HOW TO MAKE A VIDEO ESSAY

PRE-PRODUCTION

• Choose your topic. Choose your sources texts. Watch them. Watch them again, making note about the things you want to comment on.

• Start planning. A two-column format works well.

• Make sure you are typing text together with video clips. You aren't analysing the stills; they are just there as references to the video extract.

• Think about sound. When do you cut from VO (voiceover) to SOT (Sound on tape - probably the film or music video soundtrack)? Do you ever want them mixed together? Make notes on your plan.

• You haven't got enough cuts! The video line will do more to engage the audience than the audio, usually. Look for opportunities to make the video more dynamic. The sentence 'There is a dominant representation of masculinity in this video' takes about 5 seconds to deliver. That's time for three examples of what you're talking about, not one. That's how we make these things comparative, if that's part of your assignment.

• Graphics. If you want them (and you do) then plan for them. Note in the plan where they are going to appear and what they are.

• How ambitious do you want to be? Consider what everyone will do - construct a video line and record a voiceover over it - and think about how to improve on that. Edit it more. Have better graphics. Have an on-screen presenter against a green-screen which is the used to show the video. Have a voiceover which is actually targeted at your audience and which isn't just a written essay which you are reading out. Aim high!

PRODUCTION

• Make sure you have all the video files you need. If using graphics, make them now.

• Record a temp track of your voiceover. This is rough - it's just to begin editing to. You'll come back and do it better later.

• Put the audio track on the timeline.

• Working from your plan, apply the appropriate sections of the video to the audio on the timeline. (Chances are there are serious timing issues. Try to cut it into shape as best you can.)

• You should be starting to get a sense of the better and worse parts of your video already. Focus on the worse parts - try to add a few more cuts, maybe think about how to change the voiceover to allow you to make it more engaging, or consider whether you can delete that part entirely.

• Graphics, if using. Get them on the timeline. Export as rough cut and get feedback.

• Finesse the video according to the feedback. (This can be the time consuming part.) Add more cuts. Find ways to make the video work in sync with the soundtrack and graphics.

• Re-record that VO. Recite if need be - target it AT YOUR AUDIENCE - if they're teenagers, make it quite casual but remember it's still an analytical piece. Get better sound quality. (Go to the studio. Do it properly!)

POST-PRODUCTION

• Final cuts and edits. Transitions if needed. (They are needed!)

• Level the sound. All sound should basically be at the same level. Use the audiometer on your editing software rather than your ears to check. (Aim for about -0.3 dB.)

• Foley if needed (maybe to go with all those cool transitions you just included…)

• Show it to someone you trust. If they're impressed, you're done.

• Export. 250 MB maximum.

• Upload to YouTube, embed on your website on a new page or on your video portfolio.