

# 4 SPECIFICATION CONTENT

## Advanced Subsidiary

### FM1: EXPLORING FILM FORM

#### Focus of the unit

This unit focuses on the **micro features** of film and the construction of meaning and emotion. Understanding will be fostered through:

- studying micro features of film: mise-en-scène, performance, cinematography, editing and sound
- identifying how these construct meanings and contribute to the sensory impact of film
- reflecting on individual response to micro features of film as a means of exploring the relationship between film and spectator
- creating a sequence to demonstrate how micro features produce meanings and responses.

Throughout this unit, the emphasis will be on the **interaction** of film and spectator.

#### Content

##### (a) The micro features of film

This unit requires the study of the micro features of film.

- **Mise-en-scène** includes setting, props, staging, costume and make-up, figure expression and movement and off-screen space.
- **Performance** includes physical expression, vocal delivery and interaction between performers (with reference to issues of staging/choreography where relevant).
- **Cinematography** includes photographic elements (e.g. camera position, colour, lens, depth of focus), lighting, framing and composition and special effects.
- **Editing** includes the organisation of time, both within a sequence and across sections of the narrative and the organisation of space, especially in creating coherence for the spectator. The principal conventions of continuity editing, such as shot/reverse shot and the 180 degree rule, will be studied. The uses of montage editing will also be considered.
- **Sound** includes diegetic sound, non-diegetic sound and the variety of ways in which aural elements (e.g. speech, music and noise) are used in relation to visuals.

It is recognised that it is often difficult to separate micro and macro features of film, although macro features – narrative and genre – will be the basis for FM2.

**(b) Spectators**

The unit encourages candidates to develop an awareness of their active role as spectators in working with the way the micro features of film construct meanings and contribute to the sensory impact of film. The extent to which responses derive from the micro features of film and the extent to which they derive from personal and/or cultural identity will begin to be explored.

**(c) Producers**

This unit also encourages candidates to develop their analytical and creative skills, reflecting their growing understanding and appreciation of the micro features of film and the ways in which these can be deployed in order to create meaning and produce response.

**Assessment**

Candidates should complete **two** main items, assessing AO2 and AO3:

**(a) An analysis of a film extract - 1500 words (30 marks)**

Candidates are required to explore how **one or more** of mise-en-scène, performance, cinematography, editing, and sound construct meaning and provoke response in a film extract.

- Candidates are encouraged to support their work with illustrative visual material.
- Recommended length of extract: approximately 3-5 minutes (depending on the complexity of the extract).

*An approach in which a whole class studies the same extract is not permitted.*

**(b) Creative Project: aims & context, film sequence or short film and reflective analysis (50 marks)**

Candidates are required to create a film sequence or a complete short film that demonstrates how the micro features of film construct meaning. This comprises three elements:

**(i) Aims and context**

A clarification of the aims and context of the sequence or short film to be completed on the appropriate cover sheet.

Please note: the 'Aims and Context' **must** be completed on the appropriate cover sheet, otherwise the Creative Project and accompanying Reflective Analysis cannot be adequately assessed.

**(ii) Film Sequence or Short Film**

The film sequence may **either** be an extract from longer film **or** a complete short film, with the emphasis on visual communication rather than on dialogue. It may take one of the following forms:

- an **extended step outline** of 1000 words (representing 5-8 scenes)
- a **photographed (digital or photo-chemical) storyboard** of between 10 and 25 different shots (some of which may be repeated) plus up to 5 found shots (shots which would be difficult to photograph or where locations need to be established). The 5 found shots **must** be acknowledged.
- a **film sequence or short film** of approximately 2 minutes and containing between 10 and 25 different shots (some of which may be repeated).

*Group work is permitted for the filmmaking option (maximum 4). Groups of candidates should take primary responsibility for – without precluding collaboration - one or more micro features of the sequence (such as camerawork, editing or sound). Each candidate must identify their role and the micro aspect they are responsible for on the appropriate coversheet.*

**(iii) Reflective analysis approximately 750 words or equivalent (10 marks)**

The reflective analysis should select key micro features of the sequence and demonstrate how they make meaning(s) and aim to provoke response(s) in audiences. Candidates working in a group should focus on the construction and impact of their chosen micro aspect.

The analysis can be presented:

- as a continuous piece of writing, with or without illustrative material
- in a digital form such as a suitably edited blog or another web-based format or
- as a focused DVD commentary.

See Notes for Guidance *for guidance on all issues relating to this unit.*

## **FM2: BRITISH AND AMERICAN FILM**

### **Focus of the Unit**

This unit focuses on two key aspects of Film Studies:

- producers and audiences and the relationship between them
- the role of macro features of film (narrative and genre) in constructing meanings.

These will be studied in the context of two national cinemas – those of the UK and the USA. Critical understanding will be fostered through:

- the interrelationship between producers and audiences, with a particular focus on aspects of the film industry and audience behaviour
- narrative and genre characteristics of UK and US films
- personal response to films, mediated by the study of films and their contexts.

This unit emphasises the **interaction** of its twin areas of study: the film industry (as producer/supplier of films) and audiences (as purchasers/consumers of films). This provides a context for the study of the narrative and genre features of UK and US films, including the ways in which they represent social reality.

## Content

### **Section A: Producers and Audiences**

For section A of this unit, candidates will study the UK and US film industry, the audiences for films produced by these industries and their interrelationship.

#### **(a) The Film Industry**

The study of the Film Industry requires a focus on basic aspects of the working of:

- the American film industry - specifically contemporary Hollywood, including its impact on UK audiences;
- the British film industry - specifically the contemporary industry, including issues of independence, distinctiveness and profitability.

Aspects of **finance, organisation, production, distribution** (including **marketing**) and **exhibition** will be studied, particularly through case studies.

#### **(b) The Film Audience**

The Film Audience requires a focus on:

- film demand and supply, specifically in the UK today
- the consumption of film, including cinema-going and the importance of home cinema and the internet, together with the significance of digital technologies in delivering different kinds of film experience.

A study of the importance of **genre** and **stars**, both for producers and for audiences will provide a useful bridge between this section and sections B and C.

#### **(c) The Interrelationship between Producers and Audiences: case studies**

It is recommended that case studies are used as the basis for study in this unit. Case studies should be selected to explore the interrelationship between producers and audiences – sometimes appearing to be supply-led, sometimes demand-led. The significance of the convergence of different media (mobile phone, internet, games console, etc.) in changing the nature of the producer – audience relationship could also be explored. Contemporary case studies may cover the following areas:

- Hollywood film producers and the institutional frameworks within which they operate (for example as part of large conglomerate business corporations).
- UK film producers and the institutional frameworks within which they operate (for example in relation to support from the UK Film Council and through co-production deals).

- the importance of genre and stars for US/UK producers and for audiences
- film marketing (including specific marketing materials such as posters, dvd covers and 'official' internet sites)
- film reviews – both those produced by critics for circulation in other media and those produced by fans
- film exhibition, including multiplexes and independent cinemas, as well as other types of venue, and online exhibition, including consideration of different kinds of film viewing experience
- the availability of independent low budget films, and foreign language films in the UK, including Bollywood films
- the social practice of participation in contemporary 'film culture' which includes cinema-going, online viewing, and home cinema – as well as ways in which the film experience is amplified through media convergence.
- star images – both those put into circulation by the industry and by fans.

### **Section B: British Film Topics**

One or more of the following topics will be offered. Each topic requires the study of at least **two** films with a focus on how macro elements of film, particularly narrative, construct meanings and raise issues.

**The following options within each topic are available for first examination in Winter 2009 examination and last examination in Winter 2012.**

#### **(a) British Film and Genre**

This topic looks at some of the distinctive characteristics of one of the prescribed genres (see below) with a particular focus on narrative development and themes. There may be some specific focus on context and on issues of representation of character, situation and place. The principal emphasis, however, is on engaging with the chosen films. The candidate must show a detailed knowledge of a minimum of **two** films.

*Genres for examination up to and including Winter 2012 are:*

**Horror**  
**Comedy**

#### **(b) British Film and Stars**

This topic looks at some of the distinctive characteristics of one of the prescribed stars (see below) with a particular focus on how their screen role and persona are used to aid the development of narrative and underlying themes. There may be some specific focus on context and on issues of representation in which the star brings specific meanings to bear. The principal emphasis, however, is on engaging with the chosen films. The candidate must show a detailed knowledge of a minimum of **two** films.

*Stars for examination up to and including Winter 2012 are:*

**Julie Christie**

**Ewan McGregor**

*Note that only British films by the chosen star are permitted for study, although reference may be made to other examples of the chosen star's work.*

**(c) British Film and Production Companies**

This topic looks at some of the distinctive characteristics of one of the prescribed production companies (see below) with a particular focus on narrative and theme in their films. There may be some specific focus on context and on issues of representation in which particular characteristics of the production company are manifested. The principal emphasis, however, is on engaging with the chosen films. The candidate must show a detailed knowledge of a minimum of **two** films.

*Producers for examination up to and including Winter 2012 are:*

**Ealing Studios**

**Working Title**

**(d) British Film and Culture**

This topic looks at a particular moment in British culture and considers how film responded to this moment. The focus should be primarily on film narrative and the themes these narratives convey. There will be some specific focus on contextual knowledge and on issues of representation. The principal emphasis, however, is on engaging with the chosen films. The candidate must show a detailed knowledge of a minimum of **two** films.

*The cultural periods for examination up to and including Winter 2012 are:*

**Swinging Britain: 1963 – 1973**

**Thatcher's Britain: the 1980s**

**(e) British Film: Social-Political Study**

*Prescribed study for examination up to and including Winter 2012: 'Living with Crime'*

This study allows for an exploration of films in which characters are caught up in crime or are living within a culture of crime. While allowing for a study of UK crime films from a genre perspective, the principal focus should be on social and political issues raised by the films. In some cases the narrative may concern characters being drawn in to crime or trapped in a crime culture or trying to resist crime. Films may include *Sweet Sixteen*, *Bullet Boy* and *London to Brighton*. Alternatively, older films such as *Performance* and *Get Carter* may be studied. Questions that may be raised include ones relating to gender, race and class. The candidate must show a detailed knowledge of a minimum of **two** films.

**(f) British Film: Identity Study:**

*Prescribed study for examination up to and including Winter 2012: 'Borders and Belonging'.*

This topic is concerned with basic questions of identity and belonging in relation to a place which is called the United Kingdom but in which "British" is an increasingly contested term. The focus may be on films in which the narrative deals with the experience of migrants and asylum seekers – or in which characters question their attachment to or alienation from the idea of being "British". Films could focus on migrant and minority experiences in for example *Last Resort*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *Yasmin*, *Ghosts* and *Gypo*. Alternatively the focus could be on national and regional identity which sets itself in opposition to a 'united kingdom' – such as *Trainspotting*, *A Way of Life* or *In the Name of the Father*.

**Section C: US Film – Comparative Study**

**Two** films must be chosen from a specific genre or dealing with a specific theme. Since this is a comparative study, the two films selected should enable sufficient comparison and contrast to be made. One way of ensuring this is to select films made at different historical moments.

There are no prescribed films for this section. A list of examples is available in the *Notes for Guidance*. The following are indicative if a historical approach is adopted:

*Double Indemnity* and *The Last Seduction*  
*42<sup>nd</sup> Street* and *Chicago*  
*My Darling Clementine* and *Unforgiven*.

It is also possible to study remakes such as:

*The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956 and 1978)  
*King Kong* (1933 and 2005)

A thematic approach is also possible. For example, two films dealing with personal identity: *Imitation of Life* and *Boys Don't Cry*.

**Assessment**

Candidates will take an examination of two and a half hours, assessing AO1 and AO2.

**Section A: Producers and Audiences (40 marks)**

**One** stimulus-response question from a choice of two.

Normally three pieces of stimulus material will be included for each question. These will include one or more of:

- Visual material (including marketing materials, images from the internet and magazine publications)
- Written material (including extracts from trade journals, fan magazines, internet sources and other media)
- Material in table form (including numerical information)

**Section B: British Film Topics (40 marks)**

**One** question from a choice of two on **each** of the six topics.

Candidates are required to refer in detail to a minimum of **two** films. The first of the two questions will have a focus on narrative and thematic issues. The second will include a more broadly-based consideration of areas of representation, such as gender, ethnicity or age.

**Section C: US Cinema Comparative Study (40 marks)**

**One** question from a choice of two.

Candidates are required to compare and contrast **two** films **either** from the same genre **or** dealing with a specific theme. Both questions will have an emphasis on the relationship between aspects of the films' narrative in relation to generic characteristics. The first question will be based primarily on **narrative study**. The second will be based on **contextual study**. Issues of **representation** will be common to both questions.

## Advanced Level

**FM3: FILM RESEARCH AND CREATIVE PROJECTS****Focus of the unit**

This unit contributes to synoptic assessment and focuses on two projects related to the production of meaning: one is **research-based** and the other is **creative**.

Understanding will be fostered through:

- completing a small-scale research project designed to develop research skills within the framework of one or more critical approaches used in film studies
- developing creative skills and a deepened understanding of the medium chosen for the creative project.

**Content****(a) Small-Scale Research Project**

Candidates will be required to carry out a **small-scale research project**. The project is designed to develop research skills. It will be based on **one focus film**, making appropriate reference to at least **two other related films**. Candidates will establish an area of investigation that relates the chosen focus film to **one** of the following frameworks:

- star/performer
- genre
- auteur (in its broadest sense)
  
- social, political and cultural studies
- gender issues
- ethnicity
  
- institution
- technology