

Dear film studies student

A LEVEL FILM STUDIES: PRE A LEVEL WORK

If you've indicated that you've an interest in film studies - good choice! It is a fun course, as well as hard work, so it's a good idea to get ahead while you can! (Don't panic, it involves watching films....)

During the course you discuss films that you watch independently, as well as the ones you'll study. You're going to need to remember a few things about the films you watch, so we'd like you to keep some notes about the ones you see. These notes will include details of cast, director and producer, genre, storyline and your own critical response to the film.

We would like you to keep a record of the films you watch before the course - if you watch a lot of films, you could create your own film diary (this could be a notebook - spiral bound or with kittens on, or it could be on your phone or other device – it's up to you...).

We would like you to watch at least two films – one (fairly) contemporary American film. You could watch a blockbuster on TV or via a streaming service such as Netflix or Now TV. We'd also like you to watch a film not in the English language (so one where you have to read the subtitles too). Again, the subject is up to you but keep a record of the films you watch and do a little bit of investigating into a few reviews – IMDB is great for linking to reviews. You could bring some notes on these films to the first few lessons. Consider and make notes on your own views too – what did you think of the films?

It would be highly useful for you to get a good understanding of Classic Hollywood Cinema (known as CHC). There is a three part documentary to watch on the school homepage. Watch it and make a few notes about CHC techniques. What makes a CHC film?

<https://www.hartismere.com/27618/Classical-Hollywood-Style-Learning-Resource-Part-1>
<https://www.hartismere.com/27619/Classical-Hollywood-Style-Learning-Resource-Part-2>
<https://www.hartismere.com/27620/Classical-Hollywood-Style-Learning-Resource-Part-3>

Another activity to help you would be to learn some of the basic technological terms of film. Watch the following three videos on 'how to speak movie'.

<https://www.hartismere.com/23920/How-to-Speak-Movie-Part-1-The-Camera>
<https://www.hartismere.com/23921/How-to-Speak-Movie-Part-2-Mise-en-Scne>
<https://www.hartismere.com/23922/How-to-Speak-Movie-Part-3-Editing>

For each one you can make notes on the key terms and the reasons for their use.

Finally, to get a great overview, here is a '40 Days to Learn Film' course:

<https://www.hartismere.com/28372/40-Days-to-Learn-Film-WORK-for-ALL-FILM-STUDIES>
<https://www.hartismere.com/28372/40-Days-to-Learn-Film-WORK-for-ALL-FILM-STUDIES-STUDENTS>

Simply take a section at a time (there are timestamps) or watch it in one go.

Here are a few recommendations in terms of the films available on Netflix or Amazon Prime.

Netflix:

Kung-Fu Hustle (comedy/action)
Kill Bill vol 1 (crime/action)
The Crow (horror)
The Hunt (horror/action)
O, Brother, Where Art Thou? (comedy)
In Bruges (crime/dark comedy)
Snatch (crime)
Ferris Bueller's Day Off (comedy/coming-of-age)
Taxi Drive (crime)
Scarface (crime)
The Piano (historical drama)
Amelie (French comedy)
Babyteeth (drama/coming-of-age)
Moonrise Kingdom (comedy/coming-of-age)
Desperado (Western/crime)
The Boys in the Band (LGBTQI+/comedy)
Her (sci-fi)

Amazon Prime:

The Book of Eli (dystopian sci-fi)
The Lost Boys (horror/coming of age)
The Reader (historical drama)
Beetlejuice (comedy/horror)
Mad Max (dystopian sci-fi)
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (crime/comedy)
Apocalypto (historical drama)
Pulp Fiction (crime)
Dead Man's Shoes (crime)
Withnail & I (comedy)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (comedy/drama)

Here are some classic films you may wish to watch:

It Happened One Night (1931)
Duck Soup (1933)
The 39 Steps (1935)
Modern Times (1936)
The Lady Vanishes (1938)
Mr Smith goes to Washington (1939)
Rebecca (1940)
The Shop Around the Corner (1940)
The Wicked Lady (1946)
Passport to Pimlico (1949)
The African Queen (1951)
12 Angry Men (1957)
North by Northwest (1959)