

Departmental Curriculum Statement 2022-23

The premise of A Level Film Studies is to develop the students' appreciation for the modern art form. They should understand that there is more to Cinema than just the story, but see that studying Film gives them the opportunity to learn about the time the film was set and produced. They should gain an insight into the narrative devices used and the ideology the filmmakers want to share. They should also develop an understanding of societies beyond their own, be it location or time. The course follows the Educas syllabus with students studying the core topics of Film Form, Representation, Narrative, Ideology and Context, which are underpinned by key theoretical perspectives and methods.

The course is designed to challenge students and developing their understanding about how film can represent a particular time or way of thinking. It allows students to develop a deep appreciation for how films are made and the feelings challenged. It is also designed to highlight "classic", but also contemporary cinema, topical and relevant, using information about the time the films were made and set to make links with the theoretical content of the course.

Students are encouraged to develop their opinions along with their evaluative and critical skills. The premise of Creative Media is to develop a course that prepares the students in all aspects of practical production. After visiting professional companies and talking to workers, it is clear that the industry takes seriously all aspects of Pre-production, Production and Post-production, with jobs available in each sector. I have chosen Units that address each of these aspects, to give the students the skills needed to take an idea all the way through to a final product. The course is not only intended to educate students on Creative Media as a whole, but to help them find the field in which they want to progress in the industry.

We follow the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Creative Digital Media Film and Television Production. Year 12 introduces students to the key concepts of film, storyboarding for Digital Media, Single Camera Techniques and Film Editing. Year 13 progresses students to study Digital Media Skills and Film Production (Fiction).

The courses not only compliment a wide variety of other A level and BTEC choices offered at Cowley, but also provide a solid foundation for anyone seeking to study Film at university or enter the labour market. Film Studies also develops transferable skills such as self-confidence, effective verbal and written communication, critical analysis, evaluation and an awareness of social, political and economic changes in society and their global impact.

Curriculum Implementation Statement

A Level Film Studies and BTEC Creative Media are two year courses. Students come with no prior knowledge of the subjects. For Film Studies in Year 12, students study Key Concepts such as Film Form, Representation and Aesthetics. Students are “eased in” to the course through the first main topic: Global Film, which is focused on just these concepts. The course then proceeds to British Cinema, which focuses again on these concepts, but develops to include Narrative and Ideology. These topics engage students in theoretic debate while encouraging active involvement through the building of knowledge from one topic to the next. The year ends with the coursework unit, which allows students to demonstrate all they have studied in the production of their own short film. In year two, the topics studied are American Film, Documentary and Film Movements. Students will build upon the theories learned in year one to study cinematic debates in more depth. The course culminates with Experimental Film, which brings all the key issues and debates from the previous two years to one question. Students develop assessment objective skills over the two year period. These include being able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, applying their knowledge to a range of films and to be able to analyse and evaluate effectively.

For Creative Media in Year 12, students again study Key Concepts such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound and editing. They will spend the year completing the Storyboarding Unit with one member of staff, whilst spending the first half of the year completing Single Camera Techniques and the second half of the year looking at Editing with a second member of staff. Year 13 involves students combining and progressing all skills found in Year 12 to complete the external units. This involves creating a trailer for Film Production (Fiction) and responding to a brief under times conditions for Digital Media Skills.

For Film Studies, lessons take various forms and can range from lecture style classes and exam skills sessions to informal discussion groups. Students are expected to do some preparation before lessons and are given revision notes guides and examination questions at the start of each topic. In addition, students complete weekly retrieval quizzes to aid long term memory. Some of the lessons for Creative Media will follow the same pattern, but there is much more focus on working as a team and practical lessons to create a product.

Film Studies is an inclusive A Level and Creative Media is an inclusive BTEC. Standard college entry requirements are used and some students places are offered to students re-sitting English and Maths GCSEs. The subject teacher is also an English teacher and the overlap helps students develop essay writing techniques. It is a subject designed to prepare its students for a wide range of occupations and further study.

Curriculum Beyond the Classroom

The department arranges trips over the course of the two years to Television studios and Media/journalism workshops.

Leading up to the Academy Awards, we offer projects to look at the history of the Oscars and sessions to follow the nominations. There is a predictions competition organised every year and time to discuss the films selected.

Students are also invited to help with the production of the Cowley news show "Pulse TV", which is produced each term. This can involve writing links and stories, filming events and editing sequences for a young audience. Students who take up this offer are rewarded with an opportunity to develop their filmmaking skills in preparation for the coursework.

Subject Expertise

Although Film Studies and Creative Media have been on offer at Cowley for a number of years, the courses have recently been revamped in line with curriculum changes. The department has been on courses designed to introduce the new curriculum to teachers. We have also taken part in webinars to keep up to date on changes to the syllabus. Every effort has been made to follow the industry developments through podcasts, websites and relevant documentation. In addition to this, the Department has also purchased the course Textbook and Revision Guide, written by key examiners of Film Studies. The department is keen to collaborate with educators and to be aware of recent research and to explore what works in the classroom.

Destinations

Film Studies and Creative Media provides an excellent starting point for any Film and Media course, from traditional degrees to production courses. Many students have chosen to continue their development of Film Studies at university.

We have attended presentation days led by companies in the field of Media and have an open invitation to pass on information of students looking for work experience or employment after college.

A degree in Film Studies or Creative Media Production can lead to many career options including teaching, advertising and work in an upcoming and relevant industry.

The Department has been involved in joint curriculum delivery with English for student taster days. This has been beneficial for helping students with their choices and for promoting links between the two.