

# film studies

A Level

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## What is this subject about?

Film Studies is the academic study of film and is designed to deepen your understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of film, the major art form of the twentieth century. It is an interesting and challenging course which will develop your written, analytical and creative skills.

## What will I study over the two years?

The course will build on your prior knowledge of film through the study of a variety of different topics over two years. You will engage with a wide range of films, developing skills of observation, critical analysis and personal reflection.

There will be a strong focus on film as an art form, with an emphasis on aesthetics and on how the language of film makes meaning for spectators. Topics studied include narrative and genre, spectatorship, the film *auteur*, and an exploration of political, social, cultural and historical contexts in relation to the films studied.

The focus films include some mainstream Hollywood productions but also black and white, foreign language and independent films.

The creative coursework component will give you the opportunity to apply knowledge and understanding through the construction of a screenplay or a short film.

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment is by coursework on filmmaking or screenwriting (30%) and 2 essay-based exams (70%) at the end of your second year.

## What skills will I need and develop in this course?

You will be encouraged to engage with a wide range of films, developing skills of critical analysis and personal reflection, as well as creativity and practical skills in both scriptwriting and filmmaking.

## What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Many students go on to read Film Studies or Film Production at university but as the course is an academic A Level, it supports a variety of other subjects for university entry. Film Studies A Level has an excellent reputation and is accepted by the most competitive universities.

## What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry requirements of the College, you will also need a minimum of:

- Grade 4 in GCSE English Language

Additionally a good level of creativity is a strong requirement for the creative thinking and application with the production work.

## What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

We usually offers a residential trip to a film festival (Berlinale, Clermont-Ferrand, Galway) and we have strong links with the British Film Institute (BFI) and the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). Students attend film screenings and Q&As with cast and crew at London cinemas. We also offer support and enrichment workshops, invite in guest speakers and enable students to build more of a practical portfolio during Wider Skills Week. At the end of the second year we celebrate student achievement with our own Esher Oscars.

## Subject combination advice:

Film Studies is a subject that by its nature requires students to consider individual, moral, ethical, social, cultural and contemporary issues. Therefore Film Studies combines well with any humanities subject; History, Philosophy, English, Politics or Sociology, for example.

Also, as our specification strongly emphasises film as an art form, students will often combined it with other similar subjects, such as Photography, Fine Art, Performance Studies and others.

Students are allowed to take Film Studies with Media Studies, as with the new specification they are notably different. A number of film students who are keen to join the film and media industries, either straight after college or after a film-based degree, combine Film Studies with one of our BTEC courses, in order to broaden both their practical and creative/analytical skills.

We advise that you speak to a member of the Department for further information, if you are considering taking more than one qualification with us.

## What is the difference between Film A Level, Media A Level and BTEC media courses?

Film Studies focuses purely on the study of film whereas Media Studies looks at a range of media (music videos, radio, TV programmes, newspapers, social media and more) but not film. Film Studies is closer in nature to English Literature, except the textual analysis is focused on film rather than the written word. Both Film and Media Studies encompass practical elements, with a 70% exam / 30% coursework ratio.

The focus in BTEC, for the learner, is the acquisition of professional media skills which are theoretically underpinned and this is a 'hands on', practical course. The dominant learning paradigm is to 'learn by doing'. The sharpest contrast between the two courses lies in the assessment of work.