

“The Man” Behind the Message: Media Awareness 12 A B/AA Curriculum Framework

Created by Thomas Froh and Peter Maxwell



District Name: New Westminster

District Number:40

Developed by: Thomas Froh and Peter Maxwell

Date Developed: July 2011

School Name: New Westminster Secondary School

Principal's Name: Mrs. Mary Bushman

Board/Authority Approval Date: N/A

Board/Authority Signature:N/A

Course Name: "The Man" Behind the Message: Media Awareness 12

Grade Level of Course: Grade 12

Number of Course Credits: 4

Number of Hours of Instruction: 120 hours

Prerequisite(s): None

Special Training, Facilities or Equipment Required: 4-16 GB Flash Drive

Course Synopsis: *"The Man" Behind the Message* is a course that will work towards answering the question of whether there is a person or organization controlling the messages we receive in the media. By the end of the course, students will be able to answer who or what controls the media, and in what ways the media influences contemporary media. Specifically, the course will examine large television corporations and whether or not they work to shape popular perspective in news broadcasts, television programming, etc.

Rationale: Adolescents are constantly surrounded by many different types of media both at school and at home, from newspapers and books to television and films. The rapid advancement of the internet has also opened the door for young people to engage and interact with social media, a relatively new phenomenon that continues to develop every day. This course provides students the opportunity to decode the messages that can be found within the media, specifically in how companies use different methods to advertise their products. They will also understand to what extent the media is connected to large political and corporate enterprises, and how these influences shape our understanding of the world. The course also develops the students’ presentation and research skills, culminating in the final inquiry based project. The primary purpose of this course is to teach the skills needed to students to think both critically and analytically about the media, and how its message is often constructed through the lens of an institution. This is a presentation and discussion based course, with accompanying projects for each unit and a final inquiry-based research project at the end of the course.

Organizational Structure:

| Unit/Topic | Title | Time |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| Unit 1 | The Media and Who Controls It | 10 hours |
| Unit 2 | Politics and Conspiracy Theories | 15 hours |
| Unit 3 | Corporations and the Media | 15 hours |
| Unit 4 | Ethics and Advertising: Analyzing Commercials | 25 hours |
| Unit 5 | Subliminal Advertising: The Silent Influence? | 20 hours |
| Unit 6 | You and the Media: The Internet and Social Media | 25 hours |
| Unit 7 | Do We Care?: Examining Complacencies | 10 hours |
| Total Hours | | 120 hours |

Unit/Topic/Module Descriptions:

Unit 1: The Media and Who Controls It

10 hours

Students will begin the course with a brief unit on the history of different types of media, and key terms. They will also begin to gain a perspective on who exactly is responsible for what the media produces, and will ask questions of whether there is a group or organization behind the messages we receive. They will also be exposed to articles and literature surrounding the topics, and consider the idea of a “Big Brother” always watching over the populace.

A: Curricular Organizer – Ethics in Media

It is expected that students will

- Explore a historical example of ethical ambiguity in media

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective
- Create marketing strategy using various types of media to serve a predetermined agenda

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various corporate and political entities directing media and its message
- Document the coming-to-be of a corporate or political entity that hold substantial sway over popular opinion

Unit 2: Politics and Conspiracy Theories

15 hours

Students will examine the role that the government plays, and has played, on media in North America in both contemporary society and the past. They will examine to what extent the government in power uses the media to promote its messages, both overtly, such as smear campaigns, and covertly. The project for this unit allows students to choose a popular conspiracy theory from the past century, such as the moon landing or the JFK assassination, in order to consider whether or not the government does play an active role in shaping the media, or if these theories are myths.

A: Curricular Organizer – Ethics in Media

It is expected that students will

- Explore a contemporary example of the ethical ambiguity in media
- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Demonstrate the *interrelatedness* between political and corporate agendas
- Document the coming-to-be of a corporate or political entity that hold substantial sway over popular opinion

Unit 3: Corporations and the Media

15 hours

Students will examine the brief history of big corporations, and consider how they came about in contemporary society. They will also examine to what extent corporations use media as a tool to sell products or gain influence. A correlation between large corporations and governmental bodies will also be considered, and students will have the opportunity to consider whether or not there is a connecting theme between the two.

A: Curricular Organizer – Ethics in Media

It is expected that students will

- Explore a contemporary example of the ethical ambiguity in media
- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective
- Create marketing strategy using various types of media to serve a predetermined agenda

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them
- Have an appreciation as to why they are targeted ie. Why they are valuable to marketers.

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various corporate and political entities directing media and its message
- Demonstrate the *interrelatedness* between political and corporate agendas
- Document the coming-to-be of a corporate or political entity that hold substantial sway over popular opinion

Unit 4: Ethics and Advertising: Analyzing Commercials

25 hours

Students will learn about the different methods of advertising, such as celebrity endorsement, comparison to another product, bandwaggoning campaigns, etc. They will understand the different methods that the media uses to shape our understanding of the world, and consider themes from previous units to answer the overall question of the course. A suggested project for this unit is for students to deconstruct a popular commercial, and consider the strategies used by the advertisement. Another suggested project is for students to create their own advertisements.

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It is expected that students will

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- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective
- Create marketing strategy using various types of media to serve a predetermined agenda

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them
- Have an appreciation as to why they are targeted ie. Why they are valuable to marketers.
- Demonstrate the ways in which they knowingly or unknowingly engage and perpetuate media

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various corporate and political entities directing media and its message
- Demonstrate the *interrelatedness* between political and corporate agendas

Unit 5: Subliminal Advertising: The Silent Influence?

20 hours

Students will examine how companies use subliminal advertising in different forms of media, and understand that not all messages that are received are not necessarily as clear as a television commercial. They will examine the question of why advertisers use this strategy, and evaluate its effectiveness. They will also consider questions surrounding brand names, specifically why these brands are more desirable than no-name brands. A suggested project for this unit is for students to watch a television show or movie and find all the subliminal advertisements within it.

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It is expected that students will

- Explore a contemporary example of the ethical ambiguity in media
- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them
- Have an appreciation as to why they are targeted ie. Why they are valuable to marketers.
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It is expected that students will

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Unit 6: You and the Media: The Internet and Social Media

25 hours

Students will examine the increasing influence of the internet and its influence on society. They will specifically consider the power of social media, and consider how individuals have the ability to interact with this particular form of media. They will correlate their findings to the major themes discussed within the class.

A: Curricular Organizer – Ethics in Media

It is expected that students will

- Explore a contemporary example of the ethical ambiguity in media
- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives
- Create an ethical guideline for social media

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective
- Create marketing strategy using various types of media to serve a predetermined agenda
- Speculate on what the next wave of media/marketing will be

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them
- Have an appreciation as to why they are targeted ie. Why they are valuable to marketers.
- Explore the role of social media in their lives
- Demonstrate the ways in which they knowingly or unknowingly engage and perpetuate media

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various corporate and political entities directing media and its message
- Demonstrate the *interrelatedness* between political and corporate agendas

Unit 7: Do We Care?: Examining Complacencies

10 hours

Students will end the class by returning to the notion of a “Big Brother,” and consider whether the influence of governments and corporations (if any) is acceptable in our society. They will also consider alternative methods to the present-day media, and discuss ways in which today’s system can be improved. This final unit is designed to close the discussion of the course and answer the questions raised, specifically who/what controls the media, to what extent do they control it, and should society be comfortable with this predicament.

A: Curricular Organizer – Ethics in Media

It is expected that students will

- Explore a historical example of ethical ambiguity in media
- Explore a contemporary example of the ethical ambiguity in media
- Identify and defend a position of ethics in media that directly impacts their lives
- Create an ethical guideline for social media

B: Curricular Organizer – Types of Media

It is expected that students will

- Have the ability to identify and discern the various types of media
- Understand the means by which media is effective
- Create marketing strategy using various types of media to serve a predetermined agenda
- Speculate on what the next wave of media/marketing will be

C: Curricular Organizer – The Role of Media in Our Lives

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various media that targets them
- Have an appreciation as to why they are targeted ie. Why they are valuable to marketers.
- Explore the role of social media in their lives
- Demonstrate the ways in which they knowingly or unknowingly engage and perpetuate media

D: Curricular Organizer – The Various Forces Behind the Media

It is expected that students will

- Recognize the various corporate and political entities directing media and its message
- Demonstrate the *interrelatedness* between political and corporate agendas
- Document the coming-to-be of a corporate or political entity that hold substantial sway over popular opinion

- Take a position on whether the large scale results of media advertising are due to the intentional actions of a powerful few or the unpredictable consequences of the actions of the many.

Instructional Component:

- Lecture and PowerPoint
- Library and Internet Research
- Group Work
- Collaborative Learning (Jigsaw)
- Inquiry Project
- Brainstorming
- Modelling
- Scaffolding
- Presentations
- Self Assessment
- Peer Assessment

Assessment Component:

Thirty percent (30%) of the grade will be based on class participation and in-class assignments. These include individual and group presentations, group work, handouts, exit slips, and formative assessment during group work activities.

Fifty percent (50%) of the grade will be based on projects and homework assignments which will be assigned throughout the course. The projects are comprised of both individual and group assignments, and focus around the overall questions posed by each unit.

Twenty percent (20%) of the grade will be based on a final group inquiry project surrounding the question of how the political and corporate influences discussed during the course affect a certain type of media, and also how that media affects us directly in our everyday lives. Students are to construct their own inquiry proposal, which must be approved by the teacher.

| Type of Assessment | Category | Details | Weighting (%) |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Formative Assessment (30%) | Working with others, presenting findings to the class, use of technology and research tools, class participation in discussions | Handouts Group Work Collaborative Learning Presentations Exit Slips | 10% Class Participation 5% Handouts 5% Group Work Activities 10% Presentation |
| Summative Assessment (70%) | Analysis, research, writing, documentation | Individual and Group Projects Final Inquiry Group Project | 20% Individual Assignments 30% Group Assignments 20% Final Inquiry Project |
| | | TOTAL | 100% |

Learning Resources:

- Handouts and Lecture Notes
- Library and Internet Research
- Articles and sources relating to media
- Full-length films and film clips including:
 - *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984) film– The Media and Who Controls It
 - *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) Documentary film – Politics and Conspiracy Theories
 - *The Corporation* (2003) Documentary film – Corporations and the Media
 - *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold* (2011) Documentary film – Ethics and Advertising
 - *Josie and the Pussycats* (2001) film – Subliminal Advertising
 - *The Social Network* (2010) film – You and the Media

Additional Course Information:

Due to the nature of the course and the way it is structured, students should be encouraged to attend every day and stay on top of lecture notes and other media used in lessons.

Bibliography:

BA Creative Writing 10 Course Framework. Created by Eric Haffenden, School District #73 (Kamloops/Thompson), 2004.

Board/Authority Authorized Courses: Requirements and Procedures. Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2011.

Sustainability Course Content: A Curriculum Framework. Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2010.