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Film Studies - personal Learning Checklist

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| Core Study Areas |
| Film Form |
| **Cinematography:****Principal elements**• camera shots including point of view shots, focus including depth of field, expressive and canted angle shots, handheld camera in contrast to steadicam technology• composition, including balanced and unbalanced shots.**Creative use of cinematography**• camerawork including subjective camera, shifts in focus and depth of field, mixed camera styles, filters• monochrome cinematography• the principles of 3-point lighting including key, fill and backlighting• chiaroscuro lighting and other expressive lighting effects.**Conveying messages and values**• how shot selection relates to narrative development and conveys messages and values• how lighting, including 3-point lighting, conveys character, atmosphere and messages and values• how cinematography, including lighting, provides psychological insight into character• how all aspects of cinematography can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations• how and why different spectators develop different interpretations of the same camera shots and lighting• how cinematography, including lighting, is used to align spectators and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative• how cinematography, including lighting, contributes to the ideologies conveyed by a film.**Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic**• how cinematography including lighting can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or cinematographer)• how cinematography contributes to a film’s overall aesthetic. |
| **Mise-en-scène****Principal elements**• setting, props, costume and make-up• staging, movement and off-screen space• how cinematography impacts on mise-en-scène, in particular through variation in depth of field, focus and framing (a significant area of overlap with cinematography).**Creative use of mise-en-scène**• how mise-en-scène can be used both naturalistically and expressively• how the principal elements of mise-en-scène can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations• how changes in mise-en-scène contribute to character and narrative development.**Conveying messages and values**• how mise-en-scène conveys messages and values• how mise-en-scène, including setting, props, costume and make-up, can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of possible interpretations• how staging, movement and off-screen space are significant in creating meaning and generating response• the significance of motifs used in mise-en-scène, including their patterned repetition• how mise-en-scène is used to align spectators and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative• how and why different spectators develop different interpretations of the same mise-enscène• how mise-en-scène contributes to the ideologies conveyed by a film.**Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic**• how mise-en-scène can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or designer)• how mise-en-scène contributes to a film’s overall aesthetic. |
| **Editing****Principal elements**• the shot to shot relationships of continuity editing including match editing, the 180° rule• the role of editing in creating meaning, including the Kuleshov effect• montage editing and stylised forms of editing including jump cuts.**Creative use of editing**• how editing implies relationships between characters and contributes to narrative development including through editing motifs and their patterned repetition• how the principal elements of editing can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations• how visual effects created in post-production are used, including the way they are designed to engage the spectator and create an emotional response• the use of visual effects created in post-production including the tension between the filmmaker's intention to create a particular emotional response and the spectator's actual response.**Conveying messages and values**• how editing conveys messages and values• how editing is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative• how and why different spectators interpret the same editing effects differently• how editing contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.**Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic**• how editing can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or editor)• how editing contributes to a film’s overall aesthetic. |
| **Sound****Principal elements**• vocal sounds (dialogue and narration), environmental sounds (ambient, sound effects, Foley), music, silence• diegetic or non-diegetic sound• parallel and contrapuntal sound and the distinction between them• multitrack sound mixing and layering, asynchronous sound, sound design.**Creative use of sound**• how sound is used expressively• how sound relates to characters and narrative development including the use of sound motifs.**Conveying messages and values**• how sound conveys messages and values• how the principal elements of sound can generate multiple connotations and suggest a range of interpretations• how sound is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative• how and why different spectators interpret the same use of sound differently• how sound contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.**Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic**• how sound can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or sound designer)• how sound contributes to a film’s overall aesthetic. |
| **Performance****Principal elements**• the use of non-verbal communication including physical expression and vocal delivery• the significance of the interaction between actors• performance styles in cinema including method and improvisatory styles• the significance of casting.**Performance as a creative collaboration**• the role of directing as a 'choreography' of stage movement• the relationship between performance and cinematography.**Conveying messages and values**• how performance conveys messages and values• how performance is used to align the spectator and how that alignment relates to spectator interpretation of narrative• how and why different spectators interpret the same performance differently• how performance contributes to the ideologies conveyed by film.**Indication of an auteur approach and film aesthetic**• how performance can be indicative of an auteur approach (director or performer)• how performance and choreography contributes to a film’s overall aesthetic. |
| Meaning and response |
| **Film as a medium of representation:**• how film creates meaning and generates response through cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing, sound and performance (including staging and direction)• how all aspects of film form including narrative contribute to the representations of cultures and societies (gender, ethnicity and age), including the ideological nature of those representations |
| **Film as an aesthetic medium:**• the role of mise-en-scène, cinematography including lighting, composition and framing in creating aesthetic effects in specific film sequences• the role of music and editing in conjunction with the above in creating aesthetic effects• the significance of the aesthetic dimension in film including the potential conflict between spectacle and the drive towards narrative resolution in film• the aesthetic qualities of specific films and the concept of film aesthetics• film aesthetics, approached critically, including the relationship between film aesthetics and the auteur as well as film aesthetics and ideology. |
| The contexts of film |
| **Social, cultural, political contexts (either current or historical)**• social factors surrounding a film's production such as debates about ethnicity or gender• cultural factors surrounding a film's production such as a significant film or artistic movement• political factors surrounding a film's production such as the imposition of restrictions on freedom of expression or a major movement for political change. |
| **Institutional, including production, context**• relevant institutional aspects of a film's production• key features of the production process including financial and technological opportunities and constraints. |
| Specialist study areas |
| Filmmakers theories |
| The documentary film will be explored in relation to key filmmakers from the genre. The documentary film studied may either directly embody aspects of these theories or work in a way that strongly challenges these theories. In either case, the theories will provide a means of exploring different approaches to documentary film and filmmaking.• Michael Moore• Kim Longinotto |
| Critical Debates |
| **Debate 2: The significance of digital technology in film** The degree of the impact the digital has had on film since the 1990s is a developing debate. Some film commentators argue that, although digital technology could potentially transform cinema, so far films, especially narrative films designed for cinema release, have changed very little from pre-digital times. Others consider that the impact of digital filmmaking is only beginning to emerge, both in high concept Hollywood filmmaking and in much lower budget experimental work. |