Summit Public Schools
Summit, New Jersey
Grade Level 10-12/ Content Area: English
Length of Course: Half Year

Film Studies

Course Description: The film studies course involves students in the study of close analysis and language of film. Its central premise is that students are immersed in a world of visual storytelling, and yet possess few critical skills for intelligently and technically examining this material. While students are often well-versed in the language of literary techniques; few understand that they can take the skills learned in the analysis of text and refine them in the understanding of film. Film Studies is designed to give students fluency in the critical and technical language of film. By understanding the power of film to inform, entertain and persuade, students will develop critical skills in media literary across disciplines. Students will study works of fiction and non-fiction by exploring the director’s subject, audience, purpose, tone and occasion for producing. Since the viewing and analysis of film is very much like the analysis of literature, students will utilize their literary practices in the realm of film analysis. The types of elements such as character development, plot structure, literary devices, or in this case film and directing techniques, run parallel with what students do in their literature courses. Furthermore, through analysis and discussion, students will refine their skills in the areas of speaking, viewing and listening.

Anchor Standard—Reading: Text Complexity and the Growth of Comprehension

Key Ideas and Details:
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure:
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Big Ideas: Course Objectives / Content Statement(s)
- Identifying, entertaining and informing an audience
- Producing a film
- Creating tone and mood with images, music and other creative elements of film
- Using film to create an artistic statement or point of view
- Shots, angles, and composition
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<th>Essential Questions</th>
<th>Enduring Understandings</th>
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<td>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</td>
<td>What will students understand about the big ideas?</td>
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| • What is a genre?  
• What makes a film/film trailer persuasive to an audience?  
• What visual techniques persuade an audience/reader?  
• How does a filmmaker create an effective mood or tone for a work?  
• What is the most effective way to synthesize information as a viewer? | Students will understand that…  
• Genres of movies are similar to that of literature, each genre having specific characteristics that should be met.  
• Many types of techniques dealing with music, dialogue, and visual representations are used to persuade viewers to see the “bigger picture”.  
• Mood and tone of any film is deliberate in establishing the final version of any film, and viewers should see these as essential to the plot development.  
• To achieve a complex analysis of a film, viewers must identify the central ideas and assess how they interact with one another, and other production techniques to create a complex analysis of what is viewed. |

### Areas of Focus: Proficiencies (Cumulative Progress Indicators)

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#### Key Ideas and Details

Cite strong and thorough textual (visual) evidence to support analysis of what the text (film) says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text (film) leaves matters uncertain.

Determine two or more central ideas of a text (film) and analyze their development over the course of the text (film), including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text (film).

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text (film).

#### Craft and Structure

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text (directing a film), including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author (a director) uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (film production).

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author (director) uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

Determine an author’s (director’s) point of view or purpose in a text (film) in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and

### Instructional Focus: The Power of Persuasion in Film

Students will view multiple and varied movie trailers that fall under a specific genre in order to discover the similar and dissimilar tactics producers and directors use to persuade audiences to view their films. They will analyze, evaluate, and compare the structure and style, as well as the technical film elements, and understand how they compare to each other in achieving the goal of viewer satisfaction.

By viewing the movie trailers to two suspense films such as *The Perfect Murder*, directed by Zafar Hai and *Psycho*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, students can explore and examine the common film techniques directors use to attract audience members and persuade probable viewers that the film will cover all of the elements of a true suspense story.

By identifying common practices, students will learn the power of persuasion in film, even in a film trailer that runs only several minutes.

Students may view the two films and take extensive notes examining how the film meets the characteristics of its genre and analyzing the effectiveness of the director’s production. Using vocabulary associated with the suspense genre such as cross-cutting, extreme close-ups, students will become better acquainted.
content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text (film).

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

The following skills and themes listed to the right should be reflected in the design of units and lessons for this course or content area.

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**Sample Assessments:**

Such an activity lends itself to many forms of assessment. Students will demonstrate their ability to draw connections between film trailers and genres, as well as be able to use film vocabulary to express their understanding of the film as an art.

Students can present their findings, evaluate the film and compare them to the original trailers, and discuss how effectively persuasive the trailer was and how the film fulfilled that expectancy.

Students can pose an argument in which they develop a comparative analysis of a genre and explicate it either orally or through written word.

**Instructional Strategies:**

**Interdisciplinary Connections**

— As students become better acquainted with the power of persuasion in film, they can take these observations into their everyday lives or into other classrooms as they prepare to view new kinds of media.

**Technology Integration**

— By accessing sites such as Cinematrailers.net and the Internet Movie Database Trailer Gallery, students can easily access trailers to movies that may or may not intrigue them and generate general observations.

**Media Literacy Integration**

— Students can compare media coverage and/or the impact of audiences around the globe. They can also research and analyze the critical reviews surrounding current film releases.

**Global Perspectives**

— Students can explore the impact persuasion of contemporary media as they see it on the internet, television, and even radio broadcasts.

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**21st Century Skills:**

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking
- Communication and Collaboration
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Life and Career Skills
21st Century Themes (as applies to content area):
- Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Civic Literacy
- Health Literacy

Anchor Standard—Writing:
Text Types, Responding to Reading and Research

Text Type and Purposes:
1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing:
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing:
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Big Ideas: Course Objectives / Content Statement(s)
- Developing a script
- Using film and critical reviews to create artistic statement or point of view
- Writing for speaking/performance
- The Synthesis Essay using multiple and varied sources properly documented.
- Academic discussion and reflection through online social media (i.e. class forum, discussion board, etc.).

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<td>• What makes a good script?</td>
<td>Students will understand that…</td>
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<td>• How do film critics keep their reviews professional and technical?</td>
<td>• The use of dialogue, scene headings, etc can help create the overall tone/mood or message a director is trying to put forth (Introduction to Scriptbuddy.com)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What do good writers do to make their writing clear, concise and persuasive?</td>
<td>• Critics must choose from a variety of</td>
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<td>• How should effective academic discussions</td>
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Students will understand that…
be conducted online?
• What is the best way to organize an essay to make it rhetorically effective?

rhetorical appeals and strategies to connect with and persuade an audience.
• A writer must have a firm understanding of the audience to whom he or she is writing.
• Writers must be able to synthesize a clear position from multiple and varied sources including literary, informational, spoken, and visual texts.
• Writers must be able to document their research effectively and accurately when presenting evidence to support an argument in writing.
• Communicating effectively and intelligently through social media requires an understanding of principles of etiquette and practice in writing and communication online.

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<td>Instructional Focus: Putting Critics in Dialogue</td>
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<td>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</td>
<td>Students will be able to take a position on a debatable topic or issue, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. They will draw evidence from film and critical reviews to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
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<td>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</td>
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<td><strong>Production and Distribution of Writing</strong></td>
<td>Sample Assessments:</td>
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<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>Students will use intelligent and professional movie reviews, such as found in the <em>New York Times</em>, or other reliable periodicals and databases, including those that can be accessed in the library, to find two differing reviews on a film. After taking adequate notes, the student will defend his/her critical review by using the published articles to support and/or defend his final position.</td>
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<td>Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</td>
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<td>Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.</td>
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<td>Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the</td>
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strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

There are a number of ways to reveal the findings. Students can write a formal compare/contrast paper, students can present their findings in an oral presentation with the use of media to reference specific parts of the film, such as through the use of Prezi, or students can create a 5 minute “True Review” in the movie studio, using voiceovers, visuals, and other creative elements to make the review visually stimulating.

Instructional Strategies:

Interdisciplinary Connections
—Exploring topical and contemporary issues allows for students to make connections with all other subject areas, including social studies, science, the arts, technology, etc.

Technology Integration
—Students may use integrated technology (i.e. iMovie, website design, presentation software, etc.) to complement or communicate their argument.

Media Literacy Integration
—Students may explore the way the topic and/or position they have chosen is presented and perceived through contemporary media.

Global Perspectives
—Since film reviews are subjective and culturally relevant, students may have the opportunity to explore how the same movies are viewed and debated in other cultures and how that compares to America.

Instructional Focus: Research Essay (Documentary Film)

Specifically examined in FILM STUDIES will be works of prominent film directors and writers whose work is considered crucial to the development of film as an art. Students may conduct independent research and subsequently create formal writing reports documenting what they have researched.

Students may be asked to analyze a film by a specific director and identify the elements of the film that were successful or used in a unique way to add to the overall production of the film. Students may develop a question, claim, or position influenced by the research and write a research style paper citing why this director has become a successful artist in his trade.

Sample Assessments:
A formal research paper will be constructed and assessed on the strengths and limitations of each source used in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; how the student integrated information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source while following a standard format for citation.

**Instructional Strategies:**

**Interdisciplinary Connections**
—Directors selected may cover a myriad of genres, such as historical references or even documentaries discussing social and/or health issues, comedies, etc. All of which lend themselves to interdisciplinary connections.

**Technology Integration**
—Students may access library databases, Internet Movie Database, and other reliable print/non print sources (i.e. interviews) to gather information during the research process. Additionally, students can use programs such as NoodleTools to keep track of the sources used.

**Media Literacy Integration**
—Using the new vocabulary gained in the FILM STUDIES course, students can make more academic connections with the technical aspects of being a director, and use this new information to more accurately assess media.

**Global Perspectives**
—Directors chosen for this assignment can span the world in their views and their productions.

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**Anchor Standard—Speaking and Listening:**

**Flexible Communication and Collaboration**
Comprehension and Collaboration:
1. Prepare for and participate in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task purpose and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Big Ideas: Course Objectives / Content Statement(s)
- Rhetoric in speech
- Rhetoric in film (documentary) and other visual media
- Presentations using language, visuals, and 21st century media
- Listening to and interpreting, analyzing and evaluating a speaker and/or spoken language
- Socratic Seminar and other models for academic discussion

Essential Questions
What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

Enduring Understandings
What will students understand about the big ideas?

- What makes an effective and academic discussion?
- What is the best way to make a rhetorical argument using spoken or visual language?
- How are documentary films and other visual media used to make or support an argument?

Areas of Focus: Proficiencies (Cumulative Progress Indicators)

Examples, Outcomes, Assessments

Instructional Focus: Movie Review using Socratic Seminar
During the viewing of all films, students should be held responsible for note-taking on whatever that unit of film study may call for. For example, in pre-viewing for the film Casablanca, teacher should prep the students
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Evaluate a speaker’s (or actor/humanitarian/director’s) point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

in understanding the importance of dialogue in character and plot development. This could then be expanded into identifying how memorable dialogue makes characters more relatable, and that may lead to the overall success of a film. So, in viewing *Casablanca*, students may be asked to write down memorable dialogue that stood out.

Since a movie will be viewed over several days, due to time constraints, students can open up about their lines noted during the period on the class portal. These online conversations could be printed out by the teacher and the students.

Sample Assessments

Students can be assessed on several elements of Socratic Seminar. They can first be assessed on the online posts and their published commentary.

Then they should prepare to hold a professional and academic conversation with a number of their peers about the memorable lines and how these lines helped develop the characters and the plot. The teacher serves as an observer during this activity, assessing how the students communicate with one another. Are they listening attentively to their peers? Are they continuing the conversation by staying on topic? Students should be building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

A checklist rubric can be used for verbal assessment. Teacher should introduce to students how to communicate effectively. They should listen attentively to their peers, briefly summarize what was just said before them and add on to it whether in agreement or disagreement, they should maintain eye contact with their peers, they should stay on topic and keep good body posture during conversations. These are all signs of effective communication.

**Instructional Strategies:**

Interdisciplinary Connections

—The skill of effective communication is imperative in all disciplines. Understanding the importance of listening and learning to how speak with a stress on formal English will allow students to become more effective communicators.

Technology Integration
In preparation for a Socratic Seminar, students should organize their thoughts and ideas, and this could be done using the school network portals, or blog sites. If students can pose their opinions first, and have peers respond, they can better understand their own position. Media such as the Internet allow for such conversational brainstorming to occur.

Media Literacy Integration
—Students will gain the opportunity to become opinionated viewers of film and by using the vocabulary introduced in class, they can report on more specific technical observations in viewing.

Global Perspectives
—Knowing how to communicate effectively will make students more prepared and active citizens in our world.

The following skills and themes listed to the right should be reflected in the design of units and lessons for this course or content area.

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**Anchor Standard—Language:**

**Conventions of Standard English:**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**Knowledge of Language:**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:**

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.
### Big Ideas: Course Objectives / Content Statement(s)
- Vocabulary acquisition and usage
- Technical language in film and staging
- The rhetorical power of language in film, specifically documentaries (i.e. propaganda, denotation, connotation, nuance, satire, etc.)

### Essential Questions
**What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?**

- What technical terms must be fully understood to actively and academically discuss film?
- How does one know the “right” word for a particular context?
- How is language used to the writer or speaker’s benefit or advantage?
- How does a word gain new or multiple meanings, associations and connotations?

### Enduring Understandings
**What will students understand about the big ideas?**

Students will understand that...
- The study of film will introduce students to a new type of vocabulary—technical terms that will allow for more analytical and academic discussion
- Understanding the connotations and associations of a word is essential to communication and to the effectiveness of a rhetorical text on an audience.
- The meaning and power of words can begin, change, grow and diminish over time as words are applied in new contexts and for different purposes.

### Areas of Focus: Proficiencies
**Conventions of Standard English**
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**Knowledge of Language**
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Usage**
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### Instructional Focus: Effective Language Delivery—Bowling for Columbine (Ohio State University Mini-Assignment)

**Bowling for Columbine** is a well-known documentary produced by Michael Moore.

After a clear and instructional lesson on logos, ethos, and pathos, as well as film vocabulary, students may watch the film, and pay particular attention to how Moore uses images (video, photos, advertisements, movie clips, text, etc.) and synchronous and asynchronous sound (including voiceovers and soundtracks) to build persuasion into each of these mini-arguments. Consider how these elements contribute to the logos, ethos, and/or pathos of Moore's argument, and of Moore himself.

### Sample Assessment:
Students may post to the class portal a long paragraph or two that describes a segment/argument they found particularly effective, and explain how all its parts work together to create its persuasive power. Points for good description, good explanation, and inclusiveness as well as the use of technical language and assessment of its effect. considering Aristotle’s appeals.

### Instructional Strategies:
Interdisciplinary Connections
Aristotle’s appeals are relevant in political discussions, both current and past, as well in any public broadcast that may be viewed.

Media Literacy Integration
—Students will analyze the way speeches, commercials, advertisements, etc, which they are inundated with daily, may be focusing on and influencing viewer sentiment.

Global Perspectives
—Students will explore social and ethical issues related to global issues in any form of film.

**Instructional Focus:** Vocabulary Acquisition—The Language of Film

Students will use a variety of strategies for developing and acquiring vocabulary. These may include accessing the online glossary on Filmsite.org which is generously illustrated, select words from critical reviews and find ways to incorporate them into their writing, and developing a “Filmmaker’s Guidebook” of terms and devices related to the information they learn in class.

**Sample Assessments:**

Students can select words that are new or somewhat familiar to them from the reading and lectures done in class. They keep a running list of these words and periodically note direct examples from films viewed in class explaining how that term in used in the film. To further this they can even illustrate their guidebook with scanned and digital pictures.

Students can study words lists for which they will be tested periodically.

**Instructional Strategies:**

Interdisciplinary Connections
—Words may come from reading that use subject specific language (i.e. critical reviews, interviews).

Media Literacy Integration
—Students may look at the way specific words and rhetorical devices are used in film and visual media.

Global Perspectives
—Vocabulary words may be selected from works of a variety of critics throughout the world.
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Movies and Resources:

2001: Stanley Kubrick
8½: Federico Fellini
A Hard Day’s Night: Richard Lester
A Trip to the Moon: Georges Melies
Annie Hall: Woody Allen
Bowling for Columbine: Michael Moore
Casablanca
Citizen Kane
City Lights
Day for Night: Francois Truffaut
Dr. Strangelove: Stanley Kubrick
Duck Soup: Leo McCarey
Duel
Fanny and Alexander: Ingmar Bergman
It’s a Gift: Normal McLeod
Jaws, Steven Spielberg
Meet John Doe: Frank Capra
Modern Times: Charles Chaplin
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town: Frank Capra
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
One Hour With You: Ernst Lubitsch
Psycho: Alfred Hitchcock
Raging Bull: Martin Scorsese
Raising Arizona: Joel and Ethan Coen
Rules of the Game: Jean Renoir
Shadow of a Doubt: Alfred Hitchcock
Some Like it Hot: Billy Wilder
Sullivan’s Travels: Preston Sturges
The 39 Steps
The Apartment:
The Battleship Potemkin: Sergei Eisenstein
The Bicycle Thief: V. DeSica
The Four Hundred Blows:
The Gold Rush
The Jazz Singer: Jolson Version
The Lady from Shanghai: Orson Welles
The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner: Tony Richardson
The Magnificent Ambersons
Specifically examined in FILM STUDIES will be works of prominent film directors and writers whose work is considered crucial to the development of film art. Students will conduct independent research and subsequently present reports to the class on the works of:

- Georges Melies
- Sergei Eisenstein
- D.W. Griffith
- Charles Chaplin
- Buster Keaton
- Robert Flaherty
- John Ford
- Ernst Lubitsch
- Alfred Hitchcock
- Frank Capra
- Howard Hawks
- Orson Welles
- Jean Renoir
- Preston Sturges
- Elia Kazan
- Ingmar Bergman
- Federico Fellini
- Paddy Chayefsky
- Stanley Kubrick
- Richard Lester
- Martin Scorsese
- Steven Spielberg.

Or any other significant director approved by the instructor
for each section of the film, apply any and all film techniques you notice—to aid in later discussion and analysis

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

STEALING MONEY—FLEEING AUTHORITY SEQUENCE

ARRIVING AT THE BATES MOTEL & DINNER WITH NORMAN

PRE, DURING & POST SHOWER SEQUENCE

FOLLOWING UP ON THE MISSING MARION CRANE

LOOKING FOR ARBOGAST
MR. and MRS. LOOMIS ARRIVE AT THE BATES MOTEL

FINALLY MEETING MOTHER

THE “OTHER HALF” ANALYSIS (ending sequence)

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM (feelings, opinions, insights)
Elements of Film

(HuffEnglish.com)

Save this handout for future reference, and refer to it whenever we “read a film” in English class.

Lighting
The language of lighting has its own vocabulary, and you probably understand it more than you think. In a low-light scene you can bet that someone will get killed or kissed. That is the universal language of lighting. Here are some terms you need to understand:

- **High-key**: The scene is brightly lit. This is normal lighting. You can see everything.
- **Low-key**: The scene is dark with sharp contrasts. It creates a romantic or eerie feeling.
- **Front**: This softens the face, giving it a look of innocence.
- **Bottom**: Faces become sinister by creating sharp contrasts (Bride of Frankenstein).
- **Back**: The figures are silhouettes, losing their identity (Gone With the Wind).
- **Shadows**: Shadows conceal identity or make a symbolic statement (Strangers on a Train).
- **Diffused**: Lighting that is altered by fog, smoke, or filter to create a mood, to obscure an aspect of the shot.
- **Spot**: Intense pool of light that isolates a small field of the shot, usually focused in on a face, a key element of the subject of the shot.

Color
You already understand the symbolic meaning of colors from your study of literature. These same symbols transfer to film. When watching an old western you can tell the good guy from the bad guy by the color of his hat. The director deliberately chooses color for its effect in the scene (Gone with the Wind, Dick Tracy, Schindler’s List).

Framing
The four edges of a movie screen form the window in which we see the story. Placement of characters and objects within this window shows relationships and importance. Film is voyeuristic. Through the frame of the screen we peep into the private lives of the characters (Citizen Kane, 12 Angry Men).

Motion and Speed
Motion in film is not limited to characters moving around the scene. It can be as big as a camera sweeping across a scene to small movements like gestures and facial expressions. Each type of movement adds to the story being told.

- **Pan**: The camera swivels (in the same base position) to follow a moving subject. A space is left in front of the subject: the pan ‘leads’ rather than ‘trails’. A pan usually begins and ends with a few seconds of still picture to give greater impact. The speed of a pan across a subject creates a particular mood as well as establishing the viewer’s relationship with the subject.
- **Tilt**: Pivot the camera vertically (12 Angry Men).
- **Tracking or dolly shot**: Tracking involves the camera itself being moved smoothly towards or away from the subject (contrast with zooming). Tracking in (like zooming) draws the viewer into a closer, more intense relationship with the subject; moving away tends to create emotional distance.
- **Boom or crane shot**: The camera moves vertically on a boom or crane (Far and Away).
- **Zoom**: In zooming in the camera does not move; the lens is focused down from a long-shot to a close-up while the picture is still being shown. The subject is magnified, and attention is concentrated on details previously invisible as the shot...
Revised: August 2011

tightens (contrast tracking). It may be used to surprise the viewer. Zooming out reveals more of the scene (perhaps where a character is, or to whom he or she is speaking) as the shot widens.

- **Crab:** The camera moves (crabs) right or left.
- **Hand-held camera.** A hand-held camera can produce a jerky, bouncy, unsteady image which may create a sense of immediacy or chaos. Its use is a form of subjective treatment.

### Transition

Transitions are the punctuation marks of film. As periods, commas, question marks and exclamation points tell us how to end a sentence, transitions show us how to end a scene.

- **Cut:** Like a period, it abruptly ends the shot. Two pieces of film are spliced together. The most common transition. Cutting may:
  - Change the scene;
  - Compress time;
  - Vary the point of view; or
  - Build up an image or idea.
- **Fade:** The scene fades out until it is black (or white).
- **Dissolve:** One scene melts out into another melting in. Usually shows a shift in time or place (*Hope Floats*).
- **Iris in or out:** The iris of the camera closes or opens the scene (*Young Frankenstein*).
- **Wipe:** The scene changes in a line moving across the screen (*Young Frankenstein*).
- **Sound:** Sounds moves the viewer from one scene to another. A gunshot in one scene becomes a car backfire in another.
- **Superimpositions:** Two or more images placed directly over each other (e.g. and eye and a camera lens to create a visual metaphor).
- **Split screen:** The division of the screen into parts which can show the viewer several images at the same time (sometimes the same action from slightly different perspectives, sometimes similar actions at different times). This can convey the excitement and frenzy of certain activities, but it can also overload the viewer.
- **Montage:** Several small scenes connect bigger ones. It may shorten time.
- **Jump cut:** A technique that joins two shots together but that doesn’t express continuity between the shots.

### Camera Angle

The angle at which the shot is taken can have symbolic meaning.

- **Crane shot:** A shot taken from a crane or other very tall device.
- **Bird’s-eye view or aerial:** Extreme high angle shot that takes in the view of the location and dwarfs and distorts figures in the shot.
- **Close-up:** A shot of the subject’s face. (*Psycho*)
- **Detail shot:** A shot even closer, say of an eye or a hand. (*Psycho*)
- **Medium shot:** Shows the subject’s body from the knees up.
- **Long shot:** Shows entire figure.
- **Low-angle shot:** A shot taken from below the subject’s waist (*The Birds*).
- **High-angle shot:** Taken from above the subject’s waist.
- **Point of View shot:** A shot taken from the point of view of the subject. We see through the subject’s eyes (*The Birds, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).
- **Establishing shot:** A long shot that reveals the time and place of the action.

### Sound

There are five kinds of sound in movies:

- **Dialogue:** Characters talking to each other in synch with the picture.
Sound effects: Sounds that occur in synch with the picture that have been dubbed in later on.

Music: Adds to the emotional feeling of the scene. The source is not seen in the movie.

Voice-over: A narrator speaking to the audience from some distant future, but not appearing on screen (To Kill and Mockingbird, A River Runs Through It)

Silence: The lack of any sound can have a profound effect on the viewers (The Birds).

Special Effects
Special effects are techniques used by the director to create an illusion.

Stop-motion photography: Shooting is interrupted at intervals while the scenery or props are rearranged. Simple to do with a video camera (King Kong).

Animation: A drawing or clay object is changed slightly every time the camera stops. When film is projected at regular speed the object seems to move (Wallace and Grommit, Disney movies).

Miniature or models shots: A small-scale model is filmed to look full-sized. The camera must run at faster speed to slow down the action of the model to make it look like it is moving at regular speed (Star Wars).

Glass shots: Uses scenery painted on transparent class. The camera photographs the action through the glass so that the painted portions look like they are part of the scene (Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom).

Rear projection: Action is filmed in front of a screen while another action is projected on the screen from behind (Singin’ in the Rain).

Matte shots: Uses an opaque screen or matte to obscure certain portions of the frames. The film is shot twice, once with the first matte, then with a second that obscures the area covered by the first. When projected, the two separate shots appear to be one (Forrest Gump).

Computer-generated graphics: Certain portions of the film to whole movies are created on the computer (Geri’s Game).

Motifs
Motifs are recurrent thematic elements in an artistic or literary work.

Rosebud and the sled in Citizen Kane

The jagged line in Joe vs the Volcano

The violin music in Young Frankenstein

The MacGuffins in any Hitchcock movie