VCE Media Studies
Units 3 & 4

Year 11 into 12
Holiday Homework 2014
Students MUST complete work as follows for EACH outcome:

**Unit 3 Outcome 1: Narrative**

Narratives order events in space and time through a combination of images, words and sound. When we view narratives, we learn to attach special meanings or significance in certain events or the behaviour and actions of people within the narrative and also within an overall framework that embodies things such as the genre of the narrative, where and with whom we experience the narrative and our own collective experiences that we bring to the narrative.

Stories construct and convey meaning, concepts and ideas and can contribute greatly to the way we view and understand the world and our place within it. When constructing narratives, media practitioners use a range of Story and Production Elements, in order to contribute towards audience engagement and meaning.

In Unit 3, Outcome 1, we will be studying TWO Narrative texts. The two films include:

**AMERICAN BEAUTY (1999) (MA)**

You will need to set aside two afternoons in order to view each of the films at least TWICE! It is important that you watch both texts and have a solid understanding of the texts, ready for first day back.

On your **first viewing**, focus in on the story being told rather than any of the specific media elements separately. As you watch the films, answer the following questions:

1) List the main sequence of events that occur over the film’s duration.
2) Outline the plot or story of the film?
3) Describe the film including the genre (EG: Mystery, Comedy etc) in 25 words for someone who hasn’t seen it. Consider the genre conventions.
4) Identify 2 or 3 scenes or sequences that you really liked and discuss why you liked them.
5) In the first five minutes of the film (Opening Sequence), write down all of the things that you learn about various characters, story possibilities and the setting of the film.
6) By the end of the film, did it resolve or leave unresolved all of the initial narrative possibilities? How did the film achieve this?

On your **second viewing**, focus in on the production and story elements. Apart from the opening and closing sequences of the film, choose **several** other sequences or scenes and address the following questions:

1) Look at each sequence with and without sound and note what the sound (music and sound effects) brings to the sequence?
2) For two or three separate sequences or scenes, comment on as many of the following production and story elements that are applicable and discuss how they have been used in the context of the story and the impact or purpose they have had in that sequence:

- Lighting.
- Camera Techniques (Angles/Shot Types/Movements).
- Setting or Location.
- Editing.
- Character Development.
- Structuring Of Time.

**Unit 3 Outcome 2: Media Production Skills**

In order to prepare yourselves for your Production Design Plan, you are to complete a series of production technical exercises, focusing on using appropriate media technologies. You must plan, undertake and evaluate two production exercises demonstrating skills in technical, applications and planning.

In preparation for this, you are to write a **one-page outline** explaining the areas in which you are competent with your production skills and what you must work on, in order to successfully complete your Media Production Design and Process.

**Unit 3 Outcome 3: Media Production Design**

Outcome 3 includes preparing for your Media Production that you will undertake over a few months. You will develop ideas for the production, document the intention, the audience, how and where the production is designed to be consumed. In Unit 3, you MUST work solo to complete all relevant tasks. Also, you MUST choose ONE media form listed below and they are as followed:

- **Video** (Narrative Film/Documentary/Music Video/Animation).
  - Film: 3 to 10 Minutes, including titles and credits.
  - Animation: No more than 10 minutes in length, including titles and credits.
- **Radio/Audio** (Story or Play/Documentary/News or Entertainment Segment/Soundscape)
  - A minimum of 8 minutes in length, including titles and credit sequences.
- **Print** (Magazine/Newspaper/Posters/Cards/Brochures)
  - A minimum of 8 pages or layouts printed by the student.
- **Photography** (Conceptual/Story Based/Experimental)
  - A minimum of 10 original source images that must be processed and printed by the student.

You are to ensure that you get your **NEW visual diary (MUST BE A3 SIZE)** and start building it. You MUST develop 3 or 4 possible topics, concepts and or ideas for your main production. These are to be spread across four pages of your dairy. These could range from dot points and choices of media forms to extend Treatments. They must **include**:

- Images from magazines/website/your own photos that highlight your ideas or concepts.
- Sketches of your own to visually express your ideas.
- Summaries or expects of stories, real events, films, songs etc that convey some aspect of your ideas.
Please make sure that you are presenting your ideas with colour, headings and MUST provide annotations for all research and ideas.

**Generally:**

Familiarise yourself with the VCE Study Design for Media Studies and review the ‘Knowledge and Skills’ dot points for each Area of Study at:


Utilise and view a range of media products (Films, TV shows, magazines, newspapers, radio shows, podcasts, social networking, YouTube, apps, video, photo and sound editing and creation applications) Consider how other media practitioners construct narratives for audiences. Consider how you can begin to do this as well. If you have the technology at home, practise developing your skills in photography, video recording and editing, in preparation for Outcome 2.

On the next series of pages, I have included the Study Design for Year 12 Media from the VCAA website.

I have also included IMPORTANT information about Story and Production elements, in which is the essence of studying narrative films. You MUST read over the information very carefully in order to start to understand how narratives are constructed. Start creating study notes on the key terminology.

Please, if you have any questions over the holidays, e-mail me on:

james.dean.t@edumail.vic.gov.au

Have a great summer break 😊
Mr. James.
Unit 3: Narrative and media production design

In this unit students develop an understanding of film, television or radio drama production and story elements, and learn to recognise the role and significance of narrative organisation in fictional film, television or radio drama texts. Students examine how production and story elements work together to structure meaning in narratives to engage audiences. Students also develop practical skills through undertaking exercises related to aspects of the design and production process. They complete a media production design plan for a specific media form and audience. They present the relevant specifications as a written planning document, with visual representations that employ media planning conventions appropriate to the media form in which the student chooses to work.

AREA OF STUDY 1: Narrative

In this area of study students analyse the narrative organisation of fictional film, television or radio drama texts. They undertake the study of at least two texts in the same media form.

Students learn that narrative is a fundamental element in the construction of meaning in media products. Audiences actively construct meaning and are engaged by texts through the manner in which narratives are organised, and respond to the narratives in different ways. Production and story elements structure an audience’s experience of narratives and contribute to the ideas communicated by the text. The nature of the viewing experience also contributes to audience reading and appreciation of narrative texts.

The fictional narrative feature films selected for study (including animated features) will be over one hour in length. One television narrative may comprise a single standalone program that would screen in a one hour or more timeslot, or two episodes from the same series, each screened in a one hour or more timeslot, that together allow the student to address the key knowledge and skills of this outcome. A radio drama may comprise a standalone program that would be broadcast over 40 minutes or two or more episodes from the same series comprising 40 or more minutes, that together allow the student to address the key knowledge and skills of this outcome. Documentaries, advertisements, cartoons, video clips, news and current affairs programs and student films are not appropriate selections for this area of study.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the nature and function of production and story elements in narrative media texts, and discuss the impact of these elements on audience engagement.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined
in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

• the relationships between a text, its audiences, its consumption and reception, including how audiences read and are engaged by fictional narratives

• the nature and function of and relationship between production elements in fictional media narrative, including:
  – camera techniques, technologies and qualities for film and television or technologies and qualities for radio
  – lighting
  – mise-en-scene
  – acting
  – sound
  – editing of vision and sound for film and television or editing of sound for radio

• the nature and function of and relationships between story elements in fictional media narrative, including:
  – the opening, development and resolution of the narrative
  – cause and effect
  – establishment and development of and relationships between characters
  – point/s of view from which the narrative is presented
  – the function of setting in the narrative
  – the relationship between multiple storylines
  – the structuring of time and its impact on narrative progression

• the relationship between texts and the genre/s, styles and techniques they may reference

• the interrelationship between production and story elements in the narrative organisation of fictional narratives to structure and communicate ideas

• appropriate media language and terminology.
**Key skills**

- identify and discuss the nature and function of production and story elements
- compare and contrast the function of and interrelationship between production and story elements across different fictional media texts
- analyse how production and story elements are read by audiences and contribute to narrative organisation and meaning
- use appropriate media language and terminology.

**AREA OF STUDY 2: Media production skills**

This area of study focuses on the development of specific media production skills and technical competencies using media technologies and processes in one or more media forms. Students plan, undertake and evaluate two production exercises to develop skills appropriate to the technical equipment, applications and media processes available to them. Each media production exercise is accompanied by a statement of intention and an evaluation specific to the exercise. Through the completion of production exercises, students develop an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of production equipment, processes and applications; acquire skills to enable the use of specific media technologies; and explore aesthetic and structural qualities and characteristics of media products in media forms. Students’ production skills inform the development of their media production design plan and the subsequent media production developed in Unit 4. Students document their planning and evaluation processes, and use this information to support the development of their media production design plan in Outcome 3.

**Outcome 2**

On completion of this unit the student should be able to use a range of technical equipment, applications and media processes and evaluate the capacity of these to present ideas, achieve effects and explore aesthetic qualities in media forms.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

**Key knowledge**

- media production design techniques and practices appropriate to a media product and/or forms
- the possibilities and limitations of a range of technical equipment, applications and media processes
- aesthetic and structural qualities and characteristics of media products
• methods for research and planning to support media production skills
• methods for evaluation and presentation of information
• appropriate media language and terminology.

**Key skills**

• explore how media design and production techniques present ideas and achieve particular effects
• investigate capacities of technical equipment, applications and media processes to present ideas and achieve particular effects
• explore aesthetic and structural qualities and characteristics of a media product
• operate technical equipment, use applications and apply media processes to develop skills
• evaluate the function of technical equipment, applications and media processes in the presentation of ideas and achievement of particular effects
• document processes using appropriate media language and terminology.

**AREA OF STUDY 3: Media production design**

In this area of study students focus on the preparation of a production design plan for a media product designed for a specific audience in a selected media form. The design of a media production is an essential creative and organisational stage of the production process. Students develop and record concepts and ideas for production, documenting the intention of the proposed production, the audience/s for which the production is planned, how and where the production is designed to be consumed, and the intended effects on the specified audience. Media production design planning also details written and visual representations of the proposed production, including technical specifications appropriate to the selected media form, style and intention of the production. The design planning process varies from medium to medium, with each employing planning conventions specific to the proposed production and form and with consideration of the specified audience.

Students select one media form from the following list and adhere to the identified scope. They take into account the appropriate codes and conventions of the selected media form and the detailed profile of the audience determined by the student’s research.

The media production design plan is developed in one of the following media forms:

• a video or film sequence 3–10 minutes in length, including title and credit sequences
• a radio or audio production of a minimum of 8 minutes in length, including title and
credit sequences

• an animated production of no more than 10 minutes in length, including title and credit sequences

• a photographic presentation, sequence or series of images that incorporates a minimum of 10 original source images that must be processed and printed by the student

• print production of a minimum of 8 pages or layouts printed by the student

• a digital and/or online production that demonstrates comparable complexity and provides user accessibility consistent with other media forms listed

• a convergent media production that incorporates aspects of a range of media forms and is consistent with product durations and/or descriptors listed. The media production design plan demonstrates how students will apply knowledge and maintain creative control of the technical processes they plan for their media production. The student’s selection of the media form will be determined by the equipment available to them at the school. Appropriation and sampling of media material to include in production should be considered carefully in the production plan to determine the contribution to the student’s individual or distinctive product. Clear conceptual reasons must accompany the inclusion of such material along with acknowledgment of the source. The production of the media product is undertaken individually. However, the implementation of the production design plan may require a production crew to realise the student’s intentions. This will occur under the sole direction of the student, documented in the production design plan and acknowledged in the production. Group production work and group media production design plans are not appropriate for this outcome. In relation to photography, digital images and print productions must be photographed and/or scanned, manipulated and printed by the student.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to prepare and document a media production design plan in a selected media form for a specified audience.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

• media preproduction processes, including:
  – methods of research to support the selected media form, style and/or genre, codes and conventions
  – methods for concept development for an individual or a distinctive media product
– strategies to identify the function and purpose of the proposed product

– ways an audience may consume and be engaged by a media product and strategies to identify audience characteristics

• media preproduction design processes, practices and techniques, including:

  – conventions of written planning documentation and visual representations appropriate to the intended product form, audience and purpose

  – codes and conventions specific to the media form, product, style and/or genre, audience and purpose

  – production and postproduction processes, techniques and practices appropriate to the proposed production.

Key skills

• research and evaluate possibilities for an individual or a distinctive media production

• apply media preproduction processes, techniques and practices

• use media preproduction conventions specific to the media form, product, style and/or genre, audience and purpose of the proposed production

• produce a media production design plan in a selected media form for a specific audience and purpose.

ASSESSMENT  The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately. To demonstrate satisfactory completion of Unit 3, Outcome 2, students must present evidence of the use of technical equipment applications and/or media processes in production design plan specification areas appropriate to media form/s. In Unit 3, Outcome 3, students must present evidence of a media production design plan incorporating specifications appropriate for the chosen media product.

Assessment of levels of achievement  The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will
be determined by School-assessed Coursework, a School-assessed Task and an end-of-year examination.

**Contribution to final assessment**

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 6 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by a School-assessed Task, which will contribute 37 per cent, and an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 45 per cent.

**School-assessed Coursework**

Teachers will provide to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority a score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement.

The score must be based on the teacher’s rating of performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table and in accordance with the assessment handbook published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The assessment handbook also includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Where teachers provide a range of options for the same assessment task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

**Unit 4: Media: process, influence and society’s values**

In this unit students further develop practical skills in the production of media products to realise the production design plan completed during Unit 3. Organisational and creative skills are refined and applied throughout each stage of the production process. Students analyse the relationship between media texts, social values and discourses in the media. The nature and extent of media influence, the relationship between the media, media audiences and media regulation are also critically analysed in this unit.

**AREA OF STUDY 1: Media process**
In this area of study students complete a media product based on a media production design plan completed in Unit 3. Each medium has a specific production process and set of work practices that are both appropriate to the particular medium and to the type of product being produced within that form. Each type of media product, however, requires the integration of a variety of skills, management and organisational techniques to move from planning documentation through production and postproduction processes to a completed media product. These vary depending on the nature of the product. Production and postproduction processes involve the application of media codes and conventions and stylistic considerations appropriate to the selected medium and for specific audience/s and purpose of the product.

The media production must comply with the media production plan specifications outlined.

As specified in Unit 3, photographic negatives should be processed by the student. Digital images and print productions should be photographed and/or scanned, manipulated and printed by the student on the equipment available to them at the school.

The production of the media product is undertaken individually. However, the implementation of the production design plan may require a production crew to realise the student’s intentions. In this case the implementation is under the sole direction of the student, documented in the production design plan and acknowledged in the production. Group production work and group media production design plans are not appropriate for this outcome.

**Outcome 1**

On completion of this unit the student should be able to produce a media product for an identified audience from the media production design plan prepared in Unit 3.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

**Key knowledge**

- production and postproduction practices and processes associated with adapting a production design plan for a given medium and product
- equipment and materials used in media production
- the operation of media production equipment and processes
- codes, conventions and styles appropriate to the selected medium, product and audience/s
- methods to support the realisation of a media product
- methods for recording and organising information to support the production process.
Key skills

• operate equipment and use materials and processes as appropriate to the selected media form

• apply codes and conventions and demonstrate stylistic awareness appropriate to the selected medium, product and audience/s

• communicate the realisation of an individual or a distinctive media product

• manage the production of a media product from the production design plan produced by the student

• organise and record information to support the production process.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Media texts and society’s values

In this area of study students focus on the relationship between society’s values and media texts. Media representations reflect and mediate ideas from particular economic, social, cultural, political or institutional points of view. Students undertake the study of an identified significant idea, social attitude or discourse located in a range of media texts to critically analyse its representation in the media. Media texts are subject to multiple readings by audiences. Society’s values shape the construction and reading of texts. These values are in a state of constant evolution, and tension always exists between dominant, oppositional and emerging values. The media play a significant role in the construction, maintenance and conduct of social knowledge and discourses through the process of making and reproducing meaning using the representational tools of language, image and sound to construct and distribute ideas and attitudes in texts. This process reflects the structures of power and knowledge in society and may take the form of ongoing discussions or be specific to particular ideas, events, people or times. Society’s values or attitudes may be linked to particular moral, political or other views. These may include, for example, attitudes held about or directed towards particular individuals or groups, forms of social organisation (such as the family, political or social structures), institutions or organisations, the natural or built environment, events in which individuals, particular social groups or nations are involved or participate, or forms of behaviour attributed to factors such as age, class, gender, sub-culture, region and ethnicity.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss and analyse the construction, distribution and interpretation of society’s values as represented in media texts.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

• the nature and form of an idea, a value, an attitude or a discourse evident in selected
media texts

• the construction of representations in media texts and how these reflect values in society

• values held in society as represented and distributed through media texts

• the relationship between dominant, oppositional and emerging values represented in media texts

• the relationship between discourses or social issues and media texts

• appropriate media language and terminology.

Key skills

• describe a social issue or discourse that is constructed, represented and distributed through media texts

• identify, compare and contrast representations in media texts

• analyse the relationships between dominant, oppositional and emerging values in society and media texts

• discuss and analyse the relationship between a discourse or issue, society’s values and media texts

• apply and use appropriate media language and terminology.

AREA OF STUDY 3: Media influence  This area of study focuses on an analysis of media influence. Students explore the complexity of the relationship between the media, its audiences and the wider community in terms of the nature and extent of the media’s influence. Students examine arguments and evidence arising from a range of historical and contemporary developments that offer a range of perspectives about the nature, characteristics and extent of media influence on individuals and society at large. Theories of media influence and communication models are underpinned by academic approaches, including the political economy model, the effects tradition and the cultural studies model. Over time these theories have become increasingly sophisticated as they seek to explain the complexities in the relationships between the media and its audiences.

Audiences are central to the construction and dissemination of media products. They are active in media consumption and increasingly involved in media creation and distribution. Developments in media technologies, forms and texts and the changes that result in terms of the construction, distribution, consumption and regulation of media products have fundamentally changed the relationship between the media and its audiences. Students examine the nature and extent of media influence in the light of these developments. The media is subject to regulation including government, industry and self-regulation on production, distribution, content and reception. Codes of conduct and
regulations may define standards, set limitations or place ethical parameters on the media. Students consider the rationale for, and arguments about, such controls when discussing issues of media influence.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and present arguments about the nature and extent of media influence.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

- communication theories and models and their application to media forms and texts
- theories of audience, their relationship with communication theories and models, and application to media forms and texts
- arguments and evidence about media influence on audiences and the broader society
- arguments surrounding the rationale for and regulation of the media
- appropriate media language and terminology.

Key skills

- identify, compare and contrast communication theories and models
- apply communication theories and models to media forms and texts
- substantiate arguments about media influence
- discuss the relationship between audiences and media forms and texts
- analyse the rationale for and arguments about the regulation of the media
- use and apply appropriate media language and terminology.

ASSESSMENT

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment. The key knowledge and
key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately.

**Assessment of levels of achievement**

The student’s level of achievement for Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework, a School-assessed Task and an end-of-year examination.  *Contribution to final assessment*  
School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 12 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by a School-assessed Task, which will contribute 37 per cent, and an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 45 per cent.
There are 6 Topics or Areas to be covered


   Production Elements

   1. Camera use (shot (perspective, depth, angle framing) and motion)
   2. Lighting (and shadow)
   3. Editing and Mixing
   4. Sound (music, dialogue and sound fx)
   5. Visual Composition (mise en scene)
   6. Costume and Make Up
   7. Acting (verbal and physical)

   Story Elements

   1. Opening sequence & narrative Possibilities
   2. Storylines (Plot and sub-plots)
   3. Character Development
   4. Cause and Effect
   5. Structuring of time
   6. Closing Sequence and Development
   7. Point of View
   8. Setting

2. Relative contribution of production and story elements to the development and organisation of the narrative.

3. Combination of production and story elements in the development and organisation of the narrative.


5. Aspects of Genre and media codes and conventions in the organisation and development of the narrative.

6. Text reception and Audience engagement

   Audience Issues

   1. Emotional response
   2. Cues to reception
   3. The skill/ability of the audience
   4. Viewing Location
Understanding and Writing about Film

For the filmmaker, the final film/narrative results from conscious choices about technical issues and techniques that will help to focus on the story move the story forwards or reflect development in the plot or characters.

As a viewer, the narrative is experienced in ways that can confirm, modify or cheat our expectations of the story and its development.

Writing about film: - Some Basics

1. Always take accurate notes – divide your book into various sections (as described in class)

2. View scenes and shots several times to get a good sense of the narrative elements

3. Propose functions and look for motivations – why did the director use those particular elements in that way – how did it impact on the film

4. Try to pick up on the overall issues, themes or motifs developed in the film

5. Watch other films

6. Create a glossary of film terms – use class notes, the text book or your own research.

Film Terminology - Must be used in SAC and Exam responses in order to gain marks.

How to do Narrative Analysis

1. Determine the organisational structure of the film

   - The film has a plot that cues the construction of the story.
   - The film will manipulate causality, space and time.
   - The film will have distinct patterns of development from the opening to the closing sequences.
   - Narration will move between restricted and unrestricted information provision.

   * Segment the film into identifiable sequences or scenes and get a good feel of the structure – including crucial scenes. – Both with respect to the narrative as a whole and Particular Production or Story elements.
2. Identify important Production and Story elements that are used.

- Focus on a few elements at a time.
- Identify the specific nature of the elements in a shot / sequence
- Identify those that play a central role.
- Perform a shot by shot analysis for editing
- Watch without sound, listen without pictures

3. Propose functions for the Production and Story elements and the patterns that they form.

- Do the elements tend to create a sense of drama, suspense, sadness... etc?
- How do the production elements combine with story elements to develop or organise the narrative?
- How does the composition of the shot help to focus or particular areas or detail?
- When a film is affecting you emotionally – focus in on the nature and function of elements that brings you to those feelings.
- Do the elements function to restrict or unrestrict your knowledge of the narrative?
- Often film techniques are used to transfer momentum, direct us to cue or mislead our attention, clarify, intensify or complicate our understanding – can you see these in action?
- Themes and meanings are difficult to isolate on an individual section of a film. They need to be seen as developing throughout the film by the use of story and production elements that help to show them as important and significant.

4. Trace out patterns of techniques (more difficult)

- Scenes often have dramatic patterns of encounter, conflict and outcome, which are reflected by production elements. Look at how each of these is related to the narrative structure or development
- Are there themes, Motifs or developments that are specifically underscored by various techniques?
- Look for changes in relationships and character personality
- Look for progression of ideas
- Are there issues of unity and disunity that use production elements to identify or emphasise them.
- Look for techniques that are Repeated, Varied in some way or Parallelled.
Production elements in film narrative

Use of Camera and Film Stock

Nature
1. Camera control Roll, Tilt, Pan, Zoom
2. Shooting Angle Low, High, Tilted (canted).
3. Height Ground Level through to High in the air
4. Mobility Dolly, Crane, Handheld, Steady Cam
5. Type ELS, LS, FS, MS, CU, ECU, and POV (point of view)
6. Lenses Wide angle, Telephoto, Normal
7. Focus Soft, Sharp, Pulled focus, Out of focus
8. Film Stock 35mm (std) 70mm (wide) DV, Black and White, Video
9. Framing Including and excluding objects, events or people, design
    principles such as space, repetition, colour etc

Functions Highly Variable the same shot/framing method in a different scene may have
a different function and or impact.

The following list is a rather general summary of each of the 7 categories of “use of camera”

1. Allows objects to be cued from any point in the frame of vision (Pan, Zoom) Can use the movement of people or objects on screen to direct the movement of the camera. Produces changing perspectives which in turn heightens our interest (Roll, Tilt) Improves concepts of vertical (tilt) and Horizontal (Pan) space

2. Angles, especially unfamiliar ones, can make us re-examine situations or look with keener interest and make judgements about what we see.

3. Similar to point 2.

4. Mobile Framing can put onscreen space off screen and the reverse thus revealing or hiding information or events from us. Steady cam can bring smooth action to fast paced events, providing a clearer view of what is happening. Hand held and jerky framing can add an emotional or personal intensity to a scene and can make you feel as though you are there, also used to make it look like you are seeing what the character sees (POV)

5. Shots can bring up textures and details (CU), especially facial features, gestures and reactions or allow us to explore the space and its contents and movement (LS). Abrupt cuts between shot types can create a disjointed or confusing feeling. POV shots give you a perspective on the characters feelings or reactions and so you can identify more closely with them. Establishing (ELS, LS) shots help the audience to see changes in location.

6. Wide Angle tends to make objects bulge (CU, MS) giving a distorted view. Telephoto tends to flatten perspective making it difficult to see the distance between objects in terms of depth (LS)

7. Focus can exemplify (sharp) or cloud (blurred) our knowledge of events or switch our viewing to new areas of the screen (pulling)
8. The use of different film stock, especially changes within the one production, can produce a range of effects. Eg Black and White representing the past, DV and especially video can be "grainer" and therefore add realism, larger wide screen formats are useful where the setting is important – eg a western or desert setting.

9. Combinations of shot elements work together to produce the positioning of visual elements from a certain vantage point. Using the camera to show scale, depth, spatial relations, distort or flatten the scene. Framing also allows people, objects and events to be included or excluded. (See Visual Composition for more detail)

**General**

* Similar framing of particular shots at various points can be used to develop motifs and themes.
* Abrupt switches can function to highlight actions or events
* Many can be seen as being directly related to emotional responses.

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<tr>
<th>LS</th>
<th>far away</th>
<th>= Isolated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out of focus</td>
<td>blurred</td>
<td>= Confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swish Pan</td>
<td>fast movement</td>
<td>= Surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Angle</td>
<td>looking down</td>
<td>= Contempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane Out</td>
<td>pulling away</td>
<td>= Loss of control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lighting**

**Nature**
- Source: Natural, Artificial, Combination
- Std Hollywood: Key, Fill, Background (3 point lighting)
- Quality: Intensity, Hard, Soft, Diffusion
- Direction: Foreground, Background, Underlighting, Top, Side
- Shadow: Cast, Attached
- Colour: Natural, Contrast, Time of day

**Function**
- To draw out or hide features of a character, place or object
- Help to define elements in the frame.
- Build or link to emotional impact
- Assist in the articulation or hiding of textures, form and shape
- Create a sense of space or depth (esp with shadow)
**Editing**

**Nature**

1. Connecting film: Cut, Special FX, Fade In, Fade Out, Dissolve, Wipe, From the point of view of a character
2. POV: Pictorial connections b/w shots (Use of shape, colour, movement, direction of movement, Montage, Length of shots between edits (increasing, decreasing, tempo)
3. Graphic: Showing similar or different locations, crosscutting with other action, developing or showing changing sense of space
4. Rhythmic: Order of events (flash back or forward), slow or speed up or repeat
5. Spatial: Smooth flow (establish – develop- resolve), focus on events and action, unambiguous nature of space, eye line matching. Uses the 180 degree rule, 30 degree rule, match on action
7. Continuity: Assist in understanding the differences between gradual and instantaneous changes in time, location and action
8. Other: Editing action or events with cuts from a POV of a character can assist the viewer to identify with the character and to feel as part of the action
9. Graphic styles of editing can assist in connecting or disconnecting events, leading the audience to compare and note similarities or differences
10. Rhythmic styles can assist in building, slowing or enhancing the action
11. Using spatial connections help the audience link the movement of the narrative to new settings and to compare and contrast them. Crosscutting between spaces can be used to build tension and increase the anticipation of the eventual connection of events.
12. Expansion of time can allow details to be seen or shown that would ordinarily be missed and can function to intensify the moment or build suspense. Compression of time can speed up the action, allows events to be shown to be connected, remove unimportant events, increase the level of confusion (esp Jump cuts) and introduce surprise. Speed of motion (slow, fast, freeze frame) to create or enhance to mood, focus or emotional intensity of a scene or shot. Repeating events can reinforce their significance or add a sense of drama. The use of flashbacks or flash forwards can add new information, clarify situations, and propose motivation for actions.
13. Continuity editing helps to focus in on the narrative providing strong spatial continuity and screen direction.
14. Opposed to continuity editing sees the use of other forms of editing that rely less on the focus on story and more on the visual elements and repeating patterns. Often used to create maximum collision or contrast.
Sound

Nature
- Music
- Perceptual
- Sfx
- Dialogue
- Sound Design

Diegetic or Non-diegetic
Rhythm, Tempo, Loudness, Pitch, Timbre
Natural, naturalistic, Foley, off screen
Tone of voice, pitch, loudness
Background, atmosphere

Function
1. Music is used primarily to enhance or add impact to the action on screen
2. Music and sound can help to change perception and reception of images
3. In dark or dull situations sound can help to clarify or intensify the action
4. Silence is often as powerful as sound and can be used in generating many emotions, from fear, suspense, pity and so on.
5. Music can be attached to a character, locale, and time. Thus providing a cue to guide the viewer’s response.
6. Opposing or breaking the synchronising link between sound and visual can have as much impact as the reverse
7. Can be used to link into the emotional or mental state of the person.
8. Sounds off screen can be used as a device to introduce new characters, events or objects.
9. Sound bridges between scenes can function to link them together either to focus on the similarity or dissimilarity of the next scene.
10. Fill in the sound gaps in action sequences

Visual Composition

Nature
- The visual presentation of events occurring in space and time
- Differences and Balance of size, colour, positioning and repetition of objects
- Organisation of Shapes, Textures, Patterns of light and dark, Layers
- Control of time wrt to movement in the frame (Beat or pulse of visual elements)

Function
- Controls what we look at and when we look at it.
- Provides the capacity to visually highlight aspects of Motivation, Unity & Disunity, Similarity & Difference, Development & Stagnation
- Provide cues for arrival, departure, Past, Present, Future
**Costume and Makeup**

Nature:
- Colour, Texture, Movement, Style, and Materials used.

Functions:
- Hide or show aspects of the person or their personality
- Highlight or emphasise character traits
- Integrate or separate a character from the background

Examples
- Genre Based: Detective, Sci Fi
- Signifying character traits: Masks, Long Hair, Evil Alien, Nice Alien
- Individualized or grouping: Army, police, "the other"
- Highlighting: A red dress against a dull background.

**Acting**

Nature
- Visual Elements: Appearance, Gestures, Gait, Facial Expressions
- Sound: Voice or Noises
- Style: Individuated (narrow), Stereotypical (broad), Stylised (comedy, horror), Realistic (drama)

Function
- Define, Hide and or Reveal "character" within the context of the narrative
- Initiate cues through the above categories to assist us to understand the narrative
- Provide motivation for action and reaction and so development of the narrative

Assist in the focus and use of other production elements.
Story elements in film narrative

Narrative Possibilities in general and in the opening sequence

Nature
- The opening sequence initiates the narrative and presents the beginning of the plot.
- Locates the narrative in space and time.
- Presents characters.
- Sets up cause and effect.
- Assumes or presents past events.
- Sets up storylines and issues
- Develop goal orientation of characters and plot

Function
- Raises our expectations about what we think will happen and how events are connected.
- Provides a direct focus to follow, which can of course be used to hide other elements.
- Can present information related to our previous experiences of similar films and so cue us to begin responding in certain ways.
- Provides initial motivation for the development of events or the journeys that characters might take.
- Establishes character traits and relationships.
- Controls the amount of information provided to the viewer thus evoking different levels of curiosity and engagement.
- Can present several paths, issues or ideas for the story to follow or present. The viewer will then expect to see the development of these storylines, ideas or issues and will be looking for cues that provide them with this information.

Storylines The Plot and Sub Plots

Nature
- The events shown within the film are the plot – the audience then constructs a story from it.
- Often separate storylines will join up and a new storyline is produced.

Function
- Adds to the complexity of the narrative – more information and events to follow
- Increases our sense of anticipation as we can often begin to predict that the storylines will meet up and we then begin to think of the consequences of this.
- The joining of storylines gives the filmmakers the chance to confirm or cheat our expectations about what happens when they do meet.
- Allows us the compare and contrast events and locations. The collision or juxtaposition of these events and locations can help the audience to understand the issues being presented.
Establishing Characters and Character Development

Nature

- Genre based: The sheriff in a Western,
- Stereotypes: The sporting Jock, The nerd
- Opposing: The hero and villain,
- Conflicting: Two brothers competing for a parents attention
- Goal orientated: Searching for something, wanting to achieve
- Blocking/ Assisting: The boss wanting the main character sacked, the union official trying to support the main character

Function

- In general characters drive narratives. Their actions and reactions to events, issues or situations help to propel the story along. The relationships between different characters and the conflicts that arise further help to drive the story.

- Establishing characters can be seen as the process of how the audience gets to know the character, their behaviour and characteristics. This in turn allows them to identify with or reject the character, predict the reaction that the character will have to situations or events that are likely to happen.

- Character development refers to the way characters change throughout the narrative. The development of a character is of primary interest in most films. Characters often have goals to achieve (get the girl, get the boy, steal the gems, win the war, find the truth etc) and need to overcome obstacles, problems or situations in order to achieve their goals. Often the character is forced to change (emotionally, physically or spiritually) or re-evaluate aspects of their life as a result of overcoming obstacles and this will often involve conflict with other characters. Character development can also help to lead a narrative to often-unexpected resolutions.

Cause and Effect

Nature

- Characters initiate or respond to events
- Characters create causes and register effects
- Character traits and habits (attitude, skills, preferences, drive, dress and appearance) can lead to them initiating or responding to events in certain ways.
- There is a need for motivation for events to occur
- The interactions of people within groups is a source of conflict
- Unrelated event can often be left out

Function

- Allows us to search for elements in the plot that could give rise to an event
- Cause can seem minor in nature or can be separated from the effect thus creating a more complex narrative. This also functions to raise curiosity and is common in some genres (mystery, detective etc).
- Effects that are delayed cause feelings of suspense
- Withholding of the final effects or the cause can be very disruptive to the viewer
- Helps to motivate character actions and can produce changes in them
Structuring of Time

Nature
- Ordering  
  Chronological or not, flashbacks, flash forwards
- Duration  
  Expansion or compression
- Frequency  
  Repeating events

Function
- Chronological presentation of events helps us to clarify and build up the story
- Flashbacks provide a mechanism to show new information or to clarify events
- Dreams and Memories also alter time and work in a similar way to flashbacks. They can also function to help in the understanding of a characters motivation or inner feelings.
- Flashforwards or changes in the normal order of events can heighten the viewer’s interest as it presents time in a way that we do not normally experience it.
- Expansion and or compression of time can add impact or intensity.
- Events can be replayed to clarify, present a different POV and perspective or to focus on the significance of the event.

Point of View (POV)/Narration

Nature
- Restricted to unrestricted
- Voice over (character inside or outside of the narrative)
- Level of objectivity of characters and their development
- Level of subjective perspectives ranges from perceptual (hear and see) to mental (thoughts, fantasies, memories).

Function
- Where we only see what characters say and does we are restricted in our knowledge of them. By using various techniques to see their POV we can begin to gain a better understanding of their feelings, reactions, motivations, thoughts and desires.
- Is used to provide the viewer with more and or less information, which can lead respectively to feelings of anticipation and suspense.
- Creates a greater sense of involvement the “you are there” effect”
Development and Closure

Nature
- We expect that things will change in the developing narrative
- We expect that events and storylines will resolve themselves in some way
- The ordering of events, space and time contribute to the development and final closure.
- Patterns of action lead to the gaining of knowledge by characters
- It is common several smaller climaxes to occur before a final resolution
- Common for the focus of the narrative to narrow during development
- Climaxes often narrow the narrative possibilities that were initial presented

Function
- Deadlines set at the start of the narrative help to focus its development.
- Goal orientated plots and characters allow the narrative to develop as they progress through their journey or quest.
- Narrowing of narrative possibilities leads to a climax with a simple level of expectation and prediction of outcomes for the viewer – this can lead to satisfaction with the outcome of a film, but also risks making the ending too obvious and therefore unsatisfying.
- Characters that gain knowledge can then react to and act on that knowledge, this helps the film to change and develop over time.
- Devices such as meetings an appointments help to move and link the cause and effect chain.

Setting

Nature
- Textual Seattle, Yesterday Star Wars – “A long time ago in a galaxy far far away…”
- Visual Scenery, Clothing, Buildings, Objects.
- Sound Language, sfx
- Genre Sci fi, film noir, Western, War

Function
- Essentially setting locates the narrative in space and time
- Can relate heavily to the events/ issues/ emotions – eg the rainy muddy backdrop of the trenches highlighting the misery of the soldiers in a war film
- Cues within the setting further emphasis the context and conventions of Genre based films – eg dingy city streets in the urban crime genre.
- Can help to drive the narrative or characters in that they may act in ways that are in line with or counter to the setting and time that the narrative is located within
Story Development Concepts and Techniques for Film

1. Basic Story Elements
   a. Characters
   b. Locations
   c. Objects
   d. Situations
   e. Acts / Actions
   f. Themes

2. Story Telling Techniques
   a. Backstory
      Filling in details of the past (dialogue, flashbacks, dreams)
   b. Plot points
      Turning points where the storyline moves in a new or accelerated direction
   c. Knowledge Provision
      The character gains new knowledge that then causes them to take action or the audience gains new knowledge to allow them to gain a new perspective or angle on the story. Alternatively, information can be withheld from either or both the characters in the story and the audience to help develop suspense, uncertainty or mystery in the story
   d. Character Motivation
      Characters in stories need to have a reason to take action or change. Providing characters with situations or the actions of others can motivate them and so push the story along
   e. Opposites
      Characters with opposite views, backgrounds, attitudes can be used to generate conflict and also to emphasise aspects of the main character that are important to the story
   f. Conflicts
      Conflict is “grit for the mill” in stories. It helps to develop emotions, build or break down support in the audiences eyes of a character, provides motivation for further action
   g. Detours
      Audiences like to predict what will happen next in films and so detours that lead to unexpected outcomes or events that give a false impression of the outcome help to surprise and engage the audience,
   h. Delays
      Create suspense, excitement or prolong the agony or ecstasy of a scene or storyline by delaying the climax – used all the time in most films
i. Points of View

Who's point of view is the story being told from can be important. Showing how "they" see the world brings the audience into your characters eyes and mind. Alternatively having multiple points of views can make the film more complex and interesting.

j. Symbolism

Use of common objects (can be almost anything) to reinforce a point, convey a complex theme or idea or associate an easily understood item with a character trait. Eg a Red Porsche can be symbolic of the traits of its owner - fast, powerful, rich, outgoing etc. A reflection in a cracked mirror can be seen as symbolic of the mental breakdown or conflict going on in the characters mind.

k. Motifs

Symbols or techniques that are used more than once in a film. They help to reinforce the point, make people take notice and try to connect the significance of the technique to the storyline. Eg playing and inspirational type of music every time a character is seen helps to reinforce character traits or feelings that the character generates in the audience.

3. Typical "Hollywood" Story Structure

a. Genre

Films of a particular type or style use a range of codes and conventions that audiences can easily identify (Think of horror films). A film made in a particular genre can often be used to more easily tell the story as the filmmaker has the use of a range of codes and conventions that the audience expects to see in order to help frame their story. Alternatively, it is common the ignore C&C's as it can make the audience sit up and take notice when something happens in a film that they weren't expecting.

b. Exposition

The introduction, setting up characters and their personalities, goals and motivations, establishing locations, themes etc. Creating the situations and reasons that will help the film to move forwards.

c. Development

Conflicts, gaining knowledge, situations, actions and reactions between characters all occur to help develop the major points or ideas of the story. The main characters quest, journey or goals are pursued and the audience begin to think about possible outcomes or future events and connections between events that they have seen.
d. Raising the stakes

Often, each event or situation that occurs has more impact on the main characters than the last – this allows for the audience to wonder how much better or worse or scarier etc can it get. It raises levels of suspense, anticipation, thrill etc

e. Confrontation / Climax

At some point in most films there needs to be a final crisis where the main character or characters will have to face or confront something in order to succeed in their task, journey or attain their goals. The confrontation could be with themselves, other characters, a task. The outcome could be success or failure

f. Resolution

Once the final climax has been reached the main characters goals; journey or task will often have been completed successfully. At this point the story needs to show how the characters lives have changed or been impacted on (for better or worse). Films also often try to tie up any loose ends that need to be covered such as another smaller storyline or leave the conclusion open to question (maybe even a sequel)

4. Selection & Construction (Camera work and Editing)

The images that are shot by the camera (shot angle, movement of camera, distance from subject) are then combined in the editing suite to tell the story. In the cinema: the audience has no words to read, will only spend a short time (compared to a book) learning the details of the story and can’t stop the film to replay sections. So you have to be able to convey your story, ideas, emotions with the appropriate use of the camera and then being able to connect the various shots and scenes together in order that the film make sense. There are 4 basic techniques that are used to tell a story visually and each has its uses, strengths and weaknesses.

a. Structural
Building the stage, connecting people, object, time and places

b. Relational
Contrast, compare, parallel, symbolism

c. Conflictual
Counterpoint, opposing forces

d. Elision
Changes in space and time (jump cuts etc)