

Film Studies

Grades 10-12

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Superintendent of Schools:

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Introduction to Film Studies

Course Description:

An introductory study of the preeminent art form of the 20th Century. The course will focus upon the fundamentals of film study as an academic discipline, including formal analysis of film narrative and cinematic technique (the art of film), contextual approaches to film, study of various film genres, and rudimentary experience with film production. Students will be exposed to aesthetically and historically important films.

Course Sequence:

1. Introduction to Early Cinema and Historical Context
2. Societal Values & Artistic Style (Film Noir)
3. The Western - American western, Spaghetti western
4. Alfred Hitchcock - Auteur Theory, Duality, Mise-en-Scene, Motifs, Storyboards, Marketing Posters, Thrillers and Early Special Effects
5. Francis Ford Coppola - Character Development, Color, Sound, Classical Film, Editing, and Auteur Theory
6. Steven Spielberg - The Blockbuster, Monster Movie, Tension/Release, Production/Direction, Mise-En-Scene, Dolly Zoom, Color Symbolism
7. George Lucas - Space Western/Samurai, Formalism, Good Vs. Evil, Color Theory, and Symbolism
8. Screenwriting - Science Fiction, Story Structure, Acts, Plot Point, Hero's Sequence, Dramatic Need, Conflict/Resolution
9. Spike Lee - Surrealism in Film, Mise-en-Scene (outside of the frame), Racism, Characterization, and Story Structure
10. Foreign Film - Experimental Film, Fable Film, Time & Space, Editing, Story Structure/Format Superhero/
11. Comic Book Films/Women in Film - Film Theory, Cinematography, Special Effects, Characterization, Stunts/Action Sequences, and Hero's Journey
12. Animation - review Early Cinema, Steamboat Willie, Snow White & the Seven Dwarves
Pixar/Disney, John Lasseter, Walt Disney, Tim Burton, Claymation, Stop Motion, CGI

Prerequisite: Broadcasting

Content Area: Media

Unit Title: Film Theory & Direction

Grade Level: 10-12

Core Ideas: Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of film study as an academic discipline, including film theory, formal analysis of film narrative, structure, cinematic technique (the art of film), contextual approaches to film, study of various genres, and rudimentary experience with film production. The course is broken down into chronological order starting with older films and moving through the decades towards the most contemporary films available. Students will explore a specific concept such as mise en-scene, view a film, reflect and discuss their reaction to the film and how the concept applies to the viewing. Emphasis will be made on direction/auteur theory and will include: screenwriting structure, plot and character development, John Campbell's hero's journey, shots, angles, dynamics, techniques, cinematography, mise-en-scene, diegetic/non-diegetic sound, symbolism, color theory, reflection, duality, criticism, editing, history, types of films (realism, classical, & formalism), as well as style and motifs (film noir, intertextuality, parody, homage).

Unit # - Standards

Standards (Content and Technology): Visual and Performing Arts: 1.2 Media Arts Standards by the End of Grade 12

Statement: The practices reflect the steps that artists undergo in the process of creating, performing, responding and connecting to works of art (i.e., the artistic processes). To become artistically literate, it is essential that students are provided with the type of learning experiences that will enable them to engage in these practices as part of their art making processes.

Performance Expectations (NJSLs)

NJSLS 1.2.12prof.Cr1b: Organize and design artistic ideas for media arts productions.
NJSLS 1.2.12prof.Cr1d: Apply aesthetic criteria in developing, refining and proposing media arts artwork. NJSLS 1.2.12prof.Cr3a: Understand the deliberate choices in organizing and integrating content, stylistic conventions, and media arts principles such as emphasis and tone.
NJSLS 1.2.12prof.Re7a: Analyze the qualities of and relationships between the components, style and preferences communicated by media artworks and artists.
NJSLS 1.2.12acc.Re8a: Analyze the intent, meanings and influence of a variety of media artworks, based on personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

9.2.12.CAP.2: Develop college and career readiness skills by participating in opportunities such as structured learning experiences, apprenticeships, and dual enrollment programs.

9.4.12.CI.1: Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas.
9.4.12.CI.2: Identify career pathways that highlight personal talents, skills, and abilities.
9.4.12.CT.2: Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving. 9.4.12.IML.8: Evaluate media sources for point of view, bias, and motivations.
9.4.12.IML.9: Analyze the decisions creators make to reveal explicit and implicit messages within information and media.

Computer Science and Design Thinking

8.2.12.NT.1: Explain how different groups can contribute to the overall design of a product.

8.2.12.ETW.1: Evaluate ethical considerations regarding the sustainability of environmental resources that are used for the design, creation, and maintenance of a chosen product.

Intercultural Statements (Amistad, Holocaust, LGBT, etc...)

View and discuss contributions of African-Americans to the film industry. View and discuss the Holocaust as depicted and perceived via visual media. View and discuss LGBTQ challenges as depicted in film. Films to consider are *Do the Right Thing*, *Life is Beautiful*, and *Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

Anchor Standards

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Companion Standards

WHST.9-10.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Interdisciplinary Connection: To help high school students develop a more critical, discerning eye for cinema. To relate how film influences, reflects, and unites or separates society. To see how the era in which a film was made affects its content. To see how a director develops a scene to communicate emotion, manipulate an audience, and convey a message. To view film from a global perspective and as an art form. To see how films develop and influence each other over the decades. To see how our collective, societal values are conveyed and reinforced through films. To see how films influence the development of present and future films.

Unit Essential Question(s):

- What is the language of film?
- How does film reflect the beliefs and values of society?
- How do films make us think?
- What is the relationship between the viewer and the film?
- Who is responsible for creating meaning in film?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Filmmakers use cinematic tools and techniques to create meaning.
- Cinematic techniques construct a viewer's experience of a film much like literary devices construct a reader's experience of a text.
 - Film viewers are encouraged to identify with particular characters or elements of a film. This identification helps create the ideology/agenda of the film.
- Analysis is the breaking down of something into parts to understand how it works. Literary analysis and film analysis rely on the same critical thinking skills.

Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:

Students will...

- Discuss in class the ideas presented in the film. Discussion will also involve how the director presented his/her ideas about the theme of the film.
- Students will develop a language and understanding of the techniques used to construct meaning in film and explore the understanding that artists' choices impact meaning.
- Students will strengthen analytical thinking and writing skills through the study of film.
- During the unit, students will view films both in their entirety and as excerpts of selected clips or scenes. These excerpts will be viewed multiple times in order for students to practice observing and analysis.

Evidence of Learning

Formative Assessments: After initially watching complete films students will record their thoughts, reactions, and ideas in a response journal. This is informal but sustained writing that can be assigned as homework or completed in class. The assignment encourages students to make connections, analyze and evaluate the film. Evaluation criteria will be provided for each entry. For example, the teacher may require students to write about sound, tone/mood, or character development. A length requirement can also be used as criteria to ensure elaboration. The response journal is a place to collect thoughts that may later inform the extended, formal analysis (performance task).

Weekly writings will be collected and assessed. The writings will deal with what the students saw, learned in class, and thought about the film. Grading will be conducted on the basis of effort. Lateness will lower the grade. Emphasis will be put on an honest exploration of what the film has invoked in the student's mind. It is believed that film viewing will be a life-long endeavor for each student. It's important for each of us to decide what is important, motivating and stimulating for each of us individually. We can read what the critics say, but it's more important to foster a critical discerning eye in each student.

Throughout the unit, students will engage in seminar discussions about the films and segments of the films studied throughout. Students will prepare for and participate in formal and informal conversations, discussions, and presentations by building on others' ideas and expressing original ideas clearly. The teacher may require students to write 2-3 questions about the film. It is important to remind students that they need not know the answers to the questions they craft. Instead, emphasize that the questions are used to propel the conversation forward. Students will be evaluated based on their participation in the seminar discussion. A rubric will be provided and discussed in advance.

During the second half of the course the students will break into small groups, of two or three students each, and present a film of their choice to the class. They are expected to analyze the film as the teacher has done during the course. The students will be expected to discuss the time period in which the film was made, and how that time period has influenced the film's content. They will be expected to discuss what the director has done to emphasize a scene (camera angle, lighting, choice of movement by the characters, etc.) A grade will be given for the participation of each of the presenting group members. **Summative/Benchmark**

Assessment(s): A final grade will consist of the weekly formative assessments as well as the class presentation of the group's film. (No final exam is given for one semester courses.)

Alternative Assessments: Will be provided if needed

Resources/Materials: Films can be obtained from the local library in town. Several can also be obtained on-line for free. Written criticisms can be obtained from Robert Ebert reviews online.

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Student Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to review, consider, and ask

Suggested Pacing Guide

Suggested

questions about the course. Students will review the

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Class Discussion Q

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

American Film Institute's top 100 films. Students will be able to define cinema and the illusion of movement.

Students will discuss movie eras, the Hays Production Code, The Hollywood Studio System, and the historical context and setting of *Casablanca*.

Casablanca Viewing

Casablanca Reflection/Discussion
Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about classical Film Noir style including motifs, lighting, characters, setting, and structure (Hays).

Double Indemnity Viewing

Double Indemnity - Reflection/Discussion Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about The Classic American Midland Park Public Schools

View Film
Reflection Discussion
Lecture Slide Preser Reading Class Discu
View Film
Reflection Discussion
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View Film
Reflection Discussion

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View Film
Reflection Discussion
Lecture Slide Presentation Reading Class Discussion Q
View Film

Western (John Wayne) & Spaghetti Westerns (Clint Eastwood, Sergio Leone).

The Searchers Viewing

The Searchers - Reflection/Discussion

Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Alfred Hitchcock's directorial style and how he pushed the boundaries of Hays code. Other topics include Auteur Theory, Duality, Mise-En-Scene, Motifs, Storyboards, Marketing Posters, Thrillers and Early Special Effects

Psycho Viewing

Psycho - Reflection/Discussion

Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about:
Character Development, Color, Sound,
Classical Film, Editing, Auteur Theory.

The Godfather Viewing

The Godfather - Reflection/Discussion

Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about The Blockbuster, Monster Movie, Tension/Release,
Production/Direction, Mise-En-Scene
Dolly-Zoom, Color Symbolism

Jaws Viewing

Jaws - Reflection/Discussion

Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Science Fiction

Students will learn about Space Western/Samurai,
Formalism, Good Vs. Evil,
Color Theory, Symbolism

Star Wars A New Hope Viewing

Plot Point, Hero's Journey, Dramatic Need, Conflict/Resolution

Star Wars A New Hope

Reflection/Discussion

Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Science Fiction Story Structure, Acts,

Back to the Future Viewing

Back to the Future - Reflection/Discussion Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Surrealism in Film, Mise-En-Scene (outside of the frame), Racism, Characterization, Story

Do the Right Thing, Viewing

Do the Right Thing - Reflection/Discussion Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Experimental Film Time & Space, Editing
Story Structure/Format, Symbolism, & Sound

Run Lola Run Viewing

Run Lola Run Reflection/Discussion
Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Fable Film
Time & Space, Editing
Story Structure/Format, & Symbolism

Life is Beautiful, Viewing

Life is Beautiful Reflection/Discussion Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will learn about Film Theory
Cinematography, Special Effects, &
Hero's Journey

Black Panther, Viewing

Black Panther- Reflection/Discussion
Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.
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Reflection
Discussion

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Students will learn about Characterization Stunts/Action Sequences, & Hero's Journey

Black Widow, Viewing

Black Widow - Reflection/Discussion
Students will record thoughts in Response Journal and participate in a Seminar Discussion.

Students will choose a film from the list, view it independently,

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Lecture
Slide Presentation
Reading
Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

analyze and dissect it from a filmmaker's point of view and present their discoveries to the class using clips and a slide presentation. Students will work in small groups.

Students will learn about animation:

Steamboat Willie, *Snow White & the Seven Dwarves*, Pixar/Disney, John Lasseter & Walt Disney, Claymation, Stop Motion, CGI

Teacher Notes:

Additional Resources:

The Hollywood Style - video

Jaws by Peter Benchley

The Godfather by Mario Puzo

Film Studies The Basics by Amy Villarejo

Midland Park Public Schools

Lecture
Slide Presentations
Reading

Now Showing Unforgettable Moments From The Movies by Joe Garner

The Film Foundation Making Movies A Guide for Young Filmmakers, Directors Guild of America

And any other videos or printed material that relates to the films

Differentiation/Modification Strategies

Students with Disabilities

- Consult IEP
- alternative pacing of unit, reduce amount of work required, provide written and oral instruction

English Language Learners

- Consult Student's ELL Plan
- allow errors in writing, accept writing in first language, allow extended time for project completion

At-Risk Students:

- allow extended time for project completion, provide hands-on activities, accept participation at any level

504 Students

- Consult 504 Plan

Gifted and Talented Students:

- Consult with G & T Teacher
- allow for peer-to-peer instruction, provide leadership positions in group context

Class Discussion Q

View Film

Reflection
Discussion

Research
Writing
Presentations

Lecture
View Clips
Class Discussion Q