



Module Outline for Course Participants

Media and Sexuality

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This module was created by Dr Katherine Albury and adapted by the Advancing Sexuality Studies short course team at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

Abstract

This module draws on contemporary theoretical work from the fields of media and cultural studies to consider the questions of *who* uses media, and *how* and *why* they use it. Its focus is on the variety of ways that media can be used to *make sense* of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is also designed to introduce researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines to the practice of textual analysis as a research methodology.

Module readings and exercises will be used to promote a process of critical reflection, in which participants will explore the ways that media texts can be used in different contexts: to shape opinions or behaviours, to entertain, to distract, to form identities, or to build communities. Participants will be invited to reflect on the ways that they use and enjoy media, and the ways that their own interactions with the media may (or may not) actively involve negotiation of values, attitudes and/or sense of identity.

Module aims

- To introduce theories of representation and media consumption as they apply to sexuality.
- To encourage participants to reflect on, and experiment creatively with, their own practices of media consumption and analysis.

Participants will:

- Develop a basic understanding of theories of media consumption
- Acquire an increased ability to read, understand and effectively communicate theoretical ideas on media and sexuality
- Gain greater ability to engage in critical and constructive interactions with peers and workmates, thereby increasing collaborative learning skills.

Required pre-readings (to be discussed in module group work)

- McKee, A. (2006) What Is Textual Analysis? *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. London, Sage.
- O'Shaughnessy, M. & Stadler, J. (2002) Semiology. *Media And Society*. 2nd Ed. Melbourne, Oxford University Press.

Materials to be provided by participants

Each participant should bring to the module:

- A local fashion magazine or other magazine with full-page colour advertising.
- A sexual health promotion image, advertisement or poster, or media coverage of HIV/AIDS or STIs from their local context.

Overview of module

Introduction, objectives, schedule, and pre-reading review work

Participants will be given an overview of the module and will have the opportunity to review and extend their understanding of the module pre-readings, through group work.

Session 1. Cultural studies and textual analysis: some key terms

Beginning with a lecture and moving through a video screening and group work on textual analysis, this session will set the theoretical framework for the whole module. The roles of media producers and audiences will be examined, and participants will be introduced to Hall's theories of media encoding and decoding. Semiotics and meaning will also be discussed and participants will engage in developing different readings of advertising materials.

Session 2. Media and HIV in Australia

The second session offers participants the opportunity to reflect on ways that media can shape popular ideas about sexual health, through the lens of a case study of the response to HIV/AIDS in Australia. Again, video will be used as a tool to encourage participants to unpack media texts before participants are asked to critically examine local examples of HIV/AIDS and sexual health materials, or local media coverage of issues related to HIV/AIDS or sexual health.

Session 3. The Henson case

The final session of the day examines a recent controversy around sexuality and media representation in Australia, and gives participants an opportunity to reflect on the different roles that they might play when participating in a media debate.

Conclusion

The module's key points will be summarised, with reference back to the outputs of group work and other module activities.

Further reading

- Albury, K. (2005) Pornography. In Hawkes, G. & Scott, J. (Eds.) *Perspectives in Human Sexuality*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press.
- Bisin, S. (2008) UNICEF-Supported Soap Opera Raises Awareness about HIV/AIDS in Niger. [Http://WWW.UNICEF.ORG/Infobycountry/Niger_44774.Html](http://WWW.UNICEF.ORG/Infobycountry/Niger_44774.Html)
- Bowles, K. (2002) Representation. In Cunningham, S. & Turner, G. (Eds.) *The Media and Communications In Australia*. Crow's Nest, Allen & Unwin.
- Curran, J. & Park, M. (2000) *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. London and New York, Routledge. E-Book On Questia.Com:
[Http://Www.Questia.Com/Read/108305038?Title=De-Westernizing%20media%20studies](http://Www.Questia.Com/Read/108305038?Title=De-Westernizing%20media%20studies)
- Gauntlett, D. (2002) *Gender, Media and Identity*. London, Roudledge.
- Gavin, J. (2001) Television Teen Drama And HIV/Aids: The Role of Genre in Audience Understandings Of Safe Sex. *Continuum: Journal of Media And Cultural Studies*, 15, 77-96.
- Hall, S. (Ed.) (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London, Sage.
- Hall, S. (2003) Encoding/Decoding. In Nightingale, V. & Ross, K. (Eds.) *Critical Readings: Media and Audiences*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.
- Hartley, J. (2002) *A Short History of Cultural Studies*. London, Sage.
- Kiai, W. (2000) Media Functions in HIV Prevention and Management. In Kwame Bofo, S. T. & Arnaldo, C. A. (Eds.) *Media & HIV/AIDS in East and Southern Africa: A Resource Book*. Paris, Unesco.
- Knerr, W. (2008) The Global Mapping of Pleasure. In Knerr, W. (Ed.) London, The Pleasure Project.
- Kwame Bofo, S. T. & Arnaldo, C. A. (Eds.) (2000) *Media & HIV/AIDS In East And Southern Africa: A Resource Book*, Paris, UNESCO.
[Http://Www.Unesco.Org/Webworld/Publications/Media_Aids/](http://Www.Unesco.Org/Webworld/Publications/Media_Aids/)
- Marr, D. (2008) *Rule of Law: The Henson Case*. Melbourne, Text Publishing.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1986) *No Sense of Place*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- O'Shaughnessy, M. & Stadler, J. (2002) *Media and Society*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press.
- Panford, S., Nyaney, M. O., Amoah, S. O. & Aidoo, N. G. (2001) Using Folk Media in HIV/AIDS Prevention in Rural Ghana, *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, 1559-1562.
- Patton, C. (1991) Safe Sex and the Pornographic Vernacular. In Choices, B. O. (Ed.) *How Do I Look?: Queer Film and Video*. Seattle, Bay Press.
- Philpott, A., Knerr, W. & Maher, D. (2006) Promoting Protection and Pleasure: Amplifying the Effectiveness of Barriers against Sexually Transmitted Infections and Pregnancy, *The Lancet*, 368, 1-4.
- Raynor, K. (2007) Rampant: How A City Stopped A Plague. Atom and FFC Australia.
- Sendziuk, P. (2003) 'Is It Safe To Go Bowling?': Reconsidering the 'Grim Reaper' AIDS Education Campaign. *Learning To Trust: Australian Responses To Aids*. Sydney, UNSW Press.
- Watney, S. (1997) Moral Panics. *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media*. 3rd Edition. London, Cassell.

Online resources

- Gauntlett, D. (2008) www.theory.org.uk - the media theory site. Communications and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster.
- Stepanenko, V. (2004) The Pleasure Project. Oxford, The Pleasure Project.
<http://www.thepleasureproject.org>
- Zoldbrod, A. Sexsmart sexuality education video website – <http://www.sexsmart.com>
SexSmart. Boston.