

GCE A LEVEL

WJEC Eduqas GCE A LEVEL in  
**FILM STUDIES**

ACCREDITED BY OFQUAL

**GUIDANCE FOR  
TEACHING**

Teaching from 2017



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## Introduction

The **WJEC Eduqas A level in Film Studies** qualification, accredited by Ofqual and designated by Qualifications Wales, for first teaching from September 2017, is available to:

- all schools and colleges in England and Wales
- schools and colleges in independent regions such as Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands

It was awarded for the first time in Summer 2019, using grades A\*–E.

This A Level Film Studies specification offers a broad and coherent course of study which allows learners the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and understanding of film. The content is assessed across two examination components and one production component. All learners will study 11 film texts in relation to the *core study areas* with some film topics requiring the study of additional specialist topic areas including narrative, ideology and spectatorship. In addition, for the coursework component of the programme of study, students will create a Film production, choosing to specialise in either screenwriting and storyboarding or moving image production, synoptically drawing on the cinematic influences and insights gained from the range of the films studied throughout the course. This allows learners the freedom to express their own practical interests as potential film-makers.

The structure of the A level Film Studies programme allows learners to demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge and understanding from across the three components, providing them with an informed filmmaker's perspective of film.

The full set of requirements is outlined in the specification which can be accessed on the Eduqas website.

Key features include:

- a diverse choice of films, film movements and filmmakers
- assessment of production and evaluation skills (30%)
- the opportunity for learners to specialise in either screenwriting or filmmaking for 20% of the qualification
- the opportunity to evaluate creative, practical work for 10% of the qualification
- a choice of accessible and interesting films for every exam component
- questions which demand analysis, extended answers and comparison (Component 1)
- high-quality examination and resource materials, including sample assessment materials and exemplar responses.

**Additional ways that WJEC can offer support:**

- sample assessment materials and mark schemes
- face-to-face CPD events
- exemplar resources
- examiners' reports on each question paper
- free access to past question papers and mark schemes via the secure website
- direct access to the subject officer
- free online resources
- Exam Results Analysis
- Online Examination Review.

## Aims of the Guidance for Teaching

The principal aim of the Guidance for Teaching is to support teachers in the delivery of the new **WJEC Eduqas A Level in Film Studies** specification and to offer guidance on the requirements of the qualification and the assessment process.

The guide is **not intended as a comprehensive reference**, but as support for professional teachers to develop stimulating and exciting courses tailored to the needs and skills of their own learners in their particular institutions.

The guide offers assistance to teachers with regard to possible classroom activities and links to useful digital resources (both our own, freely available, digital materials and some from external sources) to provide ideas for immersive and engaging lessons.

## Overview of Specification Components

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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Component 1 – Varieties of film and filmmaking</b><br><br>Section A: Hollywood 1930 – 1990 (comparative study)<br>Section B: American film since 2012 (two film study)<br>Section C: British film since 1995 (two film study)              | 35% (120 marks)<br><br>40 marks<br>40 marks<br>40 marks             |
| <b>Component 2 – Global filmmaking perspectives</b><br><br>Section A: Global Film (two film study)<br>Section B: Documentary Film<br>Section C: Film Movements – Silent Cinema<br>Section D: Film Movements – Experimental Film (1960 – 2001) | 35% (100 marks)<br><br>40 marks<br>20 marks<br>20 marks<br>20 marks |
| <b>Component 3 – Production</b><br><br>Non-exam assessment<br><br>Option 1: Short Film <b>OR</b><br>Option 2: Screenplay (and 20-frame digital storyboard)<br>Evaluative Analysis (1600-1800 words)   | 30% (60 marks)<br><br><br><br><br>40 marks<br>20 marks              |

## Explanation of Assessment Objectives

The A Level Film Studies qualification is made up of three components. The assessment objectives are explained below. Both A01 and A02 are assessed equally in Components 1 and 2 (written exams); A03 is assessed in Component 3 (NEA – Production).

In both components, learners must study **all** of the core study areas in relation to each of the 11 film texts studied. Assessment may focus on any area of the core study areas in relation to any of the films. A detailed outline of the content that must be covered in relation to each core study area is included in the specification. Where there is a specialist area of study associated with a component, then an understanding of this will be assessed, with learners required to use the core areas of study to further inform their understanding of a specialist study area. For example, using an analysis of sound (core) to inform their understanding of spectatorship (specialist) or using their understanding of the social context of a film (core) to inform their understanding of ideology (specialist).

### AO1

*Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of elements of film*

AO1 focuses on **demonstrating knowledge and understanding**. Learners are required to demonstrate a secure *understanding* of all the core study areas and where appropriate,

specialist study area/s outlined on pp. 10-21 of the Specification). Learners are required to use subject-specific terminology when writing about film form and are encouraged to refer in detail to the techniques and connotations of cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing, sound and performance within particular sequences. In addition, knowledge of the contexts and representations as outlined in the core study areas should be demonstrated if required by the question. Knowledge and understanding of the relevant specialist study area/s will also be assessed by A01.

Learners will be assessed on their ability to **demonstrate knowledge** (e.g. by giving key facts, details from sequences) and **understanding** (e.g. by explaining, giving examples from the film) of elements of film.

## **A02**

*Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to:*

- *analyse and compare films, including through the use of critical approaches (A02 1)*
- *evaluate the significance of critical approaches (A02 2)*
- *analyse and evaluate own work in relation to other professionally produced work (A02 3)*

**Analysis** requires the critical study of the ways in which films **construct and communicate meanings** and generate responses using illustrative examples from the film texts under investigation.

Learners are required to additionally analyse film in the following ways:

A02 1 is assessed in Component 1 Section A: Hollywood 1930 – 1990. Learners will be required to analyse and *compare* two Hollywood films from different production contexts (Classical and New Hollywood) in terms of the core study areas, foregrounding context, whilst also comparing the significance of the auteur within each film.

A02 2 is assessed in either Component 1 Section B: American film since 2012 or Component 1 Section C: British Film since 1995. Within one of those sections, learners will be required to analyse and evaluate the significance of a critical approach (A02 2) in terms of narrative (British Film only) or ideology (British Film or American Film). Learners are required to debate ideas and evaluate the significance of a particular critical approach, such as a Feminist approach (ideology), constructing and developing a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and gives illustrative examples from the film text in question.

A02 3 is assessed in Component 3: The Evaluation. Learners will be required to draw upon short cinematic influences including short films in an evaluative analysis of their own production.

## **A03**

*Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to the production of a film or screenplay.*

Learners are required to produce a **film production** in the form of either a short film or screenplay and digital storyboard for a short film.

Learners will be assessed on their ability to create a production that **applies knowledge and understanding** of elements of film to the production of a film or screenplay. These are:

Structural elements (25 marks):

- Construction of narrative
- Appropriateness to the chosen brief
- Mise en scene

Key elements (15 marks):

- Cinematography, editing and sound

## Subject Content at a glance

Learners will study **11 films**.

For each of these films, learners will study three **core study areas** (outlined in detail on pp. 10-13 of the Specification). There are six **specialist study areas** which learners 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

## Course Models

A recommended course plan should include the following features:

- AL content is taught in AS year

It is strongly recommended that centres offering an AS and an AL course concurrently, with some students leaving at the end of the AS year, teach content up to A Level from the outset. For example, when teaching the Hollywood Comparative Study, also include a study of Auteur to AS students. This means that some AS students will have more knowledge than they need for the exam. It is thought that this would be a better approach than revisiting specialist content in the AL Year. If you take this approach, please remind students that they will not be assessed on auteur for AS Level.

- An Induction Period

This will include teaching the Key Elements of Film Form, either through extracts of films that will be studied on the course, clips from a range of films (on or outside of the specification), or the complete study of a film (on or outside the specification). Further induction tasks can be found on the Eduqas Website. It may be beneficial to study the American Independent film for the Induction period (in terms of the core study areas) as this will be close to the students' experience and would save time later. Learners could then revisit the film much later in the course in terms of the specialist areas of spectatorship and ideology.

- Starting with Global Film (Component 2, Section A)

The study of the two global films looks at the core study areas only, which may make for a good introductory study. Starting with the two global films would allow learners the chance to build upon what they have learnt about the key elements of film form in the Induction period and develop this knowledge into a deeper understanding of the core areas of study. This would provide a smooth transition from the induction Period. Indeed, the Global film study could be part of the Induction period itself. There is also a rationale for studying these films right at the end of the course as revision texts as students will have a rounded knowledge of film by that point, so will be in a position to tackle a 'core elements' screening and analysis with relative ease.

- Component 1, Section A is taught towards the end of the course.

It may be that centres start with the teaching of the Hollywood Comparative study at the end of the course due to the historical and contextual nature of this component. Learners will also be required to develop comparative skills as part of this study so it could be seen as the most difficult part of the specification, to be tackled when learners have prior knowledge of film studies. The specialist subject area of Auteur is also more geared towards second year students. Some centres however, may use a course structure that charts the film choices historically, in which case these films would come much earlier in the course.

- Themed Terms

Terms may be themed to allow learners to compartmentalise their knowledge. For instance, on the sample, there is a term dedicated to the study of British film and one designated to Film Movements.

- Opportunities to redraft coursework

Where possible, students should be given the chance to revisit coursework, both the production and the written evaluation. For centres offering both AS & AL courses, please ensure AS learners complete an extract as opposed to a short film. For learners who are unsure whether they will continue at AL, centres could offer ALL learners the screenplay option in the AS year with the opportunity to adapt this into a short film in Year 2.

- Exam Focus Weeks

The course model includes the regular feature of 'exam weeks' at which points learners can consolidate learning and update their revision notes/undertake mocks and create a comprehensive revision file that they can return to at the end of the course.

### **Model 1**

For centres wishing to teach an AS and AL group concurrently, teaching AS content in Year One and AL content in Year Two.

The terms are interchangeable as long as you allow for Production re-drafting at some point in Year 2.

| <b>YEAR ONE (AS)</b>                           |   | <b>YEAR TWO (AL)</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Term 1 (Year 1) – Intro to Film Studies</b> |   | <b>Term 4 (AL Year) – Refresher Term</b>                             |
| 1  | Induction Week<br>Introductory Film Screening<br>Key Elements of Film Form –<br>Technical: Cinematography, Editing &<br>Sound | Film 7: American Mainstream Film<br>Film Screening and Core Analysis |
| 2  | Induction Week<br>Sequence Analysis<br>Key Elements of Film Form – Visual :<br>Mise en Scene, Aesthetics,<br>Performance      | Key Sequence Analysis –<br>Representations & Ideology                |
| 3  | Film 1: European Film<br>Film Screening & Contexts  | Approaches to Spectatorship  |
| 4  | European Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – CORE<br>Aesthetics and Meaning & Response  | Key Sequence Analysis – Core &<br>Spectatorship                      |
| 5  | European Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – CORE<br>Representations and Meaning &<br>Response                                    | EXAM WEEK – Component 1<br>Revision & MOCK                           |

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 6                                     | European Film: Conclusion  | Film 8: Global Film<br>Film Screening & Contexts  |
| 7                                     | Pre-Production Week 1 – Ideas, Synopsis, Storyboard (if required)          | Global Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Representations and Meaning & Response                         |
| 8                                     | Pre-Production Week 2 – Ideas, Synopsis, Storyboard (if required)          | Global Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Aesthetics and Meaning & Response                              |
| 9                                     | Production*  | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions:<br>Component 2, Section A                                      |
| 10                                    | Production – Watch Shorts  | Revisit Production*   |
| 11                                    | Production   | Revisit Production – Watch Shorts   |
| 12                                    | Production/Post Production(including re-shoot, redrafts)                   | Revisit Production  |
| 13                                    | Production/Post Production/Evaluation                                      | Revisit Production  |
| 14                                    | Evaluation (Xmas Work)   | Evaluation (Xmas Work)  |
| <b>Term 2 (Year 1) – British Film</b> |  | <b>Term 5 (AL Year) – Film Movements</b>  |
| 1                                     | Evaluation Completion  | Introduction to Film Movements -<br>What is a Film Movement?<br>Focus on Silent & Experimental Cinema |
| 2                                     | Evaluation Completion  | Introduction to Silent Cinema –<br>Contexts and Clips   |
| 3                                     | Film 2: British Film 1<br>Introduction to British Cinema<br>Film Screening | Film 9: Silent Cinema Film Screening<br>Analysis: Core Elements                                       |
| 4                                     | British Film 1<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Elements                    | Introduction to Critical Debates in<br>Silent Cinema  |
| 5                                     | British Film 1<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Ideology                         | Applying Critical Debates - Silent<br>Cinema Sequences  |
| 6                                     | British Film Narratives (with clips)<br>Critical Approaches to narrative   | What is Experimental Cinema? (with<br>clips)  |
| 7                                     | Film 3: British Film 2   | Film 10: Experimental Film Screening  |

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|--|---|--|
|  | <b>Film Screening and Narrative Analysis</b>  | <b>Analysis – Core Elements</b>  |
| 8                                      | British Film 2<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Elements                                 | Experimental Film Narratives - Intro (with clips)  |
| 9                                      | British Film 2<br>Key Sequence Analysis - Ideology                                      | Film Sequence Analysis – Narrative   |
| 10                                     | British Film Narratives – British film 1 & 2  | Experimental Film & Auteur   |
| 11                                     | British Film – Closing Sequences  | Key Sequence Analysis (Narrative & Auteur)   |
| 12                                     | Critical Approaches to Narrative<br>RECAP   | Film Movements Revision  |
| 13                                     | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions: Component 2                                      | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions: Component 2, Sections C & D                               |
| 14                                     | Component 2 Revision & MOCK   | Final Coursework Submission  |
| <b>Term 3 (Year 1) – American Film</b> |   | <b>Term 6 (AL Year) - Documentary</b>  |
| 1                                      | Hollywood Film<br>The Contexts of Hollywood – Classical, New                            | Introduction to Theories & Debates about Documentary (with clips)                                |
| 2                                      | <b>Film 4: Classical Hollywood (1930-1960)<br/>Film Screening, Intro &amp; Contexts</b> | <b>Film 11: Documentary Film<br/>Film Screening<br/>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Study Areas</b> |
| 3                                      | Classical Hollywood & Auteur<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Study Areas & Auteur       | Documentary Sequence Analysis – application of theories & debates                                |
| 4                                      | <b>Film 5: New Hollywood (1961 – 1990)<br/>Film Screening, Intro &amp; Contexts</b>     | Documentary Sequence Analysis - Conclusion   |
| 5                                      | New Hollywood & Auteur<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Study Areas & Auteur             | Component 1 Section A Revision   |
| 6                                      | Comparative Sequence Analysis – Contexts  | Component 1 Section B Revision   |
| 7                                      | Comparative Sequence Analysis – Core/Auteur   | Component 1 Section C Revision   |

|    |   |                                    |
|----|---|------------------------------------|
| 8  | Hollywood Comparison Conclusion                                     | Component 2 Section A Revision     |
| 9  | Film 6: Contemporary Indie Film<br>Film Screening and Core Analysis | Component 2 Section B Revision     |
| 10 | Introduction to Spectatorship                                       | Component 2 Section C Revision     |
| 11 | Key Sequence Analysis –<br>Representations & Ideology               | Component 2 Section D Revision     |
| 12 | Key Sequence Analysis –<br>Core & Spectatorship                     | Revision & MOCK                    |
| 13 | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam<br>Questions: Component 1               | Revision/Revisit Problematic Areas |
| 14 | Component 1 Revision & MOCK   | Revision/Revisit Problematic Areas |

## Model 2

For centres delivering a two-year AL course with no AS year.

| <b>Term 1 (Autumn) – An Introduction to Film Studies: Global Film</b> |   |
|---|---|
| 1   | Induction Week<br>Introductory Film Screening<br>Key Elements of Film Form – Technical: Cinematography, Editing & Sound |
| 2   | Induction Week<br>Key Elements of Film Form – Visual : Mise en Scene, Aesthetics, Performance                           |
| 3   | Film 1: European Film<br>Film Screening & Contexts  |
| 4   | European Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Representations and Meaning & Response   |
| 5   | European Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Aesthetics and Meaning & Response  |
| 6   | Film 2: Global Film<br>Film Screening & Contexts  |
| 7   | Global Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Representations and Meaning & Response   |
| 8   | Global Film<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Aesthetics and Meaning & Response  |
| 9   | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 2, Section A)  |
| 10  | Introduction to Theories & Debates about Documentary (with clips)   |
| 11  | Film 3: Documentary Film<br>Film Screening/ Core Study Areas Refresher  |
| 12  | Documentary Sequence Analysis – application of theories & debates   |
| 13  | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 2, Section B)  |
| 14  | Revision Week   |
| <b>Term 2 (Spring) – Hollywood Cinema</b>                             |   |
| 1   | Hollywood Film<br>The Contexts of Hollywood – Classical, New  |
| 2   | Film 4: Classical Hollywood (1930-1960)<br>Film Screening, Intro & Contexts   |
| 3   | Classical Hollywood & Auteur<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Study Areas & Auteur                                       |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 4   | Film 5: New Hollywood (1961 – 1990)<br>Film Screening, Intro & Contexts     |
| 5   | New Hollywood & Auteur<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Study Areas & Auteur |
| 6   | Comparative Sequence Analysis – Contexts                                    |
| 7   | Comparative Sequence Analysis – Core/Auteur                                 |
| 8   | Film 6: American Mainstream Film<br>Film Screening and Core Analysis        |
| 9   | Key Sequence Analysis – Representations & Ideology                          |
| 10  | Key Sequence Analysis – Core & Spectatorship                                |
| 11  | Film 7: Contemporary Indie Film<br>Film Screening and Core Analysis         |
| 12  | Key Sequence Analysis – Representations & Ideology                          |
| 13  | Key Sequence Analysis – Core & Spectatorship                                |
| 14  | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 1, Sections A & B)         |
| <b>Term 3 (Summer) - Getting Creative: Production</b> |   |
| 1   | Watching Shorts/ Reading Screenplays  |
| 2   | Evaluation Draft Part 1 – Influences  |
| 3   | Pre-Production Week 1 – Ideas, Synopsis, Storyboard (if required)           |
| 4   | Pre-Production Week 2 – Ideas, Synopsis, Storyboard (if required)           |
| 5   | Production  |
| 6   | Production  |
| 7   | Production/Post Production  |
| 8   | Production/Post Production(including re-shoot, redrafts)                    |
| 9   | Production/Post Production(including re-shoot, redrafts)                    |
| 10  | Production/Post Production(including re-shoot, redrafts)                    |
| 11  | Complete Evaluation   |
| 12  | Complete Evaluation   |
| 13  | Revision  |
| 14  | MOCK (Components 1 & 2, Sections A & B)                                     |

| <b>Term 4 (Autumn) – British Cinema</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 1                                       | Film 8: British Film 1<br>Introduction to British Cinema<br>Film Screening                         |
| 2                                       | British Film 1<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Elements  |
| 3                                       | British Film 1<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Ideology   |
| 4                                       | British Film Narratives (with clips)   |
| 5                                       | Film 9: British Film 2<br>Film Screening and Narrative Analysis                                    |
| 6                                       | British Film 2<br>Key Sequence Analysis – Core Elements  |
| 7                                       | British Film 2<br>Key Sequence Analysis - Ideology   |
| 8                                       | British Film Narratives – British film 1 & 2   |
| 9                                       | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 1, Section C)                                     |
| 10                                      | Revisiting Production - Redrafts   |
| 11                                      | Production – Redrafts  |
| 12                                      | Production – Redrafts  |
| 13                                      | Production – Redrafts  |
| 14                                      | Production – Final Submission  |
| <b>Term 5 (Spring) – Film Movements</b> |  |
| 1                                       | Introduction to Film Movements - What is a Film Movement?<br>Focus on Silent & Experimental Cinema |
| 2                                       | Introduction to Silent Cinema – Contexts and Clips   |
| 3                                       | Film 10: Silent Cinema Film Screening<br>Analysis: Core Elements                                   |
| 4                                       | Introduction to Critical Debates in Silent Cinema  |
| 5                                       | Applying Critical Debates - Silent Cinema Sequences  |
| 6                                       | What is Experimental Cinema? (with clips)  |
| 7                                       | Film 11: Experimental Film Screening<br>Analysis – Core Elements                                   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 8                                       | Experimental Film Narratives - Intro (with clips)              |
| 9                                       | Film Sequence Analysis – Narrative                             |
| 10                                      | Experimental Film & Auteur                                     |
| 11                                      | Key Sequence Analysis (Narrative & Auteur)                     |
| 12                                      | Film Movements Revision  |
| 13                                      | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 2, Section C) |
| 14                                      | EXAM WEEK – Looking at Exam Questions (Component 2, Section D) |
| <b>Term 6 (Summer) Exam Preparation</b> |  |
| 1                                       | Component 1 Section A Revision                                 |
| 2                                       | Component 1 Section A Revision                                 |
| 3                                       | Component 1 Section B Revision                                 |
| 4                                       | Component 1 Section B Revision                                 |
| 5                                       | Component 1 Section C Revision                                 |
| 6                                       | Component 1 Section C Revision                                 |
| 7                                       | Component 2 Section A Revision                                 |
| 8                                       | Component 2 Section A Revision                                 |
| 9                                       | Component 2 Section B Revision                                 |
| 10                                      | Component 2 Section B Revision                                 |
| 11                                      | Component 2 Section C Revision                                 |
| 12                                      | Component 2 Section D Revision                                 |
| 13                                      | MOCKS  |
| 14                                      | MOCKS  |

## Teaching the Core Study Areas

The core study areas are defined in detail in the Specification.

### 1. The key elements of film form

There are four elements of film language to be studied:

- Cinematography (camera and lighting)
- Mise-en-scene
- Editing
- Sound
- Performance

It is recommended that centres study key sequences within their chosen films, paying close attention to the key elements of film form at work and allowing learners to develop an understanding of how key elements create meaning and response. It is expected that by studying the key elements of film form, learners will develop the appropriate vocabulary that will allow them to use subject specific terminology when analysing films.

### 2. Meaning and Response

Learners must develop their study of the key elements of film form to analyse how these elements create meaning and generate audience response. For the purposes of the specification, this includes:

- Representations (gender, ethnicity and age; first assessment for AL Summer 2029: identity and place) – These must be considered for all six films studied. It is always important to remember that representation includes what is left out of a film, as well as what it contains.
- Aesthetics – How the key elements of film form work together to create the overall look and mood of the film.

#### Additional Notes on Representation

Representations are the ways in which films portrays particular people, communities, experiences or ideas from a particular ideological perspective. Fundamentally, how do the films present the world to the spectator?

Within the films studied, the identification of representation should be informed by a sense of context.

Last assessment for A Level Summer 2028: Learners must study key relevant examples of age, ethnicity and gender from their chosen film.

First assessment for A Level Summer 2029: Learners must study key relevant aspects of key characters' identity, and representations of place in their chose film.

### Representation Starter Questions

- How does the film challenge or reinforce stereotypes?
- What is emphasised by the representation?
- What does the representation neglect to tell us?
- Is a particular group being under-represented or omitted entirely? Why?
- What are the dominant messages of the film and how are these reinforced by representations?
- What dominant ideologies are being presented or criticised by the representation on screen?
- What are the film's social and political contexts?
- How are the elements of film form used to construct the representation?

### Additional Notes on Aesthetics

Aesthetics at its most basic is a study of the look, mood and feel of the film as styled by the film's key elements - how is the look of the film being created? A film offers two principle pleasures: one is the pleasure of 'story'; the other is the pleasure of **sensory spectacle**, otherwise known as the aesthetic. To study film aesthetics is to ask questions about all those things in the film (for example, lighting, music, camera movement, set design, editing rhythm) that are there primarily to offer texture to the film. Stylistic choices can be described as 'artistic' and point to a focus on film as a medium that invites appreciation of elements which are, strictly speaking, not essential for the telling of the film's story.

A slight variation on this explanation is the following: often we forget the story of a film over time but hold on to particular moments. This is a recollection of the aesthetic – the memorable moments of 'cinema' which are brilliantly achieved, deeply affecting and often much referred to.

In practice, the distinction between these two pleasures should not be pushed too far, like some sort of crude distinction between content and form. Aesthetics is a particularly good way into a consideration of the auteur and an excellent way into the students' own production work. Learners may take the study of mise en scene further by looking at the film as a piece of art, commenting on visual elements such as contrast, colour, lines, framing, grain, tone, lighting, negative space, focus, pattern, balance/imbalance.

At the heart of a study of film aesthetics are the combined "elements of film": Cinematography, mise-en-scène, sound, performance and editing. The shot-by-shot choices made by the filmmakers provide the basis for a study of the aesthetic character of the film in question. As these choices are made by individuals or by individuals working in collaboration, then a focus on auteurism is likely to be helpful, even in sections of the Specification where auteur study is not required. It may also be interesting to look at the stylistic influences on a film. Cultural and Institutional contexts may also be points of focus, where the style of the film reflects these contexts, for example Classical Hollywood or Soviet filmmaking in the 1920s.

### Aesthetics Starter Questions:

- How are the elements of film form used to create aesthetic effect in this sequence?
- Does the beauty of this moment in the film also propel the narrative forward?

- Does the narrative pause to allow the spectator to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the film?
- Does the decision to create a strong aesthetic effect suggest something about the film's key message?
- Is the aesthetic effect in this sequence typical of this filmmaker?
- How is the pace of the film being managed?
- How is the look of the film being created?
- How is sound design contributing to effect and audience response?
- How is choreography of actors within space being exploited?
- How is set design contributing to the film at any given moment?

**3. The contexts of film: Social, cultural, political (either current or historical), institutional, including production.**

Films are depictions of people, places, and events. A study of context looks at when, where, how, why the film is set. The time, place and circumstances. Films, like all works of art, reflect the values and culture of the society that produces them. All the circumstances that a film was produced in and that shape its reception are a film's **context**. The study of context should focus on the appropriate context when the films were *made* as opposed to *set*.

**Contextual studies should be a particular focus for Hollywood 1930-60 and for Hollywood 1960-90 (Component 1, Section A).** Beyond this, learners should study the most appropriate or applicable context in relation to the films studied elsewhere in the Specification.

Additional Notes on Context

**Social:** A look at the relevant society's dominant attitudes and beliefs including debates about aspects of identity where relevant.

**Cultural:** There are two kinds of cultural context. One is general and includes a sense of what fashions were significant at the time of the film's production (the 1960s for example), and the culture in which the characters live. This general cultural context is less important than any particular cultural context that has directly influenced the film's look and style. The latter might include a studio style or an art movement, like expressionism or surrealism.

**Political:** An exploration of the impact of the contemporary political climate on the themes of the films, their representations and the production process itself.

**Institutional Contexts (including production):** Who made the films, what institutional frameworks they were working within, what funding was available to them and how all of this impacted upon the restrictions placed on the filmmakers.

Context Starter Questions:

- What does the film suggest about attitudes to key aspects of identity (e.g. gender, social class, ethnicity) within that society at that time?
- Is the film challenging or reinforcing hegemonic attitudes to particular social groups or concepts?
- Were the filmmakers restricted by any contextual factors?
- What major political movements were taking place at the time of production and how have these shaped the film text?

- Does the film engage with politics directly or is it in the subtext?
- Is the film typical of films from its country of origin in that time?
- What creative or artistic trends were occurring at the time of the film's production? Have these influenced the film in any way?
- How was the film funded and what impact has that had on how it was made?
- What studio produced and made the film and how has this shaped the film's content?
- What technologies were available at the time of the film's production and what impact does this have on the finished film?

## Teaching the Specialist Study Areas

There are six additional specialist subject areas to be studied at AL. These areas are outlined in detail on pp. 10-11 of the Specification. These are Spectatorship, Narrative, Spectatorship, Ideology, Auteur, Critical Debates (1 & 2) and Filmmakers' Theories. They will be assessed across the following exam components:

| Component 1:   | Component 2*:   |
|--|---|
| Section A: Hollywood (1930 – 1990)<br><b>Auteur</b>                        | Section B: Documentary Film<br><b>Critical Debates 1 &amp; Filmmakers' Theories</b> |
| Section B: American Film since 2012<br><b>Spectatorship &amp; Ideology</b> | Section C: Silent Cinema<br><b>Critical Debates 2</b>                               |
| Section C: British Film since 1995<br><b>Narrative &amp; Ideology</b>      | Section D: Experimental Film (1960-2001)<br><b>Narrative &amp; Auteur</b>           |

**\*Please note that in Component 2, Section A – Global film will only be assessed in terms of these core areas of study.**

All components still require a study of the core study areas.

## Component 1: Section A

### Hollywood 1930-1990 (Comparative study)

This is the only section in the exam that assesses learners' ability to *compare* films.

Assessment within Section A focuses on **Context** and the specialist study area of **Auteur**.

Assessment for this Section is out of 40 marks.

There is no stipulation that learners should write about both films equally but should make substantial reference to two films, quantified as at least one paragraph on two films.

When choosing films for this section, it is not necessary to choose films with a thematic link, there is no requirement to compare the films in relation to how they deal with a common theme or subject matter.

It is suggested that the most solid starting point in choosing films for this section, is a contextual comparison. A contextual comparison will be the basis for the auteur study too as the auteur will be limited/enabled by the context in which they produced their film.

Auteur for this section is defined as **any** contributor who has had an impact on the film. This could be director, star, composer, cinematographer or institution for example. Comparison is likely to draw out difference rather than similarity whichever selection approach is followed.

Here are some possible pairings that will generate productive comparison of both specialist and core areas of study:

### **Director as Auteur Comparison**

*Vertigo* and *Alien* or *Night of The Living Dead* or *Do the Right Thing*

These comparisons allow the learners to explore the concept of 'director as auteur' in two different Hollywood contexts - Hitchcock and Scott, Romero or Lee providing the clearest choices for this type of comparison. There are also interesting gender/social context comparisons in each instance.

### **Film as Collaboration Comparison**

*Casablanca* and *Bonnie and Clyde* are interesting to compare as they are both financed by the same studio, one at the height of the studio era and one at its demise, which makes the auteur debate about *Bonnie and Clyde* more complex, but the tension between producer and director is common to both, and there is an interesting debated to be had about the role of the writers who were prominent in shaping both films.

### **Director/Producer or Star as Auteur Comparison**

*Imitation of Life* or *Some Like It Hot* or *All About Eve*; all three have what may be considered auteur directors working within the studio system which would be interesting to compare with *Bonnie and Clyde* at the beginnings of New Hollywood and the move away from the studios, or comparison could be made with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* considering the tension between star and director compared with studio and director.

### **Social Context Comparison**

Both *Imitation of Life* and *Night of The Living Dead* could be compared looking at social contexts of race and/or gender. *Casablanca* and *Night of The Living Dead* both have interesting representations of masculinity and male heroism which could be compared

within their different social contexts. *Imitation of Life* and *Do the Right Thing* both reflect social contexts of racial identity and racism in America at the time when they were made, this could form the basis of a useful comparison.

#### Social Comparison

- *Vertigo and One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- These films offer the thematic starter comparison of 'male madness' whilst offering learners the chance to debate the concept of auteur as it could be argued that it is Nicholson, the star, as opposed to Forman, who is the auteur within *One Flew*, providing an interesting comparison to Hitchcock, the original director auteur. The films also reflect changing social contexts, illustrated not least by gender representations).

#### Genre Comparison

- *Some Like it Hot* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- These films offer the starting point of 'comedy' within different social contexts as well as explorations of identity as a theme. Both films offer a comparison of 'star as auteur', allowing learners to debate whether Monroe and Nicholson have a more authorial imprint than Wilder and Forman. A rich social context comparison in terms of gender at the times the films were made.

#### Institutional Comparison

- *Casablanca* and *Bonnie and Clyde*
- Both love stories, the archetypal 'classical' and original 'new' Hollywood film. Bogart and Beatty offer an interesting comparison auteur stars. Offers learners an interesting comparison in terms of institutions within Hollywood as both films are Warner Brothers pictures.

#### Additional notes on Auteur

##### Common Definitions:

- French term meaning 'author'
- A filmmaker, performer or studio with a visible and distinctive 'signature'
- The principal creator of a film
- The principal source of meaning in a film
- A filmmaker who makes films of artistic merit as opposed to those of commercial value
- A filmmaker who makes films with an individual style
- A filmmaker who makes films with similar themes
- A filmmaker who adopts a 'jack of all trades' approach to filmmaking

##### Statements to debate:

'An auteur (French for author) is usually a director whose work is characterised by distinctive THEMES and STYLISTIC TRAITS visible across a number of films.'

'True auteurs stamp each work with their personality.'

'An auteur director is one who brings to film, signs of their own individuality - perhaps in the way narrative is constructed, the way certain themes are explored or within their visual style.'

'The auteur functions as the main creative force and controlling presence'.

'Other key personnel such as a films' star, a cinematographer or composer can also be described as auteurs if they bring a distinct contribution to a body of films'.

## Additional Guidance - Ideology

### Component 1, Sections B & C (American film since 2012, British film since 1995)

For both Component 1, Section B (American Film since 2012) and Component 1, Section C (British film since 1995) the specialist area of **Ideology**, including critical approaches to ideology should be studied.

Section B requires the additional study of **Spectatorship**. Section C requires the additional study of **Narrative**. Both concepts should be studied hand in hand with Ideology.

Assessment for both Sections is out of 40 marks.

Both Sections B and C are two film studies. There is no stipulation that learners should write about both films equally but should make substantial reference to two films, quantified as at least one paragraph on each of the two films.

### Additional Notes on Ideology

Films are believed to reflect the fundamental beliefs of a society – **ideologies** (Phillips, 2012). Ideology can be thought of as the main messages and values conveyed by a film as well as those which inform it. Commonly mainstream cinema presents dominant ideologies, whereas alternative or independent film may seek to question the ruling ideologies that exist within society.

It is thought that the teaching of Ideology will overlap with the other specialist area, rather than be taught as two distinctly separate concepts. For example, if teaching the film *Carol*, one might explore how it rejects a populist, conservative ideology in its presentation of an unconventional lesbian couple before exploring spectator response to such a rejection.

### Starter Questions

- What are the main messages and values of the film?
- How are these messages conveyed using the key elements of film form?
- Does the film reinforce, challenge or reject dominant attitudes within the society it is made in?
- Which character(s) are the spectators encouraged to align themselves with and what is their dominant belief system?

### Critical Approaches to Ideology

For the purposes of the specification, learners should also study their chosen films for these two sections in relation to critical approaches to ideology.

The specification recommends centres study either **political** or **feminist** critical approach in relation to these films, though centres may wish to choose their own.

From its particular content and context, the film will raise specific issues; these issues make clear how it needs to be interrogated. The film being studied will often do its own recommending in terms of which critical approach to choose. For example, the themes within *This Is England* suggest that it lends itself to a political approach or one that considers toxic masculinity, whereas *Fish Tank* may lend itself to a feminist approach given it was written and directed by female filmmaker Andrea Arnold and focuses on the female experience, constructing the female gaze. Similarly, a feminist approach to *St Maud* would seem the most likely as it was written and directed by Rose Glass, subverting some of the sexist elements usually found in the horror genre. It may be interesting to consider an ideological approach which addresses racial identity and the representation of Muslims in *Mogul Mowgli* alongside the representation of the lasting trauma faced by immigrants and the legacy of partition. *Mangrove* and *This is England* would be an interesting pairing as the impact of black culture on young working-class people in late 1960s Britain, particularly influencing the original skinhead movement, It is worth remembering that an ideological critical approach can consider what is absent from the film, as well as what it contains.

### A Political Approach

All films are rooted in some kind of political reality and posit some kind of political position, either explicitly or implicitly. For example, a film may focus on poverty and the lives of people living on the margins of society. A starting point would be to ask whether these lives are represented sympathetically. If they are, then the film is likely to be taking a politically ideological position. Another film may focus on the lives of powerful and privileged people and represent their lives as glamorous. This film too is taking a politically ideological position. In the first example, this is probably explicit and deliberate. In the second example it may well be implicit, the ideology 'taken-for-granted'.

### A Feminist Approach

This could be taught in numerous ways:

- A. By looking at an avowedly feminist filmmaker who attempts to make a film that embodies/presents/uses any of the central tenets of feminist thought. Usually these will be avant-garde works or genuine 'independent films' since to make something within mainstream cinema is to be confined by the patriarchal studio system. So these films will have female protagonists and female themes and will challenge representations and critique conventional attitudes.
- B. The approach adopted by feminist scholars in 'recuperating' or 're-validating' the women's picture, the family melodrama or the musical as films enjoyed by female audiences which also reveal important ideas about women's lives and their struggles within patriarchy (see the work of Christine Gledhill or Jeanine Basinger)

- C. The approach by feminist scholars in studying genres and films by male directors which have been assumed to be targeting men and to expose the contradictions in their underlying ideologies. (See Ann E. Kaplan (Crime/Noir) Yvonne Tasker (Action), Barbara Creed (Horror) or Annette Kuhn (Science Fiction))
- D. The approach by some feminist scholars which focused on theory itself and produced specific theoretical insights such as Laura Mulvey's in relation to the 'male gaze'.
- E. Something as simple as the ideas or subversions that contemporary female filmmakers bring to their films.

In some assessments of these sections, learners will be required to analyse the usefulness of applying a critical approach. The implication is that the film was viewed somewhat innocently before being critically interrogated. As a result of this interrogation the student is able to claim greater understanding and insight into the film's complexities.

## Additional Guidance – Spectatorship

### Component 1 – Section B: American Film since 2012

Assessment within Section B focuses on the specialist study areas of **Spectatorship** and **Ideology**. Centres select one film from Group 1 and one film from Group 2. There is no expectation that candidates will compare the two films in this section.

#### Additional Notes on Spectatorship

Spectatorship is a complex subject but the Specification requires only an introductory level of knowledge of a few key concepts, as outlined on page 15 of the Specification. In summary –

- The concept of passive and active spectatorship
- How spectators interact with narrative
- How spectators respond to the key elements of film form
- How and why spectators respond differently to the same film
- Preferred, negotiated, oppositional and aberrant (unintentional/not typical) readings of films

It could be argued that all spectatorship is active, as the spectator is a co-creator of meaning and the person who produces response, both intellectual and emotional. The attempted manipulation of the spectator by filmmakers through the use of well-known film techniques is a potential key area of focus for the study of spectatorship. Alongside this, learners should study both their position within the narrative and the structure of the narrative as a further manipulation technique. It is recommended that learners study the elements of film form closely through key sequences to analyse spectator response as well as studying the films' narrative.

Starting points – Group 1: Mainstream film

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| <p><i>Joker</i><br/><br/>(Phillips, 2019)</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is much debate about the ideology of the film, is it pro-Antifa (a US left-wing, anti-fascist, anti-racist movement)? Or is it simply a warning against extremist politics? Or a left-wing call for the workers to rise against the elite, perhaps reflecting an anarchist ideology and a challenge to authority, referencing movements like Occupy and Anonymous. Something to consider is how it frames mental illness and the idea of a victim which forms part of the ‘incel’ discourse. Perhaps it is more personal than political and reflects a nihilist outlook on the world.</li> <li>• Many critics have reported the unease that the film leaves post viewing; spectatorship issues are complex in the film: the protagonist is mentally ill and perhaps this creates a barrier for identification or even sympathy as his character transforms, however this idea of a critical distance does seem to be contradicted by fears of copycat crimes; the idea of the film sparking a moral panic could form an interesting ideological debate linking in to ideas of identification and passive spectatorship. Phoenix’s performance is so undoubtedly impressive – how does this affect issues of alignment and allegiance; can allegiance be maintained even when his actions become increasingly violent or against our own moral code as a spectator?</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Little Women</i><br/><br/>(Gerwig, 2019)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seen by many as a feminist version of a nineteenth century novel where the independence of the young female characters, particularly Jo the protagonist (seen by many as a stand in for first Alcott and here Gerwig as an aspiring writer), is at the forefront of the narrative. Unlike the novel, the focus is on the women as adult characters, achieved by creating a non-linear narrative and making Jo’s primary goal creative expression rather than romantic. These changes made to the source material by Gerwig as writer and director, lend themselves to a feminist ideological critical approach, particularly as the film was made in the wake of the #metoo movement. A linked ideological approach could be considering the family headed by a matriarch. There was however a counter argument in the response to the film as a feminist portrayal which suggested that the ideology of the film was still a conservative one, promoting the idea from the novel of Christian humility, that women should serve others before themselves and strive to be perfect. Also, perhaps conservative in omitting the idea that Jo in the novel wanted to be a boy and failing to reference the body positive movement when it came to the casting of Emma Watson as Meg.</li> <li>• These criticisms may affect alignment and allegiance with the characters and prevent identification, alienating certain spectators, maybe those who are younger and more passionate about trans issues and those of body positivity. The presence of stars and their performance may affect some spectators and a knowledge of Gerwig as an auteur and the casting here of Ronan as a stand-in for Gerwig and Alcott could provide an interesting meta-analysis and cognitive affect against the immersive glossy style of the cinematography and mise-en-scene. There is an interesting debate about the presence of both passive and active</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>spectatorship and how both can be present simultaneously. There could also be a consideration of gendered responses.</p>   |
| <p><i>Nomadland</i><br/>(Zhao, 2020)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The film is directly anti-capitalist, showing the impact of the global financial crisis on individual lives and communities, it is shocking in the opening of the film to discover that as a result of company shutdowns and subsequent unemployment, certain American postcodes no longer exist. The immorality of late capitalism and some of its financial practises, shown here in an intimate portrait of people's lives could be discussed, and this ideological critical approach would be useful in understanding what the film has to say about where capitalism as an economic system, which puts profit before people, has brought us. A Marxist approach could also be useful in considering the failure of companies to return the loyalty that their workers have shown for them, and also looking at conditions for the workers in newer models of business where there is even less responsibility from employers, at Amazon for example. The emphasis in the cinematography on the vast American landscapes and the beauty of nature juxtaposed against the harsh reality of capitalism and the terrible human cost of that system, evokes the pioneering spirit at the heart of the American Dream (reflecting a Western aesthetic); this would be a fruitful ideology to explore: Fern's resilience and desire to achieve her piece of America by working hard is still present, despite being cast aside by the company she worked for, suggesting that the pioneering spirit as part of the American psyche will endure long after the person has been cast aside by brutal capitalism.</li> <li>• McDormand's performance is so raw, her character is indistinguishable from the actual nomads, and it is interesting to discuss the impact of the use of untrained actors and the realist aesthetic on spectatorship and ideology. Close ups are used to create a sympathy and alignment for Fern and the other nomads, while shots of the vast landscape emphasise the transient nature of these lives, creating a powerful emotional response which is at times overwhelming. Ultimately, it is possible to argue that the film values and celebrates these people who have so much to offer and who capitalist society has discarded.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Carol</i><br/>(Haynes, 2015)</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Carol</i> is notable for its portrayal of a lesbian relationship - and sex - that avoids the 'Male Gaze'. The popularity of lesbian pornography amongst male viewers shows that even when men are excluded from the sexual act itself, it is still presented in a way that would please the heterosexual male viewer.</li> <li>• The lovers in <i>Carol</i> are the centre of the narrative and shot only from each other's perspectives. The male characters are in supporting roles, and even when they disapprove of Carol and Therese (and Abby), we see the men from the female character's POV. Though Todd Haynes, the director, is male, he is openly gay and he worked closely with screenwriter Phyllis Nagy to create a portrayal of women that avoids the 'Male Gaze'.</li> <li>• In interviews, Haynes has said that - though he is pleased society in the West has become more tolerant of gay relationships - he feels that the transgressional element of homosexuality has been lost. He has criticised the 'sexless queer' characters featured in</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <p>many US dramas and sitcoms. Though the move of gay culture into the mainstream has meant it is easier for young people to 'come out', with more positive role models, Haynes has said that he misses the erotic thrill of transgression. The excitement of this taboo element in non-heterosexuality can be detected in his early film <i>Poison</i> (1991) and explains why he often explores gay lifestyles in earlier, less tolerant, historical periods such as the 1970s in <i>The Velvet Goldmine</i> (1998) and 1950s in <i>Far From Heaven</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carol is also ideologically subversive in its portrayal of motherhood. Carol initially sacrifices her relationship with Therese in the hope she can win custody of Rindy, and is even willing to undergo psychotherapy to 'cure' her of her sexuality. However, in the scene at the lawyer's office she refuses to pathologise or apologise for her desire for Therese. Carol finishes the film willing to give up her rights as a mother to both save emotional pain to her daughter - and, more significantly, so she can be true to herself.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>La La Land</i><br/>(Chazelle)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a film that seems self-consciously apolitical, there have been many critics who have suggested that it's precisely the lack of political engagement and obsession with nostalgia that makes it worthy of political dissection.</li> <li>• Representations of gender and race, as well as a complete absence of any LGBTQ characters have been problematised in a range of critical articles that have taken issue with the idea that <i>La La Land</i> is just 'escapist fun'. Geoff Nelson at <a href="http://pastemagazine.com">pastemagazine.com</a> suggests that those arguing "it's just nostalgic entertainment" are not acknowledging what a 'return to the past' is perhaps only beneficial for white middle class people: "The past represents liberation for one group, a horror show for another." The 'Fred and Ginger' films of the 1930s may be from a world of more traditional glamour and romance, but they also hide and distract from the racial discrimination, gender inequality and homophobia of this period of time.</li> <li>• Other critics have identified the kind of jazz Seb is obsessed with 'saving' as a symbol of this dangerously apolitical nostalgia: Seb's 'pure jazz' is embodied by Charlie Parker, who died in 1955. His successors were artists like Mingus and Coltrane, who did use electronic instruments and experimented with fusing funk or rock (or later hip-hop) with more traditional jazz. They were also far more politically engaged and supporters of Civil Rights. The world Seb wants to return to is a world before jazz became political, a time when LA was riven by racism and during the 1940s black and latino jazz fans were beaten and killed by mobs because of the clothes they wore.</li> <li>• However, in its portrayal of Seb and Mia, the treatment of nostalgia could be seen to be more intelligent and questioning. Both characters do achieve their dreams at the end but - whilst this means living in a frozen past for Seb - for Mia it means embracing the new: the film that makes her a star is an unconventional indie movie with no stars and no scripts, which will be improvised through rehearsal. There's an element of melancholy to the final scenes and a proposal that 'living in the</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>past' is not as easy or safe as the nostalgia of the film's surface style suggests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some have criticised the gender politics in the film, accusing it of being a male fantasy about artistic integrity (Seb's struggle with the lure of the commerce) that Mia just facilitates and applauds (there are a lot of scenes of her watching Seb perform, very few of him watching her). However, another view is proposed by Anna Leszkiewicz, in a New Statesmen article: that actually the film is shot mostly from Mia's perspective. Initially, Seb seems the 'creative' one - unable to play Christmas carols without drifting into his own virtuoso compositions, whilst Mia recites dumb movie dialogue whilst trying to put her soul into 2-dimensional roles. She seems more audience than creator. Yet that, Leszkiewicz says, is to unfairly dismiss being an audience member as a passive role. <i>La La Land</i>, she suggests, is a film that celebrates the audience experience: Mia may a spectator for Seb, but she revels in the experience of consuming art: jazz, cinema, cheesy 80s pop, theatre. Cutaways to her dancing or cheering (even her dance to Seb's 80s covers band) show her joy in being an audience member. But Mia then takes these as inspiration to create something <i>new</i>: the film that makes her a star has no script, a little like her life. She is a lover of cinema, and this prompts her to be a participant (e.g. when their date movie breaks down they go to the genuine location <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i> was filmed at, continuing the scene with their own story). The final 'dream ballet' medley is her fantasy of how she could have her success <i>and</i> Seb, but in this version he has virtually no agency outside of Mia's narrative; he is the one who becomes pretty 'window-dressing' to Mia's narrative. In the process she moves the joy of spectatorship to power into becoming a star. Part of the exhilaration of the film experience for the actual audience is that we can make the same leap - the way the camera moves around the dancers in musical numbers does make us feel like we've become part of the scene. The mural Mia walks past seems to symbolise this: all of cinema's greatest idols, sat in a cinema watching her, and <i>us</i>.</li> </ul> |
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### Starting points – Group 2: Contemporary Independent Film

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| <p><i>Moonlight</i><br/>(Jenkins, 2016))</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ideological critical approach which considers identity, specifically queer black male identity in American society would work for this film. The film is an interesting example of intersectionality, where the protagonist is marginalised from hegemonic society by a variety of factors: class, race and sexuality, these could be considered as an ideological critical approach of identity politics which is a valuable way of seeing how these factors together create a greater sense of oppressive forces that lead to discrimination at each stage of the protagonist's life, highlighted in each of the three sections: Little, Chiron and Black. In the Little section we become aware of the</li> </ul> |
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|   | <p>way his sexuality separates him from the other black boys and then in the Chiron section, which deals with his adolescence, the viewer is asked to consider the intersection of sexuality and how discriminatory factors work together. In <i>Black</i>, we see the consequences of adopting a hype- masculine black persona as a way of obscuring his sexuality and class. The complex nature of his identity is suggested by the use of distinct sections using three different actors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This combined with the cinematography which often positions us behind Chiron, but also has extended close ups, lends a complexity to spectatorship issues, can we maintain our allegiance with Chiron through the three sections as the actors change? And how are we affected emotionally Chiron becomes hyper masculinised in the final section, can we still maintain our allegiance? Or perhaps the use of such obvious stereotypes of black masculinity creates enough of a critical distance to allow for an examination of these and a cognitive rather than emotional effect. The beautiful use of lighting and framing of shots in in particular, has a potent effect of alignment, Jenkins and cinematographer Laxton have said that they want to create a dream-like effect that puts spectators in the world of the protagonist.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Get Out</i><br/>(Peele,<br/>2017)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The film explores the ideology of a 'post racial' society in a complex and challenging way, depicting attitudes towards black people from both white and black characters in a complex way which links to contemporary ideas of being 'woke' in the positive way it was originally intended, used at the time the film was made. The ideology of 'wokeism' in its original form would yield some really interesting discussions about the film, the marked contrast between the lobotomised black characters and Chris, but especially Rod, exemplifies the extent to which various characters are 'awake' to racial prejudice. Rod initially warns (in a series of horror tropes of ignored warnings) Chris not to visit Rose's family and then finally saves Chris from the institutionally racist law enforcers, as well as the predatory white family/community, the blue flashing lights invite us to form a realistic conclusion of what the consequences of a black man murdering white people might be. An ideological approach of post colonialism may also be interesting, there are many suggestions of slavery here.</li> <li>• In terms of spectatorship, the alignment is clear Chris is our protagonist and an extremely likeable character; film language, including the inclusion of <i>Redbone</i> by Childish Gambino (a song which predicts problems in a relationship where one person is seen as more attractive in a racist society based on having a lighter skin, a redbone is a light skinned person of various ethnic backgrounds) in the opening scenes, is part of the ways that we are encouraged to give our allegiance to Rod, who at first may seem like the comedy sidekick from a buddy movie, but ultimately it is his attitudes which are the central messages of the film. The way the spectator is positioned to feel about Rose as a potential antagonist is complex, does the film suggest that all white people are a threat to black people? The postmodern nature of the film has a distancing effect in terms of</li> </ul> |

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|   | <p>spectatorship, and this would also be a valuable critical approach to take.</p>  |
| <p><i>'Promising Young Woman</i><br/>(Fennell, 2020)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This film addresses many of the issues raised by the #metoo movement, so a feminist approach would be very useful in understanding this film; by complicating the simplistic ideas of victims and perpetrators and referencing the sexist tropes of the horror genre, Fennell is able to draw our attention to the ways female victims of male violence and sexual assault, specifically rape are shamed and blamed. The film plays with the idea of role reversal to highlight and question patriarchal norms: why the lives of promising young women aren't valued by society in the ways that male ones are – the use of a phrase familiar from rape trials to describe the impact on the life of the accused rapist is poignant. The group of men at the opening of the film immediately dispel any post-feminist ideas that we live in an equal society, although. The extent to which women contribute to the patriarchy is also explored highlighting the impossibility of one woman challenging such a deeply entrenched system, particularly Madison McPhee her former classmate and the Medical School Dean. A gendered ideological critical approach could also consider masculinity, there are some male characters who are sympathetic to the plight of young women, but these are at best, weak, Ryan for example is flawed as a love interest as he has colluded in the rape through his passivity. The film draws attention to a distinct lack of understanding of genuine equality for women, where a business meeting at male only golf is seen as preferable to a strip club. The ending of the film sends a clear message that one woman's struggle against the patriarchal hegemony can only conclude in one way: women who transgress must be punished; the futility of her struggle is horrifying, and the scheduled text messages add a complexity to the end of the film where we are asked to question whether her sacrifice was worth it?</li> <li>• In terms of spectatorship, the film oscillates between the personal and the political, at what point does the spectator stop giving their allegiance to Cassie? Do we find ourselves supporting the idea that by making herself intentionally vulnerable that she is, as one man in the bar says: 'just asking for it'? The film language creates a clear alignment with Cassie and admiration for her bravery, but also the ordinariness of the men creates a false sense of security which could mislead the viewer into alignment with the more benign seeming ones. The postmodern aspects: subverting established, often sexist genres such as horror and romcoms, referencing contemporary discourse about the silencing of female victims, and the use of music to comment on the action with irony, such as the opening song for example, creates a critical distance and cognitive effect which disrupts an immersive experience and mainstream emotional affect, where issues of sympathy or identification become subordinate to the overall messages.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> (Zeitlin, 2012)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of shots from Hushpuppy's perspective plus her voiceover and the fact that she is in every scene encourage the spectator to align themselves with her.</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contemporary events may impact upon a spectator's reading of the film i.e. recent demonisation of the outsider and suggestions that walls be built to keep 'them' out. As Hushpuppy says, 'They built the wall that cuts us off.'</li> <li>• The sense of realism created by handheld camera, use of non-actors, authentic locations and sets may intensify the emotional response for the spectator.</li> <li>• Conversely, the use of magic realism e.g. the aurochs may shatter this illusion of reality and therefore lessen the spectator's sense of immersion.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Captain Fantastic</i><br/>(Ross, 2016)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the film does not completely encourage identification with Ben it does at key moments of grief e.g. his 'hallucinations' of his deceased wife are shot using close up point of view shots encouraging identification.</li> <li>• The film represents two very different approaches to life, Ben's and Jack's, and invites the spectator to consider the pros and cons of each. Therefore the spectator's own experiences and ideologies will have a profound impact on the view they leave the film with.</li> <li>• Matt Ross, "I didn't want to vilify anyone. No one in this film is the villain. When I met Frank Langella, I told him [his character] is antagonistic towards Viggo's character but that he is not the antagonist. That would have been boring. [His attitude to the kids' upbringing] comes from love. His love is different but just as legitimate."</li> <li>• Audience expectations play a significant role in creating a spectator's response and this film being an art-house film and festival success may have created an expectation that its politics will be clearly liberal and left-leaning. The more balanced approach to ideology within the storytelling may therefore provide an interesting challenge to some audience expectations.</li> <li>• Absence of female identification</li> <li>• Star persona of Viggo – usually an object of 'female gaze'. Not here.</li> </ul> |

## Additional Guidance – Narrative

### Component 1 - Section B: British film since 1995

#### Additional Notes on Narrative

The concept of narrative is largely concerned with the story of a film, although several distinctions need to be made between *narrative*, *story* and *plot*. Narrative is *largely the practice or art of telling stories: a representation of a particular situation or process in such a*

*way as to reflect or conform to an overarching set of aims or values. Storyline is the plot of a novel, play, film, or other narrative form and plot is the main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.* Therefore, selecting the order of events into a story is a narrative. The study of narrative is one way of examining the story of a film and exploring how it is structured, ordered and why this has been done. Narrative also asks the viewer to consider from whose viewpoint we are experiencing the story and whether this has an effect on what we see, hear and experience. For example, does the way in which the narrative is presented withhold information from us or only present things from the perspective of a character? Tightly aligned to editing, narrative is a complex and highly ambiguous aspect of film studies.

The specification refers to the new term **film poetics** under the sub-heading of narrative. Poetics is a simple enough concept – the study of how things are made. In film studies this has traditionally translated into a consideration of the process of selection and construction. Elements of film are selected and then combined in ways that construct a shot, a sequence. Why make this choice (of film elements) at this moment in order to produce this particular effect?

### **The study of narrative also incorporates genre**

Genre can be defined as a style or category of film whereby, developed over time, socially-agreed tropes and conventions help to depict categories. Genre is eminently fluid and often a film may straddle the distinction of many genres. In exploring and analysing genre, a useful starting point is to typically identify key characteristics of genres. These are more commonly referred to as the 'Repertoire of Elements' (see genre theorist Steve Neale).

It is advised that students look at the films' screenplays as part of their study of narrative, particularly in their study of character and dialogue.

A study of narrative looks at, for example:

- Representation of time
- Use of narration/voiceover
- How dialogue propels the narrative
- Creation of drama or action
- Character development – heroes and villains, ambiguity
- Character alignment and identification
- How narratives present an ideological viewpoint
- Enigmas
- Generic narratives and formulas
- Binary oppositions

### **Starter Questions**

- How is time manipulated in the film?
- How is the story told through narrative techniques (flashbacks/forwards, pov, chronology, enigma, voiceover)
- What character types are created?
- Who are the audience encouraged to identify with/dislike? What are the ideological implications of this?
- Is the film linear or non-linear/chronological/multi strand?

- Does the text follow a conventional equilibrium/disruption or re-equilibrium structure or does it do something more unconventional?
- How are drama and tension created?
- Does the film's genre shape its narrative?
- Film poetics: What is the shot-by-shot relationship? How have the shots been edited together and what is the impact of this?

### Critical Approaches to Narrative

For Component 1, Section C, learners are required to have an understanding of two critical approaches to narrative. These are:

- Formalism (the distinction between story and plot)
- Structuralism (the conception of binary opposites)

Learners should show an understanding of both approaches when applied to their British two film study.

### Notes on Formalism

Formalism looks at a film's structure and recognises the differences between the story and how it is told through the plot. The story is WHAT is depicted, the plot is HOW.

Story: The events of the narrative.  
Plot: How the story is presented to us.

Speidel (Introduction to Film Studies, Nelmes, 2007) uses the example of '*Bambi*', in which the story and the plot are the same, charting a character's (Bambi) life story from birth to death. The narrative follows the same order, chronologically. '*We Need to Talk About Kevin*' is, similarly, the story of Kevin from birth to adulthood. However the non-linear narrative structure of events, seen from Kevin's mother Eva (Swinton)'s point of view provides a very different experience for audiences. As an exercise, take a simple story and consider how many ways it can be plotted – for example with flashbacks and flash forwards, with the calculated withholding and releasing of story information.

### Notes on Structuralism

Structuralism assumes that narratives are structured in a binary way. 'Binary oppositions' are concepts that appear opposite but actually need each other to define their meaning. Binary oppositions are often used in film and other narratives to achieve a narrative (or aesthetic) tension. To analyse a narrative by drawing up binaries can help 'map' the key ideas and themes of the film, and indeed reveal its ideological work. However, there is a word of warning about binary analysis – the most interesting films often have a 'space between', a kind of grey zone in which the film seems to negotiate between left and right binary. These 'spaces between' can sometimes reveal contradictions at the heart of the film. For example, in '*Under the Skin*', there are many binary oppositions at work, the most obvious being Alien V Human. However, there is no clearly delineated Good V Evil trajectory, which one may commonly associate with a Sci-Fi film about humans and an alien serial killer (Scarlett Johansson). This leads to an interesting audience response as we are often left in the position of feeling more empathy towards the alien than her victims.

### Starting Points

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| <p><i>St Maud</i><br/>(Glass,<br/>2021)</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As with many horror narratives, we are plunged into a traumatic event, which will have a profound effect on the protagonist, with no exposition, this moment from the past drives the events which are to follow; giving us a vital insight into Katie before she became Maud. This idea of a traumatic incident, which shows the protagonist that the world is not a safe place, and which occurs before the start of the film, or in this case, acts as a prologue, is a reference to the typical Coming-of-Age narrative arc, which alongside typical tropes of the horror narrative would be a useful narrative structure to explore. There is then the inciting incident which is the decision to re-invent herself as Maud and accept the position of nurse to care for Amanda. It is a character driven narrative which keeps the viewer close to Maud, constructing a female gaze and an increasing sense of an unreliable narrator; some of her actions create a distance between character and spectator, the self-harm for example. It is unsettling to be placed in the point of view of someone with psychosis, but the film language creates alignment and sympathy through the repeated use of high angle shots which frame Maud as a victim.</li> <li>• There are a few useful binary oppositions that yield an enhanced understanding of the film: benign religious faith and extreme and damaging religious faith. The relationship with Amanda also sets up some interesting binary oppositions which could be explored: mental illness and spirituality, vs physical illness and earthly pleasures – repression and expression. Social isolation and social immersion could also be discussed and the portrayal of both as obsessive, desperate and destructive. The two characters have more in common than it at first seems, both battling loneliness, approaching death will have to be faced by Amanda alone and Maud is desperate to have an all-encompassing relationship with God to fend off her increasing isolation. Ironically Maud criticises ‘creative types’ as ‘self-involved’ but that self-involvement is just as present in Maud as an apparently selfless nurse. The murderous climax and then the resolution of the film encompasses both the delusion of religious ecstasy and the harsh reality/ consequences of Maud’s final suicidal act.</li> <li>• A feminist ideological critical approach would be a valuable one to take in understanding the impact of the female gaze and the construction of the two central female characters in a non-judgemental and sympathetic way. Looking at the ideology of religion (specifically Roman Catholicism) and the comfort, pleasure and ultimately destruction and insanity that extreme religion brings, would also be an interesting to explore. Ideas of guilt and trauma are central to the narrative and its overall message of their inescapability makes Maud a sympathetic and engaging protagonist, a psychological critical approach would be interesting in revealing what the film is saying about its themes of loneliness and the ways that women stereotypically tend to blame themselves with violent impulses turned inwards rather than outwards.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Mangrove</i><br/>(McQueen,<br/>2020)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The narrative structure of the film is the conventional one of classical Hollywood, with a social realist aesthetic. The exposition and scene setting at the beginning of the film makes the era, location and themes clear; music plays an important part in this, as does the voice of Darcus Howe and the almost exclusive images of</li> </ul>  |

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|  | <p>the black community as the protagonist Crichlow walks passed children playing amongst the rubble of a run-down area and racist graffiti – where the support for Enoch Powell after his ‘River of Blood’ speech is made clear. The sign Black Ownership on the Mangrove restaurant declares that this is microcosm of black society and scenes of music and unity draw the viewer in, leaving no doubt in the overall message of the film, the binary opposite of black people against the police and the judiciary is made clear. The inciting incident is the involvement of the overtly racist PC Pulley and his determination to close the Mangrove down, with the rising action dealing with the conflict between the police and the black community. The emphasis here is on the unity of the black community which is represented by the Mangrove as a community hub. At the halfway point the trial begins and the sense of institutional racism from a patriarchal and hostile British justice system is contrasted with the integrity and unity of the Mangrove nine, with some powerful female characters and even discussions about division of labour within the home. The climax occurs when the jury acquits the defendants based on the intelligent and thorough way that they represent themselves in court and then the resolution of the celebration at the Mangrove emphasises that ‘we may have won the battle, Frank, but we’ll see about the war’, bringing the relationship between past events and current ones into sharp focus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a film which dramatises real events, Mangrove has a clear agenda and lends itself to ideological analysis. An ideological approach which considers how West Indian immigrants to the UK in the late 1960s retained their culture and identity, represented by the Mangrove restaurant itself, amidst hostility, envy and racism. The institutional racism of the police and judicial system is represented by the character of Pulley and depicted in the scenes of the trial. The ideology of community and the concept of a black community in opposition to the lack of community amongst the non-immigrant population and the threat this poses could be studied as a useful binary opposition. The protagonist Crichlow could be analysed in relation to stereotypes of black men as both entrepreneurial, resilient and optimistic while also angry and potentially violent as he fights back against harassment and injustice. A gendered approach would be useful, looking at masculinity at that time and the toxicity of Pulley borne out of prejudice based on ignorance and fear.</li> <li>• The role of women is debated in the film and a feminist critical approach would be useful when considering the key female characters. The film sets up a binary opposition between integrity: Howe and the Mangrove nine and corruption: the police and judicial system, there can be no doubt in the viewer’s mind as to which one is to be admired and which is to be admonished.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Mogul Mowgli</i><br/>(Tariq, 2020)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mysterious opening where Zed’s (the rapper’s) face is in shadow, but the lyrics of his rap are expository, showing that this is a film about immigrant and racial identity, and that the protagonist is a man who is struggling to find himself. This is followed by his passionate and physical performance as he positions himself as a person in an impossible situation – attacked from all sides, stuck between the ‘mosque and the mosh pit’ and under threat of death</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p>from a system, but ‘they can’t kill us all’. He is a character that we can’t help but sympathise with – his suffering is visceral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of academy ratio (as with <i>Fish Tank</i>) creates an intimacy typical of character driven narratives. The narrative is then developed by the break-up scene where it becomes clear that Zed/Zaheer is in crisis, alienated from himself and his family. This is a typical coming-of-age narrative structure where the protagonist seeks an outlet for his pain and pursues those goals, in this case his music, but he has already learned that the world is a dangerous place, the legacy of partition and his parents’ journey is glimpsed in fragmented memories, dreams and hallucinations which disrupt the linear narrative, directly referencing Zaheer’s inner conflict, taking the viewer into a more expressionistic and personal type of storytelling.</li> <li>• The main inciting incident is the illness and the impact on his life, again this is typical of coming-of-age narratives where the hero has to learn in the rising action to be himself, essentially his two identities must be resolved to become a whole person and to do this he has to re-connect with his family. The narrative focus is on the personal rather than the political and the film language drives the viewer to empathy as Zaheer’s life and psyche is laid bare in all its complexity. The narrative climax occurs as Zaheer is reconciled with his father, a traditional Pakistani man, as they chant <i>Toba Tek Singh</i>, a direct reference to Saadat Hasan Manto’s short story of mental illness and partition that has haunted Zaheer throughout the film, here we see a glimpse of Zed but softer and happier. The resolution of the extended mirror shot suggests that he is making peace with the disparate parts of his identity; a fourth wall break as he turns to face us revealing his vulnerability, feels less hopeless than the use of the same final shot in <i>The 400 Blows</i>, perhaps more akin to its use in <i>This is England</i>, where the idea of a coming of age narrative resolution is the same: Zaheer has suffered and he has grown as a person.</li> <li>• There is a clear binary opposition between his Pakistani heritage based on family loyalty and conformity and the youthful rap scene, which is individualistic, materialistic, pushing boundaries and full of anger and conflict. The treatment of this binary opposition ranges from traumatic to absurd, for example in one scene Zaheer and his friend are unclear if smoking weed is ‘haram’ and whether it should be passed with the right hand. This highlights the complexity of life for second generation Pakistani immigrants struggling to honour their cultural heritage while trying to assimilate into British society and form their own identity.</li> <li>• The ideology of the film is about acknowledging the complexity of this dilemma and providing an antidote to what Riz Ahmed has called the ‘toxic portrayals’ of Muslims onscreen. Discussions could focus on how the film avoids and challenges stereotypes of Muslims. As one reviewer put it, it’s a film: ‘which lobs up wieldy, potentially impossible-to-answer questions about individual ambition, inherited trauma, artistic integrity, and cultural assimilation and does its best to tackle them all.’ Reaching conclusions about the overall messages of the film will provide some interesting discussions.</li> </ul> |
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*Belfast*  
(Branagh,  
2021)

- *Belfast* is a coming-of-age film which follows a conventional narrative structure. Set in a close-knit working-class community in 1969, the narrative opens in an expository way showing children playing and adults in doorways showing the harmony which is about to be threatened, the inciting incident is a reminder of the riots which were occurring in August 1969, as a Protestant gang object to the coexistence of Catholics and Protestants living together in harmony in this street, followed by the British Army moving in. The protagonist, Buddy, is an innocent and sympathetic ten-year-old boy who is part of a close-knit, extended family, to whom Protestants and Catholics are just people, demonstrated by his forming a close friendship/romantic interest with a Catholic girl. The rising action is formed of typical childhood escapades such as stealing sweets from the local shop and watching Westerns on TV.
- A parallel narrative for Buddy's parents is around the idea of emigration and the tension between economic security and family and community – a common trope in Irish film and literature, depicted in the tension between Buddy's mother and father. The inescapable political situation is also part of this narrative, the father is constantly forced in a position where he must take a side – interestingly, the film is also not interested in taking sides. Branagh has said that using the point of view of a child enables him to keep the focus on the personal: 'because that's not what the boy saw: what he saw was small-scale intimidation, the beginnings of a kind of gangsterism, and at that stage he wasn't in a position to see higher political causes. So it inevitably has a narrowness of perspective, which means that you can get away without doing what many mightier minds than mine have done, which is to fall prey to believing that it is right and proper to try and explain everything.'
- The inevitable climax is the decision to leave behind family and community for a better life, with the resolution of the beginning of their next journey, as we see them board the bus; the final moments signal the approval of the grandmother who urges them not to look back. This bittersweet ending is typical of British films and the viewer is left with the knowledge that the grandmother will have to endure the increasing violence and trauma for the rest of her life on a political level and separation from her family on a personal level.
- It would be useful to consider a political ideology when looking at the portrayal of the beginning of 'the troubles', here Branagh creates an emotional, subjective response to the situation using a whimsical (the nostalgia is created through the use of black and white) and semi-autobiographical (Branagh has said it is his 'most personal' film) tone; it would be interesting to consider how the film avoids focussing on the political situation when the conflict is part of everyday life for the main characters, a Protestant family, who wish that 'the troubles' would just go away. By calling the film *Belfast*, Branagh makes the city a central character, the film is a nostalgic love letter to the city and its inhabitants. The depiction of *Belfast* is a romanticised one, for example the opening credits show us the Harland and Wolff shipyard, celebrating the industrial past of the city, but failing to mention the sectarian divisions and reported injustices to Catholics and nationalists. In terms of

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|  | <p>ideology, it would be interesting to look at how ‘the troubles’ are represented and the binary opposition between the personal and the political. It is interesting to note that the first violent acts in the film are from a Protestant gang, the existence of violent Protestant groups went largely unreported in the British media and Branagh seems to be suggesting that both groups are as bad as each other, that the conflict is disruptive for ordinary people and the film refuses to be drawn in to the politics. Although this is surprising for a film set in Northern Ireland, the film’s ideology is to explore the implications of the conflict on ordinary people’s lives, Ciaran Hinds has said that the film is a ‘plea for understanding, communication and respect’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ideology that the film is interested in is the family and taking the idea of the extended family (including community) and the way it is represented would be a useful ideological critical approach. A line from the grandfather delivers the main message of the film when asked by Buddy if a relationship with the Catholic girl could work, he says: ‘She could be a vegetarian antichrist for all I care. But if you respect each other, and you’re kind, then they’re welcome in our house any day of the week.’ A gendered approach would be interesting too, considering the way parents and grandparents conform to stereotypical gender roles in Buddy’s life and the matriarchal presence of both the mother and the grandmother.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Trainspotting</i><br/>(Boyle, 1996)</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The flawed hero 'Renton'. Audience roots for Renton to succeed by the end of the film</li> <li>• The film has a traditional 'happy ending', not synonymous with such as independent film about drugs. Renton 'chooses life'.</li> <li>• Throughout the film Renton narrates (his VO bookends the film) and his acerbic, cynical, foul mouthed and resigned delivery perfectly captures the 'exhaustion' of Generation X.</li> <li>• The film uses of post-modern editing techniques to tell the story. E.g. Title sequence freeze frames focus on character’s identity and character traits: Renton (00:40 – a gremlin); Sick Boy (00:57 – cool and argumentative); Begbie (01:02 – violent and sadistic); Spud (01:07 - foolish); Tommy (01:20 – embattled).</li> <li>• <i>Trainspotting</i> can be seen as part of a cycle of films about drugs which have come out of Hollywood and the UK. They are usually films which also reflect on problems of generational conflict and youth alienation. A USA film that shares <i>Trainspotting</i>'s critique of culture and heroin addiction would be <i>Requiem for a Dream</i> (Aronofsky, 2000)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Shaun of the Dead</i><br/>(Wright, 2004)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The film has a linear narrative arc and focusses on the maturation of Shaun, told through the metaphor of him saving the world.</li> <li>• The film is presented from Shaun’s perspective and we meet his Mum, Step-Dad, Girlfriend Liz and best friend Ed. The first scene in <i>The Winchester</i> wittily encapsulates the dynamics at play in Shaun’s life: his girlfriend wants more of commitment and quality time; Ed is just a foul-mouthed kid lurking in</li> </ul>   |

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|   | <p>Shaun's shadow; David and Dianne are sanctimonious friends posing as the perfect couple – intellectual and arty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essentially a suburban action horror movie featuring grisly violence, speeding cars and fast-paced action. There is also a sweet centre to the film as evidenced by the moving death scenes of Shaun's Mum, his Dad and Ed.</li> <li>• The film features Shaun as the 'everyman' hero – a figure of identification for the viewer – nothing like a usual 'hero' in the casting of the 'average Joe' Simon Pegg</li> <li>• The film has a happy ending synonymous with our generic expectations of a comedy film. Shaun saves the world and regains the girl (Liz). Even though Ed has died and become a zombie, this is handled in a comedic way.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>This is England</i><br/>(Meadows, 2006)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Binary Oppositions – conflict between opposing characters shapes the narrative from Shaun's first interaction with Sandhu in the shop and the playground fight, through Woody and Combo's gangs clashing to the dramatic assault on Milky. Levi Strauss argued that one side of the binary pair is always seen by a particular culture as more valued than the other – this could be used as a useful starting point for a discussion, particularly as the central character's allegiances shift through the narrative.</li> <li>• Open ended – the spectator does not get a clear indication of Milky's condition and it is unclear if Shaun will be isolated once more or re-join Woody's gang.</li> <li>• Patterns and repetition – numerous locations and situations are repeated e.g. confrontations in Sandhu's shop, gangs playing football. These repetitions draw the spectator's attention to how things have changed.</li> </ul>               |
| <p><i>Fish Tank</i><br/>(Arnold, 2009)</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic tension centres around conflict: Mia's struggle for freedom conflicts with her environment and circumstances</li> <li>• Joanne's struggles as a single mum and her need for love and happiness conflict with her role as mother and lead to neglect</li> <li>• Narrative patterning is indicated in the cinematography when Mia and then Joanne are framed in a wide-shot, looking outside balcony</li> <li>• Connor's own secrets and circumstances lead to the ambivalent role he plays in Mia's life creating psychological intensity and insight</li> <li>• Binary oppositions emerge through Connor's presence and the absence of Mia's real dad</li> <li>• Music becomes a pivotal 'narrative' device in developing plot and character (Mia goes to an abandoned flat to express herself when dancing)</li> <li>• When Mia, Tyler and Joanne dance at the end, music contributes to the narrative's attempt to bring resolution</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>We Need to Talk about Kevin</i></p>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of flashbacks and parallelism in the structure of the film can be usefully explored. The film begins in the aftermath of the massacre, then flashes back to the events leading up to the massacre (including flashbacks to the beginnings of</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>(Ramsay, 2011)</p>                       | <p>Franklin and Eva's relationship). The complex inter-relationship of narrative timelines culminates in the massacre itself and then flashes forward to the meeting between Eva and Kevin one year after the killings. The effects of this complex structuring of time in the plot can be usefully explored by considering the opportunities it affords the storyteller for showing parallels between characters and events, and in raising questions about cause and effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How exposition of the narrative occurs in the film can be an interesting source of inquiry. We are presented with fractured elements of a story at the beginning that we have to piece together with little indication of how to organise these into a chronological framework of time and space. The difficulty of doing this is compounded by the fact that there is a lack of expositional dialogue and conventional establish of narrative setting. The first three scenes are the net curtains blowing in the wind, the tomato festival and Eva waking up which all occur in very different places and times (which we discover later) but how we can organise these scenes into a story is restricted from us until much later in the film.</li> <li>• Eva's and Kevin's characters provide many sources for inquiry, particularly in their position within the narrative. The questions about who is the film's protagonist and antagonist, who is the 'centre' or initiator of the drama and how we are supposed to respond to the characters is complex and ambiguous at times. This complexity of character identification and function within the narrative is further complicated by the use of mirroring. The characters are made to look like each other and often display very similar expressions and body language....frequent graphic matches force a further comparison which suggests characters that are connected in more ways than simply a mother-son relationship.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Under the Skin</i> (Glazer, 2013)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the narrative is communicated purely visually in the film, there is a distinct lack of any dialogue...particularly expositional dialogue. We can see this in the opening sequence when we are given no backstory to establish the characters or their relationship to each other. The relationship between the motorcyclist and the alien remains mysterious throughout and we are often left to deduct character motivation from looks alone.</li> <li>• The characters in the film lack names which makes identification with them and delineation between them very difficult, and challenges mainstream narrative conventions. You could also argue that the characters lack much personality in that they seem to lack emotion or thought in their actions. It is left to the spectator to deduce what they can about the characters.</li> <li>• There is a lack of explicit causality which frustrates attempts by the spectator to develop a cause-effect chain in the narrative. Some events seem unmotivated, such as why the victims are being killed, whilst other events lack a clearly explained effect, such as why she leaves the man's house towards the end of the film. This is unconventional in film narratives and can be</li> </ul>   |

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|  | very challenging (or rewarding?) for the spectator, who is required to work much harder in making meaning. |
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## Additional Guidance – Component 2: Section A

### Global film

Assessment within Section C focuses on the **core study areas only** as outlined on p10-13 of the specification. This section is a two film study which means centres select one film from Group 1 and one film from Group 2. There is no expectation that candidates will compare the two films in this section.

#### Starting Points – Group 1: European Film

| Film  | Context  | Representation  | Aesthetic   |
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| <i>Another Round</i><br>(Vinterberg, Denmark, 2020) | An important context is Dogme 95 as a film movement, the use of camera movement and natural lighting, together with the film's central idea of conducting an experiment, similar to the Dogme #2 film <i>The Idiots</i> , with darkly comic, but less alarming results, is similar to a Dogme film, although the use of intertitles and the opposing non-diegetic music (a Danish patriotic song and the up-beat What A Life) in the Lake Race are in stark contrast to the Dogme rules. The absurd and severe rules of the alcohol experiment perhaps also mirror those of the Dogme movement when it came to filmmaking, | The film opens with a quotation from the philosopher Kierkegaard: 'What is youth? A dream. What is love? The content of the dream'. This establishes one of the main binary oppositions which structures the narrative: youth and middle age. The representation of youth at the opening of the film shows being young as fun and carefree, the sun and alcohol filled lake race establishes exactly what the middle-aged men feel that they have lost. The film has an ambivalent representation of the effects of alcohol, there is a depiction of some of the negative consequences of drinking, but | There is the use of a Dogme 95 aesthetic, the use of handheld cameras and natural light gives a sense of immediacy that is typical of that film movement. The fact that the film doesn't shy away from the visceral realities of alcohol makes the film uncomfortable viewing, perhaps countering those who have seen the film as too positive about the effects of drinking. The use of real locations and some untrained actors as background characters gives a sense of realism combined with a sense of the events unfolding in the present time, which is typical of Dogme films. This aesthetic is designed to depict human life as complex and real, so even though <i>Another Round</i> has been made 15 years after the demise of the film movement, it still retains much of the aesthetic. However, not all music is diegetic, the use of |

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|  | <p>perhaps offering a parody of the short-lived film-movement.</p> <p>The idea of masculinity in crisis, and midlife crisis, are other possible contexts as the central four men are searching for fulfilment in their lives beyond the mediocre ways of life, the vibrant presence of the young people they teach serves to remind the middle-aged men how dull their lives have become.</p> <p>The central characters are white middle class Danish men and the political context of a right-wing conservative country where people are superficially well-mannered and 'civilised' could be explored, considering how a dark desire for chaos is lurking very near to the surface. The ideology of the film is about reconciling those two aspects and finding a balance between the identity that the characters aspire to and how they actually are.</p> | <p>perhaps the overall message is complex and unclear, it seems to be that alcohol can enhance a person's performance in a variety of situations, but there is also a lot to lose due to an unhealthy relationship with alcohol.</p> <p>The representation of middle age is interesting, family life and teaching are portrayed as dull and this intersects with how women are represented. The film has what could be seen of a misogynist representation of women as the cause of the mediocrity and misery in the lives of the central four men, it is the female characters, the wives and the female headteacher, who remind the men of their responsibilities.</p> <p>The film represents Denmark, and specifically Copenhagen, as an affluent place where drinking is socially accepted. The filmmakers shot in real locations in Copenhagen which adds to the film's realist aesthetic.</p> <p>The final scene shot at Copenhagen's harbor, reflects Martin's emotional awakening, as the expanse of the</p> | <p>elliptical editing and the intertitles about the experiment, or later for texts appearing in white on a black screen, break the sense of Dogme, showing us that the film is a deliberate construct; perhaps drawing our attention to the fact that this was the contradiction inherent in the Dogme manifesto all along</p> |
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|  |   | water contrasts with confined interior spaces such as the school.  |   |
| <i>The Worst Person in The World</i> (Trier, Norway, 2021) | <p>Described by Trier as “a coming-of-age film for grownups who feel like they still haven’t grown up”, it could be analysed in the context of the millennial generation who are struggling to come of age, an ironic coming of age narrative, albeit at least ten years too late – she is approaching her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. The setting of middle-class Oslo gives her the luxury of being able to experiment with her identity in a way that previous generations of young women have not been able. Since the narrative is more focused on romance than her career, it could be studied within the context of the romcom genre with elements of parody and postmodern irony.</p> | <p>As a representation of the endless possibilities that affluent young women have in a western capitalist society, the film relies on the performance of Renate Reinsve as Julie to draw the viewer in as she tries to find meaning in a world where there doesn’t seem to be any. Her restlessness and impulsivity are palpable and are potentially alienating for the viewer or perhaps sympathetic – sometimes shifting between the two. It’s also a representation of existential anxiety: she feels like a spectator in her own life. Millennials are often stereotyped as selfish, but here, as the title suggests, they are their harshest critics; there could be interesting discussions about how millennials in the film are portrayed and how their struggles are perhaps made universal. The film is the third of Trier’s unofficial</p> | <p>The aesthetic is typical of an Indie film which plays around with film form and language self-consciously drawing attention to itself. By separating the film into twelve chapters, with a prologue and an epilogue, and having no consistency of approach or style within the chapters themselves, the film itself mimics the journey of the protagonist as she looks outwards rather than inwards in an attempt to find meaning in her life.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>Oslo trilogy, and Trier shot in real apartments and city streets to add to the film's authenticity. Oslo is the capital of Norway and is represented here as a vibrant youthful city, an ideal setting for Julie's restlessness and shifting identity as she navigates adulthood.</p> |  |
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| <p><i>Life is Beautiful</i><br/>(Benigni, Italy, 1997)</p> | <p>The film was inspired by the story of Auschwitz survivor Rubino Salmoni and by the experiences of Benigni's own father who was imprisoned in a Labour Camp and told humorous stories about his experiences in order to not scare his children. Benigni has said that his aim wasn't to create historical realism but a "poetic and beautiful truth (about humanity)".</p> | <p>The representation of Guido as a man and a father is interesting to explore, particularly as he transforms from a romantic clown to a tragic hero who sacrifice's himself for love and his child. The representation of women in the film is problematic. Dora, the mother, is simplistically objectified into a two-dimensional figure of romantic desire and suffering motherhood. There are interesting parallels with the Princess and Madonna archetypes that can be explored in this film as well as her lack of agency and power. The film represents two distinct and contrasting places – the first half takes place in a warm, colourful Italian town and the second half in a concentration</p> | <p>The influence of Keaton and Slapstick Comic traditions are clearly evident in the performances and visual style of the first half of the film. We see archetypal characters from the history of slapstick in the shape of Guido (the Romantic Clown), Dora (the Princess) and her fiancé (the arrogant Buffoon). Figure expression and movement in clearly expressionistic and can be directly compared with the 'prat falls', 'silly walks' and exaggerated reactions of characters played by Chaplin, Laurel and, particularly, Keaton.</p> |
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|   |  | <p>camp, an oppressive space and site of historical trauma. Guido's transformation of the camp into a game offers a reimaging of this dehumanising place from a child's perspective.</p>  |   |
| <p><i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> (del Toro, Spain, 2006)</p> | <p>The negative depiction of Franco's fascist forces is clearly intended to be extended to the imaginative poverty of fascism in general – in contrast to the more benign and sensitive (although hardly democratic) fairy kingdom. A more realist political representation is that of the guerrillas who are presented as resourceful and determined and egalitarian. Mercedes love of children (Ofelia and her baby brother) suggest a tenderness and a celebration of all things childish – indeed, unlike Ofelia's weak and dismissive mother, Mercedes gives advice on the handling of fauns.</p> | <p>There is a clear binary opposite in terms of the representation of gender at work in the film. Captain Vidal is obsessed by his fathers' military exploits and is equally determined that his own son (he refuses to believe the child can be anything other than a male) is born close to him. The health of his sick wife is of only secondary importance. Indeed he scolds her for discussing their romance in public and is equally dismissive of his step-daughter, Ofelia. The final scene where he tells the rebels who will soon execute him that his son must know who he was and (a reference to his own father - what time he died) shows the final exhaustion of the patriarchy he represents, as Mercedes tells him that his son will never know who he was. The film is set in a rural military outpost in the Spanish</p> | <p>The film is a magical realist text – combining beautifully constructed but very dark fantasy sequences, some verging on horror, with a graphically violent rendering of factional fighting in Northern Spain in the early years of Franco's dictatorship. Another motif, aside from the Gothic and gore discussed above is paganism. The moss-covered ruins of the Labyrinth and associated standing stones, and the tree beneath which Ofelia finds the toad and from which blooms her own resurrection (see above – endings) all suggest a sophisticated and elemental pagan past now acting as rare portals to the fairy kingdom.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>countryside.<br/>Contrasting spaces are used throughout, for instance the earthy organic forest vs Vidal's rigid and symmetrical mill.<br/>Here place is used to convey themes and is ideological, as the visual style of contrasting places conveys political meaning.</p>   |   |
| <p><i>Mustang</i> (Erguven, France/Turkey, 2015)</p> | <p>Marriage is portrayed as an important social tradition and ritual which defines women's role.<br/>Consider, within the film's portrayal of male-dominated values how the sisters' virginity plays a key part in their marriage value (discuss the sequence of the 'virginity test' and the incident after Selma's wedding night: 'when I say I am a virgin, no-one believes me')<br/>What do rituals, traditions, arranged marriage and preparations for being a wife say about the expected roles and identity of women in contemporary Turkey?<br/>Current debates in Turkish society are polarised regarding the position of women, with governments</p> | <p>Consider how <i>Mustang</i> represents gender roles in contemporary Turkey.<br/>How does the film portray the role of young women like the five orphaned sisters within their family and immediate community?<br/>Consider the role of the uncle in the sisters' life and the extent to which his views and actions represent prevailing patriarchal values and norms in contemporary Turkish society.<br/>Why do the grandmother, the aunty and the older females enforce these male-dominated values and attitudes?<br/>The film is set in a rural village in Turkey near the Black Sea, while the final sequences take place in Istanbul. The contrasts between these spaces is used</p> | <p>Denize Gamze Ergüven comments on the extent to which the film <i>Escape from Alcatraz</i> influenced her thinking around the film's theme of the girls' entrapment and longing for escape. How effectively do the bars on the house windows convey the image of the girls' entrapment?<br/>Film critics have commented on the similarities between <i>Mustang</i> and Sofia Coppola's <i>The Virgin Suicides</i>(2000)</p> |

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|  | adopting a reactionary stance | to emphasise the themes of tradition vs modernity. Scenes in the outside world in rural Turkey represent freedom and youth, as the girls swim in the sea, in contrast to the confinements of the patriarchal and oppressive home. |  |
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### Starting Points – Group 2: Outside Europe

| <b>Film</b>                        | <b>Context</b>   | <b>Representation</b>  | <b>Aesthetic</b>   |
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| <i>Roma</i> (Cuaron, Mexico, 2018) | The class ridden Mexican society in 1970 when the film is set is an important social context for the film, the Colonia Roma district of Mexico City, an upper-class neighbourhood is contrasted with poorer areas and the love song playing on the radio near the opening is about being poor – poverty is all around. Mexico is also shown as a place of conflict, Fermin is training at a camp run by a right-wing paramilitary group. It is a time of protest and social unrest, student protestors (a real event where 10,000 protestors marched on Mexico City) are attacked by the paramilitary group Los Halcones run by Federal District Officials, known as | While the film is clearly autobiographical, Cuaron dedicates the film to his Nanny, there is much to debate about the way that Cleo as an indigenous maid is represented and the way the film tackles racial inequality. Is it a personal story celebrating family unity and strong women, the representation of the family as a matriarchy would be interesting, the men show little family loyalty and are mostly absent. However, it could be seen as a problematic and patronising representation which doesn't really acknowledge Cleo as a human being even though she dominates the screen, we are left to draw conclusions about the way she is simultaneously | Shot digitally in 65mm, Cuaron has said he wanted the 'crisp quality' of digital rather than the look of film. He wanted to create an aesthetically complex black and white by isolating areas of the frames and manipulating tones to be evocative of memory, also created by using large format digital and very wide angles capturing as much natural light as possible. The film has an observational documentary aesthetic which allows us time and space to see what this environment is like, the black and white accentuates the dreariness and poverty in the lives of Mexicans which contrasts with the wealthy white family; the sunlight, however and the carefree |

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|  | <p>the Corpus Christi Massacre, as almost 120 people were killed. An understanding of the political context here would be useful. The cultural and social context of the position of the poor, indigenous people of Mexico (Mixteco) and the uneasy position that Cleo occupies in the film as housekeeper to a wealthy well-educated upper-class family.</p>  | <p>treated as a member of the family and a servant. There is much to debate about the representation of class and ethnicity here. Roma is set in 1970s Colonia Roma, an affluent neighbourhood. Live outside the home represents political unrest and rich / poor divides, whereas the home is safe but hierarchical, emphasising Cleo's class division from the family she works for.</p>   | <p>nature of the children's lives lift the tone of film and adds a sense of nostalgia for Cuarón's childhood. The clarity of the digital image which captures every detail through a deep focus highlights issues rather than comments on them, making the film an expose of life in Mexico at that time. The wide shots are combined with closeups so that we have both an intimate drama and events on a bigger scale.</p>  |
| <p><i>Parasite</i> (Bong Joon-Ho, South Korea, 2019)</p> | <p>Class division in South Korean society is an important social context for the film, the extremes of wealth and poverty shown are partly due to the political context of the global economic crisis of 2008 which badly affected South Korea, leading to mass unemployment; desperately seeking employment of any kind forms much of the action. The political context of capitalism is part of this and the film satirises the way that South Koreans idolise American goods and are attracted to the capitalist society of the US as a direct rejection of North Korean communism.</p> | <p>The representation of the poor and the smell which unites them is in direct contrast with the way the wealthy are represented through housing, clothing and status symbols. The subterranean, cramped and dishevelled apartment of the Kim's where the family are desperate for resources represented by their attempts to steal the Wi-Fi signal paid for other people. Despite the gulf between the two families in wealth and status, the representation of family is mirrored across the two sets of families, each has a patriarch, although Mr Kim is undermined by his wife's (a former shot-put champion) constant mocking, Mr Park is more overtly the head of the household, but both</p> | <p>The realist aesthetic is an exploration of wealth and poverty, at times there is a visceral sense of the smell of poverty, the urine-soaked window, the sewage infested flood, the dampness of the Kim's apartment giving the family all the same damp smell. Lighting is important for creating the contrast between the two as well as the importance of levels, the poor live at the bottom of the hill and the rich on the sun filled hillside. The Kim's have harsh strip lights and the Park's house has soft warm lighting, the cabinet at the back of the kitchen is lit in a noticeably beautiful way. The scenes in the bunker have a horror aesthetic, created by green lighting and horror</p> |

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|  |  | <p>are equally ridiculed throughout, the climax of which is the mock battle rather distastefully dressed as native Americans. The film explores family unity in an affectionate way, the Parks indulge their children and the Kim's children are impressively resourceful. The representation of women is also interesting, the female characters are shown to have often hidden physical and mental strength beyond that of their male counterparts. It is interesting to consider the way in which every character is made sympathetic. Parasite represents Seoul, South Korea as a late capitalist city with deep rich poor divides. The Kim family live in a basement apartment which floods, reflecting the impact of climate change on the poor, while the Parks live in a spacious, sunlit minimalist house. Uban geography is used to highlight inequality.</p> | <p>cinematography, suggesting the darkness that lies beneath all of humanity. The absurd comedy and satire can create a surreal aesthetic where the film becomes a postmodern comment on both South Korea and human nature itself.</p> |
| <p><i>House of Flying Daggers</i> (Zhang, China, 2004)</p> | <p>After the Cultural Revolution foreign films were imported to supply cinemas. Discussions were held concerning artistic freedom. Zhang's earlier films were often criticised</p> | <p>In Peking Opera all roles originally played by men. Strong female characters central to the tradition of <i>wuxia</i>. They fight with swords and take part in combat. In the <i>Flying Daggers</i> the</p>  | <p>Mandarin title of the film translates as '<i>Ambushed from Ten Directions</i>' Motif of multiple deceptions, false identities, nothing is as it first appears: Leo appears to be an</p>   |

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|  | <p>by the government for their treatment of the realities of social life in China. Since then he has enjoyed huge success with his <i>wuxia</i> films, example of global or transnational cinema's demand for ethnic cultural elements and lustrous visuals. "Exotic" "arty" China, popular with audiences.</p>  | <p>leaders are now women. Mei demonstrates female sexual power. Male and female passion is subject to tradition and duty. Male characters "Just pawns on the chessboard" The concluding fight to the death between Leo and Jin is about honour as well as jealousy. The film represents the beautiful landscape of Tang Dynasty China. Natural spaces represent freedom, while interiors of human-built spaces represent order and authority.</p> | <p>imperial soldier but is really a mole, the former lover of Mei; Mei a rebel pretending to be a courtesan, pretending to be blind; Nia appears to be the madam of the Peony Pavilion, then the leader of the Flying Daggers, then only pretending to be the leader; Jin is an Imperial soldier who pretends to be a rebel.</p> |
| <p><i>Taxi Tehran</i> (Panahi, Iran, 2015)</p> | <p>The Iranian director Jafar Panahi, who is under house arrest and has been banned from filmmaking since 2010 on the grounds of political dissent. The film acts as a criticism of the theocratic state of Iran, but often in an oblique and very subtle fashion. Panahi as a dissident filmmaker and what this means in terms of how the film is read.</p> | <p>It is worth looking at some of the contextual issues around this film by examining Iranian cultural and society since the Islamic Revolution and the way that women are portrayed (a key element in Iranian Cinema). Panahi drives his taxi through the city streets of Tehran. The passengers all reflect microcosms of Iranian society, and the film emphasises the interaction between private and public life</p>                          | <p>The very reflexive nature of the film itself blurring the boundaries between realism and the role of the filmmaker That sense of spontaneity around these 'chance meetings' and how this also may affect the aesthetic nature of the film</p>   |
| <p><i>City of God</i> (Meireilles,</p>         | <p>Brazil is part of the "developing world" and the largest</p>  | <p>This is a film that centres on an aggressive definition</p>  | <p>From 1960 to 1964 the first phase of <i>Cinema Novo</i> "an</p>   |

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| <p>Brazil, 2002)</p> | <p>country in Latin America, covering about half the continent. It is the fifth largest country in the world in terms of both land area and its population of about 163.7 million. An estimated 20 % of the population (32 million) live in absolute poverty. The disparity between those living below the poverty line (who receive 2% of the GDP) and the top 10% (who receive 50.6%) is greater than most other countries in the world. Brazil was colonised by Portugal the 16<sup>th</sup> century resulting in almost genocidal subjection of the indigenous people. Struggle for independence, gained in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Economy partly founded on the transport of huge numbers of slaves from the west coast of Africa, a practise abolished in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their multi-ethnic communities are today made of the descendants of these slaves, together with of immigrants from all over the world.</p> | <p>of masculinity. The female characters have passive and peripheral roles. The women in the film - Shorty's wife, Dona Zelia, Blacky's unseen girlfriend, Ned's girlfriend are there to be the recipients of male violence and are attacked, murdered and raped. Berenice and Angélica may reject this violence but they are sucked into it as observers and mourners. They "disappear" from the narrative and what happens to them afterwards is of no consequence. Angélica, threatened by Zé, leaves Bené's body and is not seen again. Berenice, who was given the gun, is seen fleetingly as a gangster's moll. Marina's function is to provide the bridge to Rocket's entry into manhood and the outside world. The film is set in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, spaces that structure identity, opportunity, and survival. The favelas are presented through narrow alleys, steep staircases, and densely packed buildings, reflecting physical confinement and social marginalisation.</p> | <p>idea in your head and a camera in your hand" established modern cinema in Brazil. It transformed its image outside the country by reason of its critical success. The Brazil that it symbolised of was one of exploitation, violence and deprivation. Buscapé / Rocket, the documenter and voice-over in <i>City of God</i>, is based on the photographer Wilson Rodrigues. He becomes Rodrigues at the end of the film and his association with photography enhances his "neutral" view of events. The poverty and violence are seen through the viewfinder of his camera, he documents the final shoot out. He is the one who informs us what is taking place both on a local level (the City of God itself) and at a national level (the slums of Brazil). <i>City of God</i> mixes the notion of the reporter with his objective camera that is able to reveal the truth of a sordid and violent area with the films own highly manipulated and constructed style.</p> |
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## Additional Guidance – Component 2: Section B, C & D

Component 2, Sections B, C & D (Documentary, Film Movements) are single film studies, unless choosing a shorts compilation (American Silent Comedy, Constructivism & Modernism, 1960's European Avant Garde) in which case learners are expected to study all films in the compilation and refer to at least one in their exam response.

Section B (Documentary) requires the specialist study of **Critical Debates (2) and Filmmakers' Theories**.

### ***Sisters in Law* (Ayisi and Longinotto, Cameroon/UK, 2005)**

*Sisters In Law* is an observational documentary about the lives of women in the small town of Kumba in Cameroon, it deals with the gulf between the laws which protect women and children and the outdated sexist culture which has seen women and children as possessions who can be abused with no consequences. It is filmed within a community which follows Sharia Law and follows the female State Prosecutor Vera Ngassa in her daily work empowering women and prosecuting men, educating both about the law.

Kumba is the hometown of one of the co-directors: Florence Ayisi and this gives authenticity to the documentary and allows the filmmakers to make real connections with the women whose stories are featured. Spending time on interviews and establishing a respectful relationship is one of the signature features of the work of Longinotto, she also does this with an unobtrusive style of filmmaking with the minimum amount of equipment and a very small crew to maintain trust and intimacy. Despite the dark subject matter, the film has a joyful tone created through the passionate and sometimes humorous figure of Vera Ngassa, the celebratory, respectful use of local music and colour.

### ***Stories We Tell* (Polley, Canada, 2012)**

*Stories We Tell* is a complex, personal and poetic documentary about Polley's own family, it is also reflexive, examining the nature of time and memory and the form of documentary itself as the title indicates. On the surface the documentary is concerned with who Polley's biological father is and is constructed in an emotionally raw way as in parts is narrated by her father, the actor Michael Polley reading from his biography. It features footage of Michael from the past as well as home movies that he filmed, in some ways making him the co-filmmaker and asking the viewer to consider his role as a father even when it is revealed that he is not Polley's biological father.

It features conventional interviews with Polley's siblings who reminisce about the past and this is illustrated with home movies, some of these are authentic and some have been constructed using actors. The casting of the family in these is so careful that they are seamlessly integrated into the narrative providing a visual illustration of an anecdote from an interview, contributing to the viewer's perception of the family. The blending of real and constructed footage was controversial and creates an interesting discourse about the nature of reality and if objective reality can ever be shown. The film suggests that subjective reality, or the poetic reality of how it felt, is just as valid as any 'objective' reality that is being presented. Another complicating factor is the presence of Polley herself as the filmmaker and the occasional pieces of equipment in the frame which draw the viewer's attention to the

idea of the deliberate construction of reality; she is both a character in the story and the filmmaker, suggesting that the reality she is trying to understand is herself.

There is also the nebulous presence of Diane Polley who died during the week of Polley's eleventh birthday, she is depicted through old footage and interviews as a vibrant, but enigmatic presence and the documentary reveals a sadness at the way that she was vilified by the press for her infidelities and another subject of the documentary is the sexism of the time and the impact of this on Diane and the family.

### ***Amy (Kapadia, UK, 2015)***

*Amy* is a combination of existing visual material of Amy Winehouse and the voices of her friends and family interviewed by Kapadia only a year after her death. Both of these elements create an emotional experience for the viewer as we see Amy Winehouse in a rise and fall narrative arc and hear the emotion in the voices of her friends, this gives the film a sense of raw reality and an observational feel. However, the film is deliberately constructed and carefully edited with recognisable villains: Blake Fielder, Mitch Winehouse and the British tabloids, so much so that Mitch complained about the negative way that he was represented.

There is some irony present in some of the more voyeuristic sections of the film, the opening for example is footage of a birthday party not designed for public consumption and the quite extensive footage of the Belgrade concert, although easily available online, is uncomfortable viewing, the length of the sequence which deals with her death and funeral using footage perhaps obtained from the paparazzi themselves makes for interesting discussion. For a film which questions the intrusive and damaging behaviour of the paparazzi, sections such as these seem to call into question what is acceptable in depicting 'reality' on screen, opening up a wider debate about the nature of documentary.

### ***For Sama (Al-Kateab, UK, 2019)***

*For Sama* provides a 'window into the world' of the horror of the war in Syria showing the close relationship between documentary and journalism, Al-Kateab as a journalist and filmmaker is brave, taking the viewer into dangerous situations to show the reality of the war, perhaps showing the viewer things they don't want to see or lingering a bit too long on images of death and suffering. The documentary is filmed on borrowed drones, mobile phones and digital cameras showing events in Aleppo as they happened, this gives the film a shocking and horrifying raw immediacy. Its focus is on the suffering of families and children in particular and effectively delivers an anti-war message in an emotionally intense and vicarious way.

The framing device of Al-Kateab addressing her daughter intensifies this idea of the suffering of families as Sama is a baby born in Aleppo and the non-linear narrative of the film is a series of events being explained to Sama, but perhaps all children who have to experience such terrible events. The film is a personal journey narrated by the filmmaker establishing a confident female voice amidst the oppression of women by the Assad regime and Al-Kateab appears in the film, filming herself in the mirror and the personal nature of the film allows room for the viewer to question her decisions and connect with her experience as a young woman and a mother.

### ***Exit Through the Gift Shop* (Banksy, UK, 2010)**

*Exit Through the Gift Shop* is a reflexive documentary and possibly a mockumentary or potentially an elaborate hoax by the enigmatic street artist Banksy. As Banksy's work is satirical in nature, this documentary follows a similar style, satirising the absurd premise of capturing objective reality in documentaries. It generated much debate about whether the subject of the documentary: Thierry Guetta aka Mr Brainwash filmmaker and artist is real which is an interesting question, or whether the message of the film is really what he represents: that anyone can make art. Another point of debate is whether the interviews with a heavily disguised Banksy are really him, or does that matter? Allowing for debates about art speaking for itself as a separate entity from the artist.

The film seems to be criticising the overly commercial nature of art in a capitalist society, suggested by the title, but also conversely showing how easy it is in the digital age to generate publicity and notoriety and gain commercial success from art as displayed in the film through the success of Mr Brainwash which has endured beyond the film. This postmodern idea of a self-referential text applies to the film itself as it is a vehicle for promoting the enigmatic persona of Banksy himself, who refused to say whether the film was a genuine documentary or a spoof. The film was also critically successful, nominated for an Academy Award, which is ironic considering that this is presented as an underground project or guerilla filmmaking.

### **Section C (Film Movements – Silent Cinema) requires the specialist study of Critical Debates (1).**

#### **Buster Keaton shorts: *One Week* (1920), *The Scarecrow* (1920), *The 'High Sign'* (1921) and *Cops* (1922) (Keaton, US)**

These films are typical of American Silent Comedy of the early 1920s and the auteur style of Keaton as a director and his star persona as a performer, his dead-pan expression presenting a blank canvas for the audience to project their own interpretations and responses. This movement was built around gag-based and slapstick comedy involving thrilling stunts, but also served as a critique of American society. Keaton's comedy, which is often surreal with over-sized objects, is shown in long takes to let the gag unfold and allow time to take in the elaborate mise-en-scene which played a vital part in the comedy and the underlying themes.

For example, the innovative flat pack house built on a revolving platform in *One Week* which serves as a critique of modernity, a parody of Ford's short film promoting pre-fabricated housing and a reference to the American Dream turned sour. Props are often used in creative and surreal ways, for example the trick house in *The High Sign* and the dual functions of the objects in Keaton's house in *The Scarecrow*, highlighting Keaton's innovative filmmaking style and also symbolising the hostile world around him and the

protagonist's attempts to conquer or control it, while these often fail, the characters demonstrate the resilience of the ordinary American citizen.

### **Strike (Eisenstein, USSR, 1924)**

*Strike* is an example of Soviet Montage which recognises the power of film to deliver political messages. The film depicts a strike at a Russian factory before the Russian Revolution with the idea of conflict both thematically and stylistically. Soviet montage aims to make the viewer aware of the editing by disrupting continuity creating discontinuity editing and encouraging the viewer to make meaning actively, making film watching an intellectual activity in opposition to the seamless continuity editing of escapist entertainment made in Hollywood. The emphasis is not on characters or recognisable character types such as heroes and villains, but characters who represent a particular trait or idea, for example the proletariat shown by the workers, or the bosses who represent the greed and oppressive nature of capitalism.

The film is divided into six chapters which forms another distancing device for the audience and is a montage in itself. The action which takes place reflects Eisenstein's concept of 'montage of attractions' where each moment of the film is intense and surprising, generating intellectual activity in the viewer, where ideas collide and create new meanings, for example, when the activists are discussing the strike, there are some straightforward cuts between close-ups of two of the men, one who proposes the strike and the other one who questions whether it is really necessary, this is then juxtaposed with a high angle shot of some water with a naked man struggling against it, creating a Kuleshov effect, where the viewer makes the associated meaning about the strength and bravery of the strikers, but also acknowledges their position of vulnerability.

### **Sunrise (Murnau, US, 1927)**

*Sunrise* is a German Expressionist film made in Hollywood and as such, combines many of the typical features of that film movement with some elements of the silent comedy used by Keaton. The later scenes in the city often incorporate visual comedy, the statue in the photographer's studio and the pig in the kitchen for example. These scenes also utilise the idea of innocents in a hostile world, epitomised by the traffic stopping kiss where the man and his wife are lost in their own world oblivious to the danger the city presents, and the hostility represented by some striking diegetic sounds of car horns and angry shouts.

The opening of the film is strikingly expressionist, using forced perspective to illustrate Murnau's ambivalence about the changes that modernity brings, excitement about the new modes of transport and the exciting new concept of a vacation, but also the threat that this poses to traditional ways of life, particularly family and community. The woman from the city embodies this threat alongside the threat that is posed by changing roles for women in the late twenties, representing both the flapper and the vamp. Her movements are similar to the gliding of the vampire in *Nosferatu*, Murnau's earlier work and the use of superimposition, amongst other techniques reflects the beyond natural hold that she has over the man.

In the same way as German Expressionism, the expressionist features indicate the presence of evil and fear of mind-control, but here rather than a response to the first World War, it is the fear of change to what Murnau sees as idyllic rural life, marriage and close-knit communities.

### ***Spies* (Lang, Germany, 1928)**

*Spies* has many features of German Expressionism, both visually: distorted mise-en-scene, dutch angles and the use of shadows and thematically: the controlling presence of evil and the city as an enticing but terrifying place. It also embodies features of The New Objectivity (Der Neue Sacklichkeit) which had a much more realist aesthetic and was concerned with contemporary issues of late 1920s Germany economically, socially and politically, for example, commentators have remarked on the likeness between the villain Haghi and Lenin. The representation of women who use their sexuality to gain power in a patriarchal society is also interesting. The narrative establishes many of the ingredients of espionage thrillers that have become staples of that sub-genre: surveillance, disguise suspense and sex.

Lang seems most interested in the villain Haghi and his character is more prominent than the hero 326, his control of everything behind the scenes has been likened to the director himself and the examination of the nature and influence of evil is a key expressionist theme. The intriguing nature or even attractive nature of evil is examined in the film by the ambiguity surrounding Haghi. The film however was seen by many as escapist entertainment which raises interesting questions in terms of the realist/expressionist debate, it was a huge success with German audiences and was the first German film to be taken to the U.S by plane where it was released by MGM.

### ***Man with a Movie Camera* (Vertov, USSR, 1928) and *A Propos de Nice* (Vigo, France, 1930)**

*Man with a Movie Camera* is an experimental reflexive documentary about the art of filmmaking. Vertov's statement at the beginning of the film outlined that it would have no intertitles, characters or conventional narrative set-up. The main character as the title suggests, is the man with the camera and what he chooses to show the viewer, the film shows a representation of the modern Soviet Union, a 'city symphony' but not just of one city, here a mixture of Odessa, Moscow and Leningrad, which portrays the achievements of the workers through hard labour. The man with the camera is Vertov's brother Mikhail Kaufman who demonstrates the commitment of filmmakers to their art by filming in some personally dangerous ways, on railway tracks with a train approaching for example.

The pace of the film is fast with the average shot length of just over two seconds, using montage, dissolves, split-screen and freeze frames. The presence of the camera man, and the lens itself is a constant reminder of film as a construct, of directorial choice and this is compounded by editing choices as between the reminders of the man with the camera there are intercuts to seemingly unrelated actions: a woman getting dressed, a man waking up, a square filling up with people, but they all show a city coming to life. Celebrating what film can achieve and the collective achievements of the Soviet people.

*A Propos de Nice* is a twenty-five-minute short documentary film which depicts of the daily routines of the people in Nice, France, juxtaposing wealth and poverty and thereby exposing social inequalities.

**Section D (Film Movements – Experimental Film) requires the specialist study of Auteur and Narrative.**

***Daisies* (Chytilova, Czechoslovakia, 1965) and *Saute ma ville* (Akerman, Belgium, 1968)**

*Daisies* is a film of ideas, what Chytilova called 'philosophies', it experiments with both film form and conventional narrative and characterisation: both protagonists are called Marie. In many ways it is a parody of the Socialist Realist films that were acceptable to the state funded industry leading up to the Czech New Wave, of which Chytilova was a part, who used surrealism to deliver messages criticising communism in a way which often proved to be impenetrable to the authorities. The narrative follows two young women who decide to 'go bad', this decision could be seen as an inciting incident, and it is interesting how Chytilova parodies conventional narrative; it also seems to set up the conventional socialist realist narrative of protagonists who are brought back in line with communist ideals. The authorities were able to ban it for a year on the grounds of food wastage, based on the food fight at the climax, which would have been shocking in a time of food shortage (although the opulent nature of the banquet for the communist leaders, suggested through symbolism, is of course much more shocking) perhaps suspecting its subversive power, but unable to firmly detect it.

Claimed by feminists at a later date, despite Chytilova's perhaps ironic assertions that it was critical of the young women; however, the vibrancy of the mise-en-scene surrounding the Maries and their often highly entertaining antics, gives the film a youthful energy which seems celebratory, reflected in the pace of editing, the use of colours, coloured filters and the aimless teenage sensibility reflected in the episodic structure. The film is concerned with nihilistic ideas of futility and the invisibility of young women in particular who seem to have no place in this patriarchal society other than to be 'dates' for much older married men; in a scene which appears to celebrate communist ideals: the labour of men for the good of all, the Maries despite their outrageous behaviour and appearance, are actually invisible to the men. There is an interesting auteur debate here as although there are some signature features in the work of Chytilova, the film is made collaboratively.

*Saute ma ville* is Akerman's first film but is indicative of the style and thematic concerns that she would go on to develop in her filmmaking career. The thirteen-minute short film is concerned with the mundanity and futility of domesticity, its pace is slow and the actions increasingly absurd, reflecting feminist frustrations with gender roles.

***Fallen Angels* (Wong, Hong Kong, 1995)**

*Fallen Angels* is a surreal version of a neo noir film, it has a complex narrative structure and is set in British Hong Kong; it has two intersecting plotlines, featuring alienated characters struggling to connect with each other and the city itself. It is in many ways typical of Wong's style and themes as an auteur, he has said interviews that he considers this film to be a continuation of *Chungking Express*, released the year before. Both films feature a lovesick hitman and celebrate the city itself, the surreal aesthetic and theme of alienation reflecting anxieties about the imminent handover to China in 1997.

Wong has said that the protagonist of the film is the city itself and the use of wide shots and ultra-wide shots allows the viewer to see the neon-lit vibrancy of the city at night and when used to depict characters give a disorientated sense of intimacy. The frenetic often hand-held camera movement also reflects the fast pace of life in the city, giving a sense of

disturbing immediacy, this combined with the large number of tilted frames and the use of shallow focus suggests the alienation and loneliness of the protagonists within it. The use of music, minimal dialogue and voice over narration also contributes to a hypnotic feel and dream-like aesthetic. While these stylistic features and thematic concerns are typical of Wong as a filmmaker, it is also important to consider his regular collaborators when debating the usefulness of the auteur theory.

### ***Cleo from 5 to 7* (Varda, France, 1962)**

*Cleo from 5 to 7* is a French New Wave film which has the hallmarks of that aesthetic and the typical themes of existentialism and perception, it is set apart from the male dominated film movement however, by the focus on a feminine point of view and the examination of female beauty and identity, as well as considering how women are perceived by those around them. It is a feminist film which draws the viewer's attention to the way that women are objectified by everyone around them, including women themselves who face huge social pressures. The insidious nature of this is so ingrained that women are encouraged to objectify themselves, early in the film, we see Cleo position herself in the way she thinks her boyfriend would like to see her. Concerns about mortality and a focus on female identity are typical of Varde as an auteur, however the style of her films are very different which allows for debate about the notion of auteur.

A key motif is mirrors, the protagonist Cleo is constantly looking in the mirror initially to confirm her beauty, and then later as the mirrors become fractured or broken, she must reconstruct her sense of self. The development of Cleo's perspective is marked by the use of POV shots which indicate that she is looking outwards from herself rather than considering how she looks to others, she emerges from objectification into subjectivity. The narrative structure is episodic, as is typical of French New Wave films, and also linear based on a contracted version of the two hours of the title as she waits for a possible cancer diagnosis.

### ***Memento* (Nolan, US, 2000)**

*Memento* is an experimental neo-noir film which has a non-linear narrative, a key feature of Nolan's work as an auteur. It deals with the theme of revenge, typical of the genre, but also has wider concerns which are more psychological: memory, perception and self-delusion and a philosophical quest for the elusive and unreliable truth. The film has a noir aesthetic in the black and white sequences show the protagonist struggling to piece events together, this references the typical noir detective and also the typical Nolan concern of the illusion of control in a hostile world, although this idea is reminiscent of Hitchcock's work and some commentators have observed that Nolan has 're-invented' Hitchcock or is perhaps a 'modern-day Hitchcock'. An interesting point to perhaps challenge the auteur concept.

The colour sequences shown in reverse are intercut with a seemingly unrelated black and white linear narrative which forms an elaborate narrative puzzle that the viewer must decode, the film then becomes a completely different experience on second and subsequent viewings. There are complex diagrams showing how to decode the narrative and online videos explaining it, as well as the DVD extra which shows the film in chronological order. While, this is a key feature of the film and Nolan's style, the significance of other collaborators could be discussed, particularly the editor as a challenge to the auteur theory.

### ***Mulholland Drive* (Lynch, US, 2001)**

*Mulholland Drive* is a multilayered surrealist film, typical of the work of Lynch in terms of visual style and themes: doubles, a horror aesthetic, a pre-occupation with death and the dark side of America and here specifically Hollywood; this film lacks the ambivalence of *La La Land* towards LA and the land of dreams. Famously, Lynch works from his subconscious mind and his films are both bizarre and dark, even darkly comic, the scene with the pool man is a striking change of tone, a humour more absurd when we realise this is possibly the revenge Diane has dreamed up for Adam. The surreal repeating graphic of the jitterbug contest which opens the film is reminiscent of the vintage America that Lynch captured in *Blue Velvet*, seemingly perfect but with horrific hidden depths. In terms of his status as an auteur, it may seem indisputable, but some commentators have remarked on the oblique nature of his thematic concerns, maybe the open-endedness of what the ultimate messages are and the possibility of vastly differing interpretations amongst spectators, as is definitely the case with *Mulholland Drive*, mean that the auteur debate is more complex than it initially seems.

The title, setting and reference to two iconic locations: Mulholland Drive and Sunset Boulevard (the place and the film) associated with Hollywood glamour and also doomed female stars, directs the narrative towards the idea of young women having their dreams crushed by Hollywood, a horrendously corrupt and predatory place where the auditions are never fair, it seems. In terms of narrative structure, the film seems episodic which little coherence between sections; a view of the first two thirds of the narrative as Diane's dream or fantasy allows the viewer to piece together a series of events, although at least one more viewing would be beneficial.

Even with this interpretation, there are still elements that are difficult to interpret, the cowboy for example. By making the narrative a dream, Lynch can't be held accountable for the messages about Hollywood, these could simply be Diane's bitterness at her failures, and it seems that the nearest she will get to the dream location, is a job at Winkies on Sunset Boulevard. In conventional narrative terms, the climax at Club Silencio, is perhaps the key for understanding the whole film, particularly the way the film celebrates the power of film itself. The final third of the film depicts 'reality' in a more apparently familiar narrative structure, using flashbacks (or are they memories and therefore unreliable) with a startling contrast in mise-en-scene, lighting and performance from Naomi Watts.

Assessment for each of these Sections is out of 20 marks.

## **Component 3: NEA Production Guide**

### **Overview of Component 3: Production (Non-exam Assessment, 30%)**

Component 3 requires learners to create a film production which will take the format of either a short film (video) or screenplay for a short film. Students completing the screenplay option must also produce a 20 frame digital storyboard.

Learners must complete one of the **briefs set by Eduqas**, that will be changed every three years. The briefs will stipulate the narrative context for the short film i.e. 'a narrative that has a distinct genre'. Four brief options will be available to choose from. Learners may create a production in any genre of their choice.

In preparation for production work, learners must undertake research into a variety of short films (at a running time of totalling at least 80 minutes). The short films must be taken from Appendix A in the Specification (p.43).

The production work will be supported by an evaluative analysis which incorporates an analysis of the narrative structure of the short films researched, other cinematic influences and reflections on intended meaning and response within the film.

Learners will be required confirm on the cover sheet the titles of the short films researched and the total viewing time.

Learners must identify on the coversheet any animation or CGI software that they have used, detailing how and where in the production it has been used.

### **Individual work**

All production work must be completed individually; group work is not permitted in Component 3. Each learner must develop their own response to the chosen set brief and all aspects of the research, planning and production must be completed individually, by the assessed learner. As detailed on p.32 of the specification, the learner may use unassessed students and helpers:

*'to appear in their media products e.g. as actors or models or to operate equipment, e.g. lighting or sound recording equipment, **under the direction of the assessed learner.**'*

**Learners should not appear in their own films as they are responsible for all filming, so should remain behind the camera.**

### **Pre-production Tasks**


Learners will benefit from undertaking pre-production tasks prior to commencing the production. Though pre-production is vital to planning a film production, please note that any pre-production work undertaken will not be assessed.

The following pre-production tasks may be used as suggestions. Centres are encouraged to use their own tried and tested training tasks to develop skills in the relevant areas for the NEA.

It may be useful to link practical training to theory work rather than undertaking it in isolation. The tasks will be more meaningful if they are linked to the film texts studied. This will allow learners to apply codes and conventions of film language within their production. While the

NEA work must be individual, these practice tasks may, of course, be completed in small groups.

### Pre-Production Task Ideas

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Pinterest Digital Mood Board<br/><a href="https://uk.pinterest.com">https://uk.pinterest.com</a></p> | <p>To be created from the beginning of the course and added to throughout by uploading still images from the films studied. Learners may choose one or two interesting stills from each film text studies with a view to potentially recreating these shots in their film. They may then refer to these in the 'cinematic influences' part of their evaluation. The stills may also be used to underpin the study of aesthetics in Components 1 and 2. Learners working in art disciplines may alternatively wish to use a sketchbook to collate these ideas.</p> |
| <p>Generating Ideas</p>   | <p>Learners should be encouraged to gather a range of story ideas in preparation for their short film production. There are many simple methods to help learners to formulate simple ideas including the 'What if? Method' where learners finish the sentence 'What if?' i.e. 'What if it never stopped raining?' or 'What if plants could talk?' Learners should be able to summarise and express their initial ideas in a concise few sentences, incorporating what or who the story is about. This is a teen drama about</p>                                   |
| <p>Five Finger Pitch</p>  | <p>Learners could create a Five Finger Pitch which incorporates the Genre, Protagonist, Goal, Obstacle, Why is the story important. They may wish to pitch a few story ideas to the class and get feedback on which one sounds best.</p>    |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Synopsis Writing                               | <p>Learners should take their concise idea and write up a more fleshed out Synopsis.</p> <p><b>THIS IS A TEEN DRAMA ABOUT A SIXTEEN YOUR OLD RUNAWAY WHO FLEES HER GROUP HOME IN BRIGHTON TO HITCHHIKE TO ABERDEEN TO FIND THE FATHER SHE'S NEVER MET.</b></p> <p><b>SHE'S CONVINCED SHE'LL FIND HIM BUT ALL SHE HAS TO GO ON IS AN OLD PICTURE, SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME.</b></p> <p><b>GIVES A VOICE TO KIDS THAT NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT.</b></p> <p><b>AFTER ALL THE YEARS OF GROUP HOMES AND FOSTERING SHE JUST WANTS TO FIND SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE. ANYONE WHO MIGHT GROUND HER AND GIVE HER A HOME FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.</b></p> |
| Writing Character                              | <p>Learners, particularly undertaking the Screenwriting Option need to undertake some character development work to ensure that characters are three dimensional. This may include a consideration of:</p> <p>Gender, Age, Appearance, Family, Personal Life, Professional Life, Key Relationships, Goals, External Desire (on the surface of the narrative i.e. to be famous – Emma Stone's character Mia in <i>La La Land</i>), Internal Desire (uncovered and realised by the end of the character's journey i.e. to be happy – Emma Stone's character Mia in <i>La La Land</i>).</p>   |
| Storyboard (Film-making option only)           | <p>Learners should create a storyboard for their short film. A template is available on our Digital Resources Page.</p>  |
| Shot List (Film-making option only)            | <p>Learners may find it useful to create a Shot List to accompany their storyboard which enables learners to at a glance look at mise en scène requirements for each shot</p>  |
| Digital Driving Test (Film-making option only) | <p>Centres may permit learners to use their own equipment. Whether this is the case or not, centres may wish to conduct a Digital Driving Test to ensure the equipment is suitable and that the learner is able to use it. A template for the Digital Driving Test can be found on our Digital Resources Page.</p>   |
| Screenplay Drafts                              | <p>Learners are encouraged to practise formatting of the screenplay in preparation for their screenplay production. This may include exercises such as writing an alternative ending for a film on the Specification in order to get to grips with the screenplay format.</p>  |
| Rough Cut (Film-making option only)            | <p>Learners should create a rough cut of their film as their first draft and be prepared to arrange a re-shoot of certain shots that did not work first time, or to get extra footage.</p>   |

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Short Film Screenings and Note-taking | This is an essential and assessed part of pre-production. Learners need to view and make notes on short films from the Specification totalling a minimum of 80 minutes and make reference to these in their evaluation. Their notes need to concentrate on how narrative is used to generate meaning and response. |
|---------------------------------------|--|

## Writing the Evaluative Analysis

A suggested sample structure for the Evaluative Analysis is outlined below. This can be reproduced and given to students.

### Very Short Introduction:

Identify the brief selected and outline how your short film will meet it.

### Analysis

Analysis of your own work is the focus of this piece, you should analyse how the key elements you used create meaning and response, as you would for any of the films that you have studied on the course. It is advisable to analyse your work chronologically, starting at the beginning of the short film, identifying how key elements and narrative devices are used, for example at the opening you could explore how you set up the narrative, create character and also encourage alignment with particular characters. You can use spectatorship terminology throughout, to show how you are encouraging particular responses to key moments in your short film and how these relate to overall meaning and themes.

As you are analysing your own work you should refer to elements of at least 80 minutes worth of short films that you have identified on the coversheet. You must refer meaningfully in some way to all of them, this could be a narrative device, the way the inciting incident is introduced for example, or the way character is created, or it could be a particular key element, a striking shot type, transition or location for example. To show the way key elements have influenced your work, screengrabs from the short film and your film are really useful for illustrating the effect of the device, this will allow you to use the words available for analysis of meaning and effect as you won't need to describe how the moment in the film looks.

Screenwriters can use screengrabs from their screenplays and their storyboards to show the influence of the 80 minutes of short films, this must **also** include professionally produced screenplays including those for short films, the screenplay for *Curfew* is available here: <http://curfewfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Curfew-Short-Film-Shooting-Script.pdf>

The analysis should be of the key elements demonstrated in the storyboard and the how the narrative and mise-en-scene are constructed in the screenplay that you have produced.

Alongside the analysis of key moments from your own work where particular responses are generated in the spectator by key elements, mise-en-scene or narrative devices, you should refer to two other cinematic influences. These must be films, for example television shows and computer games are not acceptable influences and should not be discussed. As with the short films, the influence could be in terms of narrative devices, for example how a climactic sequence is constructed, or a moment of character development, or a how a

particular prop or costume design are used; it could also be how particular key elements are used, for example a long take or some non-diegetic music to create or enhance a particular mood.

The analysis should end by talking about the resolution, your short film may be open ended for example and you can discuss how the spectator is left feeling, also what sort of themes and messages has the work generated? Again, refer to key moments and how they have been constructed using key elements and mise-en-scene.

### Conclusion

Very briefly conclude by evaluating how your film met the brief, you do not need to say what you would have done differently.

Please include a word count on your work and, for screenwriters, on your screenplay or the cover sheet.

Refer to exemplars with commentaries on the secure website and provided at CPD.

## Production Checklist

| Task  | Yes |
|---|-----|
| <b>Pre-Production</b>   |     |
| Pre –Production tasks undertaken (not assessed)   |     |
| Short films from the Specification (totalling min. 80 minutes) viewed with notes made in preparation for evaluation |     |
| <b>Production</b>   |     |
| Production is complete  |     |
| Production fulfils the stipulation of the brief in terms of narrative context                                       |     |
| Production is 4 – 5 minutes long (video)<br>Production is 1600-1800 words long (screenplay)                         |     |
| Accompanying digital storyboard is complete – SCREENPLAY OPTION ONLY<br>(20 frames/2 pages of screenplay)           |     |
| <b>Evaluation</b>   |     |
| Evaluation is complete  |     |
| Evaluation references short films (totalling a minimum of 80 minutes)   |     |
| Evaluation references other cinematic influences  |     |
| Evaluations reflects on how the production creates meaning and response   |     |

## Component 3: Short films

Where to find the short films and a few starting points. *(Please note that short films may disappear from websites. Please contact [film@eduqas.co.uk](mailto:film@eduqas.co.uk) if a film is no longer available online and we will endeavour to update this document)*

### **Meshes of the Afternoon (Deren, USA, 1946)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjtLgNpv5AQ&t=5s>

<https://archive.org/details/meshesoftheafternoon>

- Surrealism and dreams
- Motifs and symbolic objects
- Disjointed, non-linear narrative
- Shadows – German Expressionism
- Horror cinematography – POV shots, tracking shots
- Theme of time and perception
- Theme of violence and death

### **La Jetée (Marker, France, 1962)**

<https://vimeo.com/658254211?msocid=2c810fe381d66b3b34ce19dc80366a01>

- Science fiction
- Photomontage
- Circular narrative
- Memory and time
- Mortality
- Destruction of war
- Torture and experimentation
- Voice over narration

### **La Ricotta (Pasolini, Italy, 1963)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oz8tOMYGWWo>

- Experimental film
- Meta narrative – film within a film
- Vivid colour and surrealism/ black and white realism
- Social commentary – controversial portrayal of the church
- Themes of poverty and inequality
- Ugliness and constructed beauty – appearance and reality

### **The Grandmother (Lynch, USA, 1970)**

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1310067645761408>

- Surrealism
- Experimental techniques
- Animation
- Grotesque close-ups
- Themes of loneliness and abuse
- Expressionistic mise-en-scene

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

<https://vimeo.com/41180637>

- Female experience and friendships
- Female sexuality
- Dysfunctional families
- Black and white aesthetic
- Incest and abuse
- Mental illness
- Repression and religion
- Intimate framing, close ups and big close ups

**Elephant (Clarke, UK, 1989)**

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x9670o\\_elephant-by-alan-clarke-partie-1\\_webcam\\_\(parts\\_2-4\\_in\\_the\\_sidebar\)](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x9670o_elephant-by-alan-clarke-partie-1_webcam_(parts_2-4_in_the_sidebar))

- Tracking shots
- Static long shots
- Lack of a protagonist
- Repetitive senseless violence
- Long take on victim – uncomfortable viewing
- Masculinity
- Diegetic sound – no dialogue
- Political themes

**The Wrong Trousers (Park, UK, 1993, also available on DVD)**

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7ub14w>

- Animation/claymation
- Comedy
- Three act structure
- Classical Hollywood narrative structure
- Good vs evil
- Hollywood parody
- British stereotypes

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luUwDuV8GNY>

[https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2v0m57\\_when-the-day-breaks-directed-by-amanda-forbis-wendy-tilby-nfbc-1999-9-min\\_webcam](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2v0m57_when-the-day-breaks-directed-by-amanda-forbis-wendy-tilby-nfbc-1999-9-min_webcam)

- Animation
- Linear narrative
- Anthropomorphism
- Dark comedy
- Tragedy
- Life and death
- Montage editing
- City life

**About a Girl (Percival, UK, 2001)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV1\\_TXm0XHs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV1_TXm0XHs)

- Diegetic narrator
- Unreliable narrator
- Close ups and tracking shots – vicarious experience
- Flashbacks
- Social realism – focus on real location
- Poverty and neglect
- Cut away shots to reveal reality
- Shocking ending

**Wasp (Arnold, UK, 2003) (also available as an extra on *Fish Tank* Blu-ray)**

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8kvpj7>

- Social realism
- Real location
- Diegetic sound
- Handheld camera – chaotic and immediacy
- Social issues – poverty and teenage mother
- Dark comedy
- Sympathy and alignment – non-judgemental
- Poetic realism – everyday objects (and wasps) become symbolic

**High Maintenance (Van, Germany, 2006)**

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

- Dystopian science fiction
- Dark comedy
- Big closeups for alignment with female protagonist
- Romance and relationships
- Stereotypes of femininity and masculinity
- Shot reverse shot editing – differences between men and women
- Twist ending

**Connect (Abrahams, UK, 2010)**

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

- Realism and expressionism combined
- POV shots – subjective cinematography
- Loneliness
- Close ups and alignment
- Vicarious experience – emotional connection
- Diegetic and non-diegetic use of music to create meaning

**Night Fishing (Park, South Korea, 2011)**

<https://vimeo.com/115480849>

- Surrealism/Horror
- Low budget aesthetic
- Death and the afterlife
- Canted angles and other devices to suggest the supernatural
- Non-linear narrative
- Rituals
- Family conflict
- Loneliness
- Grief

**Pitch Black Heist (Maclean, UK, 2012)**

<https://vimeo.com/331090235>

- Distinct genre – heist as sub-genre of crime film
- Starts in media res
- Black comedy
- Monochrome aesthetic
- Intense relationship
- Contrasting character types – comedy archetypes
- Match cuts to show similarity between characters
- Twist ending

**Curfew (Christensen, USA, 2012)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pg-ua1tGKY>

- Ironic use of The Flower Duet, a song about romantic possibilities, sung in a major key
- Black humour
- High angle shot of Richie – his desperation
- Big close-ups for alignment
- Contrasting physical appearance of Richie and Sophia
- Expressionistic use of slow motion and music
- Character reveals/backstory
- Difficult family relationships

**Swimmer (Ramsay, UK, 2012)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NF0H-Lfpa9s>

- Poetic realism
- POV shots
- Monochrome aesthetic
- Memories – soundscape
- British identity/childhood
- Memories of childhood
- Slow motion – surreal tone

**The Gunfighter (Kissack, USA, 2014)**

<https://vimeo.com/79306807>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWs4WA--eKU>

- Distinct genre – the western
- Postmodernism
- Use of a narrator
- Recognisable character types
- American masculinity
- Black comedy
- Comic timing
- Parody

**Stutterer (Cleary, UK, 2015)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ag7TwUMRhlq>

- Big close-ups/ close-ups – alignment
- Exposition – character introduction
- Isolation – through framing
- Online dating
- Inciting incident – impending date
- Character development
- Character based comedy – alignment

- Mise-en-scene to create character
- Climax sequence – the date
- Resolution – human connection and communication

***Two Cars, One Night (Waititi, NZ, 2004)***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFmbIO\\_JTH0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFmbIO_JTH0)

- Monochrome aesthetic
- Childhood
- Rites of passage
- Comedy
- Sweeping camera movement
- Fast motion – passage of time
- POV shots
- Zooming in to show connection between characters
- Adults' world and children's world
- Two shots
- Moment of human connection

***The Silent Child (Overton, UK, 2017)***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GbxFIVQv8c>

- Sign language
- Communication and human connection
- Isolation
- Childhood
- Aerial shot
- Isolated location – horror aesthetic
- Middle class family
- Shallow focus/shifts in focus for isolation – push and pull focus
- Neglect
- POV shots – alignment
- Silent sequences – vicarious experience

***Hair Love (Cherry, US, 2019)***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNw8V\\_Fkw28](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNw8V_Fkw28)

- Animation
- Childhood
- Flashback
- Family
- Masculinity
- Music to express emotions and to create narrative
- Expressionistic sections – personification of the hair
- Narration from her mother via a video
- Classical Hollywood narrative structure

*Wild Tales* Compilation (Szifron, Argentina 2014) (DVD, streaming: rent or buy on Amazon)

1. Pasternak

- Black comedy
- Slow zoom and long take as co-incidences revealed
- Pace of editing increases
- Non-diegetic music – low strings – to build tension
- Satire
- Male arrogance
- Wild animals theme – closely beneath ‘civilisation’

2. The Rats

- Horror aesthetic
- Pathetic fallacy
- POV shots
- Framing to show differing outlook of the two women
- Political corruption
- Male arrogance and abuse of power
- CU alignment with waitress and cook
- Shallow focus and pull focus to direct attention
- Non-diegetic music for sadness and tragedy

3. The Strongest

- Car commercial aesthetic
- Beautiful scenery/ugly behaviour
- Dark comedy
- Patriarchal power
- Class differences
- Atavistic masculinity
- Horror aesthetic through music and very long shot to show isolation
- Ironic humour at the end

4. Little Bomb

- In media res at the opening – surreal tone – foreshadowing
- Low angle shots of the demolition expert – powerful in a masculine environment
- Dark humour
- Corrupt, uncaring capitalism
- Revenge
- Close -ups for alignment
- Long shot to show the extent of the queue and his sense of entitlement and male power
- Ordinary person vs corrupt institutions
- Power of social media

## 5. The Proposal

- Class divisions – wealth through mise-en-scene
- Autumn leaves symbolic of change
- Non-diegetic music – high strings tension – thriller
- Gender stereotypes of parents
- Entitled, weak son – stereotypes of wealth
- Power of the wealthy and corruption of the judiciary
- Society of huge class differences
- Victims of the wealthy

## 6. Till Death Do Us Part

- Wealth through panning shots – amount of wedding guests
- Song ‘Titanium’ – inner strength of the bride – foreshadowing – about to be tested
- Fast cutting rate, exposition – happiness, celebration
- Editing emphasises gender divisions
- Close-ups of bride – dark comedy – insincere performance with his family – sets up conflict
- Close-up and slow zoom for the inciting incident – her realisation
- POV shots – alignment with the bride
- Aerial shot of the roof – implies suicide rather than revenge
- Dark comedy – revenge is through money
- Materialistic, class ridden Argentinian society
- Absurd comedy, wedding rituals continue
- Comic ending

***The Human Voice* (Almodovar, Spain, 2020) (Streaming: rent/buy on Amazon)**

[Watch The Human Voice | Prime Video \(amazon.co.uk\)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/watch/?ref=pe_video_title_text&pf_rd_p=81111111-1111-1111-1111-111111111111)

- Symbolic use of primary colours – Almodovar auteur feature
- Red dress symbolises vibrancy, life but also death
- Bright, colourful apartment – juxtaposed with misery of protagonist
- Voice over narration
- High angle/aerial shot of the set – Hitchcock influence – helplessness of the protagonist
- Orchestral music – non-diegetic
- Blue suit – calculated killer – axe?
- Meta layer – aerial shot reveals it is a sound stage – theatrical – suspension of disbelief
- Boundaries between film and theatre blurred
- Despair/abandonment – close-ups, alignment
- Narration becomes diegetic through phone call
- Triumphant ending – takes control of herself and the dog! Female empowerment typical of Almodovar

## Resources

### General

What is Context?

<http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/doing.php>

### Political Context

<http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780765635976/01%20A%20Guide%20for%20the%20Political%20Analysis%20of%20Movies.pdf>

### Detailed explanation of representation:

<http://www.mediaknowall.com/gcse/keyconceptsgcse/keycon.php?pageID=represent>

### Some interesting approaches to representation:

<http://lessonbucket.com/vce-media/unit-1/representation/representations-in-film/>

### On the issues of lack of diversity in Hollywood:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/jan/18/hollywoods-race-problem-film-industry-actors-of-colour>

### How the representation of women is improving. An article in the NY times:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/movies/fall-arts-preview-representation-of-female-characters-in-movies-is-improving.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/movies/fall-arts-preview-representation-of-female-characters-in-movies-is-improving.html?_r=0)

<http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/gender-representation>

### Great overview of representation of ethnicity:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zwpq39q/revision>

### Overviews of representation of age:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zx6qsg8/revision>

[http://www.mediaknowall.com/as\\_alevel/alevkeyconcepts/alevelkeycon.php?pageID=age](http://www.mediaknowall.com/as_alevel/alevkeyconcepts/alevelkeycon.php?pageID=age)

Very useful article from The Guardian including clips:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/jul/04/what-films-best-portray-old-age>

### A useful PDF:

The Shot and Mise-en-Scene

Use of colour in storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXgFcNUWqX0>

### **Aesthetics/Colour Palettes**

<http://mymodernmet.com/cinema-palettes/>

### **Set film texts**

**Official Textbook and Revision Guide from Illuminate/Hodder publishing (new editions available Spring 2024). Order here:**

<https://www.illuminatepublishing.com/product-category/film-studies>

## **COMPONENT 1: AMERICAN FILM**

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## **Section B: American film since 2005**

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