Course Transition

Bridging the Gap
from School to College

Warlingham
Sixth Form College

Year 11 > Year 12 Transition
Summer Term 2021
A Level Film Studies

FILM STUDIES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No
Course Overview	1-3
Our Expectations	4
Using Cornell Notes	5
Review / Revise	6
Watch	7
Listen to	8
Read	9
Research	10
Complete	11
Appendices / Resources	12

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Film Studies course is made up of three components that we study over two years.

Component 1: Varieties of film and filmmaking

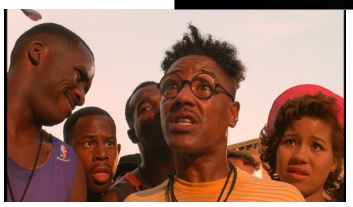
Written examination: 2½ hours

35% of qualification

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

Section A: Hollywood 1930-1990 (comparative study)

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



We will be studying how the films reflect the times in which they were made and the personality and beliefs of their directors.

Films: *Vertigo* (1958) and *Do The Right Thing* (1989)

Section B: American film since 2005 (two-film study)

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

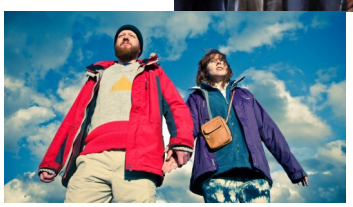
We will be studying the different ways that different audiences can respond and react to the same film as well as the deeper meanings behind both films.

Films: *No Country For Old Men* (2007) and

Captain Fantastic (2015)

Section C: British film since 1995 (two-film study)

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



We will be studying the deeper meanings behind both films and what messages they give us about what it means to be British.

Films: *Shaun of the Dead* (2004)

and *Sightseers* (2012)

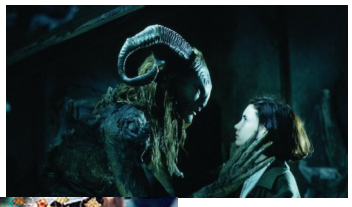
COURSE OVERVIEW

Component 2: Global filmmaking perspectives

Written examination: 2½ hours

35% of qualification

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



Section A: Global film (two-film study)

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

We will be studying how different film techniques make meaning for audiences, from cinematography to sound.

Films: *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2004)

Section B: Documentary film

One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one documentary film. We will be studying how different documentaries are constructed using a variety of Cinematic techniques.

Film: *Stories We Tell* (2012)

Section C: Film movements – Silent cinema

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

We will be studying how film language developed during the silent era.

Film: *Sunrise* (1927)

Section D: Film movements – Experimental film (1960-2000)

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

We will be studying how different film-makers have experimented with film technique to create either unique films or a new way of approaching cinema.

Film: *Fallen Angels* (1995)

Component 3: Production

Non-exam assessment

30% of qualification

This component assesses one production and its evaluative analysis.

Learners produce:

- either a short film (4-5 minutes) or a screenplay for a short film (1600-1800 words) plus a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay, and
- an evaluative analysis (1600 - 1800 words).

OUR EXPECTATIONS

College Expectations for Academic Success

The College will work closely with all students and parents to create a purposeful, creative and stimulating environment in which students are encouraged to fully develop - both academically and personally.

We will expect you to take responsibility for your own behaviour and learning. The current College Committee along with the student body have discussed and agreed that students should commit to:

- Ensuring academic success through regular attendance and punctuality at all required registrations, lessons, supervised study lessons and Inspire Periods. Attendance which drops below 95% reduces Key Stage 5 performance by at least one grade, so it is taken very seriously.
- Completing all set tasks on time to the best of your ability, making full use of study periods and homework to enable you to meet all deadlines.
- Using study time effectively by bringing all required equipment and resources with you and making full and regular use of the College study rooms and LRC, respecting the need for silent studying conditions.
- Working closely with all your teachers to develop an effective working relationship based on mutual respect and discussing your work with them on a regular basis and meeting targets set.
- Developing your skills as an independent, self-evaluative learner and work closely with your tutor in monitoring and discussing your academic progress. As an independent learner, if you miss a lesson, it is your own responsibility to find the teacher and catch up with the work missed.
- Organising your work efficiently and effectively into folders for each subject, making full use of individual subject expectations and using Cornell Notes daily to ensure work in your folders is relevant and meaningful.
- Keeping mobile phones out-of-sight in all classrooms and during assemblies so that lessons are not disturbed and/or important information is missed.
- Attending all parents' evenings and arrange appointments with your teachers to discuss your progress and work.

Course-specific Expectations for Academic Success

- Above all, an open mind and willingness to engage
- To be able to hit deadlines
- To be able to work in groups and share ideas with your peers

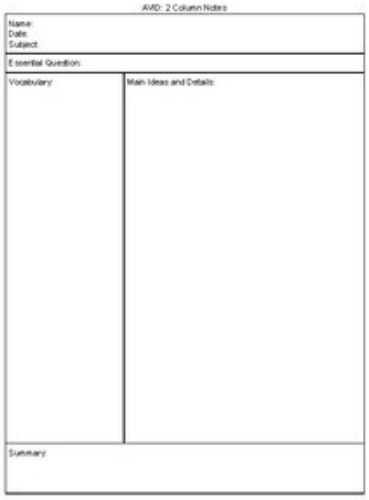
USING CORNELL NOTES

The Cornell Notes system is a note-taking system devised by Walter Pauk, an education professor at Cornell University. It is a proven method that establishes a more effective learning process.

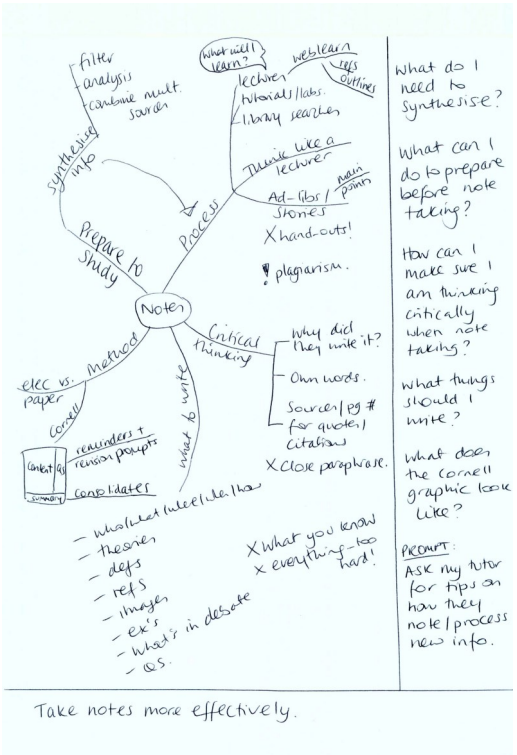
It is designed to help the user think and reflect upon the notes they have made as well as making them more useful for revision purposes.

Please click here to watch a video that explains how to take Cornell Notes properly.

Film Studies particularly benefits from Cornell notes as we will often be studying particular concepts when looking at a film. A good tip is to create two columns, one column having a key concept of the course and the second containing detailed examples of how the concept has been applied in the film you are studying.



A less linear alternative is to use mindmaps. These again apply themselves really well to film, where a concept or idea is placed in the centre with examples heading off. These have the added benefit of allowing expansion ideas to be placed on extra nodes, with competing ideas and examples attached.



REVIEW / REVISE

As Film Studies will be a new subject for most of you there isn't really any revision that you can do. A genuine curiosity and interest in different types of films is really all you need. However, there may be some things that you may not realise you already know that we will use in the course. The following is a quick guide in terms of basic starting knowledge which will hopefully be very familiar to you already

A good place to start your Film Studies journey is BBC Bitesize revision on Film which is a short and simple introduction to some of the concepts and ideas behind Film Studies, many of which you will already be aware of.

Other than that, start watching films that you may not otherwise have watched. Explore Netflix or iplayer and see what looks interesting. Have a look at a 'greatest films' list and see if you can find any, have a look at black and white or foreign language films. There are lots of amazing films out there waiting to be discovered!

WATCH

The following short videos are all really good introductions to how Film Studies asks you to view films.

1. **How does Edgar Wright create comedy in his films?**

   While watching this short video, make notes on the different film techniques that Edgar Wright uses to engage his audience. Link to specific examples from his different films. As an extension exercise, watch his films if you haven't seen them yet!

2. **How do the Coen Brothers use framing techniques and editing techniques in their films?**

   The Coen Brothers have a unique style in their films. Make notes whilst watching the video above on what the main film technique they use to achieve this.

3. **How did Buster Keaton create comedy in silent cinema?**

   Silent cinema has been described as 'pure cinema'. Make notes on how Buster Keaton used cinematic language to push the boundaries of film-making while watching this short video

4. **What do the different camera positions mean?**

   This short video from Film Studies Fundamentals introduces you to why films use different camera framing positions as well as introducing you to some key terminology.
   Make some notes when watching one of your favourite films on the different camera positions used. Why do you think those particular framing devices were chosen?

5. **Lisa's Study Hacks**

This gives a very quick but insightful guide into how you should study film. Try and use her techniques whenever you study a film. The most important point is the first point - you can never truly understand a film after only one viewing!

LISTEN TO

There are a wide range of film based podcasts available to listen to. Below are some of the most useful and most interesting

1. **The Film Business with Mark Kermode**

This gives an interesting behind-the-scenes look at the film business, from production to exhibition. Make some brief notes on how the film industry works while listening.

2. **Zoom**

Zoom is a great podcast for looking at certain films in a lot of detail. This particular episode explores the zombie film. What makes them so appealing and so popular? Why does nobody in a zombie film say the 'z' word? How have they developed over time? This will be particularly interesting when we come to study *Shaun of the Dead*.

3. **The Empire Film Podcast: The Ranking - Alfred Hitchcock**

Empire is the UK's leading film magazine and they run their own podcasts full of reviews and interviews. In this podcast they run the rule over the films of Alfred Hitchcock, one of cinema's most famous directors. We will be studying Hitchcock and this is an ideal starting point to who he is and what films he made. While listening make some notes on who Hitchcock is, the films he made and why they are so popular. See if you can find some and watch them.

4. **Pure Cinema Podcasts**

This podcast is written and recorded by a cinema in Hollywood that is owned by Quentin Tarantino. This episode invites special guest Edgar Wright to talk about his favourite comedy films. As Edgar Wright made *Shaun of the Dead*, it's interesting to see how his influences came across in his films. After listening, make a mindmap of Edgar Wright's comedy influences.

READ

The internet is full of interesting things to read about film and cinema. Below is just a selection to introduce you to some of the key films that we will be studying.

1. **How We Made Shaun of the Dead**

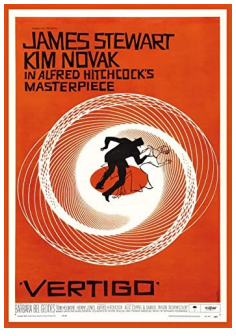
   Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg discuss how the idea for *Shaun of the Dead* came about and the process they went through in making it. Make a mindmap of the five most interesting points to come out of their discussion.

2. **Empire's 30 Year anniversary of Do The Right Thing interviews.**

   Do The Right Thing is one of our key texts and it turned 30 in 2019. Empire went and spoke to lots of different people involved in its making and discussed its legacy. This is a very interesting introduction to one of the most important films of the 1980s. Make notes while reading on why it was such a ground-breaking film in either a mindmap or linear form.

3. **Mark Kermode interviews Guillermo Del Toro on *Pan's Labyrinth***.

   One of the first films we will study is the Spanish language film Pan's Labyrinth, which film critic Mark Kermode claimed was his favourite film of 2006. This interview from the time is a great introduction to the film and Del Toro's intentions in making it. Make some notes on what drove Del Toro to make it.



4. **What makes Vertigo so great?**

   One thing that unites all film fans is their desire to rank and rate films. The BFI magazine Sight and Sound runs a ten yearly poll to find the best film ever made. The winner of the last poll was Vertigo, another of the films we will study. On first viewing it seems overly long and confusing, so what makes it such a great film? This article explores the many different ways we can judge a film as 'great' - whilst reading make notes on the different aspects of the film that make it 'great'.

RESEARCH

Before you start to study Film, a nice thing to do is to reflect on your own film-watching habits. There are a variety of ways we can research into films we have seen. Try the following research exercises.

1. Choose a favourite film of yours:

   Who directed it? What other films have they directed? Are they similar types of film or different? How are they similar? Do they have similar themes or similar aesthetics (looks)? What links between the films can you make?

   Make a mindmap linking all the films and their themes to find connections.

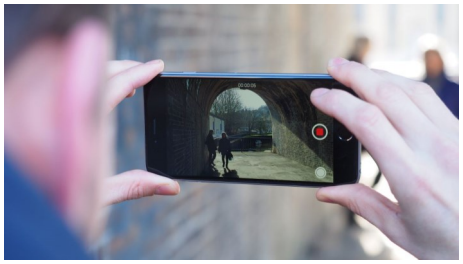
2. Choose another favourite film of yours and look into the story of how it was made.

   Can you find behinds the scenes footage? A director's commentary or interview with the director? Interviews with the stars? Do any reviews give you any insight into the work that went on behind the scenes?

   Make a short 5 point revision card with the most interesting things you found out

3. Research into different camera framing positions and camera movements.

   Try shooting a very short film on your phone using a variety of different angles and movements. How do the different framings and movement change the meaning of what you film?



4. What was the last film you saw? Find 5 or 6 reviews of the film online. Do you agree with the reviews? If not, why not? Were the reviews fair? Make some notes summarising your findings.

5. Research into the different career Film Studies could lead to.

   It's more than you think! Which ones are most appealing or are most suited to your skill set?

COMPLETE

1. Complete a film diary

Whenever you watch a film make a note somewhere of the following questions:

Did you like it?

What did/didn't you like about the story?

What did/didn't you like about the main character?

What 3 things did you like about the film as a whole?

What 3 things didn't you like about the film as a whole?

Hopefully this will encourage you to look at films in a more critical and educational way!

2. Complete some quizzes!

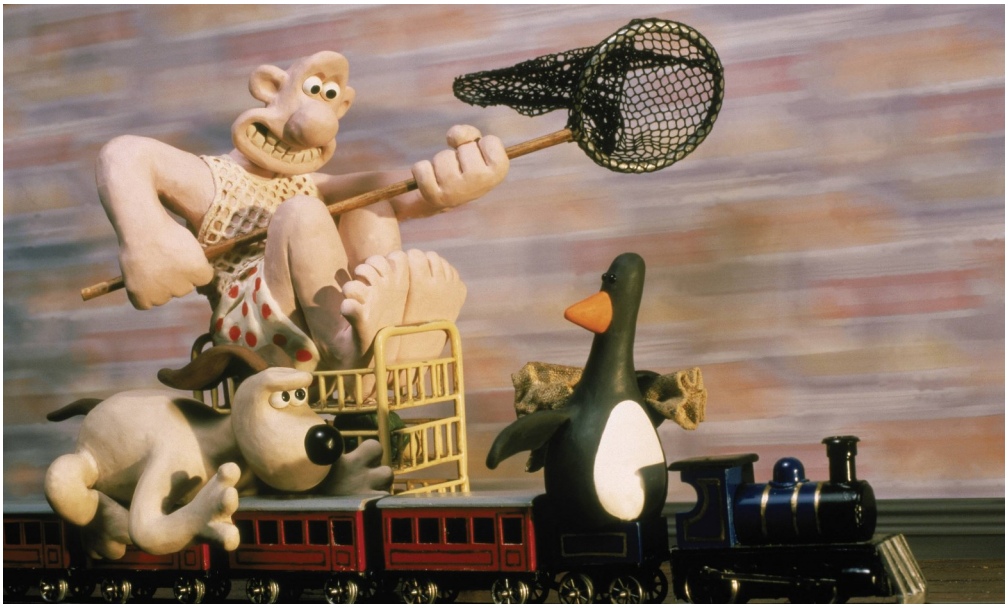
Brush up on your general film knowledge by taking part on some online film quizzes. For example, how much do you know about the Harry Potter films? Or the Toy Story films? Why not make a quiz on your favourite film?

3. Write a review!

Watch a new film that you haven't seen before and use this template to write a review of the film to share with others. It doesn't have to be very long but make sure you follow the outline.

APPENDICES / RESOURCES

Filmography

The films we will be studying during the course are listed below. You do not need to purchase them as clips will be provided but multiple viewings are very useful and recommended. Most can be found very cheaply in charity shops or on streaming services such as Netflix.

Pan's Labyrinth	(Del Toro, 2006)
House of Flying Daggers	(Zhang, Chi, 2004)
Shaun of the Dead	(Wright, UK, 2004)
Sightseers	(Wheatley, UK, 2012)
No Country For Old Men	(Coen Bros., 2007)
Captain Fantastic	(Ross , USA, 2016)
Vertigo	(Hitchcock, USA, 1958)
Do The Right Thing	(Lee, USA, 1989)
Sunrise (A Tale of Two Humans)	(Murnau, USA, 1927)
Stories We Tell	(Polley, Can, 2015)
Fallen Angels	(Wong Kar-Wai,HK,1995)
The Wrong Trousers	(Park, UK, 1993)