



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Level Examination
June 2011

Communication and Culture COMM4

Unit 4 Communication and Culture in Practice: Portfolio

Coursework Topics for Assessment June 2011

(Submission date 15 May 2011)

Guidance for teachers

- Teachers are advised to refer to pages 19-27 of the Communication and Culture specification
- There are **four** Topic Guides.
- The Topic Guides are designed to inform, support and clarify what is required for each topic.
- Each Topic Guide contains an introduction, six titles and their associated issues and suggested stimulus materials.
- Each candidate must select **one** topic.
- Each candidate must then select **one** title from their chosen topic and then identify **one** issue which will form the basis of their coursework.
- Both coursework pieces (Case Study and Creative Work) must address the same selected issue.
- Further clarification, if required, is available from your coursework adviser.

Body Modification

What follows is the Unit 4 Topic Guide 'Body Modification'. Included in the Topic Guide are:

- an introduction to the Topic
- Titles
- Issues
- suggested stimulus materials.

'Body Modification' offers a range of possibilities for candidates to explore; there are no assumptions as to whether the modification of the body is a voluntary action in which the individual exerts some self-determination as to how the body is modified, or whether it is the result of external agents shaping the body for different purposes and motivations, with different qualitative outcomes. The description of a range of exotic body-modifications is to be discouraged. Some referenced analysis should be undertaken as to the cultural roles and meanings of body modification.

Candidates choosing Body Modification as a topic area must select **one** of the titles followed by **one** of the issues listed below. They are all broad enough in themselves to allow many different 'takes' on the topic, but they are not infinitely malleable and will need to be addressed relevantly. The chosen issue and the individual focus on it should be negotiated between the teacher and the student.

The case study is a piece of academic writing in which all sources should be clearly acknowledged. These sources should be identified in a list of references.

Body Modification

Body Modification (Topic in Site A: The Person)		
Title 1	Title 2	Title 3
<i>Under my skin: implants, piercing, tattoos, skin treatments.</i>	<i>“Nip & Tuck”: cosmetic surgery and reconstructive alterations of the body.</i>	<i>Dress to impress: influencing perceptions of our bodies.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Illustrated ‘Man’: tattooing as body art. ○ Implants and/or body piercings: where and why? ○ Fantasy personae. ○ Extreme body modification: what counts as ‘extreme’? ○ Skin deep: skin treatments such as tanning or skin whitening. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is beauty skin deep? ○ Total makeovers. ○ Searchers for perfection. ○ Gender difference. ○ Transgender. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The search for the perfect look. ○ Fashion and the frame (clothes horse models). ○ Holding back the years. ○ Who are the style police? ○ Accessories. ○ Hair. ○ Putting your face on: the art of make-up.
Title 4	Title 5	Title 6
<i>Fit for purpose: our bodies at work and play.</i>	<i>Perfect/imperfect: cultural values and the body.</i>	<i>Into the future: technology and the human body.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lifestyle and body shape. ○ Looking the part: role and role play. ○ The pressure to compete. ○ Sport and the body. ○ Body fascism. ○ Slimming and body building. ○ Fitness regimes. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical impairment and disfigurement in films and other fictions. ○ How do ideas about physical (im)perfection reflect and influence our values and attitudes? ○ Physical impairment and cultural difference. ○ Ugliness/beauty. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bionic future? Can we become what we always wanted to be? ○ Fantasy futures: the potential roles and impacts of nanotechnology and developments in genetics. ○ Part human, part machine? Utopia or dystopia? ○ Cyborgs and sci-fi.

Body Modification – Possible stimulus material

The following list of texts can be used as stimulus materials and/or as reference material. It is not to be read as exhaustive in any sense. Teachers will inevitably assemble their own resource and reference ideas. They are likely to be shared via online channels as well.

Non-Fiction Texts

- Gelder, K., 2007. *Tattoo Communities. Subcultures.* Taylor and Francis, Inc. ISBN 978-0415379526.
- Polhemus, T., 2000. *The Customised Body.* 2nd ed. Serpents Tail ISBN 978-1852426774.
- Toffoletti, K., 2007. *Cyborgs and Barbie Dolls: Feminism, Popular Culture and the Posthuman Body.* I B Tauris and Co Ltd. ISBN 978-1845114671.
- Wolf, N., 1992. *The Beauty Myth.* Anchor. ISBN 978-0385423977.
- Weston, S. 1989. *Walking Tall: An Autobiography.* Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd. ISBN 978-0747504993.

Fiction

- Bradbury, R. 1951. *The Illustrated Man.* Doubleday & Co and 1995 (Pbk) Bantam Books, ISBN: 978-0006479222
- Carter, A. 1977. *The Passion of New Eve,* Victor Gollanz, ISBN: 978-0860683414
- Dick, P. K. 1968. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Doubleday, ISBN: 978-1857988130 (*book on which Bladerunner was based*)
- Forster, E.M. 1909. *The Machine Stops.* Kessinger Publishing. ISBN 978-1419171116
- Weldon, F. 1983. *Life and Loves of a She-devil,* London: Hodder & Stoughton, ISBN: 978-0340589359

Television

- Extreme makeover TV documentaries
- Liversedge, Marcus, 2008. *Britain's Missing Top Model,* Love Productions for BBC3, Reality Television, 21 November- 20 December 2008.

Films

- Aldridge, R. 1962. *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?,* Warner Bros, Film.
- Burton, T. 1991. *Edward Scissorhands,* 20th Century Fox, Film.
- Butler and Fiore 1977. *Pumping Iron,* Lumiere Pictures, Documentary.
- Cronenberg, D. 1983. *Videodrome,* UCA, Film.
- Cronenberg, D. 1986. *The Fly,* 20th Century Fox, Film.
- Nolan, C. 2008. *The Dark Knight,* Warner Bros, Film.
- Scott, R. 1982. *Blade Runner,* Warner Bros, Film.
- Sheridan, J. 1989. *My Left Foot,* Universal Pictures, Film.
- Tucker, D. 2005. *Transamerica,* 20th Century Fox, Film.

Songs

- Bragg, Billy 1987. *The Busy Girl Buys Beauty,* from the albums 'Back to Basics' and 'Life's a Riot with Spy vs Spy', Cooking Vinyl.
- Dury, Ian et al, 1981. *Spasticus Autisticus,* on the album *Reasons to be Cheerful, the Best of...*, Papillon Records.
- Ian, Janis 1975. *At Seventeen,* from the album 'Between the Lines', Columbia Records.

Cinema-going

What follows is the Unit 4 Topic Guide 'Cinema-going'. Included in the Topic Guide are:

- an introduction to the Topic
- Titles
- Issues
- suggested stimulus materials.

'Cinema-going' as a topic is not principally concerned with films (and especially not with films as texts) but rather with the social and cultural rituals of cinema, and through these to the implications of what the critic Raymond Williams called 'drama in a dramatised society'. In other words it is interested in exploring where we watch films and why we do and the ways in which we ourselves are defined by these experiences. It is anticipated that students will use their experience and expertise with reference to Cinema-going; using appropriate and challenging references as starting points for analysis, discussion and argument is to be encouraged.

Candidates choosing cinema-going as a topic area must select **one** of the titles followed by **one** of the issues listed below. They are all broad enough in themselves to allow many different 'takes' on the topic, but they are not infinitely malleable and will need to be addressed relevantly. The chosen issue and the individual focus on it should be negotiated between the teacher and the student.

The case study is a piece of academic writing in which all sources should be clearly acknowledged. These sources should be identified in a list of references.

Cinema-going

Cinema-going (Topic in Site B: Cultural Practice)		
Title 1	Title 2	Title 3
<i>Saturday night at the movies. Explore the ways in which the 'social ritual' of going to the cinema provides social and cultural information about a society, location or era.</i>	<i>Picture palace or flea-pit. Explore the meanings overtly and covertly communicated by the places in which we watch films.</i>	<i>Waiting for the DVD to come out? Explore the impact of film and cinema technology on everyday life.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Girls' Night Out ○ The social rules of cinema-going. ○ Significant demographic factors (gender, age, social class, ethnicity). ○ The history of cinema and social change. ○ Going to the cinema on your own. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Movie palaces and multiplexes. ○ Outdoor and indoor cinema experiences. ○ The cinema foyer. ○ The Americanisation of the cinema experience. ○ Art house cinema. ○ Womb with a view. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The technology of film and its implications. ○ Digitalisation, interactivity. ○ Home movie formats (home cinema). ○ Sound. ○ The consumer as producer.
Title 4	Title 5	Title 6
<i>That's me! Explore the implications of the dramatisation of our lives by film and cinema.</i>	<i>The Box Set. Explore ways in which films are packaged as products/franchises and our experience of this.</i>	<i>In the back row? Explore the relationships between cinema-going and 'socialisation'.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Film as social practice. ○ Re-defining reality in relation to realisms. ○ The dramatised society. ○ Cinema and personal identity (class, age, ethnicity, physical impairment and gender). 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Film as event. ○ The launch. ○ The marketing. ○ The merchandising of films. ○ The blockbuster! ○ Award ceremonies. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cinema-going and romance. ○ Film and the way we 'love'. ○ Cinema-going and coming of age. ○ The family film.

Cinema-going – Possible stimulus materials

The following list of texts can be used as stimulus materials and/or as reference material. It is not to be read as exhaustive in any sense. Teachers will inevitably assemble their own resource and reference ideas. They are likely to be shared via online channels as well.

Non-fiction:

Kael, P. 1963. *Trash, Art and the Movies* in *I Lost it at the Movies*, Pp87-89 Little, Brown ISBN: 978-0316481656

Manvell, R. 1944. *Film*, Pp114-115, pp125-131, Penguin, ISBN: Unknown.

Faire, L. and Jancovich, M. 2003. *The Best Place to See a Film: The Blockbuster and the Transformation of Exhibition*, Julian Stringer, ed., *Movie Blockbusters*, Routledge, ISBN: 978-0415256087

Monaco, J., 1999. *How to Read a Film*, Pp 558-561 3rd ed., New York, Oxford University Press.

Film:

Bogdanovich, P. 1971. *The Last Picture Show*, Columbia Pictures, film.

Tornatore, G. 1988. *Cinema Paradiso*, Cristaldifilm, Les Filmes Ariane, RTI, TF1 Films, Forum Picture, film.

Electronic Media:

Lipponen, K., Jefimova, J., Rebelo, A. 2003. The Notion of "Cinema-going", in *Semiotics of Cultures, Universitat Bayreuth, semionet.com*. [online]. Available at http://www.semionet.com/ressources_enligne/enseignement/03_04/03_04_bayreuth/projets/cinemagoing.pdf [accessed 9 Jan 2009]

Pearl and Dean 2009. *...famous screen titles through the ages*, [online]. Available at <http://www.pearlanddean.com/>

Unattributed., 2004. "The Future of Cinema-going" Interview with John Fithian Part 1, *European Cinema Journal*, [online]. Available at http://www.mediasalles.it/journal/ecj4_04ing.pdf [accessed 6 Jan 2009]

Unattributed, 2005. "The Future of Cinema-going" Interview with John Fithian Part 2, *European Cinema Journal*, [online]. Available at http://www.mediasalles.it/journal/ecj1_05ing.pdf [accessed 6 Jan 2009]

Songs:

The Drifters, 1974. *Kissing in the back row of the movies*, widely available.

Celebrity

What follows is the Unit 4 Topic Guide 'Celebrity'. Included in the Topic Guide are:

- an introduction to the Topic
- Titles
- Issues
- suggested stimulus materials.

Celebrity is a broadly ranging topic partly because definitions of what constitutes 'celebrity' are elusive, ambiguous and often temporary; it is expected that candidates will critically challenge mainstream discourse and not simply describe what they understand as given. Celebrities may be international or local, alive or dead. Fictional characters are not, however, acceptable as celebrities, although their treatment in the media may invite such a reading. Simple hagiographies of celebrities are to be discouraged; rather, some kind of critical position should be adopted which offers perspectives on how celebrities are mediated and which analyses their role in the transmission of culture.

Candidates choosing Celebrity as a topic area must select **one** of the titles followed by **one** of the issues listed below. They are all broad enough in themselves to allow many different 'takes' on the topic, but they are not infinitely malleable and will need to be addressed relevantly. The chosen issue and the individual focus on it should be negotiated between the teacher and the student.

The case study is a piece of academic writing in which all sources should be clearly acknowledged. These sources should be identified in a list of references.

Celebrity

Celebrity (Topic in Site A: The Person)		
Title 1	Title 2	Title 3
<i>How celebrities make objects and places desirable.</i>	<i>Celebrities and fictions.</i>	<i>'What's in it for me?': our preoccupation with celebrity.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Celebrity endorsement: the various uses made of celebrity involvement in marketing strategies. ○ The Celebrity opening, event launch or charity event. ○ Representations of objects and places. ○ Selling us an image of who we could be, or should be; the identity of the consumer. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating the celebrity persona. ○ Mediated celebrity. ○ The narrative trajectory of celebrity: 'build them up, knock them down'. ○ Gender, class and ethnicity: who is 'allowed' to achieve celebrity? Who gets forgiven and who gets condemned? 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The cult of celebrity. ○ The identity of the fan. ○ Fan subcultures. ○ Empowerment/disempowerment. ○ The participating, obsessive fan.
Title 4	Title 5	Title 6
<i>Images of celebrity and how we read them.</i>	<i>'When will I be famous?'-ordinary people and celebrity.</i>	<i>'We're all celebrities now'.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The appearance of the celebrity. ○ Representations of gender, ethnicity, age and class ○ Beauty: what is it, and how do we recognise it? Where do our notions of beauty come from? ○ Active readings. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talent shows. ○ Reality TV. ○ Constructing 'ordinariness': how does the idea of celebrity comment on everyday lives? ○ Voyeurism. ○ 'In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes' asserted Andy Warhol in 1979. Is fame really so ephemeral? 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Politics and celebrity. ○ Social networking and self-presentation: how we use technology to create a virtual celebrity for oneself. ○ The High School Prom. ○ A star in my own soap opera: self-consciousness and self-images.

Celebrity – Possible stimulus materials

The following list of texts can be used as stimulus materials and/or as reference material. It is not to be read as exhaustive in any sense. Teachers will inevitably assemble their own resource and reference ideas. They are likely to be shared via online channels as well.

Non-Fiction:

Cashmore, E. 2006. *Celebrity Culture*, Routledge, ISBN: 978-0415373111

Dyer, R. and McDonald, P. 1998. *Stars*, 2nd ed. BFI Publishing, ISBN 978-0851706436

Fiction:

Holden, W. 2009. *Beautiful People*, Headline Publishing Group, ISBN. 978-0755342549

Print media:

Hello, Heat, Closer, OK magazine, teen magazines, and most national newspapers

e-Media:

Popbitch.com

Celebpulp.com

Celebitchy.com

Fametastic.co.uk

Douglas, K. 2003. When you wish upon a star, in *New Scientist*, Reed Business Information Ltd. [online]. Available at <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg17924084.400-when-you-wish-upon-a-star.html>.

Harrison, E. 2006. Divine trash: the psychology of celebrity obsession, in *Cosmos Magazine*, Luna Media Pty Ltd. [online]. Available at <http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/features/print/414/divine-trash-psychology-celebrity-obsession>

TV:

Britain's Got Talent, 2007/08. TalkbackThames production for ITV.

When Will I be Famous? 2007/08. A BBC production for BBC1.

Loads and loads of reality or celebrity TV programmes

Film:

Boyle, D. 2008. *Slumdog Millionaire*, Celador, Film4, Fox Searchlight and Warner Bros., film.

Cukor, G. 1954. *A Star is Born*, Warner Bros, film.

Pierson, F. 1976. *A Star is Born*, Warner Bros, film (remake).

Stone, O. 1994. *Natural Born Killers*, Warner Bros, film.

Temple, J. 1980. *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, Universal Pictures UK, film.

Scorsese, M. 1982. *King of Comedy*, Embassy International Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, film.

Songs: (lyrics can be obtained from any number of lyrics sites, guitar tab/chord sites etc)

Bros 1987. *When Will I Be Famous?* available on 'Push' and 'Best of Bros', Sony Music.

James 1998. *Destiny Calling*, on the albums 'Destiny Calling', 'Fresh as a Daisy' & 'The Collection', Mercury Records.

Suede 1997. *Trash*, single, on the album 'Coming Up', Nude.

The Smiths 1990. *Paint a Vulgar Picture*, on the album 'Strangeways Here We Come', WEA.

Various Artists 1980. *Fame, The Original Soundtrack*, album, Rhino Records.

Holiday

What follows is the Unit 4 Topic Guide 'Holiday'. Included in the Topic Guide are:

- an introduction to the Topic
- Titles
- Issues
- suggested stimulus materials.

Often thought of as simply a branch of the leisure industry, holidays have often been simply opposed to 'work', itself a term demanding some complex unravelling! Holidays have always played a significant part in people's lives as cultural practices in a diverse range of forms, and contexts. As cultural practices and cultural products holidays contain a range of meanings which go beyond simplistic descriptions; the issues enumerated here should allow candidates the potential to explore some of the complexity of those meanings, employing a range of contrasting and diverse perspectives and appropriate references from a range of sources.

Candidates choosing Holiday as a topic area must select **one** of the titles followed by **one** of the issues listed below. They are all broad enough in themselves to allow many different angles on the topic, but they are not infinitely malleable and will need to be addressed relevantly. The chosen issue and the individual angle on it should be negotiated between the teacher and the student.

All sources should be referenced.

A few suggested examples of stimulus materials is offered only as a starting point.

Candidates and teachers will undoubtedly wish to assemble their own stimulus material.

Holiday

Holiday (Topic in Site B Cultural Practice)		
Title 1	Title 2	Title 3
<i>Getting away from it all: holiday destinations.</i>	<i>High Days and Holy Days: holiday as communal celebration/shared experience.</i>	<i>Club 18-30 or Saga: age, gender, ethnicity and class on holiday.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branding spaces and places as tourist destinations. ○ Leaving for the coast: the seaside as 'retreat'. ○ Defining the 'pleasures of leisure'. ○ Disneyfication: replicas of fantasies. ○ 'As seen on TV': film/TV locations as destinations. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Holidays in the UK and the rest of the world. ○ Carnival! ○ 'Secular saints days': occasional days of celebration or mourning. ○ The holiday as family or community ritual. ○ Holidays as rite of passage (with associated moral panics...). 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fictional representations of youth and holiday. ○ The package holiday as a cultural phenomenon. ○ Holidays as status symbols. ○ Constructing the social identities of holidaymakers. ○ How holidays are marketed.
Title 4	Title 5	Title 6
<i>Gap years and grand tours: better to travel than to arrive?</i>	<i>Place yourself in this narrative; the themed holiday.</i>	<i>Memories are made of this: capturing holiday experiences.</i>
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travelling as enhanced holidaying. ○ 'Travel broadens the mind': travel as education/self-improvement. ○ 'Cheap holidays in other people's misery': who benefits from gap years? ○ The Grand Tour: what's the modern equivalent? ○ Ethical tourism and eco-tourism: the cultural impact. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Romantic cruises ○ Photo safaris. ○ 'Survival' and extreme holidays. ○ Make yourself a better person: the 'learn how to' holiday. ○ Virtual holidays. 	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Postcards, holiday snaps and videos: do they replace memories? ○ Travel blogs. ○ 'Pieces of the action': acquiring cultural artefacts. ○ 'A present from ...': buying and selling holiday memorabilia. ○ Travel writing and reporting.

Holiday – Possible Stimulus Materials

The following list of texts can be used as stimulus materials and/or as reference material. It is not to be read as exhaustive in any sense. Teachers will inevitably assemble their own resource and reference ideas. They are likely to be shared via online channels as well.

Non Fiction:

Bryson, B. 1996. *Notes from a Small Island*, Black Swan, ISBN: 978-0552996006

(Those interested may like to look at Bill Bryson's travel writing)

De Botton, A. 2002. *The Art of Travel*, Penguin, ISBN: 978-0140276626

Fiction:

Garland, A. 1997. *The Beach*, Penguin, ISBN: 978-0140258417

Kerouac, J. 1957. *On The Road*, Penguin Classics, ISBN: 978-0141182674

Other Print Stimuli:

Rough Guides and Lonely Planet Guides

Holiday Supplements in newspapers

Television:

TV Travel documentaries: Stephen Fry, Michael Palin et al.,

Current TV holiday programmes

Allen, K., Johnson, S. 2007/8. *Benidorm*, Tiger Aspect Productions for ITV1, Comedy, 1 Feb 2007 -

Film:

Dayton, J. 2006. *Little Miss Sunshine*, 20th Century Fox, film.

Hopper, D. 1969. *Easy Rider*, Columbia TriStar, film.

Ramis, H. 1993. *Groundhog Day*, Sony Pictures, film.

Music:

Richard, C., (Sir). and The Shadows, 1963. *Summer Holiday*, available on the album 'Summer Holiday', EMI Records.

Vrethammar, S. 1973. *Y Viva España*, widely available on compilations.

Fiddler's Dram, 1979. *Day Trip to Bangor*, available on the album 'Fiddler's Dram', Dingle's.