

## **Definition of media studies**

The study of the mass media as an academic subject.

Media Studies is the critical/cultural analysis of all media formats and the role they play in society. These media include print, news, entertainment, television, video games, movies, etc. It's a very wide net and intersects with many fields like communication, ethnic studies, women and gender studies, religious studies, American studies, film studies, anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, etc. It is inherently inter-disciplinary and encapsulates many different areas of research.

Media studies is a discipline and field of study that deals with the content, history, and effects of various media; in particular, the mass media. Media studies may draw on traditions from both the social sciences and the humanities, but mostly from its core disciplines of mass communication, communication, communication sciences, and communication studies.

## **History of media studies**

For a history of the field, see History of media studies. The first Media Studies M.A. program in the U.S. was introduced by John Culkin at The New School in 1975, which has since graduated more than 2,000 students. Culkin was responsible for bringing Marshall McLuhan to Fordham in 1968 and subsequently founded the Center for Understanding Media, which became the New School program.

## **Chicago School**

Though not yet named as such, media studies' roots are in the Chicago School and thinkers such as John Dewey, Charles Cooley and George Mead. These authors saw American society on the cusp of positive social change toward pure democracy. Mead argued that for an ideal society to exist, a form of communication must be developed to allow the unique individual to appreciate the attitudes, viewpoints and positions of others unlike himself, and allow him to be understood by others as well. Mead believed that this "new media" would allow humans to empathize with others, and therefore moves toward an "ideal of human society." [1] Where Mead sees an ideal society, Dewey names it the "Great Community," and further asserts the assumption that humans are intelligent enough for self-government, and that that knowledge is "a function of association and communication." [2] Similarly, Cooley asserts that political communication makes public opinion possible, which in turn promotes democracy. Each of these authors represent the Chicago School's attention to electronic communication as a facilitator of democracy, its faith in the informed electorate, and its focus on the individual as opposed to the mass.

## **First M.A. Media Studies program in the U.S.**

The social impact of mass communication has been studied at The New School University in New York since its founding in 1919. The first college course to investigate the motion picture was offered here in 1926. Marshall McLuhan's colleague, John Culkin, brought his Center for Understanding Media to The New School in 1975 and The New School began offering the Master of Arts degree in Media Studies, one of the first graduate programs of its kind. [3] Today, among other programs, [4] MA in Media Studies is

still being offered by School of Media Studies, The New School, which will celebrate 40th anniversary of Media Studies at The New School during the academic year 2015-2016.

### **Propaganda studies**

Between the First and Second World Wars, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis briefly rose to importance. Their definition of propaganda was

"expression of opinion or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinion or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to predetermined ends."

Harold Lasswell, who worked in the paradigm of the Chicago School of sociology wrote Propaganda Technique in the World War, which included this definition of propaganda:

"Propaganda in the broadest sense is the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may take spoken, written, pictorial or musical form."

These definitions of propaganda clearly show that this was a school of thought that focused on media effects, as it highlighted the influence that media could have over its audiences attitudes and actions.

Current Propaganda studies are applied into many fields besides politics. Herman described a propaganda model as "a model of media behavior and performance, not of media effects." (Herman, 2000, p. 63) He argued: "They are profit-seeking business, owned by very wealthy people (or other companies); and they are funded largely by advertisers who are also profit-seeking entities, and who want their advertisements to appear in a supportive selling environment." [10] He also presented "five factors: ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communist ideology-work as filters through which information must pass, and that individually and often in cumulative fashion they greatly influence media choices." [10] Until now, there is no conclusion of propaganda, debate still continues.

### **Key concepts in media Studies.**

- Media Language  
All the different ways in which media text can create meaning.  
For film it might be a camera angle that suggests isolation or a costume/dress that convey certain meaning.
- Representation  
How media represents reality in their products.  
British PM Margaret Thatcher poll tax or community charge.  
Face book creating a certain representation of reality.
- Audience  
Who watches the media and why?
- Institution  
Who makes the media: funding ideology, and their way to represent the world?