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**FILM STUDIES A LEVEL**

**Course Handbook &**

**Pre-course Tasks**

**2023 - 2025**

**Course Outline**

**SUBJECT CONTENT AT A GLANCE**

Learners will study **11 films**.

For each of these films, learners will study three **core study areas**. There are six **specialist study areas** which students are required to study in relation to **specific films only**.

The core study areas are:

1. The key elements of film form (cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing and sound)

2. Meaning and response (including representation & aesthetics)

3. The contexts of film (social, cultural, historical, political & institutional)

The additional study areas are:

1. Spectatorship

2. Narrative (including critical approaches and genre)

3. Ideology

4. Auteur

5. Critical debates

6. Filmmakers' theories.

**OVERVIEW OF SPECIFICATION COMPONENTS**

The A Level Film Studies qualification is made up of three components with the following weighting:

|  |
| --- |
|  **The specification can be accessed here:** [**http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/film-studies/as-a-level/WJEC-Eduqas-A-level-Film-Studies-specification.pdf**](http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/film-studies/as-a-level/WJEC-Eduqas-A-level-Film-Studies-specification.pdf) |

**HOW THE COURSE IS DELIVERED**

The course is delivered in a classroom environment with students working individually, in pairs and in group discussions. Integrated in the course are revision, consolidation, extension and regular testing lessons. Personalised Learning Checklists (PLCs), with links to the A Level Film Studies Specification, are regularly reflected upon to gauge progress and feed forward. As external examination accounts for 70% of the final A Level grade, emphasis is placed on exam style questions where students work through previous exam questions and develop effective exam techniques.

**FACULTY EXPECTATIONS – RESOURCES**

* You will require a lever-arch folder and file dividers, which you must bring to the first lesson in September. Students are expected to present notes and responses appropriately. During the course all marked work and printed resources must be added to the correct section of your folder. These folders will be checked by teachers throughout the course.
* Students are expected to have the correct stationery for lessons including pens, pencils, glue, scissors and highlighters.
* Students are expected to attend all lessons.

**HOME STUDY STRUCTURE**

For every hour of lesson, it is expected students dedicate an hour to independent study time. Home study will be set using the following sections:

**Gaps to close** – You act upon feedback, close the gaps in your learning e.g. writing a summary, re-answering test questions underperformed in; producing a glossary of key terms; mark scheme mnemonics; re-reading and extending lesson notes; practice testing; creating model answers or annotated mark schemes; address PLC gaps etc.

**Revision** – Creating revision resources based upon what was taught in the lesson. E.g. mind map, flash card, lists, learning key word definitions.

**Assessed Designated Study Tasks** – Teacher set tasks which will be self/peer/teacher assessed depending upon what the teacher directs. These tasks are to be completed in designated study time and reflected upon in DIRT/ starter tasks once the deadline has passed. This could also include a flipped learning task (See Pre-work below).

**Support** – Identify areas from PLCs that may need teacher/peer / Year 13 Buddy support or extension after employing strategies in order to grasp the content.

**Pre-work** - flipped learning – research undertaken ready for the next lessons content or extension work.

**It is your responsibility to ask for help if it is needed**

**EXAMINATION PERIODS**

* Internal progress check tests are integrated during the course
* Internal examination dates are listed on the school calendar
* Course Work Assessment – on-going during the course. Deadline: February half-term 2025
* External examination – May/June of Year 13

**PRE-COURSE START UP TASKS**

Please make sure that you have prepared the following before lesson 1 begins.

**TASK 1: Course File**

Please buy one A4 lever arch file with file dividers and put your name and ‘A Level Film Studies’ on the folder. Please ensure you have pens, pencils, highlighters and an A4 pad of paper.

Prepare your file by labelling your file dividers as follows:

TAB 1: Subject Information

TAB 2: Introduction to Film Studies

TAB 3: Hollywood 1930-1990

TAB 4: American Film

TAB 5: British Film Since 1995

TAB 6: Global Film

TAB 7: Documentary Film

TAB 8: Silent Cinema

TAB 9: Experimental Film

TAB 10 Mock Exams/ in class assessments

TAB 11 Past Papers, Mark Schemes and Examiner Reports

TAB 12Other notes/learning beyond the classroom

**TASK 2: Compile a glossary of the following Film Studies terminology:**

(All work must be typed up and in an academic format)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mise-en-scene  | Film movement | Messages and values |
| Cinematography | Experimental cinema | Sensory spectacle |
| Genre | Global cinema  | Spectatorship |
| Narrative | Production context | Passive spectatorship |
| Diegetic sound  | Social context | Active spectatorship  |
| Non diegetic sound | Cultural context | Representation |
| Editing  | Institutional context | Film Noir |
| Postproduction | Intertextuality | Protagonist |
| Ideology | Realism | Hybrid |
| Aesthetic | Post modernism | Binary oppositions |
| Alignment | The Male Gaze | Melodrama |
| Auteur  | Magical realism | Documentary |
| Motif | Feminist film theory |  |
| Symbolism  | Screen play |  |
| Subversive | New Wave cinema |  |
| Transgressive | German Expressionism |  |

**Task 3: Visual Essays and Film Criticism**

1. Watch how others criticise film; Use YouTube to find some ‘visual essays’ or film criticism channels. Watch a few examples. Use this playlist link if you’re not sure where to start: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9HivyjAKlc&list=PLeNerb9lxe3k_kt_ZDy44k65O__Rb6vR3>
2. Appreciate how critical analysis can alter the effect of a film; Watch at least 3 visual essays and then afterwards make a note of the essay title, the name of the channel or creator and a few sentences about your reaction to the video/what you learned.
3. Evaluate how film criticism has different aspects. Finally, make a playlist on YouTube or write down a list of the different videos or channels you’ve come across/watched, but group them in terms of what/how the channel focuses on.

**Task 4: Cinematography and Editing (Complete the tables on the following 3 pages with example images and the dramatic effect achieved)**

Cinematography means all aspects of camerawork:

Shot types

Camera positioning

Camera movement

Framing

You will need not only to identify the element of camerawork being used, but to discuss *how* it is being used and the impact on the viewer.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Example image | Shot Type | Shot Description | Dramatic Effect |
|  | Extreme long shot (ELS) | Often used to introduce a setting – may only show environment or tiny figures swamped by a particular place. If used in the film’s opening, this can be termed the **establishing shot**. |  |
|  | Long shot (LS) | Often used to show the relationship between character(s) and setting. The whole body of the character is visible as is much of the setting.  |  |
|  | Medium long shot (MLS) | In the case of a standing actor, the lower frame line cuts off their feet and ankles. |  |
|  | Medium shot (MS) | In such a shot, the subject or actor and its setting occupy roughly equal areas in the frame. In the case of the standing actor, the lower frame passes through the waist. There is space for hand gestures to be seen. |  |
| ﻿  | Medium close-up (MCU) | The setting can still be seen. The lower frame line passes through the chest of the actor; usually just the head and shoulders can be seen.   |  |
|  | Close-up (CU) | A shot that shows a fairly small part of the scene, such as a character's face, in great detail so that it is the dominant object in the screen. |  |
| ﻿  | Extreme close-up (ECU) | Shows a section of a face or object. Often used to focus the viewer’s attention on a significant part of the face e.g., a tearful eye. This technique is common in horror films. |  |

Camera Angles and Positioning

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Example image | Camera Angle/Position | Angle Description | Dramatic Effect |
|  | Eye-level  | The level of camera is roughly at eye height to create a sense of reality within a film.  |  |
|  | Low angle  | Creates an impression that what the viewer is seeing is much bigger than they are. |  |
|  | Worm’s eye | So-called as it matches the apparent perspective of a worm. Is essentially a 'very low' shot that looks up at someone or something. |  |
|  | High angle shots | Generates the sense that something is being looked down on |  |
|  | Bird’s eye | Named as it represents the angle from which a bird would view the object or person, essentially, from a very high angle looking down on someone or something. |  |
|  | Point of view | Present action from the viewpoint of a particular character. This can encourage the audience to identify with a character or empathise with their situation. |  |
| ﻿  | Over the shoulder | The camera literally looks over someone or somethings shoulder at another person, object or landscape. The shoulder being looked over is often in the shot. |  |
|  | Canted angle | An angle that is at an 'odd' angle to the position of the viewer so that it makes the object, subject or people look as if it is tilted. |  |

Camera Movement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Example image | Camera Movement | Camera Movement Description | Dramatic Effect |
|  | Panning | The base of the camera remains still, but the camera itself moves either right to left, or left to right. The movement is horizontal and might be anything up to 360 degrees in diameter. |  |
|  | Zoom | Taken with a lens that has a variable focal length, a zoom shot is one that permits the cinematographer to change the distance between the camera and the object being filmed without actually moving the camera. In one continuous movement, this camera technique makes an object or subject in the frame appear larger or smaller.  |  |
|  | Tracking | The whole camera moves, in, out or sideways to follow the action. The camera is fixed to a set of wheels or ‘dolly’ which is then moved. Tracking shots enable film makers to follow moving action or characters through scenes. |  |
|  | Tilting | The camera base again remains static, the movement of the head of the camera is vertical. 2 classic tilt shots would be either up and down a character or a building – a sort of ‘sizing up’.  |  |

**Task 5: How to apply critical theory to a film**

A critical theory is the use of applying a social science to an aspect of culture. In this case, it’s essentially being able to watch a film and explain a ‘deeper meaning’ or idea behind the film using a theory or idea from an area of social science, for example Psychology, Sociology or History.

There are a number of theories that you have to come to grips with during the A Level course. For each one of these theories, in order to prepare for the course, you should try looking up any introductory guides and trying to write down your understanding of what the theory means and how you can apply it to your favourite film.

Auteur

This is the film theory most associated with Film Studies. This is the theory of the director as the author. It is an incredibly popular theory and has given rise to the cult of the director. Your Preparation: Research one of the following directors. What qualifies them to be classed as an auteur? What is their specific, ‘signature’ style?

The Top 10 Modern Auteur Directors as listed by IMDb:

Quentin Tarantino

Wes Anderson

Tim Burton

Martin Scorsese

Robert Rodriguez

Christopher Nolan

Guillermo del Toro

Zack Snyder

Nicolas Winding Refn

David Fincher

Spectatorship

The theory of the audience and their relationship with the film. Exploring how messages/meanings are received. Your Preparation: look up Active and Passive readings. How do they work?

Narrative Theory

 A film’s creation of the story/narrative can be explored through these theories. Your Preparation: Explore how Todorov, Propp, Barthes and Levi-Strauss crafted narrative theories to explain stories.

Marxist

The theories of Karl Marx can be applied to films to explore how commerce and commodification are represented and in conflict. Your Preparation: What are commodification, alienation, universal equivalent and any other terms you find

Feminist Approaches From the 1970s onwards

Feminist approaches to film have provided a powerful way of deconstructing a male dominated art form. Your Preparation: Look up Laura Mulvey’s theory of the ‘male gaze’. What does it mean? How does it work?

**CAREER PATHWAYS IN FILM**

**Careers in Film:**

Employment in the screen industries has grown by over 78% since 2009. Career paths for students of Film may, of course, include practical avenues such as Film-Making, Directing, Producing and Editing but a qualification in Film Studies also allows you to move into more theoretical pathways such as Film Criticism, Journalism, Teaching and Education

**UK Film Studies Degrees**

A Film Studies degree looks at the theoretical, historical and critical approaches to film and explores the narrative, artistic, cultural, [economic](https://www.studyin-uk.com/popular-courses/economics/), and [political](https://www.studyin-uk.com/popular-courses/politics/) implications of cinema. Students will spend time reading and writing about all types of film, discussing meaning and importance and the role of the audience, while also learning about the roles of producers, directors, screenwriters and actors.

What Types of Film Degrees Can I Earn?

Undergraduates are usually awarded with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Film Studies. If you're interested in graduate programs, you can earn a Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Fine Arts (MFA) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the fields of filmmaking, film studies or film theory

Where can I study Film in the UK?

To learn more about the best Film Studies courses in the UK, find details on the top ten ranking Film Studies universities in the *Guardian University Guide 2023* below:

1. [University of Warwick](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/warwick/)
2. [Cardiff University](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/cardiff/)
3. [Loughborough University](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/loughborough/)
4. [University of Derby](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/derby/)
5. [Queen Mary, University of London](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/queen-mary/)
6. [University of Leeds](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/leeds/)
7. [Teesside University](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/teesside/)
8. [University of Stirling](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/stirling/)
9. [Lancaster University](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/lancaster/)
10. [University of Exeter](https://www.studyin-uk.com/profiles/university/exeter/)

A degree in film studies develops a broad range of desirable transferable skills, including:

- thinking analytically, logically and critically;

- the ability to conduct research in a variety of modes;

- communication skills and the ability to articulate opinion;

- the ability to work to a set brief independently or collaboratively;

- the ability to formulate a reasoned argument;

**Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

Apprenticeships and traineeships combine hands on practical training and studying at the same time. As an apprentice, you are treated as an employee, earn a wage, and get holiday pay. You also get the opportunity to study for a qualification that is related to your role. You will work alongside experienced staff and gain knowledge and skills specific to the department you will be working in.

Some broadcastersoffer apprenticeship opportunities. You can find out more about them below:

**BBC**

[**https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/trainee-schemes-and-apprenticeships**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/trainee-schemes-and-apprenticeships)

**CHANNEL 4**

[**https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/apprenticeships**](https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/apprenticeships)

[**https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/production-training-scheme**](https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/production-training-scheme)

**ITV**

[**https://www.itvjobs.com/business-areas/broadcasting/itv-news/itv-news-apprenticeship**](https://www.itvjobs.com/business-areas/broadcasting/itv-news/itv-news-apprenticeship)

**SKY**

[**https://careers.sky.com/earlycareers/**](https://careers.sky.com/earlycareers/)

Grierson DocLab, supported by The Rank Foundation and Netflix, is a training scheme that helps new entrants to work in factual and documentary programme-making. [**https://griersontrust.org/outreach**](https://griersontrust.org/outreach)

**Entry Level Jobs**

Entry level jobs are a good way to get started in the film and TV industry. You could start as a runner or other entry level work such as working for an equipment hire company. Entry level work will give you the opportunity to gain valuable experience and find out more about the various progression routes you might want to follow.

FOR MORE INFO:

[**https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/trainee-schemes-and-apprenticeships/work-experience**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/trainee-schemes-and-apprenticeships/work-experience)

[**https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/work-experience**](https://careers.channel4.com/4skills/work-experience)

Production companies offer work experience opportunities so you can gain an insight into what they do and how they do it.

Check out this list of Bristol based production companies, some of them may offer work experience.

[**https://directory.bristolpost.co.uk/search/bristol/tv-and-production-companies**](https://directory.bristolpost.co.uk/search/bristol/tv-and-production-companies)

You could join[**The Production Guild**](https://productionguild.com/training-hub/), a membership organisation for professionals working in UK film and television, that offers training for people who want to get into the industry.

**BFI Film Academy Courses in the Southwest and Further Opportunities**

[**BFI Film Academy Bristol**](https://bfifab.org.uk/)

[**Somerset Films**](https://www.somersetfilm.com/bfi)

[**White Lantern Film Bournemouth**](https://www.getinsidemovies.co.uk/white-lantern-film/)

[**BFI Film Academy Plymouth**](https://www.plymouthart.ac.uk/study/pre-degree/bfi-film-academy-plymouth)

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the course in September

*The A Level Film Studies Team*