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Media, Communication, & Cultural Studies
Teaching with Interview Video
Interview videos are often longer in length and can range from 30–60 minutes. Here, key scholars and thinkers share information about their areas of expertise and often provide a background of why these issues matter or how they came to study them in the first place. Because of their longer length, they can cover several key academic theories, concepts, and developments and provide an overall map of certain fields and the contributions they have made. Because Interview videos are lengthy, these might be best used as homework material. However, because these videos are often broken down into shorter segments, it is still easy to incorporate them into classroom activities and discussion or be used to devise assignments.

David Hesmondhalgh Discusses Political Economy of Media
http://sk.sagepub.com/video/david-hesmondhalgh-discusses-political-economy-of-media

In this interview, David Hesmondhalgh, Professor of Media and Music Industries at the University of Leeds, explains what the concept of the “political economy of the media” entails and details how he came to this area through his own interest in the music industry. Throughout the interview, he defines and discusses key terms such as “cultural industries,” identifies key thinkers, provides an overview of key developments in the field, defines what constitutes critical research, and explains the value of education in media and communication studies and its practical value for students.

Dr. Hesmondhalgh also defines what’s “new” in media studies and critiques the idea of a singular “global” position of media and communication studies. He also questions overly optimistic views of technology’s ability to empower the powerless. He addresses the relationship between media and culture, the public impact of his research, and how media studies research contributes to society and social transformations.

Suggested Courses or Topics
This interview can be used for those students who want an overview of the concept of political economy or more information about the background into cultural industries more generally. Course examples might include:

- media and communication,
- cultural industries,
- political economy of the media, and
- sociology of media.

Classroom Clips
Listed below are a few examples of clips that focus on key concepts:

- This clip describes the concept of the political economy of the media and how it differs from media economics. Clip 00:04 – 00:48.
- Dr. Hesmondhalgh discusses his book The Cultural Industries and debates on the ways the cultural industries are changing (or not) over time. Clip 1:56 – 2:42.
- Here, the term “cultural industries” is explained. Clip 2:42 – 3:30.
- The famous cultural scholar Raymond Williams and Nancy Fraser are introduced here as well as their significance for Dr. Hesmondhalgh personally. Clip 3:31 – 5:05.
- Dr. Hesmondhalgh provides an overview of three key developments in studies on the political economy of the media: media production studies, anthropology of cultural production, and studies of cultural work. Clip 5:06 – 7:42.
- The decline of political economy studies is discussed here in direct relation to the rise of the Internet. Clip 7:42 – 9:08.
- In this clip, Dr. Hesmondhalgh makes a case for the best type of political economy research as that which provides “criticism and critique” of the way the media operate and those which engage with ethics. Clip 9:09 – a 10:09.
- Here, Dr. Hesmondhalgh discusses his own recent research and what he would like to explore in the future. Clip 10:10 – 11:28.
- The practical benefits of studying the media are discussed here. Clip 11:29 – 13:15.
The concept of “critical” media studies is discussed in this clip. Clip 13:15 – 14:42.

The role that education can play in creating a sense of strong ethics is discussed here. Clip 15:29 – 15:59.

The concept of new media is discussed here. Clip 17:05 – 18:25.

Dr. Hesmondhalgh discusses the position of the “global” in media and communication studies and argues there is no one global position. Clip 18:26 – 19:32.

Here, the importance of understanding how the media operate in different geographical spaces and cultures is discussed. Clip 19:33 – 21:24.

Dr. Hesmondhalgh discusses the importance of copyright and its political, economic, and cultural implications. Clip 21:25 – 22:22.


Key changes in media and communication studies are addressed here, particularly the rise of the Internet and “digital optimism” Clip 25:09 – 26:09.

Dr. Hesmondhalgh argues that “you can’t be a serious media scholar unless you take the idea of culture seriously” (Clip 23:11 – 23:19). Yet not all cultural artefacts or industries are valued in the same ways. Engage with academic literature on the concept of high and low culture and outline at least two key critiques of this distinction.

Dr. Hesmondhalgh argues that “you can’t be a serious media scholar unless you take the idea of culture seriously” (Clip 23:11 – 23:19). In what ways can you find academic evidence that scholars are taking culture seriously? For example, what sorts of “cultures” are scholars interested in, and what are your views about how “worthy” some of these studies are.

### Classroom Discussion

Here are some examples of questions which might be used for in-class discussion.

1. In the video, Dr. Hesmondhalgh explains that the political economy of the media is an analytical approach to examining the power the media have in modern societies (Clip 00:04 – 00:48). Drawing on your own experiences, what sorts of power do you recognize the media as having?

2. In the video, Dr. Hesmondhalgh defines the term “cultural industries” (Clip 2:42 – 3:30). Are there any aspects of the list which you think he missed, particularly in light of the rise of new media technologies?

3. In the video, the role that education can play in creating a sense of strong ethics is discussed (Clip 15:29 – 15:59). Thinking about your own experiences, how, if at all, have your values or morals been shaped through your education?

4. Debate Format: In the video, Dr. Hesmondhalgh provides a critical view of digital optimism—the view that new technologies will empower more people (Clip 25:09 – a 25:58). Create two groups. One which argues that new technologies have in fact empowered more people and one which argues that it has not or led to greater inequalities and powerlessness.

### Research Assignment

See below for some example assignments that you might use for students:

1. In the video, Dr. Hesmondhalgh discusses a decline of political economy studies of media industries (Clip 7:42 – 9:08). However, this approach has certainly not died away, particularly for feminist scholars who use it to raise questions of power, production, and working conditions for women in the media and cultural industries. Find, read, and analyze five studies which take a political economic approach to issues of gender in media and cultural industries.

2. In the video, Dr. Hesmondhalgh makes a case for the best type of political economy research as that which provides criticism and critique of the way the media operate (Clip 9:09 – a 10:09). Drawing from recent political economy research of one cultural industry, what are some key criticisms and critiques that emerge and to what extent do you agree with them?

3. Dr. Hesmondhalgh defines critical media studies as research which “tries to make the world a better place” (Clip 13:15 – 14:42). Find and summarize three pieces of critical media studies research and discuss the extent to which you think this academic work can or has the potential to make the world a better place.