

Film Studies Curriculum Summary May 2024

Vision:

Film is one of the main cultural innovations of the 20th century and a major art form of the last hundred years. Those who study it characteristically bring with them a high degree of enthusiasm and excitement for what is a powerful and culturally significant medium, inspiring a range of responses from the emotional to the reflective. Film Studies consequently makes an important contribution to the curriculum, offering the opportunity to investigate how film works both as a medium of representation and as an aesthetic medium.

We aim to introduce learners to a wide variety of films in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of film and the range of responses films can generate. The specifications at GCSE and A Level therefore offer opportunities to study mainstream American films from the past and the present as well as a range of recent and contemporary British films, American independent films and global films, both non-English language and English language. The historical range of film represented in those films is extended by the study of silent film and significant film movements so that learners can gain a sense of the development of film from its early years to its still emerging digital future. Studies in documentary, experimental and short films add to the breadth of the learning experience.

Production work is a crucial part of this specification and is integral to learners' study of film. Studying a diverse range of films from several different contexts is designed to give learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of how films are constructed to their own filmmaking and screenwriting. This is intended to enable learners to create high quality film and screenplay work as well as provide an informed filmmaker's perspective on their own study of film.

Across GCSE and A Level Film Studies we aim to enable learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- a diverse range of film, including documentary, film from the silent era, experimental film and short film
- the significance of film and film practice in national, global and historical contexts
- film and its key contexts (including social, cultural, political, historical and technological contexts)
- how films generate meanings and responses
- film as an aesthetic medium
- the different ways in which spectators respond to film.

It also aims to enable learners to:

- apply critical approaches to film and
- apply knowledge and understanding of film through either filmmaking or screenwriting.

The specification is additionally designed to reflect the diversity of film culture through both filmmakers and the films they make. The wide choice of films offered includes films by women directors and films which represent particular ethnic and cultural experiences. The specifications consequently provide a framework for the systematic study of a broad range of film as well as providing opportunities for creative work, an integral part of film study. Most of all, we offer the opportunity to explore a range of important ideas and emotions, reflect on art and technology and connect theory and creative practice in ways which are designed to provide an absorbing and motivating educational experience.

Yearly Intent Statements

What are the aims of specific stages of the curriculum?

Year 10: By the end of the year...

Students will have become conversant with the key concepts of Film Studies: Film form and language; Narrative; Genre; and Representation. They will have learned how to apply these to key sequences from the set films. Students will also have learned how to place film texts within their wider social, cultural, historical and industry contexts.

In Year 10 students will cover Component Two of the GCSE specification: Global English Language Film; Global Non-English Language Film; and British Film. Students will also undertake Component Three, the coursework unit which allows students to apply their knowledge in a practical context.

Year 11: By the end of the year...

The key concepts of Film Language, Narrative, Genre and Representation will become embedded and extended. Students will also learn how to analyse a film text through the context of specialist writing which introduces an ideological perspective.

In Year 11 students will cover Component One of the specifications; Hollywood Cinema; Key Developments in Film Technology; US Independent Cinema.

A variety of revision strategies will be employed to help students prepare for examination.

Year 12: By the end of the year...

Key elements of film form will be reinforced for those students who have studied Film Studies at GCSE and introduced to those students new to the subject. The key focal areas of the specification (Film Form, Meaning and Response and Contexts) will become embedded in the way that students explore and analyse texts. Additional study areas of an Auteur-based approach to film and Feminist and Marxist critical ideological approaches will also be introduced.

In Year 12 students will cover Component One Section A (Hollywood Cinema 1930 - 1990); Component One Section B (US Film Since 2005); Component 2 Section A (Global Cinema) and Component 2 Section B (Documentary). Students will also undertake Component Three, the coursework unit which allows students to apply their knowledge in a practical context following the study of the Short Film form.

Year 13: By the end of the year...

In Year 13 students will cover Component 1 Section C (British Film); Component 2 Section C (Silent Cinema) and Component 2 Section D (Experimental Cinema). This will extend students' understanding of a range of different film genres and forms, also introducing a historical perspective on the study of film. Revision and exam technique sessions ensure that students are fully prepared for their A Level exams.

Rationale behind sequencing:

The sequence in which units are taught and materials covered has been carefully constructed. Units build upon prior learning and provide the skills and information required for learning in the future. For example, delivery of the GCSE specification begins in Year 10 with Component 2 Section C. This is because this material is the most accessible and familiar for students new to the subject. The learning and assessment focus for the Component 2 texts are the Core Study areas of film

form/aesthetics, narrative, representation and genre. Covering these skills in the Autumn and Spring 1 terms provide the basis for students to integrate this knowledge into Production coursework, which is delivered in the Spring 2 and Summer Terms of Year 10. The units which contain more challenging material and assessment are covered in Year 11. For example, the US Comparative Study requires comparisons being drawn between two texts (rather than a focus on a single-study text) and has a more demanding synoptic assessment focus including industry and historical contexts. Likewise, the US Independent Film unit requires learners to consider a film text in relation to a piece of specialist writing. Conceptually and in terms of literacy requirements, this is the most challenging of the units.

Similarly, delivery of the A Level specification has been sequenced in order to revisit and build upon knowledge for those who have studied the subject at GCSE, while also providing a structured and accessible framework for those new to the subject. So, for example, the course begins with Component 2 Section A, Global Cinema. Although the texts may be unfamiliar to students, this unit has an assessment focused solely on the Core Study Areas (Film Form, Meaning and Response and Contexts) with no supplementary assessment of Specialist Study Areas. This allows for an introduction/revisiting of those areas which underlie all subsequent units of the course. Units are carefully sequenced so that Study Areas of Auteur Theory, Spectatorship, Industry and Historical Contexts, Ideological Approaches and Narrative Theory are all covered in Year 12 and then revisited and reinforced in Year 13. Production Coursework is undertaken in the Summer Term of Year 12. This allows learners to integrate their knowledge of Film Form, Cinematography and Narrative gained during the first two terms, as well as providing the most flexibility in terms of filming for practical production work.

