



# FILM STUDIES

## A LEVEL

Head of Film and Media: Mrs Duncan

1. COURSE OUTLINE & EXPECTATIONS
2. KEY ELEMENTS OF FILM FORM
3. SUMMER PROJECTS INFORMATION
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NAME:

### Component 1 – Varieties of film and filmmaking

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes (35%)

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of **six** feature-length films.

#### Section A: **Hollywood 1930-1990** (comparative study)

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two Hollywood films, one from the Classical Hollywood period (1930-1960) and the other from the New Hollywood period (1961-1990).

#### Section B: **American film since 2005** (two film study)

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to **two** American films, one mainstream film and one contemporary independent film.

#### Section C: **British film since 1995** (two film study)

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to **two** British films.

### Component 2 – Global filmmaking perspectives

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes (35%)

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of **five** feature-length films.

#### Section A: **Global film** (two-film study)

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to **two** global films; **one** European and **one** produced outside Europe.

#### Section B: **Documentary film**

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to **one** documentary film.

#### Section C: **Film movements – silent cinema**

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to **one** silent film or group of films.

#### Section D: **Film movements – experimental film**

**One** question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one film option.

### Component 3: Production

Non-exam assessment (30%)

This component assesses **one** production and its evaluative analysis.

You will produce:

- **Either** a short film (**4-5 minutes**) **OR** a screenplay for a short film (**1600 – 1800 words**) plus a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay
- An evaluative analysis (**1700 – 2000 words**)

## **Our Expectations:**

### **Independence and Confidence**

You have chosen Film Studies at A Level and your teachers expect to see that you are determined to produce the best work that you can. You should be developing strong independence and an ability to solve problems for yourself. You should be visiting the library, managing your time effectively and investigating ideas outside of lesson time because you *choose* to, not because you *have* to. You **MUST** be watching films outside of lessons and make an effort to broaden your cinematic tastes.

### **Curiosity**

Be curious. Be interested. Be excited. Be inspired by each other; a curious mind is a powerful tool that will help you achieve great things. Read books, consume magazines and, more importantly, **watch as many films as you can (see our viewing list)!**

Presumably you chose this subject because you love films – now is your chance to explore that love! The following are suggested texts:

- Sight & Sound Magazine (subscription) – BFI
- Short Guide to Writing About Film, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Timothy Corrigan)
- Film As Film: Understanding And Judging Movies -V.F Perkins
- An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film - Michael Ryan (Author), Melissa Lenos (Author)

There is an official text book and revision guide produced by the exam board. We do recommend this to help your studies. The teachers will use pages in it from time to time:

- **WJEC EDUQAS FILM STUDIES FOR A LEVEL AND AS - AUTHOR(S): Lisa Wardle, Ellen Cheshire, Mark Ramey, Jenny Stewart.** Available on Amazon or through *Illuminate Publishing*.
- **WJEC Eduqas Film Studies for A Level & AS Revision Guide – AUTHOR: Jenny Stewart.** Available on Amazon or through *Illuminate Publishing*.

### **Independent Study**

You are expected to spend the same amount of time on Film outside of lessons, as you spend in lessons. You are expected to do this independently to gain a wider/further understanding of topics we are covering. In your 9<sup>th</sup> lesson, you will have specific set tasks and teachers will check you are completing these.

Homework is integral to your success. If you do not complete work set you will find yourself in a DASD to be sat in the Durning room, on Faculty report or even may be asked to leave the course and look at other options.

There are multiple articles and links to explore on our Twitter account:

**@ChartersMedia** that posts for both Film and Media Studies. We strongly suggest you either follow the account with your current Twitter (we do not follow back!), or create a new twitter login for school-based research.

For revision we suggest using our Padlet: <https://padlet.com/jduncan89/vhynjtpilwo0onmu>

## **All films on the course are studied for:**

- ~Key elements of film form
- ~Meaning and response in film
- ~The contexts of film

## **Some films on the course are looked at using specialist study areas:**

Spectatorship

Narrative

Ideology

Auteur

Critical debates

Filmmakers' theories (documentary)

### **The key elements of film form**

Filmmakers use a range of elements in constructing narrative meaning and generating response. The key elements of film form consist of **cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing, sound** and **performance** and provide an important starting point for learners' study of film at A level. These key elements provide a means of approaching narrative as well as other aspects of film studies (such as spectatorship, aesthetic issues and the auteur), all of which learners will study throughout their course.

## **Cinematography, including lighting**

### *Principal elements*

- camera shots including point of view shots, focus including depth of field, expressive and canted angle shots, handheld camera in contrast to steadicam technology
- composition, including balanced and unbalanced shots.

### *Creative use of cinematography*

- camerawork including subjective camera, shifts in focus and depth of field, mixed
- camera styles, filters
- monochrome cinematography
- the principles of 3-point lighting including key, fill and backlighting
- chiaroscuro lighting and other expressive lighting effects.

### *Conveying messages and values*

- how shot selection relates to narrative development and conveys messages and values
- how lighting, including 3-point lighting, conveys character, atmosphere and messages and values
- how cinematography, including lighting, provides psychological insight into character

- how all aspects of cinematography can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations
- how and why different spectators develop different interpretations of the same camera shots and lighting
- how cinematography, including lighting, is used to align spectators and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative
- how cinematography, including lighting, contributes to the ideologies conveyed by a film.

#### *Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic*

- how cinematography including lighting can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or cinematographer)
- how cinematography contributes to a film's overall aesthetic.

## **Mise-en-scène**

### *Principal elements*

- setting, props, costume and make-up
- staging, movement and off-screen space
- how cinematography impacts on mise-en-scène, in particular through variation in depth of field, focus and framing (a significant area of overlap with cinematography).

### *Creative use of mise-en-scène*

- how mise-en-scène can be used both naturalistically and expressively
- how the principal elements of mise-en-scène can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations
- how changes in mise-en-scène contribute to character and narrative development.

### *Conveying messages and values*

- how mise-en-scène conveys messages and values
- how mise-en-scène, including setting, props, costume and make-up, can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of possible interpretations
- how staging, movement and off-screen space are significant in creating meaning and generating response
- the significance of motifs used in mise-en-scène, including their patterned repetition
- how mise-en-scène is used to align spectators and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative
- how and why different spectators develop different interpretations of the same mise en-scène
- how mise-en-scène contributes to the ideologies conveyed by a film.

#### *Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic*

- how mise-en-scène can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or designer)
- how mise-en-scène contributes to a film's overall aesthetic.

## **Editing**

### *Principal elements*

- the shot to shot relationships of continuity editing including match editing, the 180° rule
- the role of editing in creating meaning, including the Kuleshov effect
- montage editing and stylised forms of editing including jump cuts.

### *Creative use of editing*

- how editing implies relationships between characters and contributes to narrative development including through editing motifs and their patterned repetition
- how the principal elements of editing can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations
- how visual effects created in post-production are used, including the way they are designed to engage the spectator and create an emotional response
- the use of visual effects created in post-production including the tension between the filmmaker's intention to create a particular emotional response and the spectator's actual response.

### *Conveying messages and values*

- how editing conveys messages and values
- how editing is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative
- how and why different spectators interpret the same editing effects differently
- how editing contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.

### *Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic*

- how editing can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or editor)
- how editing contributes to a film's overall aesthetic.

## **Sound**

### *Principal elements*

- vocal sounds (dialogue and narration), environmental sounds (ambient, sound effects, Foley), music, silence
- diegetic or non-diegetic sound
- parallel and contrapuntal sound and the distinction between them
- multitrack sound mixing and layering, asynchronous sound, sound design.

### *Creative use of sound*

- how sound is used expressively
- how sound relates to characters and narrative development including the use of sound motifs.

### *Conveying messages and values*

- how sound conveys messages and values
- how the principal elements of sound can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations

- how sound is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative
- how and why different spectators interpret the same use of sound differently
- how sound contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.

*Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic*

- how sound can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or sound designer)
- how sound contributes to a film's overall aesthetic.

## **Performance**

*Principal elements*

- the use of non-verbal communication including physical expression and vocal delivery
- the significance of the interaction between actors
- performance styles in cinema including method and improvisatory styles
- the significance of casting.

*Performance as a creative collaboration*

- the role of directing as a 'choreography' of stage movement
- the relationship between performance and cinematography.

*Conveying messages and values*

- how performance conveys messages and values
- how performance is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative
- how and why different spectators interpret the same performance differently
- how performance contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.

*Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic*

- how performance can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or performer)
- how performance and choreography contributes to a film's overall

# Summer Project

Please complete the following **two** tasks in the back of this booklet. These are **both mandatory** and are requirements to you joining the Film Studies A Level class in September.

## Task 1

Analyse a chosen scene (approx. 3 minutes long) from a film you love. You must refer to a minimum of two 'film elements' that includes: cinematography, sound & music, mise-en-scene, performance. Write up in **full paragraphs**, exploring how you think meanings are created and how certain filmic elements are impacting an audience/you as a spectator.

**Top tips:** Pick a scene where something relatively significant is happening: a character's entrance; a death; a moment of tension. Write in the present tense e.g. 'We see a close-up of the character's face and watch a single tear drip down her face'

You can also use screenshots to help explain what happens on screen.



### Stuck for a film?

- Shark attack in Jaws
- Shower scene in Psycho
- Opening to Saving Private Ryan
- Beach scene in Atonement

## Task 2

Research one of the following directors:

Francis Ford Coppola  
Nicholas Ray  
Spike Lee

Joel & Ethan Coen  
Christopher Nolan  
Wes Anderson

Todd Haynes  
Richard Linklater  
Ken Loach

As well as watching **several** of the director's filmography, you should write about their past and current films, cinematic influences, their filmic style, themes/ideas they explore and anything else of interest. Please use books and the internet but all work must be written in your own words (DO NOT COPY & PASTE.)

Use the links below to help you:

- <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/movie-film-terms/>
- <https://www.empireonline.com/movies/features/film-studies-101-camera-shots-styles/>
- <https://filmschoolrejects.com/>

## **VIEWING LIST – Aim to watch at least one per week!**

**Tick when you've watched!**

- 12 Angry Men (Lumet, 1957)
- 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
- Apocalypse Now (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979)
- Blade Runner (Scott, 1982)
- Cabin in the Woods (Goddard, 2012)
- Donnie Darko (Kelly, 2001)
- Edward Scissorhands (Burton, 1990)
- Far from Heaven (Haynes, 2002)
- Fargo (Joel and Ethan Coen, 1996)
- Ferris Bueller's Day Off (Hughes, 1986)
- Get Out (Peele, 2017)
- Jaws (Spielberg, 1975)
- Juno (Reitman, 2007)
- Midsommar (Aster, 2019)
- Moon (Jones, 2009)
- Moonlight (Jenkins, 2016)
- Parasite (Bong Joon-ho, 2019)
- Rear Window (Hitchcock, 1954)
- Reservoir Dogs (Tarantino, 1992)
- Shawshank Redemption (Darabont, 1994)
- Singing in the Rain (Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly, 1951)
- Some Like It Hot (Billy Wilder, 1959)
- Spirited Away (Miyazaki, 2001)
- Stand by Me (Reiner, 1986)
- The Apartment (Wilder, 1960)
- The Birds (Hitchcock, 1963)
- The Blair Witch Project (Myrick & Sanchez, 1999)
- The Breakfast Club (Hughes, 1985)
- The Dark Knight (Nolan, 2009)
- The Fog (Carpenter, 1980)
- The Godfather (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)
- The Graduate (Nichols, 1967)
- The Grand Budapest Hotel (Anderson, 2014)
- The Princess Bride (Reiner, 1987)
- The Wizard of Oz (Fleming, Cukor, 1939)
- To Kill a Mockingbird (Mulligan, 1962)











