

A Level Bridging Work

Film Studies

What we expect of you:

Watch for pleasure: You will be expected to think independently and to develop your own 'voice', and you will be expected to expand your knowledge outside of the classroom through reading about and watching film.

Be willing to be challenged: Some of the films and topics in this subject are difficult, complex and require a great deal of discussion and thought for you to understand them. We will constantly push you in our work in the class and in our assessment feedback.

Discuss/listen/debate: Film Studies A level will introduce you to a wide range of film-making processes so that you develop, through discussion, analysis and debate, a wide range of technical skills for both constructing and deconstructing film.

Intellectual Curiosity: You must be curious. You must be independent in your reading and research. You must be willing to have your preconceptions challenged and to challenge them yourselves.

If you would like further information about the Film Studies course please contact Miss Brooks (Director of English) on sbrooks@wellswayschool.com

Practical tips for success!

- Twitter - follow film makers, critics and academics who blog about cinema and film making.
- Create and write a private blog to experiment with your own film making and screen writing.
- Brush up on your understanding of film by using this website:
<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html>
- Read books and articles by Mark Kermode:
https://twitter.com/KermodeMovie?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle|twcamp%5Eserp|twgr%5Eauthor
- Get an understanding of what deconstruction, narrative, **ideology and context mean**.
- Research and find out about the History of Cinema and how film making has changed over time.
- Write a weekly reflection of what you have learnt each week – these notes can build up to some great revision notes.



““EVERY TIME I GO TO A MOVIE, IT’S MAGIC, NO MATTER WHAT THE MOVIE’S ABOUT.”

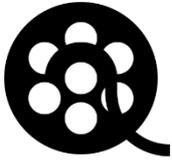
- Steven Spielberg

Things to read and watch...

Improve your subject knowledge by reading articles, listening to talks and watching documentaries.

Ted Talks	<p>Get inspired by listening to some film themed Ted talks.</p> <p>https://www.ted.com/playlists/66/the_power_of_film</p>
YouTube	<p>Choose a documentary to watch on the history and development of the Film Industry.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/o9-iCdUrnJ0</p>
BBC Inside Cinema documentaries	<p>Choose a documentary to watch on cinema.</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p07f7m9q/inside-cinema</p>
Podcasts about film making	<p>Listen to the following podcast and make notes:</p> <p>https://nofilmschool.com/</p>
The English and Media magazine	<p>Explore the wide range of articles on film making and cinema topics available in the archive. Make a working notebook of all the language theories and ideas that you discover.</p> <p>https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/e-magazine/emag-login</p> <p>Username: Emag2019 Password: WellsWay2019</p>
Useful websites	<p>https://www.bfi.org.uk/</p> <p>http://www.documentaryfilms.net/</p> <p>http://www.imdb.com/</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfilms</p> <p>https://www.screenskills.com/</p>

Work through the following pages to gain an introduction to Film Studies.



Introducing the key ideas and skills

There are some important areas that will be the basis of your study of the Film Studies A level. It involves studying 12 different films that are separated into set categories, which are; American, British, Independent, Global, Documentary, Experimental and Silent Film.

You work with your peers to debate and pull apart the set film texts and to develop a sophisticated contextual understanding of the world at the time these films were made.

Film Frameworks

Film form

Meaning and Response

Context

Spectatorship

Narrative

Ideology

Authorship

Critical debates

Theoretical debates

Related Concepts

Social -age, gender, ethnicity and class

Political -challenging or maintaining the status quo

Economic contexts in the making of films.

Film Frameworks

Film form - The key elements of film form consist of cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing, sound and performance

Key Features may include:

- Cinematography- camera shots including point of view shots, focus including depth of field, expressive and canted angle shots, basically anything that is created by the movement or positioning of the camera.
- Mise-en-scène- setting, props, costume, make-up and anything that has been placed in front of the camera to create the picture.
- Editing - the shot to shot relationships in which different shots and scenes have been put together.
- Sound- vocal sounds (dialogue and narration), environmental sounds (ambient, sound effects), music and silence.
- Performance- the use of non-verbal communication including physical expression and vocal delivery and how actor's performances are used to communicate ideas and emotions to audiences.



Activity 1: Phew! Don't panic, just look up some of these words, begin to compile a glossary and learn a few for now. Can you think of films where you can explain the effect of cinematography? Watch the clips, make notes and think of examples of films you have watched and like.

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3NRvrmKeMA>

Can you think of films where you can explain the effect of mise-en-scène?

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3BcS8UwI9U>

Can you think of films where you can explain the effect of editing?

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQtkbQkURCI&t=128s>

Can you think of films where you can explain the effect of sound and performance?

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBrl96hyChc> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQnXcQKzD4w&t=500s>

Meaning and Response- how film creates meaning and generates response through cinematography, mise-en- scène, editing, sound and performance. How all aspects of film form contribute to the representations of gender, ethnicity and age.

Key Features may include:

- how film creates meaning and generates response through cinematography, mise-en- scène, editing, sound and performance.
- how all aspects of film form contribute to the representations of cultures and societies (gender, ethnicity and age), including the ideological nature of those representations.



Activity 2: Can you list as many genres you can think of and choose a film that is a good example of that genre? Star Wars for Science Fiction etc. Which is your favourite genre of film?

Read the sentences. Label each sentence with one of the film types below.

a. comedy b. action c. romantic d. thriller e. horror f. documentary

1. Help! It's a monster. _
2. I love you, Tilly. _
3. Monkeys live in the jungle. _
4. Quick! Run! The police are coming. _
5. Just call me Mr Funny. _
6. Frank was in his office yesterday but then he disappeared. _

Context- Films are shaped by the contexts in which they are produced. The broader contexts of a film at the time when it was produced – its social, cultural and political contexts, either current or historical. A film's institutional context, including the important contextual factors affecting production such as finance and available technology.

Key Features may include:

- social factors surrounding a film's production such as debates about ethnicity or gender
- cultural factors surrounding a film's production such as a significant film or artistic movement
- political factors surrounding a film's production such as the imposition of restrictions on freedom of expression or a major movement for political change.
- key features of the production process including financial and technological opportunities and constraints.



Activity 3: Which films did you see last year? Write a film review. Imagine that your review is to be posted on an Internet film website. It will be read by people of all ages. It should be between 500- 700 words.

1. Film title. You could also include a star rating here.
2. Introduction: what you expected from the film
3. Genre: what type of film is it? Does it have a message?
4. Plot: what happens in the film? Does the plot make sense? Is it easy enough to follow? Is it believable?
5. Characters: Who are the main characters and what are they like? Who are the actors playing these parts, and are they good in the parts?
6. What is the camerawork/ animation like? If there are special effects, what are they like? Are there beautiful scenes? Are there moments when the camera is used in an interesting way?
7. Did you enjoy the film? Why/why not? What were its good and bad points?
8. Write about a scene you particularly enjoyed or remembered. Why was it good/ memorable?
9. Would you recommend this film? To what sorts of people? Why?
10. Are there any other films you can compare this film to?

Spectatorship- A central part of Film Studies is exploring how films address individual spectators through, for example, particular shots, editing, music and performance as well as narrative and genre to engage their interest and emotions.

Key Features may include:

- how the spectator has been conceived both as 'passive' and 'active' in the act of film viewing
- the impact of different viewing conditions on spectator response
- the analysis of narrative, visual, musical, performance, genre and auteur cues in relation to spectator response
- the possibility of preferred, negotiated, oppositional and aberrant 'readings' of film



Activity 4: A good place to figure out who the target audience for a film is to watch the trailer: What type of audience would like these films and how do you know? Pick eggs from the trailers to support your observations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LuxOYIpu-I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZblQLhKcZQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvmdb6vWfic>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtJxYuiz05U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK8FHdFluOQ>

Narrative- Narrative structure requires consideration of the whole film, most obviously in the way a story is told through plot.

Key Features may include:

- how narrative construction reflects plot and expresses temporal duration and ellipsis
- narrative devices including voiceover, flashback, the framing narrative, the open ending, repetition and other forms of narrative patterning
- how narrative construction provides psychological insight into character
- the significance of narrative structures which are alternative to and/or in opposition to conventional narrative structures, particularly in regard to experimental film
- narrative conventions of mainstream screenwriting, including the construction of dialogue, character and the use of images and sound to convey narrative



Activity 5: Go to Bitesize to do online activities;
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zysrrdm/revision/3>

This is Todorov's theory of narrative structure;

Stage	What Happens
1	Narrative starts with 'equilibrium' (balance, normality)
2	 An event happens and disrupts the equilibrium causing 'disequilibrium'
3	The disruption/disequilibrium is realised.
4	An attempt is made to restore the equilibrium.
5	Resolution - equilibrium is restored (usually = happy ending)

Can you apply this to your favourite film and complete the table?

Narrative Point	Briefly describe the part of the clip in the narrative which refers to narrative point	What effect does this have on the audience? E.g. does this build tension? Does it change our understanding of the ape hierarchy? Challenge: What does it tell us about ourselves?
Equilibrium	Here, the main character's life is balanced and normal . There have been no disruptions to the main character's life...yet. Give an eg of your own	

Disruption of Equilibrium	<p>The main character’s life has suddenly been disrupted, shattering their previous equilibrium.</p> <p>Give an eg of your own</p>	
Recognition of Disruption	<p>The main character now begins to realise that their situation has changed – and not for the better.</p> <p>Give an eg of your own</p>	
Attempt to Repair Disruption	<p>The main character now sets out to ‘right the wrongs’ and repair their situation, so that life can be as good as it was originally (equilibrium).</p> <p>Give an eg of your own</p>	
New Equilibrium	<p>The main character has worked through the problems and as a result, have gained back their equilibrium. However – they have grown from their experience. Life is now BETTER than it was at the beginning of the narrative.</p> <p>Give an eg of your own</p>	

Authorship- the concept of the auteur can be applied to a film or group of films in order to identify and explain its distinctive characteristics, arguing that these derive from a principal creative individual, most commonly the director.

Key Features may include:

- how auteurs determine the look and style of a film in relation to the collaborative approach to film production within Hollywood cinema
- how auteurs, through the imprint of their ‘signature’ features, can make a significant impact on a film’s messages and values.



Activity 6: Watch this presentation;

<https://www.slideshare.net/kinsusansi/presentation-of-film>

and read this article;

<http://www.outsidecontext.com/2012/06/19/the-hidden-context-in-some-great-movies/>

Can you name a film that was made in the past that would have a different meaning now and vice versa? What are the meanings and why? What contextual factors have influenced the film? (Social, Political and Technological)

Ideology - The concept of film as ideological involves exploring what ideologies are conveyed by a film as well as those which inform it which may, for example, reveal that a film reinforces or challenges dominant beliefs and attitudes within a society.

Key Features may include:

- the connotations of visual elements and sounds
- binary oppositions, both those contained in the narrative and those contained in film's use of formal elements

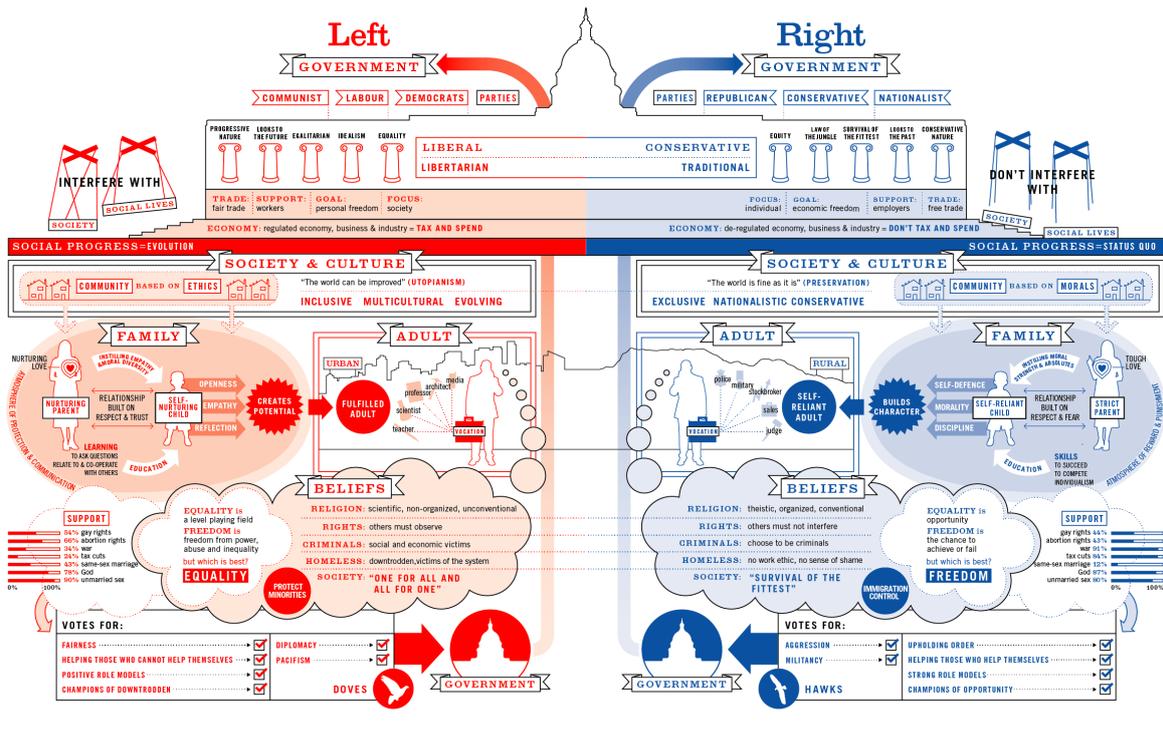
ideological perspectives appropriate to the text (such as a feminist or a political perspective)

- an evaluation of the ideological critical approach to film.



Activity 7: Do you know any films that deal with any of these issues?

Combatting terrorism , Unemployment, Gay Marriage, Drug Addicts, Refugees, Homelessness, Big Business. Look at the diagram below and consider how a film may show a right- or left-wing perspective? Provide examples.



Related Concepts- to develop a knowledge and understanding of a diverse range of film styles and genres, reflecting different social, cultural, political, historical and technological contexts.



Activity 8: Think of a film that made you think about your own life. What lessons from this film can viewers apply to their own lives? Name three and, for each, describe the lesson. If you can recall some dialogue that relates to any of the lessons, describe what was said. For each lesson, describe how the personality traits of the characters and the events of the story teach the lesson.

Please complete the following tasks ready for September:

Watch as many of these short films as possible.

1. Write a review using the questions from Activity 3 about your favourite one.
2. Choose one film you like and apply Todorov's theory, using the grid above.
3. Prepare a short presentation (using Powerpoint or something similar) about your observations to the class. You may want to use screen shots to talk through some of your favourite moments, and apply your knowledge about terminology.

Meshes in the Afternoon (Deren, US, 1946)

La Jetée (Marker, France, 1962)

La Ricotta (Pasolini, Italy, 1963)

The Grandmother (Lynch, US, 1970)

A Girl's Own Story (Campion, Australia, 1987)

Elephant (Clarke, UK, 1989)

The Wrong Trousers (Park, UK, 1993)

When the Day Breaks (Forbis/Tilby, Canada, 1999)

About a Girl (Percival, UK, 2001)

Wasp (Arnold, UK, 2003)

High Maintenance (Van, Germany, 2006)

Connect (Abrahams, UK, 2010)

Night Fishing (Park, South Korea, 2011)

Pitch Black Heist (Maclean, UK, 2012)

Curfew (Christensen, US, 2012)

Swimmer (Ramsay, UK, 2012)

The Gunfighter (Kissack, US, 2014)

Stutterer (Cleary, UK, 2015)