(A) *Newspapers and television*

In the case of newspapers and television programmes there has been an effectively predominant integration of cultural production with the general conditions of privileged ownership of the means of production and the consequent (wage-labour) employment of the actual producers. Thus, except in certain marginal cases, to practise is to enter these conditions of practice, and certain fundamental kinds of determination, whether (as often) (i) directly economic, or (as again often) (ii) political, in the congruence between the forms of privileged ownership and the general forms of the socio-political order, or more generally (iii) cultural, in an administered compatibility between the actual production and the dominant interests of the social order as seen from just these conditions, then undoubtedly operate. (20%)

(B) Media and communications have never been thought more important. Pervasively they are seen to be key agents of change. In the political domain many, who are otherwise sceptical of News International's assertions, give credence to the headline 'It's The Sun wot won it!' In economic life, claims that Western economies are becoming post-industrial information societies have become political orthodoxy. And, culturally, mass media and communications are seen to be primary agents in fostering knowledge and understanding, or, when viewed negatively, in the erosion of established and valued identities and cultures. (20%)
(C) The chances are, then, that advertising probably encourages a small percentage of voters to change sides. It undeniably activates the activists and supports the preconceptions of supporters. They are uplifted and galvanised into ever-greater exertions by seeing their side’s slogans on hoardings as they wearily slog round the streets. And they love to see their side biffing the enemy. In an election like that of 1997, when the outcome was a landslide, the advertising was almost certainly irrelevant: a waste of money. But in a tightly fought election the influence of advertising would be significant. Every vote then counts. And in advance, who can ever tell whether the outcome will be a landslide or a close run thing? (20%)

(D) The term cyberspace literally means ‘navigable space’ and is derived from the Greek word kyber (to navigate). In William Gibson’s 1984 novel Neuromancer, the original source of the term, cyberspace refers to a navigable, digital space of networked computers accessible from computer consoles; a visual, colourful, electronic, Cartesian datascape known as ‘The Matrix’ where companies and individuals interact with, and trade in, information. Since the publication of Neuromancer, the term cyberspace has been reappropriated, adapted and used in a variety of ways, by many different constituencies, all of which refer in some way to emerging computer-mediated communication and virtual reality technologies. Here, we refocus the definition back to that envisaged by Gibson, so that cyberspace refers to the conceptual space within ICTs (information and communication technologies), rather than the technology itself. (20%)
(E) Virtual communities may resemble real-life communities in the sense that support is available, often in specialized relationships. But Net members are distinctive in providing information, support, companionship, and a sense of belonging to persons they hardly know offline or who are total strangers. Anecdotes from virtual communities and more systematic accounts of computer-supported cooperative work provide ample evidence of the usefulness of accessing new information from weak ties on the Net. For example, 58 percent of the messages on an organization’s DL came from strangers. (10%)

(F) It is quite true that cultural modernity also generates its own aporias. And those intellectual positions which hasten to proclaim postmodernity, to recommend a return to premodernity, or which radically repudiate modernity altogether, all appeal to these aporias. Thus, apart from the problematic social consequences of social modernization, it is true that certain reasons for doubt or despair concerning the project of modernity also arise from the internal perspective of cultural development. (10%)