

# 6

# SPRINGBOARD



## A-Level Film Studies

### OUR COURSE DETAILS

Film/cinema is the major art form of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of the A Level Film Studies course is to develop your interest in & appreciation of cinema through the study of a diverse range of films including mainstream and independent Hollywood films, non-English language films, documentaries, films from the silent era, experimental and short films.



### PREPARING FOR STUDY

Top tips. Most students won't have studied film before – a few will have done GCSE. The most important requirement for A Level Film Studies is that you like films. You need to be interested in films, curious about films and prepared to expand your knowledge and understanding of how they work, how they are made and how they affect audiences.

Cinemas are beginning to open again and you have access to a wide range of films at home, so watch as many as you can. Try to develop your knowledge by watching films which you wouldn't normally – perhaps because they are old, or in B & W or not in English. Watching things which are "different" is a really good way of expanding your knowledge and understanding of how films work.



### EMPLOYABILITY

There are lots of jobs in the UK film industry and there is a massive skills shortage. The jobs that exist are specialised and well paid but there isn't a simple career structure and much of the work is freelance.

Not everyone working in the film industry is or wants to be a director – there are editors, sound engineers, cinematographers, costume designers, animators, location managers, scriptwriters, accountants, caterers, make-up artists, visual effects specialists etc.....

Find out about potential jobs, start here:

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

and then here: [screenskills](http://screenskills.com).



### FILMS

All films are worth watching but there are some good TV programmes about films around at the moment so have a look at these – all on BBC iplayer:

*Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema* – 3 series, the critic explores how different genres of films, including Rom-Coms, War films and Superhero movies, work: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

*Inside Cinema* [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

*Life Cinematic* [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)



### LINKS TO THE SPECIFICATIONS

[www.eduqas.co.uk](http://www.eduqas.co.uk)

## UNIVERSITY COURSES

There are lots of excellent film related University degrees. They are split, roughly into those which are theory related and those which focus on film production. There are some which offer a mixture of practical and theory work and if you are unsure about which area you are most interested in these are a good option. Universities all over the country have excellent film related degrees but if you want to stay in the East Midlands there are some great local options: Nottingham University & NTU both have excellent courses as do Leicester, De Montfort, Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam.

## OUR TOP READS

A really good introduction to studying film is *Introduction to Film Studies* by Jill Nelmes. It's huge and something you dip in and out of rather than just read but it covers all the key concepts. You can often buy secondhand copies quite cheaply. There are lots of books like *1001 Movies to See before You Die* which are great starting points for expanding your knowledge. And you can tick them off once you've watched them – film geeks love lists! Have a look at magazines as well: *Empire*, *Total Film*, *Little White Lies* and *Sight & Sound* are all worth reading.



## USEFUL ONLINE LINKS

IMDB [www.imdb.com/](http://www.imdb.com/) is brilliant and the source of all sorts of geeky film knowledge – essential for Film Studies students.

There are lots of film related podcasts and radio programmes available to download – these are all worth listening to:

Radio 1 Screentime: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)—[Link 1](#)

Mark Kermode & Simon Mayo's Film Review: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)—[Link 2](#)

The Film Programme (Radio 4) [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)—[Link 3](#)

## PEOPLE TO RESEARCH

This is a great opportunity to research some key directors and track down examples of their work. **Alfred Hitchcock** is always a great starting point: his long career started with silent films and ended in the 1970s. His best-known films were made in Hollywood, but he started directing in the UK and even worked in Germany for a brief period. He is a hugely influential director whose work has been discussed and analysed in depth. Start by watching some of his classic Hollywood films such as *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo*, *Rear Window* and *Psycho* (there is even an excellent documentary which analyses a famous sequence from *Psycho* called *Hitchcock's Shower Scene: 78/52*). Hitchcock's work is regularly on TV and available on streaming services, you'll also find it on YouTube etc.

**Wes Anderson** is a more recent director whose work you are probably familiar with; it includes films such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Isle of Dogs* and *Moonrise Kingdom*. Anderson has a very distinctive visual style – he uses colours interestingly and his camerawork is often unusual. He also works with the same actors again and again. As with Hitchcock, his work is widely available.

**Christopher Nolan's** films often have complex narratives which are structured in ways that play with time – they use flashbacks a lot. Watch some of his films: *Dunkirk*, *Inception* or any of the Batman trilogy and think about how the story is organised. Nolan's work is easy to track down.

Once you've watched some of these directors' films research their careers. How did they become directors? What and who influenced their work? IMDB & reviews are good places to start.