



GATEWAY PREPARATION FOR YOUR NEW SUBJECT



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Welcome to A Level Film Studies

Film is one of the most successful A Level courses at Norwood, and a large proportion of our students love it so much, they go on to study it at university. All this is despite the fact that when our students start in year 12, they've never studied the subject before. So what do the next two years have in store for you?

The purpose of studying Film Studies at A Level is to:

- *explore how films are made*
- *discover lots of different types of film including Hollywood, global cinema, experimental, and documentary films*
- *consider why filmmakers make their films in certain ways*
- *understand how huge costs and potential profits shape the films we see*
- *see how film has developed over a wide historical time frame*
- *plan, create and refine your own filmmaking ideas*

What do I have to do in A Level Film Studies?

Week by week you will be asked to do a number of different kinds of work:

- In class analysis and discussion of set films
- Learning about how films are made
- Research into the contexts of the set films
- Attendance to weekly popcorn screenings of other essential films in school/at the cinema
- Writing about films you have studied
- Rewatching key scenes and preparing detailed notes for your revision
- Creating and refining ideas for your coursework
- Making your own experimental films, sharing these and improving them

There are three components of the course- two are exam papers and the third is coursework. The table below summarises the content for each component and the percentage they make of our final grade.

Written Exam	Component 1 - Varieties of Film and Filmmaking	35%
	<p>This component assesses knowledge and understanding of six feature-length films.</p> <p>Section A: Hollywood 1930-1990</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Section B: American film since 2005</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two American films, one mainstream film and one contemporary independent film.</p> <p>Section C: British film since 1995</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two British films.</p>	
Written Exam	Component 2 - Global filmmaking perspectives	35%
	<p>This component assesses knowledge and understanding of five feature-length films.</p> <p>Section A: Global film</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two global films: one European and one produced outside Europe.</p> <p>Section B: Documentary film</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one documentary film.</p> <p>Section C: Film movements – Silent cinema</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one silent film.</p> <p>Section D: Film movements – Experimental film (1960-2000)</p> <p>One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one film option.</p>	
Coursework	Component 3- Production	30%
	<p>This component assesses one production and its evaluative analysis.</p> <p>Learners produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a screenplay for a short film (1600-1800 words) ● a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay ● an evaluative analysis (1600 - 1800 words) 	

Summer Project

As part of the summer transition process to this new subject area, students are asked to do some tasks for their chosen subjects. Some are optional, *but **Transition Tasks 1&2** are the ones we definitely want you to do.*

Preparation for the Course

Film-watching challenge

It's never a waste of time to watch a film if you're a student of Film Studies. Watch as many as you can, especially if you haven't seen them before. Try to watch them without interruption: leave your phone in your pocket, particularly in the first 20-30 minutes, when the film is working hard to gradually feed you enough information to make you care about the characters and situations. If you can, watch on a screen that's bigger than your phone - but if a phone is all you have, watch anyway. The most successful film studies students are the ones who watch the most films, and they watch so many films because they enjoy it. Make a list of how many films you watch before September 1st. The list should have the date you watched it, the name of the film, and the points you scored. Score one point per film, plus:

- One bonus point if you haven't seen it before
- Three bonus points if the film is in Black and White
- Four bonus points if the film is a Silent Movie
- Five bonus points if the film is subtitled (foreign language films)
- Subtract one point if the film is an animation (animation is great, but it has less to teach you about the basics of filmmaking).

Sixty Second Films

Using a smartphone, make one or more sixty second films. You can use the iMovie app on Apple or if using Android, the free version of InShot is great. If you prefer to work on a computer the website ClipChamp allows you to edit without downloading any software.

Your sixty second film could be about anything. Recent year 12 themes have included "Going Solo"; "The Truth"; "The Bottle Show" (films where being set in one room is part of the story) and "Lost". You could make a short documentary, or attempt an animation - it's up to you. The only rules are:

- Films must be 1 minute or less in length
- Films must be shot in landscape (like a real movie), and not portrait (like TikTok)
- Don't film anyone without their permission

Careers Research

The Film and TV industry employs huge numbers of people, and it's an employment sector that keeps growing. Unlike performers, the people who make films don't tend to find it hard to find work (as long as they're reliable and have the right skills), and the work is comparatively well paid. If you like the idea of working in show business you need to find out more about the different careers available. Research the following jobs, and find out what they involve, how much they pay, and how you'd start:

- Focus Puller
- Foley Artist
- Script Supervisor
- Editor
- Location Manager
- Line Producer
- VFX manager
- Distributor
- Construction Manager

Transition Task 1: Reading A Film

Watch as many films as you can that have been nominated for "Best Picture" at the Academy Awards. For a full list, look here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Picture#Winners_and_nominees

Many are available via Netflix/Prime etc, but lots of the older ones are freely available on YouTube. BBC iPlayer is also worth checking regularly.

Choose a scene from one film between 3 and 5 minutes long. Note down an example of how each of the following is used to tell the audience both explicit and implicit messages:

- colour
- setting
- performance
- sound & music
- costume
- hair/makeup
- camera angles
- lighting effects

Please present your findings as a Google Slides (or powerpoint) presentation, with screenshots to illustrate your findings. Alternatively, if you'd like to give a spoken commentary, you can submit this work in the format of a short video.

Extended reading/research/Weblinks

Youtube Channel: Every Frame a Painting
bfi.org.uk

Transition Task 2: Deconstructing Narrative

As you already know, a lot of films fit very clearly into certain genres, for example Action, Romantic Comedy, War, Thriller, Romantic Drama, Horror, Science Fiction, Fantasy and so on.

Choose a genre that you already know well and enjoy.

Think of five **tropes** that are regular features of this kind of film. A trope is something in a story that is often used. It's a bit like a cliché, but the word cliché suggests bad or lazy storytelling. Tropes can be clichés, but actually, we need tropes. For example, in an action film, it's a trope that our hero doesn't get to fight the biggest baddie until the end. It has to be that way, because if they fought them in a different order, we would be less interested in whether or not they succeed as the film goes on. As another example, in romantic comedies, the female lead often believes that she's in love with Person A, who turns out to be no good for her. Meanwhile, Person B - who she doesn't like at the start - turns out to be her perfect partner by the end of the film. You can use the internet to help you find tropes for your chosen genre, but first try to think of some on your own.

For each of your five tropes, we want you to give examples of how that trope appears in three different films of that genre. There's no need to refer to the same three films for each trope, but you can if they provide a good example.

So we might have something like:

Trope 1

- Example from Film A
- Example from Film B
- Example from Film C

Trope 2

- Example from Film B
- Example from Film D
- Example from Film E

Trope 3

- Example from Film A
- Example from Film B
- Example From Film F

...and so on.

Once again, please submit your work as a Google Slides presentation.

Extended reading/research/Weblinks

studiobinder.com

IMDB

Film List

You will need access at home to the eleven films you will study in depth, whether this is by streaming services you have access to, or on DVD. DVD's can often be purchased cheaply online (either new or second hand).

The films we will actually study are subject to change, and so you should not spend lots of money at this stage. However, they will come from the list below, and any film we are certain to study has been underlined. It is not a requirement to have watched any of the below films before September, but all the films on the list are worth viewing and will help your wider understanding.

Classical Hollywood (1930-1960)

- Casablanca (Curtiz, 1942)
- The Lady from Shanghai (Welles, 1947)
- Johnny Guitar (Ray, 1954)
- Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958)
- Some Like It Hot (Wilder, 1959)

New Hollywood (1961-1990)

- Bonnie and Clyde (Penn, 1967)
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Forman, 1975)
- Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)
- Blade Runner (Scott, 1982)
- Do the Right Thing (Lee, 1989)

Contemporary American Mainstream film

- No Country for Old Men (Coen Brothers, 2007)
- Inception (Nolan, 2010)
- Selma (Duvernay, 2014)
- Carol (Haynes, 2015)
- La La Land (Chazelle, 2016)

Contemporary American Independent film

- Winter's Bone (Granik, 2010)
- Frances Ha! (Baumbach, 2012)
- Beasts of the Southern Wild (Zeitlin, 2012)
- Boyhood (Linklater, 2015)
- Captain Fantastic (Ross, 2015)

British Film

- Secrets and Lies (Leigh, 1996)
- Trainspotting (Boyle, 1996)
- Sweet Sixteen (Loach, 2002)
- Shaun of the Dead (Wright, 2004)
- This is England (Meadows, 2006)
- Moon (Jones, 2009)
- Fish Tank (Arnold, 2009)
- We Need to Talk about Kevin (Ramsay, 2011)
- Sightseers (Wheatley, 2012)
- Under the Skin (Glazer, 2013)

European film

- Life is Beautiful (Benigni, Italy, 1997)
- Pan's Labyrinth (Del Toro, Spain, 2006)
- The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (Schnabel, France, 2007)
- Ida (Pawlikowski, Poland, 2013)
- Mustang (Ergüven, France/Turkey, 2015)
- Victoria (Schipper, Germany, 2015)

Outside Europe

- Dil Se (Ratnam, India, 1998)
- City of God (Mereilles, Brazil, 2002)
- House of Flying Daggers (Zhang, China, 2004)
- Timbuktu (Sissako, Mauritania, 2014)
- Wild Tales (Szifrón, Argentina, 2014)
- Taxi Tehran (Panahi, Iran, 2015), 12.

Documentary film

- Sisters in Law (Ayisi and Longinotto, Cameroon/UK, 2005)
- The Arbor (Barnard, UK, 2010)
- Stories We Tell (Polley, Canada, 2012)
- 20,000 Days on Earth (Forsyth and Pollard, UK, 2014)
- Amy (Kapadia, UK, 2015)

Silent cinema

- One Week + The Scarecrow + The 'High Sign' + Cops (Keaton, US, 1920-22)
- Strike (Eisenstein, USSR, 1924)
- Sunrise (Murnau, US, 1927)
- Spies (Lang, Germany, 1928)
- Man with a Movie Camera (Vertov, USSR, 1928)
- A Propos de Nice (Vigo, France, 1930)

Experimental film (1960-2000)

- Vivre sa vie (Godard, France, 1962)
- Daisies (Chytilova, Czechoslovakia, 1965)
- Saute ma ville (Akerman, Belgium, 1968)
- Pulp Fiction (Tarantino, US, 1994)
- Fallen Angels (Wong, Hong Kong, 1995)
- Timecode (Figgis, US, 2000)