. (Feel free to watch more than one.)

These films can be difficult to watch because they challenge deeply held notions of masculinity and femininity. Students are highly encouraged to watch with other people in order to facilitate discussion.

In this iteration of the course, gender is discussed largely as a binary (male/female); however, we recognize that gender is fluid and that many youth do not identify with or fit into a

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read pages 246–251 in *Media/Society*.
- ☐ View one film related to gender identity.
- ☐ Identify ways to change how media portrays gender.
- ☐ Identify a positive example of gender portrayal in media.
- ☐ List types of individuals who are not represented in mainstream media.
- ☐ Write a comparative essay.
- ☐ Activity A: Revisit Your Self Map
- ☐ Activity B: Speak Out for Gender Identity

strict gender code. There is little accessible scholarly literature on gender fluidity and media representation, but there is increasing media portrayal of gender fluidity. *Transparent* (on Amazon Prime) and *Orange Is the New Black* (on Netflix) both have trans characters, though these shows may not be considered appropriate for younger high school viewers. *The Fosters*, which includes transgender and gender questioning characters, is intended for teens and has a pro-youth message.

- *The Illusionists: The Globalization of Beauty* (Media Education Foundation, 2015) looks at how global corporations and advertising influence how people define beauty and see themselves. (53 minutes)
- *Slim Hopes: Advertising and the Obsession with Thinness* (Media Education Foundation, 1995) explores how body image issues, skewed by the obsession for thinness and beauty in media and in our culture, affect women's mental and physical health. (Film length: 32 minutes)
- *The Bro Code: How Contemporary Culture Creates Sexist Men* (Media Education Foundation, 2011) examines how boys and men are inculcated into a rigid culture of masculinity that perpetuates and normalizes behavior that is dehumanizing and disrespectful to both men and women. (Film length: 58 minutes)
- *The Codes of Gender: Identity and Performance in Pop Culture* (Media Education Foundation, 2009) takes a look at gender representations in media, focusing on how gender identity is based on a pattern of media messages rather than emerging as a natural expression of self. (Film length: 72 minutes)
- *Generation M: Misogyny in Media and Culture* (Media Education Foundation, 2008) tracks negative definitions of femininity and expressions of hate and violence toward women in pop culture, exposing the ways in which these attitudes both reflect and encourage a dangerous reality. (Film length: 60 minutes)



Think About It

It can be hard to watch a film (such as the ones above) that clearly demonstrates how widespread negative gender messages are in media and in our culture. How does this knowledge make you feel? How do you feel about young children growing up with these images, as you have?

Written Assignments

1. If you could change one thing about the way media portray gender, what would it be? Discuss your ideas with a group of your peers, and listen to their ideas. Identify three (or more) concrete actions that could be taken to effect change. At least one action should focus on what an

individual can do (you!) and at least one action should focus on a change that could be made on a structural level (at the production level).

The focus of this assignment is on identifying concrete actions, taking the issue from discussion into social activism. For instance, a student might state that individuals could make an impact with their entertainment dollars, boycotting films that portray limiting or detrimental gender roles and supporting those that feature inclusive or beneficial gender role models. On a structural level, students might identify inclusive hiring practices designed to attract writers and directors who seek to redefine modern gender identity in the media.

2. Find an example in media where gender identity is portrayed in a positive way. Describe what the message is and how this positive message is conveyed. Explain who will benefit from this supportive representation.
3. List at least five different types of individuals who are not represented in mainstream media. Who speaks, and who is silenced?

Students are likely to be able to list more than five groups, and answers will vary depending on the student's experience, background, and personal perspective. Possible answers of underrepresented populations include children, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, low-income families, and any nondominant cultural, religious, or ethnic group.

4. Do three searches on YouTube using the following terms:
 - Motivational videos
 - Motivational videos men
 - Motivational videos women

Watch a few videos from each search. (Most of the videos are just a few minutes long.) Write an essay that compares and contrasts the treatment of gender in the videos. Are the motivational words and images different when you type in “men” or “women”? Would you have noticed these differences and similarities if you weren’t intentionally looking for them? Would you notice a pattern with just one or two videos? (See “Comparative Essay” in the appendix of this coursebook for detailed writing instruction on this essay format.)

Activities

Complete both of the following activities.

Activity A: Revisit Your Self Map

Go back to your self map and add mementos focused on gender identity. Since this self map is a personal reflection, feel free to express yourself in any way. Make sure to include images and mementos that reflect your own sense of self as well as those that reflect media’s image of gender identity.

Activity B: Speak Out for Gender Identity

Choose one of the films you viewed in this lesson and write about the issues it raised that were of the greatest concern to you personally. Your writing can take many possible forms: a letter to your future son or daughter; a blog post about the issues raised in the film and what can be done about them; a complaint lodged in the form of a fake lawsuit against an advertising company that promotes negative images related to gender; a song or poem expressing your feelings about one of the issues raised. Whatever form your writing takes, make sure to specifically reference the film you watched and provide media examples that show the problem and/or show positive, productive ways to portray gender.

Lesson

17

Meta Media Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Conduct a meta media analysis
- Apply media literacy concepts and terminology
- Reflect on the learning process

Assignments

Viewing

Choose *one* of the following films to view. (You may find them for purchase or streaming online, or at your local library.)

***The Truman Show* (1998)**

The story of Truman Burbank, an insurance salesman who discovers his entire life is actually a television show.

***EDtv* (1999)**

Ed, a video store clerk, agrees to have his entire life filmed as a television show, but he soon finds out that fame and constant publicity make living a real life impossible.

***The Joneses* (2009)**

The Jones family moves into a new home and makes fast friends with the neighbors, but it's soon discovered they are not a real family but rather marketers/advertisers who live within the products they sell.

Written Assignments

1. Write a comparative essay based on the novel you read and the film you watched. Use the following questions to help frame your essay:
 - How are media presented in these two texts?
 - What are the different techniques used for critiquing media?

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ View one of the films.
- ☐ Write a comparative essay.
- ☐ Write a reflective essay.
- ☐ Activity A: Media Mirror
- ☐ Activity B: Video Interview

- The works of fiction are dystopian and futuristic while the films are (ostensibly) in the present day and humorous. Which method do you find more effective for getting the point across? Why?
- What can be learned from these texts through their genre as well as their subject matter?
- Considering that these works of fiction present a negative view of media, is there a more objective way to present a critical view of media?

Using the information learned in this course and the questions above, create an outline for your comparative essay. (See the appendix for a reminder on how to format a comparative essay.) Refer to the four key concepts of media literacy that we've been using to frame this course (Buckingham, *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture*, 2003):

Production: All media texts are consciously manufactured.

Language: All media texts use a combination of languages to communicate meaning. Languages are the codes and conventions familiar to us that help us make sense of media texts.

Representation: Media production involves selecting and combining moments to make stories and create characters. Representation invites us to see the world in particular ways.

Audiences: All media texts are made for an audience. To study the audience is to study our role as media producers and consumers.

Use the terminology above as you compose your essay, showing how each concept plays a role in the stories presented in the novel and the film. How do production, language, representation, and audiences show up in the plot? How do production, language, representation, and audiences motivate or influence the characters? Refer back to the notes you took while reading your novel, and incorporate specific examples from the book and the film. You have two weeks to complete this project.

Refer to lesson 12 for a list and description of the novels. The focus of this assignment is to compare the effectiveness of the chosen film and book in presenting a critical analysis of media and its impact on society and individuals. Students are expected to include in the essay their own ideas for how to present an effective and objective critique of media. Comparative essays should follow a logical format, and they should be revised for clarity and flow as well as edited to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The final essay should be proofread and polished.

2. Write a short (one-page) reflective essay about the impact this course has had on you personally. Consider the following:
 - Do you have a different, more complex understanding of self than you did at the beginning of the course?

- Do you see how you (in all your complexity) “fit” into mainstream media?
- Have you decided your position within the structure versus agency debate? (Refer to lesson 3, assignment #3, for a refresher on structure versus agency.)
- Do you approach your media choices differently from the way you did before this course?
- As a critical scholar, have you made changes in how you view yourself? On how you view your family or community? On how you view the larger society in which you live?

In this reflective essay, students are asked to give some thought to the effect this course has had on them. The essay should convey the student’s personal experience of growth.

Activities

Complete one option from activity A, and then complete activity B.

Activity A: Media Mirror

Choose one of the following activities to complete.

1. Create a curriculum project or assignment for a media literacy course. Choose any topic covered in this course or one that you feel should be included in a media literacy course. Create a project that includes viewing (films, videos, books, articles, etc.), doing (creating, field trip, polling, etc.), and both analytical and reflective writing.
2. Choose three of the themes in this course (gender, family, social class, politics, environment, etc.) and find media examples that you feel are excellent representations of the topic. Include at least two different types of media for each of your three themes.

Activity B: Video Interview

Have someone interview you about what you learned this semester. Record your interview in video format. (Your interviewer should be off-screen.) Without reading the interview questions (which are found in the appendix), give them to your interviewer. For this exercise, it’s best to not know ahead of time what is going to be asked of you, so don’t peek! You can prepare for your interview by reflecting on what you’ve learned in this course and considering what message you’d like to convey about the importance of media literacy. Some of the questions will mirror those in assignment #2 above, so writing your reflective essay is good preparation for your interview.

Treat the interview seriously, as though you were invited to speak at a media literacy forum. Prepare mentally and dress the part! Record your interview in one continuous segment, if possible. Even if you laugh or want a do-over, just keep the video rolling and have the interviewer pose the question again.