

# ***Film Studies Pre-Course tasks***

## ***Exploring the horror genre***

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# Film Studies – Course Overview.

## **AS Level Course components**

### **Component 1:**

American film *Written examination: 1½ hours 35% of qualification.*

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of three American films.

**Section A:** Hollywood 1930-1990 (comparative study).

One two-part question, requiring reference to two Hollywood films, one produced between 1930 and 1960 and the other between 1961 and 1990. There is a choice of question in the second part.

**Section B:** Contemporary American independent film.

One two-part question, requiring reference to one contemporary American independent film (produced after 2010). There is a choice of questions in the second part.

### **Component 2:**

European film *Written examination: 1½ hours 35% of qualification.*

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of two British films and one non-English language European film.

**Section A:** British film (two-film study).

One two-part question, requiring reference to two recent British films. There is a choice of question in the second part.

**Section B:** Non-English language European film.

One two-part question, requiring reference to one non-English language European film. There is a choice of questions in the second part.

### **Component 3:**

Production *Non-exam assessment 30% of qualification.*

This component assesses one production and its accompanying evaluative analysis.

Production (20%)

- Either an extract from a film highlighting narrative construction (2½ to 3½ minutes)
- Or a screenplay for an extract from a film highlighting narrative construction of between 1200 and 1400 words plus a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay (approximately 1½ minutes' screen time, corresponding to approximately 15 storyboard shots). Evaluative analysis (10%)
- An evaluative analysis (1000-1250 words) of the production in comparison with other professionally produced films or screenplays.

## **A Level Course components.**

### **Component 1:**

Varieties of film and filmmaking. *Written examination: 2½ hours 35% of qualification*

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of six feature-length films.

**Section A:** Hollywood 1930-1990 (comparative study) One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two Hollywood films, one from the Classical Hollywood period (1930-1960) and the other from the New Hollywood period (1961-1990).

**Section B:** American film since 2005 (two-film study) One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two American films, one mainstream film and one contemporary independent film.

**Section C:** British film since 1995 (two-film study) One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two British films.

### **Component 2:**

Global filmmaking perspectives. *Written examination: 2½ hours 35% of qualification*

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of five feature-length films (or their equivalent).

**Section A:** Global film (two-film study) One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to two global films: one European and one produced outside Europe.

**Section B:** Documentary film One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one documentary film.

**Section C:** Film movements – Silent cinema One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one silent film or group of films.

**Section D:** Film movements – Experimental film (1960-2000) One question from a choice of two, requiring reference to one film option.

### **Component 3:**

Production. *Non-exam assessment 30% of qualification*

This component assesses one production and its evaluative analysis.

Learners produce:

- either a short film (4-5 minutes) or a screenplay for a short film (1600-1800 words) plus a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay
- an evaluative analysis (1600 - 1800 words).

## ***Summer Learning – pre reading and research.***

### **Suggested viewing:**

Silent cinema – Charlie Chaplin’s ‘The Kid’

Classical Hollywood (1930 – 1960) - ‘Citizen Kane’

New Hollywood (1961 – 1990) - ‘The Godfather’

World Cinema - ‘Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon’

Documentary - ‘Senna’ or ‘Searching for Sugarman’.

### **Suggested reading:**

‘The Film Sense’ by Sergei Eisenstein

‘Easy Riders, Raging Bulls’ by Peter Biskind

‘Which Lie Did I Tell?’ by William Goldman

‘The Secret Life of Movies’ by Simon Brew

### **Suggested listening (podcasts):**

‘The Cine-Files’ – Steve Morris & John Rocha

‘Kermode and Mayo’s Film Review’ BBC Radio 5 Live archive

Kermode and Mayo’s Take podcast

‘Film Stories Podcast’ – Simon Brew

### **Helpful links:**

<http://empireonline.com>

<https://www.filmsite.org>

<https://film.britishcouncil.org>

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk>

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-camera-shots>

Research the key terms in the table below, note the definitions and write how you think they link to 'film'.

<b><i>Key Term</i></b>	<b><i>Definition &amp; notes.</i></b>
<b><i>Aesthetics</i></b>	
<b><i>Auteur</i></b>	
<b><i>Cinematography</i></b>	
<b><i>Diegetic</i></b>	
<b><i>Genre</i></b>	
<b><i>Mise-en-scene</i></b>	
<b><i>Point of view (POV)</i></b>	
<b><i>Representation</i></b>	

Task keywords. Dictionary task.

<b><i>Thriller</i></b>	
<b><i>Censorship</i></b>	
<b><i>Voyeurism</i></b>	

## Camera Angle Info Task

Shot Type	Example	Description
<p><b>Close Up</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A close up shot of a character usually takes in their head and shoulders.</li> <li>▪ It can be used to emphasise how important a character or object is.</li> <li>▪ It allows the audience to build a relationship with the character</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extreme Close Up</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An extreme close up shot usually focuses on a part of the face (often the eyes or mouth)</li> <li>• Used to convey emotion to the audience</li> <li>• Often used at key points in the story</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mid / Medium Shot</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A mid shot shows the body from the waist up.</li> <li>▪ It shows some background and whole body language.</li> <li>▪ Focus on character – it lets the audience see what they are doing but also how they are feeling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long Shot</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full body is shown.</li> <li>▪ Used to show location or relationships of characters.</li> <li>▪ Often used as a first shot at the start of a particular sequence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Two Shot</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The frame views both subjects.</li> <li>▪ The shot is used to show the emotional reactions between the subjects.</li> <li>▪ The two shot is often used for romance, tension, and action.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High Angle</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The camera is positioned above the person or place.</li> <li>▪ It can make a person look vulnerable.</li> <li>▪ Designed to make the audience side with the characters in shot</li> </ul>

<p><b>Low Angle</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The camera is positioned below the person or place.</li> <li>▪ It can make a person look powerful or important.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Over the Shoulder</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An over-the-shoulder shot shows your subject from behind the shoulder of another character.</li> <li>▪ It emulates perspective.</li> <li>▪ It's common in conversation scenes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Point Of View</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The camera becomes the character and shows us exactly what they are seeing, as they would see it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dutch Tilt / Angle</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For a dutch angle (dutch tilt), the camera is slanted to one side.</li> <li>▪ With the horizon lines tilted in this way, you can create a sense of disorientation.</li> </ul>

**Task: Visit the weblink below and read through the section on ‘Camera Movement – Meaning Through Motion’.**

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-camera-shots#camera-movement>

Select three camera movement techniques and note why they are effective, where you have seen them used before and what cinematic situations you would employ the shot style in your own movie making.

**Movement 1:**

**Movement 2:**

**Movement 3:**

**Research task:** Complete your own research on the director of Psycho, Alfred Hitchcock.

### **Short Biography**

Alfred Hitchcock was born in Leytonstone, England on August 13, 1899. He was the youngest of three children born to William and Emma Jane Hitchcock.

After attending a technical school at 15, Hitchcock spent the first years of his career as a draftsman, advertising designer, and writer. An interest in photography led to him working in London's film industry, first as a title card designer for silent movies and, just five years later, as a director. In 1926, Hitchcock married his assistant director, Alma Reville, and in 1928 they had a daughter, Patricia.

Hitchcock quickly gained notoriety as a director who delivered suspense, twist endings, and dark subject matter. His own personality and gallows humour were embedded in popular culture through interviews, film trailers, and cameo appearances in his own films. He was popular with audiences at home and abroad, and in 1939 the Hitchcock family moved to Hollywood. In the three decades that followed he would cement his legacy by directing and producing his most successful and enduring works. His television anthology, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, ran from 1955 to 1965 and made him a household name.

**Notes on his filmography:**

**Notes on his directorial style:**

**Notes on his legacy and influence over future filmmakers:**

# Psycho

US | 1960 | 109 mins |

Dir: Alfred Hitchcock | Cert. 15 |

Engaging for ages 14+



## Synopsis.

After Marion Crane steals a huge sum of money from her boss and drives out of town, she finds herself caught in a storm – and then becomes the only guest at a remote motel. What happens from this point in the story is best left as a series of surprises, but it contains some of the most memorable scenes film history has to offer, along with a legendary score that has a crucial role in shaping the action.

## Task to complete before watching the film.

Note, in full sentences:

- Have you seen or heard of *Psycho* before?
- What do you know of its reputation?
- Does this influence how you approach the film?
- In your opinion, what makes a good thriller?

## Task to complete after watching the film.

Complete with full paragraphs:

1. Think back to the film's famous shower scene. Why do you think this was so shocking for audiences at the time? Is it still powerful? What impact does the music add to the effectiveness of the scene?
2. Why do you think Alfred Hitchcock chose to make this film in black-and-white?
3. One of the key themes in the film is voyeurism. How does this play out throughout the film?
4. The film was notable at the time for pushing the boundaries of censorship. What examples can you think of that might demonstrate this?

## Extension tasks:

- Do you think *Psycho* holds the same impact for audiences today as it did in 1960?
- Do we still find it shocking, even though issues around censorship and violence have changed?
- What do you think the reception would be like if it were released today?

### **Further viewing:**

Watch next – 'Don't Look Now' | 1973 | Cert. 15 | Engaging for ages 16+

Unforgettable psychological thriller about a couple who decamp to Venice in order to forget the tragic death of their daughter.

## **Psycho overview and opening scenes notes.**

***Task: Re-watch the film and read along with the production notes for the opening scenes.***

Alfred Hitchcock's powerful, complex psychological thriller, Psycho (1960) is the "mother" of all modern horror suspense films - it single-handedly ushered in an era of inferior screen 'slashers' with blood-letting and graphic, shocking killings (e.g., Homicidal (1961), The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974), Halloween (1978), Motel Hell (1980), and DePalma's Dressed to Kill (1980) - with another transvestite killer and shower scene). While this was Hitchcock's first real horror film, he was mistakenly labelled as a horror film director ever since.

The nightmarish, disturbing film's themes of corruptibility, confused identities, voyeurism, human vulnerabilities and victimization, the deadly effects of money, Oedipal murder, and dark past histories are realistically revealed. Its themes were revealed through repeated uses of motifs, such as birds, eyes, hands, and mirrors.

The master of suspense skilfully manipulates and guides the audience into identifying with the main character, luckless victim Marion (a Phoenix real-estate secretary), and then with that character's murderer - a crazy and timid taxidermist named Norman (a brilliant typecasting performance by Anthony Perkins). Hitchcock's techniques voyeuristically implicate the audience with the universal, dark evil forces and secrets present in the film.

Psycho also broke all film conventions by displaying its leading female protagonist having a lunchtime affair in her sexy white undergarments in the first scene; also by photographing a toilet bowl - and flush - in a bathroom (a first in an American film), and killing off its major 'star' Janet Leigh a third of the way into the film.

In this film, Hitchcock's gimmicky device, termed a MacGuffin (the thing or device that motivates the characters, or propels the plot and action), is the stolen \$40,000 from the realtor's office. Marion Crane becomes a secondary MacGuffin after her murder.

Like many of Hitchcock's films, Psycho is so very layered and complex that multiple viewings are necessary to capture all of its subtlety. Symbolic imagery involving stuffed birds and reflecting mirrors are ever-present. Although it's one of the most frightening films ever made, it has all the elements of very dark, black comedy. This film wasn't clearly understood by its critics when released. Hitchcock admitted that Henri-Georges Clouzot's influential thriller Les Diaboliques (1955, Fr.) inspired his film.

When the film was originally aired in theatres in mid-1960, Hitchcock insisted in a publicity gimmick (a la P.T. Barnum) that no one would be seated after the film had started - the decree was enforced by uniformed Pinkerton guards. Audiences assumed that something horrible would happen in the first few minutes. Violence is present for about two minutes total in only two shocking, grisly murder

scenes, the first about a third of the way through, and the second when a Phoenix detective named Arbogast is stabbed at the top of a flight of stairs and topples backwards down the staircase. The remainder of the horror and suspense is created in the mind of the audience, although the tale does include such taboo topics as transvestism, implied incest, and hints of necrophilia.

- The bleak, monochrome film is made more effective by Bernard Herrmann's sparse, but driving, recognizable score, first played under the frantic credits - shown with abstract, grey horizontal and vertical lines that streak back and forth, violently splitting apart the screens and causing them to disappear. The frenetic lines appear as prison bars or vertical city buildings. [These criss-crossing patterns, like mirror-images, are correlated to the split, schizophrenic personality of a major protagonist.]

The film opens with the aerial-view camera sweeping left to right along the urban skyline of "PHOENIX, ARIZONA" where some new construction is in progress. [The numerous references to birds in the film begins here, with the city of 'Phoenix'.] The specific date and time are emphasized in titles in the middle of the screen:

FRIDAY, DECEMBER THE ELEVENTH  
TWO FORTY-THREE P.M

- The shot pans across many skyscraper buildings, and after a series of numerous dissolves, randomly chooses to descend and penetrate deeper into one of many windows in a cheaper, high-rise hotel building - the window's venetian blinds narrowly conceal the dingy interior. There, the camera pauses at the half-open window - and then voyeuristically intrudes into the foreground darkness of the drab room. The camera takes a moment to adjust to the black interior - and then pans to the right where a post-coital, semi-nude couple have just completed a seedy, lunch-time tryst.
- Attractive, single 30-ish secretary, Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), wearing only a prominent white bra and slip and reclining back on a double bed, is with her shirtless lover Sam Loomis (John Gavin) who stands over her.

Sam speaks the first line of dialogue, referring to the uneaten lunch food on the stand - on many levels, she *has* lost her appetite for their ungratifying relationship and mutual poverty. As he kisses her and they embrace on the bed, they discuss their "cheap" relationship and impoverishment, and their many unresolved issues:

- The scene begins with Sam getting dressed and the two talking about their secretive relationship. As he stands above her, this gives the impression that Sam is control. They embrace on the bed as the conversation goes back and forth about marriage. Who is on top changes as the direction of the conversation does- They each give their opposing opinions on their relationship.
- As Marion rises to dress, they discuss further difficulties in their fitful relationship (characterized as more sexual than intimate). She faces away from Sam, until he says what she wants to hear.
- In a semi-ultimatum to Sam, Marion tells him that "this is the last time" - she will deny him further sexual couplings in "secretive" meetings. She expresses her frustration about their private love trysts and her real desire for marriage - she wants chastity, respectability, and public meetings in the place she shares with her sister (where a framed picture of her dead "Mother" morally disapproves, presides, and judges them).

- He agrees to see her under the new terms of 'respectability,' although he reminds her how "a lot of sweating out," "patience," and "hard work" would be prerequisites in a respectable relationship [Marion's sister later tellingly asserts: "Patience doesn't run in my family"]:
- Sam, a small-town (Fairvale, California) hardware store proprietor, is also frustrated and self-pitying because of his money worries - he is a financial martyr, burdened by his father's debts and the alimony he must pay to his ex-wife. She proposes marriage directly (she is still a spinster and stuck in the same job after ten years) - and poignantly describes her willingness to share a life of cash-strapped hardship with him. But annoyingly, he balks at the thought, refusing because he doesn't want her to live in poverty and because he believes he must first pay off his debts over the next couple years. She threatens to leave him and thinks she may find "somebody available" to take his place and end her fears of being a fallen woman:
- As the two speak, the camera goes closer to them as they closer to each other, but pulls back when they pull back from each other. They pull back from each other when one says something the other doesn't like and causes frustration. Their body language through this scene depicts their emotions.
- Unhappy and unfulfilled in her unsanctified relationship, Marion rejects his idea to take the afternoon off and rushes back to her storefront real estate office - she is anxious about being late.
- For the audience this scene creates justification for Marion's following actions- stealing the \$40,000 (the MacGuffin)

#### Arriving at the Motel-

- Rain drops begin to splash on the windshield, as oncoming headlights blind Marion's tired eyes (she has been traveling for almost 30 hours with nothing to eat and an uncomfortable Friday night's sleep in her car). The rainstorm becomes more violent, and the windshield wipers slash back and forth through the water across her window, accentuated by the soundtrack. [A perfect visual metaphor for the celebrated shower scene to come!] Although the rain has a cleansing, climactic effect and her inner monologues cease (and the music dies down), her vision is blurred and obscured - literally - and she becomes lost and driven off the main road. Glaring car headlights (from behind or ahead) disappear. The side road she has been derailed onto is dark - suddenly up ahead, a neon "BATES MOTEL VACANCY" sign appears (seen from her point of view) - almost conjured up like all her other interior imaginations. Her flight is aborted. She pulls in to the out-of-the-way, deserted, and downbeat roadside motel - a modest but seedy looking place.
- As the rain is beating down, she parks in front of the motel office and gets out of her car. The office is lighted but unattended. Then, from the motel porch, she peers around the corner of the motel, looking up at the gloomy, gothic-style Victorian house behind the motel on a hill. The stereotypical horror movie's 'old dark house' looks like a giant skull with lighted windows/eyes. In a lighted second story window, she sees the silhouetted figure of an old woman pass in front of the window. She honks her horn a few times to signal her presence.
- The nervous, gangly thin, shy, peculiar but likeable caretaker, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) breathlessly bounds down the steps on the hill in the rain (carrying an unopened umbrella) - smiling and greeting her with the words:

- From the motel porch, she peers around the corner of the motel, looking up at the gloomy, gothic-style Victorian house behind the motel on a hill. The stereotypical horror movie's 'old dark house' looks like a giant skull with lighted windows/eyes. In a lighted second story window, she sees the silhouetted figure of an old woman pass in front of the window
- As she enters the empty office, the camera captures her reflected image in a mirror, and then a split-second image of both of their faces in the mirror. They speak to each other in profile across the desk, prefaced by his meaningful, ironic comment: "Dirty night." According to the twitchy proprietor, the motel is completely vacant: "We have twelve vacancies. Twelve cabins, twelve vacancies. They moved away the highway."
- He is delighted to see a visitor because nobody ever stops at the motel unless they accidentally get off the "main road" [another ironic comment about her waywardness]: "Nobody ever stops here anymore unless they've done that." Her handbag is placed next to her on the desk, with the word "OKAY" visible at the top of her folded *Los Angeles Tribune* newspaper.
- With frayed nerves from her experience, Marion awkwardly registers in the guest book under a false identity as Marie *Sam-uels* [a reference to her unfulfilled wish to marry Sam] from Los Angeles after a glance at her paper. The motel keeper banters on with a significant statement:
- At the same moment that she lies about her address, the attendant hesitates when he reaches for the room key to Cabin 3. Turning slightly sideways, he selects instead the key to Cabin 1 - the room that adjoins the office: "it's closer in case you want anything." She learns she is only about 15 miles from Fairvale, Sam's town. He takes her bags from the back seat and leads her to her room. As he shows her the interior of the room, he comments on its smell - another richly-textured line: "Boy, it's stuffy in here," and opens the window. In a charming, friendly, eager-to-please way, the uptight proprietor meticulously shows Marion where everything is, pausing on the word "mattress" [a word remarkably similar to the word *matricide*], possibly because he is nervous about being in the bedroom alone with a pretty woman:
- As he shows her the interior of the room, he comments on its smell - another richly-textured line: "Boy, it's stuffy in here," and opens the window. In a charming, friendly, eager-to-please way, the uptight proprietor meticulously shows Marion where everything is, pausing on the word "mattress" [a word remarkably similar to the word *matricide*], possibly because he is nervous about being in the bedroom alone with a pretty woman. Framed bird pictures adorn the drab walls. But he stammers as he turns on the bright bathroom lights and points her to the "and the, uh, over there" (she must provide the word bathroom for him as if it was a forbidden, dirty word), the white-tiled bathroom
- When she learns his name - it's not "Mr. Bates" he suggests, but a more personable "Norman Bates" - her image is reflected in the room's mirror, clutching her purse with the stolen bundle of money. He shyly and humbly invites her to dinner in his house: "Would you have dinner with *me*? I was just about to myself. You know, nothing special, just sandwiches and milk...I don't set a fancy table, but the kitchen's awful homey." [His own self-deprecating opinion of himself is that he is "nothing special."] She agrees and he tells her to wait in her room and he'll be back "as soon as it's ready" with his "trusty umbrella."
- While he is gone, Marion places both her handbag and suitcase on the bed. She takes the money from her handbag and looks for a better place to conceal the money - she opens up three drawers. She finally decides to wrap it up in her Los Angeles newspaper and place it in

plain view on the bed nightstand (the word 'OKAY' is ironically still visible in the headline). [As she sets the paper down, it's as if a voice she hears saying "NO!" from the house judges her guilty action.]

- Through the window (that Norman conveniently opened) facing the old house, Marion hears voices - an argument that Norman is having with his shrill-voiced, domineering mother (voice of "Mother" by Virginia Gregg) over his "cheap erotic" dinner invitation to the young woman [the film's voyeur theme is reinforced by the idea of Norman's mother 'peeking' into her son's life with her ears]:
- Norman returns with food for one, defying his mother, reflection of him in the window showing his split personality.
- Uncomfortable, she turns away from the window until she hears the door shut. She watches Norman, who has defied his mother, carrying a tray of sandwiches and a pitcher of milk down the hill. Marion waits outside her motel door, and moments later sees Norman turn the corner onto the porch: "I caused you some trouble," she apologetically states. As they stand together on the porch, the camera photographs them as if they were the two sides of the same coin, and Norman's image is reflected in the glass window behind him - and symbolic of his split personality. Crestfallen, Norman tells Marion that his mother is extremely disagreeable. She resigns herself to 'eat'-ing his "fixed" supper
- As she leans back with her hands folded across her front and invites him into her motel room to eat, Norman steps forward and backward one step, stiffens uncomfortably and lowers his gaze, and then proposes that it would be "nicer and warmer" in the motel office. She is amused by his bashfulness and pathetic self-consciousness - and sympathetic to his nervous awkwardness around her. And because it is "too officious" in the office, he suggests the darkened parlor (with only one Tiffany lamp) behind the office: "I-I-I-I have the parlor back here."
- The lighting is dim, creating suspense. The parlor is decorated with his stuffed [stuffy, but in another sense] trophy birds mounted on the walls or on stands - an enormous predatory, nocturnal owl with outstretched wings, a raven [a bird with a knife-like beak that preys on carrion (Marion?)], a pheasant, and a hawk - and classic paintings of nude women being raped. As he sits straight up and leans forward as in a toilet-like position while she nibbles on a sandwich (but doesn't drink any of the milk from the large pitcher), he looks on, fondles a stuffed bird, and talks about his "uncommon" and "cheap" hobby "to pass the time" - his interest in avian taxidermy:
- Pictures of birds and stuffed birds. Her refers to it as a hobby. There is one large owl in the corner that is mounted like its swooping towards its prey. The camera is at a low angle as Norman talks about his mum, showing the owl looking directly down at him as if it is his mother keeping her eye on him.
- Taxidermy is the art of keeping things looking alive, which in Norman's head he is doing to his mother.
- He dutifully confides that he doesn't have other friends - his "best friend is his mother." Their conversation leads to speaking about how human beings become imprisoned "in our private traps" - in a narrow and minimal existence - in the course of their private lives. Marion sees parallels in her own life - she is caught in a degraded and draining relationship with a weak-willed Sam, similar to how Norman is debilitated by his enforced caring for his mother:

- Assertively, Marion insists that he can free himself from the traps that he feels have possessed him since birth - in actuality, she is in the process of healing herself and ready to renounce her own madness. She can't believe that he is traumatized so harshly by his mother - and suggests he should break away from her. According to Norman, he was raised by his widowed mother after the age of five. He was the central focus of his mother's attention until she fell in love with a man who talked her into building the Bates Motel. When his mother's lover died under unusual circumstances and she was bankrupted, "it was just too great a shock for her" and she went insane:
- There is a massive space between them. he is relaxed at times, but sits up straight and defensively when he talks about his mother's illness and when Marion suggests putting her in some place.
- Norman was forced into the role of nurse-maiding his deranged and invalid [mentally - "ill" ?] mother after his step-father's death. He erupts with furious intensity when she suggests that his mother be committed "someplace..." Marion is slowly made aware of how Norman's imprisoning predicament and treatment by his mother is far worse than her own situation. After Norman has sympathetically told her the story of his mother and their hard lives, Marion is compassionate but incredulous regarding his passive acceptance of his duty, his unhealthy, troubled devotion to his mother, and his sexual repression:
- At the conclusion of their discussion, he attempts to solidify their first-name-basis intimacy, but she is only thankful that she has learned a lesson from their talk. [Marion's admission that she has sunk to neurotic depths ("we all go a little mad sometimes") parallels Norman's own psychotic, pitiable trap in which he is hopelessly caught.] Marion realizes how horrible life can be when one is trapped in a situation without escape. In the mad act of stealing her boss's money, she has placed herself in such a trap.
- Benefiting from Norman's example and trapped, self-sacrificing condition, he has provided or suggested a way of liberating salvation for Marion - and she gratefully thanks him. Regaining her sanity and rationality, she is resolved to extricate herself from her own self-imposed "private trap back there" due to lack of money and a frustrating romance. She will return to Phoenix to turn herself in "before it's too late":
- Marion forgets, however, that she has signed the register with a fake name and fake home address, and now tells Norman that her name is Crane. Norman watches her return to her cabin, and then takes another look at the register, smirking at the false name and location. [Norman Bates' hobby, "baiting," snaring and trapping birds for stuffing - such as the "crane" woman from Phoenix - another legendary bird - has again found a suitable match - and he is amused by it.]
- Walking back into the shadowy dark parlor and shutting the door behind him, motel manager Norman listens at the wall for sounds in the adjoining Cabin Room 1. Then, he removes one of the nude paintings from a hook [a replica of *Susanna and the Elders* - in which a nude is assaulted by two male satyrs], revealing a jagged hole chipped out of the wall with a bright peephole in its center [a symbol of feminine sexuality].
- When he leans down to peer at Marion through the hole, his eye, in profile view, is illuminated by the light from her bedroom. The camera angle shifts and from Norman's point of view, he sees her undress down to her black brassiere and slip in front of her open bathroom door [a subjective camera placement implicates the audience in his peeping voyeurism].

A gigantic closeup of his large unblinking, profiled eye fills the screen - at precisely the same instant that he is lustfully watching Marion remove her undergarments and become naked. The camera cuts back to Marion as she covers her nude self with a robe and walks out of his/our view. An aroused Norman nervously replaces the picture, glances up to the house (in profile) with his jaw slightly twitching, and then resolvedly walks out. At the door to the office, he again glares up toward the house (in profile) and then begins bounding up the steps to his hillside home. Inside the house, he pauses at the carved staircase, places his hand on the banister post - and then with his hands in his pockets, retreats to the kitchen and sits hunched over the table at an odd angle. He twirls the cover on the sugar bowl. The schizophrenic camera - or his Mother - voyeuristically watches him - and he appears to sense and realize it.

***Task:***

***Continue re-watching the film and make your own notes on the following pages about what you see, hear and experience.***







## **HORROR GENRE – PRE-COURSE TASKS**

For these pre-course tasks you are going to explore the wider horror genre to help support your analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho. You will need to use the horror episode of Mark Kermode's 'Secrets of Cinema' (Click View link: <https://clickv.ie/w/femm>) to guide you.

Film critic Mark Kermode is somewhat of an expert in the genre of horror and declares that William Friedkin's 'The Exorcist' (based upon William Peter Blatty's novel of the same name) the greatest film ever made.

As you will see, Kermode believes that horror is a ground-breaking genre, a genre of firsts, that seeks to explore our repressed fears and plays upon contemporary anxieties. He draws our attention to a quotation from HP Lovecraft, an American horror writer, in which he said: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." Conversely Kermode also quotes Wes Craven, possibly one of the most prolific and successful horror directors, as saying that, "horror movies do not create fear, they release fear."

**At the start of the episode Kermode sets up the following debate for us to consider as we watch:**

What is a horror movie?

- Is it an essential rite of passage for generations of filmgoers to prove their nerves of steel?
- A contemporary evolution of the great Gothic tradition in literature?
- A reprehensible, exploitative spectacle cashing in on the most depraved instincts of humanity for quick profit?
- Or the most challenging and creative field of movie-making where the lowliest auteur with a scary idea can have a break out hit, while the best backed big studio production is not guaranteed a box office return?

Your task will be to establish a viewpoint in relation to this debate. Whether you enjoy the horror genre or not isn't really important – what's important is that you understand how it works, what methods directors use and why it is such an influential genre.

**You will need to be aware of the following terms as you carry out your task:**

- Tropes/ conventions
- Genre
- Juxtaposition
- Cinematography
- Editing
- Choreography

### **Viewer discretion**

Obviously be aware that horror is a genre with many mature themes and can often feature scenes and sequences of a threatening and violent nature.

The films listed below all have the current BBFC age classification noted alongside them. We encourage you to use your discretion if you choose to watch any of these films in their entirety.

The BBFC website (<https://www.bbfc.co.uk/search/releases>) offers an explanation as to why a film is given its age certificate; we urge you to be informed before watching any film that is awarded a 15 or 18 age certificate.

We have indicated any films we feel feature content of a more challenging nature with an asterisk (\*).

### **HORROR GENRE TASK A**

In his programme, Kermode tells us that all horror films include the following narrative and structural tropes or conventions: the journey; the ominous atmosphere; the scary place; sound; the jumpscare; the monster; the savant; the chase; the final girl and the exorcism.

As you watch the episode, make notes on the following questions with reference to at least one of the films mentioned under each trope. (Note that the year of release is indicated next to each film as there are often different versions and remakes of films over time.)

**The Journey** – what is the narrative and structural purpose of the journey?

- *Angel Heart* (1987) (18)\*
- *Dracula* (1958) (12)
- *Psycho* (1960) (15)
- *The Wicker Man* (1973) (15)
- *The Shining* (1980) (15)
- *The Evil Dead* (1982) (18)\*
- *The Exorcist* (1973) (18)\*
- *Let the Right One In* (2008) (15)

**The Ominous Atmosphere** – what techniques do directors use to establish the ‘ominous atmosphere’ and why?

- *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (1980) (18)\*
- *Get Out* (2017) (15)
- *Carnival of Souls* (1962) (12)
- *Nosferatu* (1922) (PG)
- *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919) (U)
- *The Babadook* (2014) (15)
- *The Haunting* (1963) (12)
- *Suspiria* (2018) (18)

**The Scary Place** - what techniques do directors use to play on our fears?

- *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) (18)\*
- *The Haunting*
- *The Shining*
- *The Exorcist*

**Sound** – why is the sound design crucial to horror films?

- *Paranormal Activity* (2007) (15)
- *Eraserhead* (1979) (18)

- *The Orphanage* (2007) (15)

**The Jumpscare** – how, and why, do directors construct a ‘jumpscare’ sequence in horror?

- *Cat People* (1942) (PG)
- *Exorcist III* (1990) (15)
- *Psycho*
- *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) (15)
- *The Exorcist*

**The Monster** – Kermode notes that Linda Blair’s character in the *The Exorcist* “may look monstrous but it’s her humanity that makes her terrifying.” How, and why, do directors create their monsters?

- *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) (PG)
- *The Exorcist*
- *Psycho*
- *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*
- *It* (2017) (15)
- *Poltergeist* (1982) (15)
- *The Last House on the Left* (1972) (18)\*
- *It Comes at Night* (2017) (15)
- *Unfriended* (2015) (15)

**The Savant** – what is the narrative purpose of the savant and what can they represent?

- *Poltergeist*
- *Insidious* (2010) (15)
- *Troll Hunter* (2010) (15)
- *Dracula*
- *Halloween* (1978) (15)
- *Witchfinder General* (1968) (15)
- *Jaws* (1975) (12A)

**The Chase** – what are the common techniques directors use to film ‘the chase’ and why do they use them?

- *The Evil Dead*
- *The Shining*
- *Halloween*
- *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) (15)
- *Cockneys vs Zombies* (2012) (15)
- *It Follows* (2014) (15)
- *The Silence of the Lambs* (1990) (15)

**The Final Girl** – why do you think so many horror films use the trope of the final girl?

- *Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Pt. III* (1982) (15)
- *Insidious*
- *Alien* (1979) (15)
- *Red Riding Hood* (2011) (12)
- *Nosferatu*
- *The Spiral Staircase* (1945) (PG)
- *Halloween*

- *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) (18)\*
- *The Babadook*
- *Under the Shadow* (2016) (15)
- *Prevenge* (2016) (15)

**The Exorcism** – do you think that it is for artistic or commercial reasons that many horror films feature unresolved endings or ‘sequel hooks’?

- *Night of the Living Dead*
- *The Wicker Man*
- *Halloween*
- *Nightmare On Elm Street*
- *Carrie* (1976) (18)

### **HORROR GENRE TASK B**

Now that you have watched the episode and made notes, you need to prepare an answer to the question below:

*“Horror is genre of no artistic merit; it is an exploitative genre that merely manipulates our basic fears and emotions.” to what extent do you agree with this view?*

*You must reference sequences from **at least two** of the films listed above. Your response should be between 750 and 1000 words in length. There are 40 marks available.*

This is a question that is encouraging you to:

- Engage in a structured argument;
- Demonstrate your understanding of a genre;
- Analyse how cinematography and other features of film making influence spectator (audience) responses.

Please find below the criteria by which we shall mark your responses.

<b>Band</b>	<b>AO1 (20 marks)</b> <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of elements of film</i>	<b>AO2 (20 marks)</b> <i>Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to analyse films</i>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>17-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent demonstration of knowledge and understanding of cinematography in relation to one sequence from each of the chosen films.</li> <li>• Excellent knowledge and understanding of possible responses to the films studied.</li> </ul>	<p><b>17-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of cinematography to discuss spectator responses in the chosen films.</li> <li>• Uses excellent points to develop a sophisticated exploration of how far spectator responses are influenced by cinematography.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>13-16 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good demonstration of knowledge and understanding of cinematography in relation to one sequence from each of the chosen films.</li> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of possible responses to the films studied.</li> </ul>	<p><b>13-16 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good application of knowledge and understanding of the importance of cinematography to analyse spectator responses to the chosen films.</li> <li>• Uses good points to develop a detailed exploration of how far spectator responses are influenced by cinematography</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>9-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and understanding of cinematography in relation to one sequence from each of the chosen films.</li> <li>• Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of possible responses to the films studied.</li> </ul>	<p><b>9-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of the importance of cinematography to analyse spectator responses to the chosen films.</li> <li>• Uses satisfactory points to develop a reasonably coherent exploration of how far spectator responses are influenced by cinematography</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>5-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic demonstration of knowledge and understanding of cinematography in relation to one sequence from each of the chosen films.</li> <li>• Basic knowledge and understanding of possible responses to the films studied.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of the importance of cinematography to analyse spectator responses to the chosen films.</li> <li>• Uses basic points to develop a partial consideration of how far spectator responses are influenced by cinematography.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>1-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited demonstration of knowledge and understanding of cinematography in relation to one sequence from each of the chosen films.</li> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of possible responses to in the films studied.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited application of knowledge and understanding of the importance of cinematography to analyse spectator responses to the chosen films.</li> <li>• Uses limited points in an attempt to develop a consideration of how spectator responses are influenced by cinematography.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>0 marks</b> No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.</p>	