Developing Habits of Inquiry

Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages

**Authorship**
- Who made this?

**Content**
- What are the messages about _____?
- What ideas, values, and information are overt? Implied?
- What is left out that might be important to know?
- How does this compare/contrast to other media messages on this topic?

**Purposes**
- Why was this made?
- Who is their target audience?
- What do they want me to do?
- What do they want me to think (or think about)?

**Context**
- When was this created?
- Where and how was it shared with the public?
- What aspects of cultural context are relevant to consider?

**Techniques**
- What techniques are used to communicate the messages?
- How effective are those techniques? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Why might they have chosen to use those techniques?

**Economics**
- Who paid for this?
- Who might make money from this?

**Effects**
- Who might benefit from this message?
- Who might be harmed by it?
- Whose voices are represented or privileged?
- Whose voices are omitted or silenced?

**Credibility**
- Is this fact, opinion, or something else?
- How credible is the information?
- What are the sources of the ideas or assertions?
- Is this a trustworthy source about this particular topic?

**Interpretations**
- What is my interpretation of this?
- How do prior experiences and beliefs shape my interpretation?
- What do I learn about myself from my interpretation or reaction?

**Responses**
- How does this make me feel?
- What kinds of actions might I take in response to this?

**And...**
- What’s my evidence?
- Why might that matter?
- Why do I think that?
- What else do I want (or need) to know?
- How could I find that out?