



Film Studies

GCE

Film Studies

Teacher Resource Booklet

Version 1

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to address teachers' questions arising from the new specifications and to advise teachers new to the subject and to the specification, of how best to organise and run the course.

This booklet when used in conjunction with the specification and 'Introduction to A Level Film Studies – Get Ready Presentation' will give centres enough footing to start to get to grips with this new course.

Throughout the booklet, the term student has been used rather than candidate in order to distinguish the support and guidance function of this booklet as opposed to the more formal purpose of the specification for assessment.

The booklet is divided into sections. Sections 1, 2 and 3 comprise general questions about the specification, timing of courses and resources and the fourth relates to the units of the specification in the order F631, F632, F633 and F634.

If you are seeking guidance about a particular unit, you can go straight to the relevant section.

Possible routes for each unit are suggested in the relevant sections, but these should not be taken as absolute fixed ways of delivering the course.

This booklet should be used in conjunction with the specification.

Further resources will be available on the OCR A Level Film Studies homepage.

Questions can be asked and best practice shared with other teachers at the OCR online Media Community in the Film Studies discussion threads. Specific questions not covered in the booklet can be asked via email to general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk. If emailing please put 'GCE Film Studies' and the unit number if applicable in the subject header.

Information about professional development opportunities can be found on the OCR website.

Section 1 General questions

When are the examinations?

There is one examination series each year in June. In 2013, only AS units will be assessed. From 2014 onwards, both AS units and A2 units will be assessed.

How much time do we need on the timetable to teach the course?

The same as for any other A level at your Centre. Most teachers have between four and five hours per week to deliver A levels. It is hard to see how it could be delivered in less time than this, unless with a small group of mature students.

AS GCE Film Studies requires 180 guided learning hours in total. Advanced GCE Film Studies requires 360 guided learning hours in total.

In what order should units be taught?

The normal order in which the unit assessments could be taken is AS Units F631 and F632 in the first year of study, leading to an AS GCE award, then A2 Units F633 and F634 leading to the Advanced GCE award. However, the unit assessments may be taken in any order.

When is it worth advising a re-sit?

There is no restriction on the number of times a candidate may re-sit each unit before entering for certification for an AS GCE or Advanced GCE. Bear in mind though, that there is no January series so all re-sits will need to be entered in the June series.

Should one unit be taught at a time or is it possible to teach two in parallel?

Again this is up to you, depending upon your staffing, your students and your resources. It is possible for alternate lessons to be used for examination and production work, perhaps by two different teachers; however, students are often better focussing on one unit at a time.

For example, when undertaking creative practical work for coursework, it is difficult for students to transfer their energies to examination-based work as they are always itching to get back on with their project. There is also the disadvantage that units can outstay their welcome if they last for months. There is much to be said for short - term bursts and goals so that students remain on task. There is lots of evidence too that it leads to better practical work, born out of a sense of urgency.

Can the whole A level be delivered in one year?

Yes, but only if you have plenty of contact time and incredibly committed and well-organised students! Most experienced teachers would advise against this.

What should the teacher-student ratio be?

No higher than any other subject at your Centre and given the practical nature of much of the course, ideally lower.

Should I take students on who have not studied Film previously at a lower level?

You will probably have to! If the class is a mixture, it really does not hurt to start everyone from scratch on the key concepts and with skills for the practical units.

What should be the minimum qualification to embark on this course?

It will depend upon your centre's entry requirements, but in general 5 GCSEs at A-C is accepted as the minimum for doing AS levels. There will always be exceptions, however and it is important to remember that many Film students starting from a low general base on qualifications, perform exceptionally well on this course because it is able to capture their interest in totally new ways.

When should I start teaching the A2?

Ideally the period after AS examinations should be used to start the A2 course. There is little point in starting it before the AS ends as students are likely to become confused about what they have to do in the examinations. If you leave it to September, without any kind of A2 preparation, students may not be ready soon enough for the higher standard of work expected.

What are the coursework deadlines and examination dates and where do I find the various cover sheets?

These are available from the OCR website and should be obtainable from your centre's Examinations Officer. It should be noted however that the coursework deadlines are unchanged each series. For Film Studies all marks for internally assessed units (F632 and F634) need to be submitted to OCR by 15 May each summer.

Should there be an induction course and if so, what should it comprise?

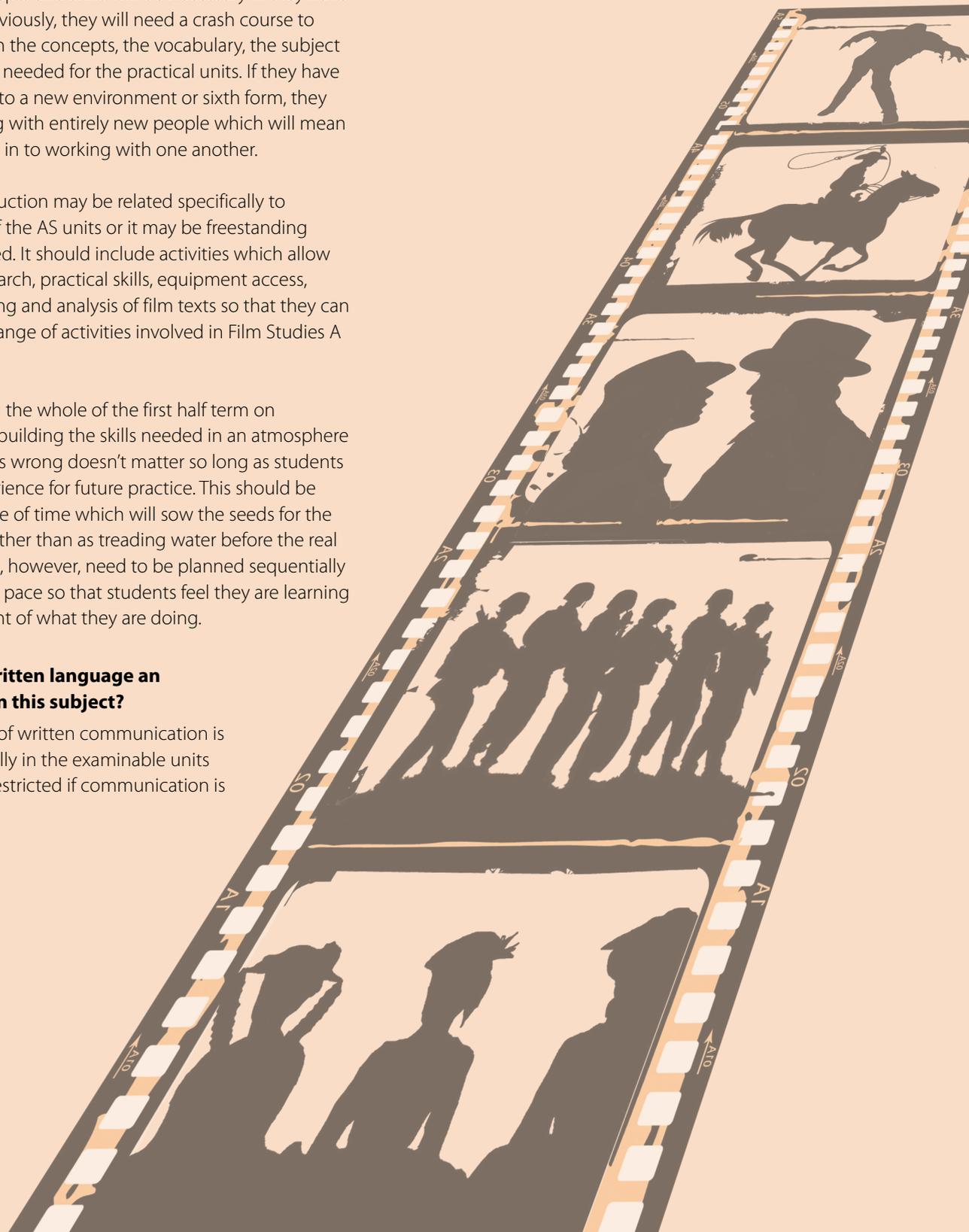
Even on a course as short as AS level (two and a half terms or about 32 weeks), it makes sense to have an induction course. If you have students who have studied Film at a lower level then revision of key concepts and skills will be necessary. If they have not studied Film previously, they will need a crash course to familiarise them with the concepts, the vocabulary, the subject matter and the skills needed for the practical units. If they have moved from school to a new environment or sixth form, they may well be working with entirely new people which will mean the need for settling in to working with one another.

What you do for induction may be related specifically to material from one of the AS units or it may be freestanding and more generalised. It should include activities which allow for group work, research, practical skills, equipment access, discussion and writing and analysis of film texts so that they can get the idea of the range of activities involved in Film Studies A level.

Some centres spend the whole of the first half term on induction activities, building the skills needed in an atmosphere where getting things wrong doesn't matter so long as students learn from the experience for future practice. This should be seen as a positive use of time which will sow the seeds for the rest of the course, rather than as treading water before the real course starts. It does, however, need to be planned sequentially and move at a good pace so that students feel they are learning and can see the point of what they are doing.

Is the quality of written language an important factor in this subject?

It is a factor. Quality of written communication is assessed in specifically in the examinable units and credit may be restricted if communication is unclear.



Section 2 Resource Guide.

What equipment is needed to run this course?

As the assessment focus of GCE Film Studies is weighted towards the theoretical rather than the practical, a major investment in audio/visual equipment is not necessary. There is a practical element to the coursework units but this is designed to demonstrate the students' understanding of their learning rather than their competence across a range of skills. The outcomes of both the AS and A2 coursework units require centres to choose between a filmed or non-filmed artefact. This choice clearly has an impact on what equipment is required to run the course. The choice is between a filmed artefact and a script (AS)/screenplay(A2) with photographic representations of key frames. It is advised that the centre plays to the strengths of those delivering the course in making this decision.

For the script/screenplay with photographic images it is suggested that students use an appropriate format for the script/screenplay. It is possible to buy/download a range of software that will auto-format materials, however, a simple internet search will reveal a wide range of guides and templates such as <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/screenplay-TC001018636.aspx> which, when used with most popular word-processing software will produce the desired result.

For the photographic images a range of options are available. The driving criteria here should be, can the student use the device to frame and capture a clear representation to demonstrate their understanding. It is not necessary to purchase the latest DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera. Whilst these give the best photographic results, for the purpose of this course any digital camera of 3mp or above should suffice. The centre will need to decide whether to purchase these for students to use, allow students to use their own equipment, or a combination. Cameras built into mobile phones and digital tablets could also be used if they are of a high enough resolution and allow students to frame images accurately – the iPhone4s, iPad3, and the latest Galaxy range, amongst others, are all suitable devices.

If opting for the filmed option, there is also no need to invest in professional standard cameras and edit suites costing several thousands of pounds each. However, the financial commitment is likely to be higher than the script/screenplay option. In order to be able to demonstrate understanding effectively the student will need to demonstrate a degree of skill in framing an image, editing (video and audio), and sound recording. To this end students will need to have access to video cameras, preferably with external microphones, and digital editing software. Many students will already have some or all of this equipment available to them. If not, digital camcorders with audio input sockets can now be purchased at very reasonable prices. Good external microphones can be purchased for around £50. And editing software is widely available to buy or download. iMovie and Serif MoviePlus are both powerful but inexpensive software packages that would allow students to demonstrate their understanding of editing. It is inadvisable to use iMovie for iOS on the iPhone or iPad due to issues with holding a shot steady. To this end it is also desirable to purchase tripods to be used with digital cameras, whether they be the students' own or the centres.

When buying digital video cameras from new consideration should be made as to how to get the material from the camera to the editing software. Whilst MiniDV tape still offers the best quality it is advisable to opt for non-tape based systems, such as SD card, for ease of capturing material in the software package employed.

If the centre is already offering the video option for Media Studies or a different Film Studies specification little extra equipment will be required, only enough to accommodate any extra students. Remember that as coursework for Film Studies is assessed individually a higher ratio of equipment to students is required than for Media Studies, where students can work in groups.

What about playback facilities?

For cinema-screen presentation in class, a good projector, linked to a DVD/Blu-ray, laptop, tablet, or computer is desirable. Alternatively, a large screen TV with DVD/Blu-ray player would offer higher quality playback, but is not as versatile as the computer and projector option.

How much of a budget do I need?

This depends on what you are going to offer for practical work and how many students you have. After start-up costs, an annual budget of £30 per student is not unreasonable, provided you are not buying sets of textbooks. Your main expenses are likely to be photocopying, software, DVD/Blu-rays, and equipment replacement over time.

Is internet access essential?

There are some problems in centres concerning the barring of access to various websites. Internet access is desirable to this course and you should argue for the removal of 'net nanny' style software and offer a supervised environment instead, as access to so many relevant websites is denied by the heavy-handed nature of such software. Though many students will have access at home, it is an equal opportunities issue, as it is with production work.

May 18 certificate films be shown to classes?

Yes, as schools or colleges are not subject to the same certification as a cinema. However, you should be sure of your own position within the institution. You may find it necessary to do a blanket letter home for permission or you may need to consult with senior staff. Often segments of films can be viewed without showing the controversial aspects. Most 18 films will not raise any eyebrows, but more controversial well known choices should be considered carefully. Common sense is the best option!

Can material recorded 'off air' be shown to classes?

Yes provided your institution holds the relevant licence.

Inappropriate material

Teachers need to use common sense and decent judgement in selection of material to be shown to students, not least in the hope that the students will follow the same example in their production work. In Media Studies there have been some examples of production work that have raised eyebrows, and in some cases, been referred to the exam board and back to the centres themselves as 'inappropriate material'. Rather than list examples of offensive or inappropriate material here, suffice it to say that teachers need to 'supervise' and ultimately be responsible for artefacts that are sent to the exam board. This includes being responsible for health and safety issues. Centres should have a health and safety policy, and should make sure that students are aware of it, and keep to it. For example, students need to be aware whose permission they need to film in private and public places, and they need to be aware of the dangers and risks that filming can pose to themselves and to members of the public. Awareness of the law, application of common sense, and consideration for others are important factors. Written permission should be acquired by centres, from those individuals whose pictures are taken or appear on film; this can be achieved through a Model Release Form. For students eighteen years and under parental permissions should be obtained by the centre.

Section 3

Unit F631: Film Text and Context

How is the unit assessed?

The unit is assessed by students sitting a two hour exam. Students will answer one question from a choice of two for Section A, and students will answer two questions from section B.

Section B consists of four topics, students need to be prepared to answer questions from two of these topics. There will be a choice of two questions per topic, students will answer one of those questions (please see the specimen assessment materials for details).

Is there a prescribed list of films?

No. This unit, and the specification, have been designed to offer as much freedom and flexibility as possible, not having a set list of films is a key tool in offering that freedom and flexibility. For this unit, the requirements are that films are predominantly in the English language and are contemporary (released within ten years of the sitting of the examination).

What do students need to do in the exam?

In Section A – Contemporary English Language Film - students need to be able demonstrate their understanding of the ways in which films attempt to communicate with their audiences. Students need to develop a working knowledge of the seven broad 'macro' frameworks for analysis offered in the specification and be able to show an understanding of how these concepts apply and possibly interrelate in each of their chosen film texts.

In Section B, the focus is a contextual study of how cinema works as an industry and how film works as a medium of communication, subject to other institutional and industrial practices. Students need to be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the key issues and events relevant to their two chosen topic areas. Teaching, as a minimum, should be based around the range of historical, economic, social and cultural contexts identified in the indicative bullet points for each topic area (pages 6 and 7 of the specification). Students will need to be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of how these contexts influenced the development of film in their chosen topic areas. Students will be expected to be able to exemplify their knowledge and understanding of relevant issues and events by connecting these to specific films in the topic / period being studied – e.g. connecting Star Wars to ... or Avatar to...

What sorts of questions are likely to be set for Section A?

The questions set for each examination will centre on one or two of the frameworks for analysis, as detailed in the specification. For students to be fully prepared for any question which arises, they will need to have studied films which enable analysis across the entire range of the frameworks for analysis. The intention is to ensure that students have been offered the opportunities for a rich learning engagement with the topic, counter-balanced with an amount of work which is manageable within the time constraints of the exam yet which also enables students to fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding thus enabling them to achieve to their full potential.

Is it possible to adapt materials from other elsewhere for use in this unit?

In short, yes. There are a range of other qualifications which require or enable the study of film. Centres are free, and are indeed; welcome to use materials which they can adapt from elsewhere for use in this unit (and the qualification as a whole). For example, centres could adapt materials from GCSE Media Studies on the topic of Action-Adventure films to fit with the work of this unit (centres who delivered the legacy version of the A-level Media Studies specification might also consider this route for the same reason). Action-adventure films / extracts used as the basis for study in these two qualifications could be adapted to fit with this unit – but centres should be mindful of the requirement in this specification for films to be contemporary (this is defined as being within 10 years of when the examination is sat for this qualification). Similarly, centres are welcome to carry across to this specification material which they may have used in delivering units with similar structures for other qualifications with Film Studies components. As there is no prescribed list or canon of film texts for study, centres and students have considerable grounds for manoeuvre when mapping their own way through the unit and the course as a whole. For brief examples of how this might work in practice, then please see the Get Ready presentation which is also available on the OCR A Level Film Studies homepage on the OCR website.

Is it possible to make connections to A-level Media Studies?

Again, the short answer is yes. The design of this specification has paid regard to the structure of the OCR A-level Media Studies specification, and there a number of options to connect elements of the two courses together. For example the work of this unit and that of G321 for AS Media Studies could mutually reinforce each other by centres focussing on a genre which they use as the object for study for Section A of this unit and also use for the focus for responding to the opening sequence production coursework brief. Also, the films chosen for study for Section A of this unit could be chosen with a view to connect with a study of the film industry for Section B of units G322 / G323 of AS Media Studies. Another opportunity for synthesis between this unit and A-level Media occurs with the topics for Section B of G325 for A2 Media Studies – where each of the topics is flexible across a range of media and where many students often discuss films as part of their response, e.g. in the Collective Identity topic and the Postmodern Media topic, amongst others.

With regard to Section B of this unit, the topic of 21st century cinema might offer some useful overlaps with the study of film for the AS G322/3 examined units and also with the topic of Media in the Online Age for the A2 G325 Media Studies exam.

How easy will it be for centres / teachers who have not taught the subject before to deliver this specification?

The specification has been purposefully designed to offer as much freedom and flexibility as possible. It should be straightforward to pick relevant materials for study primarily because there are no prescribed film texts or prescribed theories. Where it is necessary or desired, centres can start with a blank canvas and develop the structure of the course to suit their centre. In doing so, centres can choose to map a way of organising the course where they are not using materials adapted from use elsewhere. Again, some examples of how to do this are offered in the Get Ready presentation offered on the OCR A Level Film Studies homepage on the OCR website.

Section A – making choices – what needs to be considered?

When making choices about what to focus on for Section A, the following bullet points are offered as points of advice:

- Ensure texts fit the specification's definition of contemporary (i.e. within 10 years of when the exam is sat)
- Ensure texts are predominantly in the English language
- Ensure that the texts chosen aren't too similar. There should be sufficient difference between the texts to allow students to exemplify a wide range of points in relation to any of the seven frameworks for analysis.

Beyond that, centres are further advised to take into consideration the interests / tastes of their students and make decisions about what they think is likely to engage their students the most and also be mindful of BBFC certificates and the advice offered by the BBFC on the content of the film, and carefully consider the suitability of films for students being taught.

Section B – making choices – what needs to be considered?

The four topic areas for the unit centre on specific periods in the development of cinema. Centres can opt for a purely historical approach, or seek to mix the historical with the contemporary. Whichever way centres seek to approach selecting topics for this section, there are a wealth of resources available to support these topics – which can be quickly found out about through internet searches.

Unit F632: Foundation Portfolio in Film

This is a coursework unit, internally assessed and externally moderated. Students produce a portfolio consisting of four elements: a textual analysis of two contemporary English language film texts, planning materials for a creative artefact, a creative artefact (filmed or non-filmed option), and an evaluation.

The portfolio should be seen as a series of inter-related tasks with each element influencing the next. It is therefore advisable to deliver and complete the elements in the order they are presented.

The textual analysis is the foundation upon which all other tasks are based.

Textual Analysis

When delivering the Film Studies course centres and students should keep in mind that the textual analysis element of the Foundation Portfolio carries a greater assessment weighting than the creative artefact, the planning, and the evaluation. Therefore, sufficient time should be allocated to this element.

What is meant by “contemporary English Language film” and “produced in Hollywood”?

For the purpose of this specification “contemporary” means released in the past 10 years from the year of the examination. Therefore, for the 2013 session films should have been released from 2003 onwards.

“English Language film” refers to any film where the actors use English as their primary language. This could include, for example, a German film where English is the primary spoken language, but not a British film where Welsh is the primary language. Films over-dubbed in English should not be used. English here refers to global English rather than British English.

We have used the instruction “The texts should not include more than one film **produced in Hollywood**” to encourage students to explore films outside of their usual experience. It is desirable for students to choose at least one film which is “independently” produced, or from a culture other than the easily identifiable trans-atlantic culture popular in most British cinemas.

What is the framework for analysis?

The student, guided by the centre, should identify a contextual (macro) element to act as a focus for their micro analysis. So, for example, a student may wish to micro analyse two films using representation as the main focus (see pages 8 and 9 of the specification for more examples and a list of the Macro and Micro technical elements used in this specification).

Should students compare the two texts?

As they should be from broadly the same genre there will inevitably be some comparable aspects, however, this is not a requirement of the specification. It is possible to achieve level 4 marks by analysing both texts without making comparisons. Centres, might, however, wish to encourage students to develop this skill in preparation for future units.

Planning

As this element carries least marks in this unit, students should be monitored carefully so that they do not spend an inappropriate amount of time producing materials.

What materials should be produced for this element?

This should be discussed and decided upon by the student and the centre. There are three suggestions in the specification (page 9), but these are purely indicative. As long as materials are detailed enough to satisfy the marking criteria then they are acceptable. A few pages of scribbled notes would clearly not suffice, whereas several pages of detailed notes with photographs illustrating elements of mise-en-scene and camera position would meet the assessment criteria.

Creative artefact

Why is there a choice of outcomes for this element?

The choice presented in the specification allows centres to organise the course in a way that best suits their circumstances. Which option to choose will depend very much on the strengths and limitations of the centre.

Can the students work in groups?

No, all materials must be assessable as the student's own work. However, it is very difficult to produce filmed artefacts on an individual basis. Therefore, it is permissible to "employ" others in the construction of artefacts, as actors, camera operators etc. As technical skills are not assessed it is appropriate for students to direct others in the use of cameras, mise-en-scene, and sound.

How the centre organises practical work is context dependent. Some may have small enough classes to allow students to work individually and organise their own crews and actors. Others may use small groups in a class to help each student produce their own work. Others may teach Film Studies alongside Media Studies and use the Media groups to assist the Film students. Each centre will need to decide the best way to work on artefacts. However, it must be remembered that the individual student must be responsible for their own creative output.

There seems to be more work involved in the filmed sequence than the script. How can comparability be ensured?

Both tasks should be seen as comparable in terms of how long should be spent in production. It is important to remember that what is assessed is the student's understanding rather than their competence in production. Materials submitted across both tasks should demonstrate an understanding of the concepts explored in the textual analysis element. The tasks are therefore comparable in assessable outcomes. If the centre offers both options they should ensure that the assessment criteria are applied consistently across both outcomes.

Evaluation

The evaluation element should reflect on the whole portfolio and address the four questions from the specification: what were the aims of the artefact? What codes and conventions identified in the textual analysis were used in the artefact? How were planning materials used in the construction of the artefact? And how successful was the artefact in achieving the aims?

How should the evaluation be presented for assessment?

Unlike Media Studies there is not a requirement for evaluations to be presented digitally. Evaluation of the portfolio should be presented on paper or as a word-processed document. The questions can be addressed within the body of an "essay-like" document or can be dealt with separately in a "report-like" document with individual headings.

How much should centres intervene in coursework?

Though coursework is the work of the student, it would be a dereliction of the centre's duty to simply leave them to it. Clear advice on expectations should be given from the outset and students should be supervised and advised throughout in whatever ways seem professionally appropriate. Teachers should be used as a source of advice, to allow students to think through issues, and suggest improvements wherever applicable.

Teachers should also offer advice and guidance on the choice of texts used for student's textual analyses. It is not good practice to allow students to choose texts without some input from the centre.



Unit F633: Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives

How will this unit be assessed?

The unit is assessed by students sitting a two hour external examination. Students answer two questions in total. In section A there will be one compulsory question worth 50 marks. In section B students must answer one question from a choice of 3 topic areas (there is a choice of two questions in each topic area). This section is also worth 50 marks.

How does Section A at A2 differ from Section A at AS?

There are several differences between the two. Section A at A2 is designed to develop the skills assessed at AS. Whilst both require students to study two key texts the frameworks for analysis are more developed in the second year.

Key differences are:

- The two key texts selected for analysis must be non English-language texts which will encourage students to broaden their understanding of film
- Students should explore beyond the texts themselves and consider the wider social, historical, political and cultural issues that impact on the films' messages
- Students should seek to make explicit comparisons and contrasts between the two key texts studied
- The seven frameworks for analysis from AS should be explored but with further links made to the role they play in communicating messages and values
- The ten year rule does not apply as students may be exploring and contrasting texts from different time periods.

Why are there no suggested texts for Section A. How should I go about selecting texts for study?

The reason for not having prescribed texts is to enable maximum flexibility and choice for centres. This is designed to allow teachers and students to develop their strengths.

However it may help to think about the following questions when selecting appropriate texts for Section A:

- Do the texts have some clear points of similarity and difference for comparisons to be made?
- Will the texts allow students to explore the eight bullet points in the spec with some confidence?

- Can I use these texts to make links to other aspects of the A2 course? For example comparing female centered narratives and experiences in *Caramel* (2006) and *Volver* (2007) may provide some useful links to explore Audiences Experience and Spectatorship in Section B.

Can I make reference to the films studied in Section A as examples for Section B?

No, you may use Section A texts to introduce students to the concepts such as film regulation but students should refer to different case studies and texts when answering Section B.

How can I approach Section A when adapting my materials from other specifications?

Film industries that you may have studied previously such as Bollywood, Iranian, Japanese and Mexican can be used for Section A and are very useful to explore genre and social, political and historical contexts.

Film texts that explore issues of power, poverty and conflict can be really useful when examining themes and/or messages and values for example a comparison of French films *La Haine* (1995) and *A Prophet* (2009)

Previous close study texts can be used for this section and can be rich areas of study when examining social context, messages and values and Authorship. For example *Les Enfants du Paradis* (Carné, France, 1945) *The Battle of Algiers* (Pontecorvo, Algeria/ Italy, 1966) *Happy Together* (Wong Kar Wai, Hong Kong 1997) *Talk to Her* (Almodovar, Spain, 2002)

How can I approach Section A if we already offer OCR Media Studies A-Level?

There are many links between the Media Studies spec and this one that you can explore. Representation and textual analysis skills developed in the AS exam will be useful here as well as developing students understanding of narrative from the AS coursework film openings option. At A2 topic areas such as collective identity can also provide a rich area where links and cross over teaching can be adopted.

How many topics in Section B should we prepare for?

One is adequate.

You may wish to cover more than one but due to time constraints this may be used to link to other aspects of the course for example students' independent research projects.

How can I approach Section B when adapting my materials from other specifications?

Previous material on star studies and the cross over appeal of directors and actors can be very relevant for the topic area of Authorship in Contemporary cinema.

Materials covering spectatorship and shocking and/or emotional cinema may be useful for the topic of Audience experiences as well as critical approaches relating to the impact of gender, race, sexuality on spectator response.

How can I approach Section B if we already offer OCR Media Studies A-Level?

There are many links that can be developed here. An obvious one is regulation for G325 which can be an excellent foundation for the Film Regulation topic. The key difference would be to look beyond UK regulation and develop this with some case studies and exploration of regulatory practices and their impact across the world.

Another clear link would be the critical application of theory required for question 1b. The application of theoretical approaches would also be very relevant in Section B for all three topic areas.

Finally the case study approach with a wide range of evidence to support students arguments suggested in G325 would be advised here.

In Section B do we need to still focus on case studies from non English-language texts/origin?

No, here you can make reference to film texts and industries from anywhere in the world. The focus is on understanding contemporary issues within a contextual framework.

How much theory do students need?

The key here is about 'critical approaches' and students at an A2 level should be able to apply some theoretical approaches when exploring these topics. In general students will have to understand relevant theories and apply them to their case studies. So the study of academic theorists will benefit students and may well interest them. Whilst well established theories (such as those referred to in the spec) are likely to be covered, a wide range of contemporary literature should also be explored. The BFI study guides, Sight and Sound etc are very useful as well blogs such as Roy Stafford's Global Film blog <http://itpworld.wordpress.com/> which is a great starting point with interesting articles and useful links.

Unit F634: Creative Investigation in Film

This is a coursework unit, internally assessed and externally moderated. Students produce a portfolio consisting of four elements: independent research into a topic within the field of film studies, evidence of planning for a filmed sequence which should be directly related to the research, a creative realisation of the work planned (filmed or non-filmed option), and a critical evaluation.

The portfolio should be seen as a series of inter-related tasks with each element influencing the next. It is therefore advisable to deliver and complete the elements in the order they are presented.

Conclusions drawn from the independent research will form the foundations upon which all other tasks are based.

Research

When delivering the Film Studies course centres and students should keep in mind that the research element of the Creative Investigation carries a greater assessment weighting than the creative realisation, the planning, and the critical evaluation. Therefore, sufficient time should be allocated to this element.

Are there any restrictions as to which texts students can use for their investigations?

Texts should not include those taught in class or used by the student for their textual analysis. Other than this, students can use texts from any genre, cinema, era, and in any language.

Does independent research mean that students should be left to get on with their work on their own?

The centre should offer advice and guidance on the hypothesis and choice of texts used for students' research. Students could be asked, for example, to present initial ideas to the class for feedback from teachers and peers. Once a workable idea has been agreed upon the student should then research their hypothesis independently. The centre should monitor this process with regular one-to-one meetings, presentations etc.

In the specification a list of expected research skills are outlined. These should be taught to students in addition to the guidance outlined above.

How should the research be presented?

How to present a research study should also be taught to students. There is an expectation that research should be presented formally. This equips students with transferable skills which could be used in higher education or employment. The research should be presented on paper or as a word-processed file and consist of at least the six sections outlined in the specification.

Planning

What materials should be produced for this element?

The materials required are presented in the specification. Seven pieces are required, but both students and centres need to remember that this element is worth 10 marks. Students should be monitored carefully so that they do not spend an inappropriate amount of time producing the required materials.

Creative realisation

Why is there a choice of outcomes for this element?

The choice presented in the specification allows centres to organise the course in a way that best suits their circumstances. Which option to choose will depend very much on the strengths and limitations of the centre.

Can the students work in groups?

No, all materials must be assessable as the student's own work. However, it is very difficult to produce filmed artefacts on an individual basis. Therefore, it is permissible to "employ" others in the construction of artefacts, as actors, camera operators etc. As technical skills are not assessed it is appropriate for students to direct others in the use of cameras, mise-en-scene, and sound.

How the centre organises practical work is context dependent. Some may have small enough classes to allow students to work individually and organise their own crews and actors. Others may use small groups in a class to help each student produce their own work. Others may teach Film Studies alongside Media Studies and use the Media groups to assist the Film students.

In order to manage coursework effectively centres could consider grouping students by macro/micro focus areas of research. Those focussing on similar areas of research could then work together and share resources (cameras/actors/locations/lighting etc) to produce their creative artefacts. However, it must be remembered that if using a group approach each student must still produce their own individual creative artefacts for assessment. For example it would not be acceptable for a group of four who have researched similar areas to produce four different edits of essentially the same film or screenplay. However, it is acceptable for the same group of four to work together and share similar resources (cameras/actors/locations/lighting etc) to create their own individual creative artefacts. These artefacts may share similar themes or ideas but would need to be assessable as the creative outcome of an individual student.

This 'shared' approach may help centres manage resources in situations where, for example, numbers of cameras or availability of actors are tight, but this approach will require logistical fore planning when preparing to teach this unit.

Each centre will need to decide upon the best way to work on the creative artefacts taking into account both the needs of their students and the resources available. However, it must be stressed again that the individual student must be responsible for their own creative output.

Does the creative realisation have to be influenced by the student's research?

Yes. It is important to ensure that the student is clear about the link between their research and the creative realisation. They will need to discuss this explicitly in their critical evaluation too.

Critical Evaluation

The evaluation element should reflect on the process of research, planning, and construction. Students should explain how their research influenced their creative outcome. They should also offer a textual analysis of their artefact taking into account the context of their research.



Are there any questions that must be addressed by the student?

Unlike the AS unit, there are no formal questions to be addressed. Students must use the critical analysis skills they have learnt throughout the course to evaluate their own learning and how effectively they have applied it to their practical outcomes.

How should the evaluation be presented for assessment?

Evaluation of the creative realisation should be presented on paper or as a word-processed document. This can take the form of an essay or report.

How much should centres intervene in coursework?

Though coursework is the work of the student, it would be a dereliction of the centre's duty to simply leave them to it. Clear advice on expectations should be given from the outset and students should be supervised and advised throughout in whatever ways seem professionally appropriate. Teachers should be used as a source of advice, to allow students to think through issues, and suggest improvements wherever applicable.

Appendix Model One:

Suggested teaching of topics: Sandwich Model

Year One	
Sept/Oct	Unit F631: Film Text and Context Section A: Contemporary English Language Film
Nov/Dec	Unit F632 Foundation Portfolio in Film Textual analysis (40 marks) Evidence of planning for a creative artefact related to the textual analysis (10 marks)
Jan/Feb	Unit F632 Foundation Portfolio in Film Creative artefact (30 marks) Evaluation (20 marks)
March/May	Unit F631: Film Text and Context Section B: Cinema in Context
May	Examination and Coursework submission

Year Two	
July/Sept	Intro to A2: Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives Section A: Messages and Values in Global Film
Oct/Dec	F634 Creative Investigation in Film Independent research (40 marks) Planning for filmed sequence.(10 marks)
Jan/March	F634 Creative Investigation in Film Creative realisation (30 marks) Evaluation (20 marks)
April/June	Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives: Section B: Critical Engagement with Cinema
June	Examination

Appendix Model Two

Suggested teaching of topics: Linear Model

Year One	
Sept/Oct	Unit F632 Foundation Portfolio in Film Textual analysis (40 marks) Evidence of planning for a creative artefact related to the textual analysis (10 marks)
Nov/Dec	Unit F632 Foundation Portfolio in Film Creative artefact (30 marks) Evaluation (20 marks)
Jan/Feb	Foundation Portfolio in Film Submission Unit F631: Film Text and Context Section A: Contemporary English Language Film
March/May	Unit F631: Film Text and Context Section B: Cinema in Context
May	Examination

Year Two	
July/Sept	Intro to A2: Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives Section A: Messages and Values in Global Film
Oct/Dec	Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives: Section B: Critical Engagement with Cinema
Jan/March	F634 Creative Investigation in Film Independent research (40 marks) Planning for filmed sequence (10 marks)
April/June	F634 Creative Investigation in Film Creative realisation (30 marks) Evaluation (20 marks)
June	Revisit and Revise F633 Examination

Each model has its advantages and disadvantages. Consideration of resources, cohort and institutional demands will enable teachers to decide how to organise. Please note these are suggested models and centres are advised to find a best fit for their centre and students.



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