

Summer Induction: A Level Film Studies

Industry knowledge

The purpose of subject Induction activities is to ensure that you arrive in September ready to embark on your A level film study, therefore I would ask that you complete the following:

Some general understanding of the contemporary film world.

Know the following terms and concepts. Any that you are not confident about, conduct some research of your own.

- Mainstream film
- blockbuster
- Indie (or independent) film
- Be familiar with the difference between Independent or 'Art House' cinema and a multiplex cinema – might be a good idea to start by googling images.
- High concept film
- Tentpole film
- Know the production cycle (what happens in pre-production, production etc...)
- Research a little about how films are distributed... What impact have streaming services had?
- Know what a *film festival* is, what its purpose is, which are the most famous?

- Understand the idea of what an audience 'gaze' is, most commonly seen in male gaze theory (lots of excellent videos on YT!) but a female gaze? How does it differ from Male Gaze? (Again, lots of interesting reading and videos!)
- Research: what is The Bechdel Test? Do any of your favourite films pass or fail? We might need a 'Bechdel' ranking wall for gender and sexual equality!
- Know what the 'Me Too' movement was/ is. Who is Harvey Weinstein and what was he on trial for? Research a little into gender and race inequality in the film industry... how much is it shifting?
- Find out (I'll be very impressed if any of you already know) what an *intimacy co-ordinator* is. On The Guardian newspaper website there are a number of interesting articles relating to this. Be very careful of your search here – you could get some very *interesting* results!
- Extension... Find out what the word verisimilitude means! Think about how it relates to film.

There are also a range of in-depth tasks designed to introduce you to important film studies' language and concepts for analysis. The tasks include plenty of examples to watch. You will begin (or continue) to develop your knowledge and experience of different types of film and notice more about the way they are constructed. Please engage with these tasks, I can assure you that they will be extremely useful in preparing you for study... and that is the advice of our current students!

Finally, and most obviously, enjoy your summer and I hope to meet you in September.

Best wishes, Ms. Moore 😊

CINEMATOGRAPHY: CAMERA

****If you are also a BTEC Production student, you may find some overlap in preparation tasks. However, you will find that our focus and depth are quite different in the classroom.**

The key focus of this section is to establish and develop your knowledge of **FILM LANGUAGE**, this is the term we use to describe cinematography (camera: shots, movement, composition, focus and lighting), Mise en scene, sound, editing and performance. A key part of film studies is analysing Film form – that is, what a film looks like, sounds like, how it's edited etc. Having a confident grasp of film language gives you the tools to analyse and understand how a director (or more accurately, a cinematographer/ set designer/ editor) has constructed a scene for meaning, and to provoke a certain response from spectators watching. Analysing film language is about getting into the 'nitty gritty'!

Part 1: What is Aesthetics?

- Make a note of these terms and what they mean
- Try to learn the spellings!

Aesthetics refers to the style and look of a film. The director uses a combination of elements to construct the style of the film which prompts the audience to respond to characters, situations and locations in a particular way. The construction of the scene/film also allows the director to explore themes and develop messages for the audience.

Cinematography is the art of the camera, where it is positioned, how it moves and how the shot is lit. When we are examining how a scene has been constructed this is an essential element in considering how the audience have been positioned.

TASK: Watch the following clip from Silence of the Lambs (Clarice and Hannibal's first meeting) and think about the questions below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_jxq3lTJZ8&t=189s

Are we close to the subjects? Why?

Does this make us feel comfortable and safe or are we 'too close for comfort? Consider both characters in the scene.

We should also consider how long the director is making us look at these moments (Editing).

How are the director's use of the following techniques effective?

- camera angles
- background and foreground space
- composition – where characters are positioned

These are all interesting things to think about!

Read through the basic types of camera shots and movement you need to know. However, then use the link to develop your knowledge and understanding – you can decide the depth you go! Studio Binder is brilliant! [studio binder camera - Search Videos \(bing.com\)](#)

Camera shots:

Extreme close-ups are reserved for moments of extreme emotion and intimacy.

Close-ups allow the audience to emotionally connect with characters.

Medium/Mid shots, for example from the torso to the head.

Long shots show the full length of the character and may be used to demonstrate their isolation.

Extreme long shots, often used to establish a location or to 'show off' spectacular SFX.

High Angle is when the camera is placed high/above the subject, it can be used to imply a character is submissive, insignificant or victimised as the camera is in a powerful position 'looking down on them'.

Extreme high angles are called 'Birds Eye View Shots'.

Low Angle shots are when the camera is below the subject, placing them in a position of power, and the audience in a lower status, 'looking up at them'.

Extreme Low Angles are called 'Worms Eye view shots'.

60° angle shots (off-centre shots), Dutch/canted angles, are used to visualise a sense of uncertainty, that 'something is not right'.

POV shots: Point of View shots are through the 'eyes' of a character, allowing the audience to share their experience, usually followed by a reaction shot so the audience can then observe the characters response.

Camera Movement:

Aerial These shots are usually taken from a helicopter and allow the audience to enjoy the spectacle of the landscape.

Crane When the camera is placed on a crane, it allows the shot to 'sweep' over the action of the scene.

Pan The camera is in a fixed position and moved horizontally. A whip-pan is when the panning motion is very fast, disorientating the audience, creating a sense of realism.

Tilt The camera is in a fixed position and moved vertically.

Tracking/ Dolly shot The camera is placed on a track in a 'dolly' (like a train track and a car), and the dolly is then pushed alongside the action. This is quite a fluid movement.

Steadicam This is a type of handheld shot, a stabiliser is used to make the free moment of the camera operator smooth, handheld shots can also be 'wobbly' and unstable, creating a more realistic and immersive effect.

Zoom This is where the shot is moved by adjusting the camera lens, from close up to long shot zoom out, or from long shot to close up, zoom in.

Here are some fantastic scenes to watch that really showcase camera movement!

If you know your camera movement you should be able to 'spot' lots of them as this very well-known scene plays! If the link doesn't work, you could look at any modern Bond opening sequence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDIAZJlpbM>

and...

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=la+la+land+freeway+scene&ru=%2fvideos%2fsearch%3fq%3dla%2bl%2bland%2bfreeway%2bscene%26go%3dSearch%26qs%3dds%26form%3dQBVDMMH&view=detail&mid=DB4075E315CAA29A8B7ADB4075E315CAA29A8B7A&&FORM=VDRVRV>

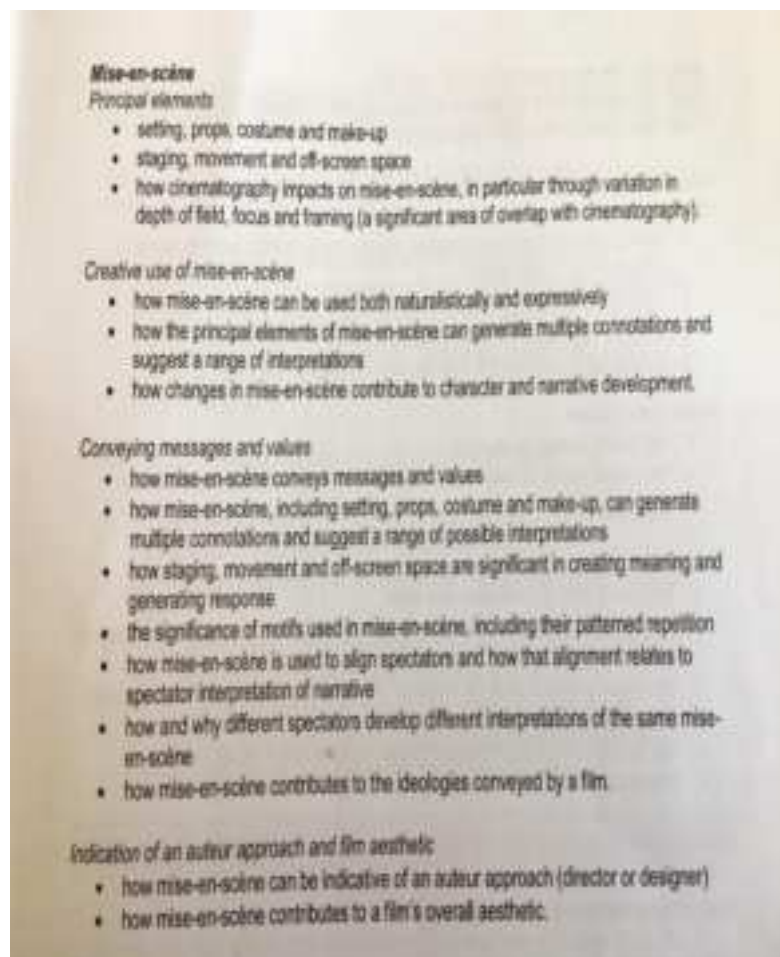
Plus, watch this brief (its only approx. 2 minute) insight into how they shot the opening scene of *La La Land*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9NNuMDBXSY>

Exploring Mise en Scene

Now, explore mise en scene, or from this point on MES because it's a fiddle to type! I say *explore* because there are elements of MES at A level that really step-up sophistication and the depth and detail at which analysis can and will occur. Whatever your starting point, I can almost guarantee that you will come out of this task with a new respect for MES, a far better appreciation of its contribution to the making of meaning and that you will look at films with a different kind of intensity.

Here is an outline of the knowledge and understanding of mise en scene that the exam board expect you to be able to show in your analysis... don't worry, not from day one! **Read through carefully.**



Thinking about these questions in your own viewing will really help you develop awareness and understanding.

TASK 1: Conduct some basic research into mise en scene. Watch this video *Designing the world of film* (and maybe a couple of others because they will really help prepare you!) which will give you an overview of key elements. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3BcS8Uwl9U> (also what Lily Gladstone was doing before she was appearing in Oscar nominated films with L DiCaprio!)

- What does mise en scene mean?
- What are the key elements? Make notes.

Also, know what the following terms mean:

- Depth of field
- Rule of thirds
- Balanced and unbalanced shots
- Use of colour in terms of meaning

**Just to say that I know some of you may have already looked at some of this in BTEC which is great but don't worry there isn't really overlap once we're in the classroom.

Now watch this video that explores the relationship between cinematography and MES. Add to your notes where you feel it's helpful but definitely watch and listen carefully!

<https://longzijun.wordpress.com/2014/04/03/film-scene-analysis-cinematography-and-mise-en-scene-in-american-beauty/>

Understanding of these key ideas will mean you get the most out of the videos in task 2.

TASK 2:

As an introduction to thinking about analysing a scene in real depth and detail watch this brilliant video where director Rian Johnson breaks down a scene from *Knives Out* **

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69GjaVWeGQM>

It is not wholly MES, there is discussion of camera and cinematography too which is actually why it's so good, because it demonstrates the inter-play between MES, camera and lighting, and addresses the topic of *how cinematography impacts mise en scene*.

** *Knives Out* is so good by the way so if you haven't seen it you might want to watch it first! Daniel Craig in a role very different from Bond! It's a 12A btw.

TASK 3: Use the resource below to learn more and make notes on setting and framing.

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/mise-en-scene-elements/>

- Section 3 – Your set establishes your world ○ Click on the related post *See how Wes Anderson uses mise en scene*. Read the article and watch the links. Please make notes/ draw diagrams on key terms.
- Section 18 – Blocking in the scene ○ Watch the blocking tutorial and make notes on key shapes

Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-4rk3T8PbQ> Please make notes/ draw diagrams on key terms.

The studio Binder link is a bit of a MES bible! I would encourage you to dip in and out of it as much as possible as it will certainly develop your understanding hugely and the videos are so thorough and informative!

Finally, there is a great strand of BBC (very) short videos called **INSIDE CINEMA** – you can find these on BBCiPlayer/Youtube. I recommend you watch as many as you can – they are on all sorts of subjects from Tarantino to drag queens in film to Jordan Peele reinventing horror and more....!

Personally, I'd start with Maneaters – it's 4 minutes! It's great.

[BBC iPlayer - Inside Cinema](#)

**Having checked all the links, they are all active but some you may need to copy and paste into google.

Well done all, I hope you feel well prepared. Mrs M 😊

Actually, one *final, final*/thing! Please watch some films – simple as that. Ask every adult member of your family for a recommendation. That is likely to give you a diverse list! Here's a more modern starting point, please note the runners up on the first list because I would have probably listed every one of them.

[Best American Indie Movies: 'Tangerine,' 'Past Lives,' and More](#)

[The Best British Films of the 21st Century: Meet the Critics — MASSIVE CINEMA](#) – there's some good uns!

[Our Best Movies of the 21st Century List - The New York Times](#)