



Film Studies

A Level

Film Studies

F633 Section B:
Film Regulation and
Classification Study Guide

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F633 SECTION B: FILM REGULATION AND CLASSIFICATION STUDY GUIDE*

The aim of this study guide is to give you a range of activities and materials to work through in order to ensure that you cover all areas of the entire topic

The Film Regulation and Classification topic consists of a number of areas of study which are detailed in OCR's Film Studies specification ranges and can also be found below. The topic consists of:

- the impact of **new technologies** on regulation and classification
- the effect of wider **social changes** on film regulation and classification
- the role of **global film consumption** on regulation and classification
- the role of **authorship** in the face of regulation, classification and/or state censorship
- the effect of **legal, political and cultural restrictions on film production and exhibition** (including alternatives to cinema exhibition such as online, film festivals and the DVD black market)
- the effect of **legal, political and cultural restrictions, audience consumption and reception** of film
- the significance of **critical approaches and audience theories**, such as the effects debate, the two step flow, uses and gratifications and reception theories.

It is vital that you develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of each of these areas. That way you will ensure that you develop an holistic understanding of the period and cover the required breadth of study for this unit. This guide seeks to give students the means to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of these areas and to be able to apply this knowledge and understanding to some contemporary films.

GETTING STARTED

For ease of use of this study guide, the terms that have been emboldened out of the topic bullet points above will be used as headers below, with materials to go to in order to work through aspects of the topic.

The online resources suggested in this guide are easily accessible at <http://waynesfilmstudiesblog.blogspot.co.uk> – hence there are no web links in this guide, but the titles of the suggested resources in the sections below link up with the titles of materials on the blog. Some of the resources suggested below are applicable to a number of areas and are suggested in each appropriate headed area.

LEGAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RESTRICTIONS

Gaining an understanding of the social parameters of the on-going debate about regulation and classification is a good starting point into the topic. Given that the specification requires a consideration of 'regulation and classification in global cinema' (p.15 of the OCR Film Studies specification), there are resources suggested here that will enable students to develop a global dimension to their work.

The list below offers suggested resources that will enable students to develop an overview of this sub-topic, which will prepare the ground for application to case study films.

BBFC Classification Guidelines 2014 – the report is 40 pages long, but it is worthwhile students being familiar with the whole report for a full understanding of the contemporary regulatory environment in the UK.

Screenonline.org.uk – entries on The Hays Code, Film Censorship in the US and The US Ratings System – this will give students an overview on contemporary and historical approaches to regulation and classification in the USA.

Dear Censor – BBC Four documentary currently available in its entirety on YouTube – this gives a detailed, behind-the-scenes historical look at regulation and classification in the UK

This Film Is Not Yet Rated (BBFC 18 certificate) – a polemical, comprehensive exploration of the workings of the US film regulator, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). This is available for purchase on DVD.

TVtropes.org article – The Hays Code – example driven look at the workings of the Hays Code.

Guardian article – DIY YouTube directors to self-regulate under new censorship scheme – offers an alternative perspective on regulation from the position of small, 'amateur' video-makers.

The Hollywood Reporter – Daniel Radcliffe's 'The Woman In Black' Draws Most U.K. Film Complaints as of Mid-Year Point – for an insight into how audiences have a role to play in film regulation and classification.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The following resources are suggested for this sub-topic, but students should be mindful that this is always a fast moving area, and therefore should keep abreast of current developments in this area.

BBFC Annual Report 2012 and BBFC Annual Report 2013 – both reports have commentary on how the BBFC is seeking to keep up with technological change and using a range of ways to engage and interact with film audiences.

BBC article – Illegal film downloads up 30%, new figures suggest – offers easily accessible article on the key points of illegal downloading

Guardian article – Film streaming and downloads to overtake box office in 2017 – short article focussing on how the home film market is changing in favour of online services

Guardian article – Piracy study shows illegal downloaders more likely to pay for films than music – audience focussed report, will enable students to situate their own consumption practices within the bigger picture.

SOCIAL CHANGE

The resources suggested here are designed to give students an insight into how social changes impact upon regulation from a contemporary standpoint, whilst also seeking to give an historical aspect to such changes.

BBFC Classification Guidelines 2014 – the report is 40 pages long, but it is worthwhile students being familiar with the whole report for a full understanding of the contemporary regulatory environment in the UK.

Guardian article – 12 Years A Slave first film to pass Indian censor for full nudity – an insight into how social change affects film regulation outside of the UK

Huffington Post article – Maintaining Public Trust in Film Classification – article detailing how social attitudes feed into determining the regulatory environment in the UK

Guardian article – DIY YouTube directors to self-regulate under new censorship scheme – offers an alternative perspective on regulation from the position of small, 'amateur' video-makers.

BBFC Annual Report 2012 and BBFC Annual Report 2013 – both reports detail the concerns of audiences, discussing films which have received complaints about their regulatory status – together these reports give a thorough insight into what issues generate social concern.

The Hollywood Reporter – Daniel Radcliffe's 'The Woman In Black' Draws Most U.K. Film Complaints as of Mid-Year Point – for an insight into how audiences have a role to play in film regulation and classification.

Guardian article – Film classifiers rewrite horror rules after Woman In Black complaints

Guardian article – British film censor faces new challenges after 100 years of horror, killing and sex

GLOBAL FILM CONSUMPTION

The resources suggested here cross-over to some of the other areas whilst begin pointing the way to some of the case study films suggested later in this guide.

Guardian article – DIY YouTube directors to self-regulate under new censorship scheme – offers an alternative perspective on regulation from the position of small, 'amateur' video-makers.

Guardian article – 12 Years A Slave first film to pass Indian censor for full nudity – an insight into how social change affects film regulation outside of the UK

Guardian article – Despicable Me 2 blocked by Chinese censor, but Smurfs sequel approved

Daily Telegraph article – Chinese film fans are outraged by cuts to Skyfall

Daily Mail / Mail Online – British censors under pressure as other countries give Batman a 15 certificate

AUTHORSHIP

Given that this sub-topic is particular to the films used as the basis for case studies, some resources pertaining to the case study films are suggested later on. If you haven't used one of the AS study guides, the following resources below will you a good introduction to the debate about film authorship.

The question as to whether films have an author has long dogged the subject. You can begin to explore this debate by going to the following:

<http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~simpsons/Connections/Film/Author/index.html>

<http://alisashortfilm.wordpress.com/2011/05/06/francois-truffaut-auteur-theory/>

<http://alisashortfilm.wordpress.com/tag/auteur-film-2/>

CRITICAL APPROACHES

The following online resources are suggested to give students a familiarity with key terms and concepts within the debates about censorship.

Mediaknowall.com – The effects of media violence

Mediaknowall.com – Violence in the Media – Moral Panics

Theory.org.uk – David Gauntlett – Ten things wrong with the media 'effects' model.

TVtropes.org article – The Hays Code – example driven look at the workings of the Hays Code.

BBFC Classification Guidelines 2014 – the report is 40 pages long, but it is worthwhile students being familiar with the whole report for a full understanding of the contemporary regulatory environment in the UK.

Yahoo.com – The most complained about films of the last decade

The following book resources are also suggested for this topic

McQuail's Mass Communication Theory (6th edition) Denis McQuail (2010) – Part 6: Audiences and Part 7: Effects

The Media Student's Book (5th edition) Gill Branston and Roy Stafford (2010) – Chapter 14

Teaching Film Censorship and Controversy Mark Readman – (especially the section on the Forna versus Kermode debate).

CASE STUDIES

THE DARK KNIGHT (2008)

Whilst the film is a number of years old now, given that the certification of this film as a 12 in the UK generated substantial controversy, this film offers a good practical introduction to the debates about regulation, classification and censorship. In combination with the online resources listed below, it is worthwhile watching some extracts from the film. The 'pencil scene' is vital to engaging with debate about the suitability of the 12 (circa 27 minutes into the film). Other notable scenes for study include Batman's interrogation of Joker and Batman's pursuit of Joker towards the end of the film.

After watching an extract or extracts, read through the following resources and make notes on what the various commentators are arguing and work out whether you agree with them or not considering what you've watched from the film and from the work you will have done previously across the sub-topic areas.

Daily Mail / Mail Online – Allison Pearson: Holy cretins, Batman, this is no family film

Daily Mail / Mail Online – Ray Connolly: Batman and Britain's pathetic film censors

Daily Mail / Mail Online – British censors under pressure as other countries give Batman a 15 certificate

Daily Mail / Mail Online – Dr Aric Sigman: How seeing movies like Batman can turn our children violent

DJANGO UNCHAINED (2013)

This film generated controversy due to its representation of the issue of slavery in America and the use of racial / racist terminology. The use of such terminology, and controversy around this, has dogged director Quentin Tarantino for the entirety of his career, as has the representation of violence. Studying this film offers a contemporary way to explore this combination of controversial elements. In terms of watching the film, as a minimum it is recommended that students watch the first 30 minutes and last 30 minutes – if time allows, then the entirety of the film could be watched to gain a fuller understanding of the controversy which has become attached to the film. Besides the areas of controversy already detailed, it is recommended that some attention is given to the character played by Samuel L Jackson – this will illuminate the complexity of some of the issues here – with a famous and critically acclaimed African American actor playing a somewhat unpleasant African American character here.

This case study represents a good opportunity to engage with the concept of authorship, and some of the articles detailed below will assist in the process of measuring the role of authorship in the face of regulatory regimes.

After watching some or all of the film, read through the following resources and make notes on what the various commentators are arguing and work out whether you agree with them or not considering what you've watched from the

film and from the work you will have done previously across the sub-topic areas.

Guardian article – Django Unchained: is its portrayal of slavery too flippant?

Los Angeles Times article – 'Django Unchained's' word-use controversy rages on

Huffington Post article – Jermaine Spradley: Django Unchained Controversy

Huffington Post article – 'Django Unchained' & China

The Independent article – Jonathan Romney on Django Unchained

CNN.com article – Why 'Django Unchained' stirs race debate

Boston Globe – Tarantino blows up the spaghetti western in 'Django Unchained'

JoBlo.com – Would you support or fight having Django Unchained re-rated to the level of NC-17?

THE FLOWERS OF WAR (2011)

This is a Chinese war film – this is based on real life events, specifically upon what has become known as 'the rape of Nanjing', where Japanese soldiers overran the Chinese city of Nanjing in 1937. This is an issue which still tarnishes governmental relations today between China and Japan, proving that this is very much a live issue, particularly for the Chinese government and its people.

For students unfamiliar with the nature of the conflict between China and Japan before and during the World War 2 period, it is advisable for such students to watch the entirety of this film to ensure thorough understanding of the events depicted and to be able to understand the different regulatory approaches taken to the film in China and in countries such as the UK.

China is a country which is known for being quite censorious – as will have become clear from an article mentioned earlier on the censoring of Skyfall. Whilst the Chinese film regulator (the SAPPRT) is quick to censor films which are deemed to have anti-China messages, this quite violent film was subject to no censorship at all in China, and the production was government backed. Arguably, this shows how standards towards regulation can differ depending on the content and who is producing the film – this is something which happens in UK film regulation too.

This film was directed by Zhang Yimou - who has directed other films which have been successful outside of China, notably House of Flying Daggers (2004) and Hero (2002). Therefore this case study acts as another good opportunity to engage with the concept of authorship, and some of the suggested resources detailed below will help with this.

After watching some or all of the film, read through the following resources and make notes on what the various

commentators are arguing and work out whether you agree with them or not considering what you've watched from the film and from the work you will have done previously across the sub-topic areas.

BBC News – The story behind Chinese war epic The Flowers of War

BBC News – Scarred by history: The rape of Nanjing

New York Times – A filmmaker walks a line between artistic acceptance and official approval

Iliketorite.blogspot.co.uk – On censorship, The Flowers of war, and artistic merit

AA Rising.com – Zhang Yimou's war epic The Flowers of War truly blossoms

Daily Telegraph – The Flowers of War: the Chinese film that is sparking a revolution

BBFC.co.uk – The Flowers of War

*For suggested films that are 18 certificated by the BBFC please see their FAQ on showing films in an educational context in schools: <http://www.bbfc.co.uk/education-resources/teacher-guide/teacher-faqs>

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