Summit Public Schools
Summit, New Jersey
Grade Level: 7/ Content Area: FPPA
Film Studies
Six-week cycle

Overview:

This course in film studies offers seventh-grade students an immersive exploration into the art and language of cinema. Over the span of six weeks, students will delve into three main units, each focusing on a different aspect of filmmaking and analysis.

In the first unit, "Exploring Characters in Film," students will dissect the intricacies of character development, uncovering how filmmakers craft compelling personas to drive narratives forward. Through analysis of iconic characters and creation of their own original characters, students will gain insights into the role of characters in storytelling.

The second unit, "The Art of Storytelling," delves into the foundational principles of narrative construction in film. Students will dissect storytelling techniques, explore various film styles and genres, and examine how cultural and historical contexts shape cinematic narratives.

In the final unit, "Scriptwriting and Film Analysis," students will step into the shoes of screenwriters and critics. They will learn the fundamentals of scriptwriting, analyzing film scripts for structure and thematic elements. Through scriptwriting exercises and film analysis projects, students will sharpen their critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of cinematic storytelling.

Throughout the course, students will engage in interdisciplinary connections, integrating concepts from literature, psychology, visual arts, history, and media studies. They will also explore global perspectives, examining diverse cultural representations in film and the impact of global film movements on storytelling traditions.

By the end of the course, students will not only develop a newfound appreciation for the art of cinema but also hone their analytical skills, creativity, and cultural awareness in the process.

Weeks 1-2: Unit 1: Exploring Characters in Film
Weeks 3-4: Unit 2: The Art of Storytelling
Weeks 5-6: Unit 3: Scriptwriting and Film Analysis

Unit 1: Exploring Characters in Film

Big Ideas: *Course Objectives/Content Statement(s)*

- **Analyze Iconic Characters:**
  - Students will study iconic film characters and analyze their traits, motivations, and development.
  - They will understand the significance of characters in storytelling.
- **Create Original Characters:**
  - Students will invent their own fictional characters, complete with detailed backstories.
  - They will explore character creation and develop unique personalities for their characters.

Essential Questions *What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?*	**Enduring Understandings** *What will students understand about the big ideas?*
1. How do filmmakers use visual and narrative techniques to create and develop compelling characters that resonate with audiences? 2. In what ways do the personalities, motivations, and relationships of characters drive the plot and themes of a film, and how can understanding these elements enhance our appreciation of cinematic storytelling?	• Characters in film are multi-dimensional constructs whose development and interactions serve as essential components in conveying themes, driving plot, and engaging audiences on an emotional level. • The portrayal of characters in film is a deliberate artistic choice influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural context, genre conventions, and the filmmaker's creative vision, which can shape viewers' perceptions and interpretations of the narrative.
Areas of Focus: Proficiencies **(New Jersey Student Learning Standards)**	**Lessons**
Students will: 1.2.8.Cr1a: Generate a variety of ideas, goals and solutions for media artworks using creative processes such as sketching, brainstorming, improvising, and prototyping with increased proficiency, divergent thinking, and opportunity for student choice. 1.2.8.Cr1b: Organize and design artistic ideas for media arts productions. 1.2.8.Cr1c: Critique plans, prototypes and production processes considering purposeful and expressive intent. 1.2.8.Cr2a: Organize and design artistic ideas for media arts productions. 1.2.8.Cr2b: Critique plans, prototypes and production processes considering purposeful and expressive intent. 1.2.8.Cr3a: Experiment with and implement multiple approaches that integrate content and stylistic conventions.	**Week 1: Introduction to Characters** **Objective:** Understand the role of characters in storytelling. **Activities:** • **Character Analysis:** Study iconic film characters and discuss their traits, motivations, and development. • **Create Your Character:** Students invent their own fictional characters, complete with backstories. **Week 2: Character Arcs and Growth** **Objective:** Explore character arcs and how they evolve throughout a film.

1.2.8.Cr3b: Communicate an intentional purpose and meaning utilizing varying point of view and perspective. 1.2.8.Cr3c: Refine and modify artistic choices to reflect an understanding of purpose, narrative structures, composition, audience, and context. 1.2.8.Pr4a: Experiment with and integrate multiple forms, approaches and content to coordinate, produce and implement media artworks that convey purpose and meaning (e.g., narratives, video games, interdisciplinary projects, multimedia theatre). 1.2.8.Pr5a: Develop and demonstrate a variety of artistic, design, technical, and soft skills (e.g., self- initiative, problem solving, collaborative communication) through performing various roles in producing media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr5b: Develop and demonstrate creativity and adaptability, through processes such as testing constraints and divergent solutions, within and through media arts productions. 1.2.8.Pr5c: Develop and demonstrate creativity and adaptability in standard and experimental ways, to construct, achieve assigned purpose, and communicate intent in media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr6a: Analyze and design various presentation formats and tasks in the presentation and/or distribution of media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr6b: Analyze benefits and impacts from presenting media artworks. 1.2.8.Re7a: Compare, contrast and analyze the qualities of and relationships between the components and style in media artworks. 1.2.8.Re7b: Compare, contrast and analyze how various forms, methods and styles in media artworks affect and manage audience experience and create intention when addressing global issues including climate change. 1.2.8.Re8a: Analyze the intent and meanings and context of a variety of media artworks, focusing on intentions, forms, and detect bias, opinion, and stereotypes. 1.2.8.Re9a: Evaluate media art works and production processes at decisive stages, using identified criteria, and considering context and artistic goals. 1.2.8.Cn10a: Access, evaluate and use internal and external resources to inform the creation of media artworks, such as cultural and societal knowledge, research and exemplary works. 1.2.8.Cn10b: Explain and demonstrate how media artworks expand meaning and knowledge and create cultural experiences, such as local and global events.	**Activities:** ● **Character Journals:** Students write journal entries from the perspective of their invented characters, tracking their emotional journey. ● **Film Clips Analysis:** Analyze film clips to identify character growth and transformation.

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Differentiation	**Assessment**
Interdisciplinary Connections ● Literature: Comparing how characters are depicted in film adaptations to their original counterparts in literature, exploring themes and character development across different mediums. ● Psychology: Analyzing character motivations, conflicts, and relationships within the film narrative, and considering psychological theories to understand the complexities of character portrayal. ● Visual Arts: Examining the visual elements of character design such as costume, makeup, and physical appearance, and how these contribute to the audience's understanding of character traits and story dynamics. **Technology Integration** ● Interactive Character Analysis: Utilize digital tools for collaborative character mapping and analysis, enhancing engagement and understanding of character development. ● Virtual Character Interviews: Implement technology to simulate interviews with film characters, fostering critical thinking about character motivations and perspectives. **Media Literacy Integration** ● Analyze how character portrayals in film can perpetuate stereotypes or challenge societal norms, fostering critical thinking about media representations and encouraging students to consider the impact of visual storytelling on audience perceptions. ● Examine how character development in film	**Activity: Analyze Iconic Characters** **Formative Assessment**: Have students complete a character analysis worksheet where they identify and analyze key traits, motivations, and conflicts of iconic film characters. The worksheet could include questions about the character's backstory, personality traits, and how they contribute to the overall themes of the film. Students can then present their analyses to the class or engage in group discussions to compare their findings. **Activity: Create Original Characters** **Formative Assessment:** Ask students to write character biographies or profiles for their original characters, detailing aspects such as their background, personality traits, motivations, and goals. Students can then share their character profiles with peers for feedback, either through peer review sessions or online discussion forums. Additionally, students can present their original characters in a short written narrative or storyboard, allowing for further assessment of their understanding of character development and storytelling techniques.

intersects with marketing strategies and audience reception, prompting discussions about the role of advertising, demographics, and viewer demographics in shaping cinematic narratives and commercial success.

Global Perspectives

- Examine how character archetypes and narrative conventions vary across different cultures and film industries worldwide, fostering appreciation for diverse storytelling traditions and cultural representations in cinema.
- Analyze international films to explore how cultural contexts shape character motivations, societal norms, and thematic elements, promoting understanding and empathy for diverse cultural experiences portrayed in global cinema.

Supports for English Language Learners		
Sensory Supports	**Graphic Supports**	**Interactive Supports**
Real-life objects	Charts	In pairs or partners
Manipulatives	Graphic Organizers	In triands or small groups
Pictures	Tables	In a whole group
Illustrations, diagrams & drawings	Graphs	Using cooperative group
Magazines & Newspapers	Timelines	Structures
Physical activities	Number lines	Internet / Software support
Videos & Film		In the home language
Broadcasts		With mentors
Models & Figures		

Intervention Strategies		
Accommodations	**Interventions**	**Modifications**
Allow for verbal responses	Multi-sensory techniques	Modified tasks/expectations
Repeat/confirm directions	Increase task structure (e.g. directions, checks for understanding, feedback	Differentiated materials
Permit response provided via computer or electronic device	Increase opportunities to engage in active academic responding	Individualized assessment tools based on student need
Audio Books	Utilize pre-reading strategies and activities previews, anticipatory guides, and semantic mapping	Modified assessment grading

Unit 2: The Art of Storytelling	
Big Ideas: *Course Objectives/Content Statement(s)* ● **Analyze Film Styles and Genres:** ○ Students will learn how to analyze film techniques and styles. ○ They will explore historical movements in film, understanding how different styles emerged over time. ● **Genre Exploration:** ○ Students will delve into various film genres (e.g., comedy, drama, sci-fi). ○ They will identify genre-specific characteristics and conventions.	
Essential Questions *What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?*	**Enduring Understandings** *What will students understand about the big ideas?*
1. What are the fundamental components of effective storytelling in film, and how do filmmakers manipulate these elements to engage and captivate their audience? 2. How does the structure of a narrative, including the arrangement of plot points, character arcs, and thematic development, contribute to the overall impact and meaning of a film?	● Effective storytelling in film relies on the strategic integration of elements such as plot structure, character development, visual composition, and thematic resonance to create a cohesive and impactful narrative experience. ● The structure and organization of a film's narrative, including the use of techniques such as foreshadowing, flashback, and parallel storytelling, play a critical role in shaping audience engagement, understanding, and emotional investment in the story being told.
Areas of Focus: Proficiencies **(New Jersey Student Learning Standards)**	**Lessons**
Students will: 1.2.8.Cr1a: Generate a variety of ideas, goals and solutions for media artworks using creative processes such as sketching, brainstorming, improvising, and prototyping with increased proficiency, divergent thinking, and opportunity for student choice. 1.2.8.Cr1b: Organize and design artistic ideas for media arts productions. 1.2.8.Cr1c: Critique plans, prototypes and production processes considering purposeful and expressive intent. 1.2.8.Cr2a: Organize and design artistic ideas for media arts productions. 1.2.8.Cr2b: Critique plans, prototypes and production processes considering purposeful and expressive intent. 1.2.8.Cr3a: Experiment with and implement multiple approaches that integrate content and stylistic conventions.	**Week 1: Elements of Storytelling** **Objective:** Understand the building blocks of a compelling story. **Activities:** ● **Plot Structure:** Introduce the concept of the three-act structure. ● **Storyboarding:** Students create simple storyboards for short scenes. **Week 2: Crafting Engaging Narratives** **Objective:** Learn techniques for creating engaging narratives.

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Differentiation	**Assessment**
Interdisciplinary Connections ● Language Arts: Analyzing narrative techniques shared between literature and film, and practicing creative writing with cinematic elements. ● History and Culture: Examining storytelling across cultures and historical periods, and analyzing how societal contexts influence film narratives. ● Media Studies: Exploring the impact of technology on storytelling, particularly in digital media, and analyzing how advancements affect audience engagement. **Technology Integration** ● Interactive Character Analysis: Utilize digital tools for collaborative character mapping and analysis, enhancing engagement and understanding of character development. ● Virtual Character Interviews: Implement technology to simulate interviews with film characters, fostering critical thinking about character motivations and perspectives. **Media Literacy Integration** ● Explore how narrative structures and storytelling techniques in film influence audience engagement and interpretation, promoting awareness of narrative manipulation and encouraging students to discern between different storytelling methods and their intended effects. ● Investigate the influence of media conglomerates and industry practices on storytelling conventions in film, prompting discussions about media ownership, censorship, and the commercialization of narrative content in the film industry.	**Activity: Analyze Film Styles and Genres** **Formative Assessment:** Assign students to watch a short film clip representing a specific genre or style discussed in class. Then, provide a guided analysis worksheet or graphic organizer for students to identify and analyze elements such as cinematography, editing, sound, and mise-en-scène that contribute to the overall style and mood of the film. Students can then present their analyses to the class, highlighting key observations and discussing how the chosen elements align with the genre or style. **Activity: Genre Exploration** **Formative Assessment:** Divide students into small groups and assign each group a different film genre to explore further. Have students research and analyze examples of films within their assigned genre, focusing on common themes, narrative structures, visual techniques, and audience expectations. As a formative assessment, groups can create presentations or posters summarizing their findings and discussing how the chosen genre has evolved over time. This activity encourages collaborative learning and allows students to deepen their understanding of various film genres through research and analysis.

Global Perspectives

- Investigate how storytelling techniques and narrative structures in film reflect cultural values, historical contexts, and social issues across various regions and filmmaking traditions.
- Explore the influence of global film movements and auteurs on storytelling innovations and cross-cultural exchanges, highlighting the interconnectedness of cinematic storytelling and its impact on global cultural discourse.

Supports for English Language Learners		
Sensory Supports	**Graphic Supports**	**Interactive Supports**
Real-life objects	Charts	In pairs or partners
Manipulatives	Graphic Organizers	In triands or small groups
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Illustrations, diagrams & drawings	Graphs	Using cooperative group
Magazines & Newspapers	Timelines	Structures
Physical activities	Number lines	Internet / Software support
Videos & Film		In the home language
Broadcasts		With mentors
Models & Figures		

Intervention Strategies		
Accommodations	**Interventions**	**Modifications**
Allow for verbal responses	Multi-sensory techniques	Modified tasks/expectations
Repeat/confirm	Increase task	Differentiated

directions	structure (e.g. directions, checks for understanding, feedback	materials
Permit response provided via computer or electronic device	Increase opportunities to engage in active academic responding	Individualized assessment tools based on student need
Audio Books	Utilize pre-reading strategies and activities previews, anticipatory guides, and semantic mapping	Modified assessment grading

Unit 3: Scriptwriting and Film Analysis	
Big Ideas: *Course Objectives/Content Statement(s)* ● **Film Script Analysis** ○ Students will demonstrate proficiency in analyzing film scripts by identifying key elements such as plot structure, character development, and dialogue, through close reading and discussion. ● **Film Script Structure** ○ Students will apply their understanding of scriptwriting techniques by independently crafting a short film script, incorporating learned principles of storytelling, character development, and cinematic language.	
Essential Questions *What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?*	**Enduring Understandings** *What will students understand about the big ideas?*
1. How do the choices made by screenwriters in crafting dialogue, plot progression, and character arcs influence the viewer's interpretation and emotional engagement with a film? 2. What techniques and conventions are employed in film scripts to convey narrative information, evoke specific moods or tones, and ultimately shape the audience's cinematic experience, and how can these elements be analyzed to deepen our understanding of filmmaking as an art form?	● The process of scriptwriting involves careful consideration of storytelling principles, including character motivation, dialogue, pacing, and visual imagery, to effectively translate narrative concepts into a cinematic format. ● Through the analysis of film scripts, students can gain insight into the creative decisions made by screenwriters and filmmakers, as well as develop critical thinking skills to deconstruct and evaluate the effectiveness of storytelling techniques in conveying thematic messages and engaging the audience.
Areas of Focus: Proficiencies (New Jersey Student Learning Standards)	**Lessons**
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approaches that integrate content and stylistic conventions. 1.2.8.Cr3b: Communicate an intentional purpose and meaning utilizing varying point of view and perspective. 1.2.8.Cr3c: Refine and modify artistic choices to reflect an understanding of purpose, narrative structures, composition, audience, and context. 1.2.8.Pr4a: Experiment with and integrate multiple forms, approaches and content to coordinate, produce and implement media artworks that convey purpose and meaning (e.g., narratives, video games, interdisciplinary projects, multimedia theatre). 1.2.8.Pr5a: Develop and demonstrate a variety of artistic, design, technical, and soft skills (e.g., self- initiative, problem solving, collaborative communication) through performing various roles in producing media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr5b: Develop and demonstrate creativity and adaptability, through processes such as testing constraints and divergent solutions, within and through media arts productions. 1.2.8.Pr5c: Develop and demonstrate creativity and adaptability in standard and experimental ways, to construct, achieve assigned purpose, and communicate intent in media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr6a: Analyze and design various presentation formats and tasks in the presentation and/or distribution of media artworks. 1.2.8.Pr6b: Analyze benefits and impacts from presenting media artworks. 1.2.8.Re7a: Compare, contrast and analyze the qualities of and relationships between the components and style in media artworks. 1.2.8.Re7b: Compare, contrast and analyze how various forms, methods and styles in media artworks affect and manage audience experience and create intention when addressing global issues including climate change. 1.2.8.Re8a: Analyze the intent and meanings and context of a variety of media artworks, focusing on intentions, forms, and detect bias, opinion, and stereotypes. 1.2.8.Re9a: Evaluate media art works and production processes at decisive stages, using identified criteria, and considering context and artistic goals. 1.2.8.Cn10a: Access, evaluate and use internal and external resources to inform the creation of media artworks, such as cultural and societal knowledge, research and exemplary works. 1.2.8.Cn10b: Explain and demonstrate how media	films. **Activities:** ● **Scene Breakdown:** ○ Analyze a pivotal scene from a well-known film. ● **Film Review :** ○ Students write a short film review, considering elements like cinematography, acting, and storytelling.

artworks expand meaning and knowledge and create cultural experiences, such as local and global events. 1.2.8.Cn11a: Access, evaluate and use internal and external resources and context to inform the creation of media artworks (e.g., cultural and societal knowledge, research, exemplary works). 1.2.8.Cn11b: Explain and demonstrate how media artworks expand meaning and knowledge, and create cultural experiences (e.g., via local and global events considering fair use and copyright, ethics, media literacy).	
Differentiation	**Assessment**
Interdisciplinary Connections ● Language Arts: Applying principles of narrative structure, dialogue, and characterization from literature to scriptwriting, and analyzing the effectiveness of scriptwriting techniques in conveying story elements. ● Media Studies: Exploring the role of technology in scriptwriting and film production, examining how advancements in digital media have influenced storytelling techniques and distribution platforms. ● Critical Thinking: Developing analytical skills by evaluating film scripts, identifying narrative themes, and deconstructing storytelling techniques, and applying these insights to analyze the cultural and social implications embedded within films. **Technology Integration** ● Scriptwriting Software: Introduce industry-standard tools for formatting and editing scripts, preparing students for professional script development. ● Online Film Critique Platforms: Engage students in online forums for sharing analyses and feedback, enhancing critical thinking and discourse on film. **Media Literacy Integration** ● Analyze how film scripts reflect cultural and societal values, providing insights into prevailing ideologies, power dynamics, and representations of diversity and inclusion in media narratives. ● Explore the relationship between film scripts and	**Activity: Introduction to Scriptwriting** **Formative Assessment:** After providing instruction on scriptwriting principles, assign students to write a short scene or dialogue exchange following specific guidelines discussed in class (e.g., incorporating conflict, character development, setting description). Students can then peer-review each other's scripts using a rubric that assesses elements such as creativity, clarity, and adherence to scriptwriting conventions. Additionally, students can engage in a script read-through or dramatic enactment of their scenes to further assess dialogue flow and character portrayal. **Activity: Film Analysis and Critique** **Formative Assessment:** Provide students with a film clip or short film to analyze and critique based on themes, storytelling techniques, and cinematic elements discussed in class. Students can write a film analysis essay or create a multimedia presentation highlighting their observations and interpretations. As a formative assessment, facilitate a class discussion where students share their analyses and critique, allowing for peer feedback and further exploration of different perspectives on the chosen film. Additionally, students can complete a reflective journal entry discussing their personal insights gained from the film analysis process and areas for further exploration.

audience interpretation, considering how textual analysis and close reading of scripts can deepen understanding of cinematic storytelling and challenge dominant narratives presented in mainstream media.

Global Perspectives

- Analyze scripts from diverse cultural backgrounds to examine how language, dialogue, and storytelling conventions differ across global film industries, enhancing awareness of linguistic and cultural nuances in cinematic narratives.
- Engage with international film criticism and scholarship to broaden perspectives on film analysis methodologies and theoretical frameworks, recognizing the diverse cultural lenses through which films are interpreted and understood globally.

Supports for English Language Learners		
Sensory Supports	**Graphic Supports**	**Interactive Supports**
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Accommodations	**Interventions**	**Modifications**
Allow for verbal responses	Multi-sensory techniques	Modified tasks/expectations
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Course Summative Assessment
In the "Five-Day Film Challenge," students will work in groups to develop a story, write a pitch, demonstrate character development, and write one scene in the form of a script, all within a condensed time frame. This project integrates concepts and assessment criteria from the three course units, providing a comprehensive assessment of students' understanding and application of film studies principles.

Project Components:

Day 1: Story Development and Pitch Writing

- **Brainstorming and Story Development:** Students will generate story ideas and develop one into a cohesive narrative, integrating elements of plot structure and storytelling techniques learned in Unit 2.
- **Pitch Writing:** Each group will craft a pitch for their story, incorporating elements of genre exploration and effective communication of thematic concepts learned in Unit 2.

Day 2: Character Development

- **Character Profiles:** Students will create detailed profiles for the main characters of their story, demonstrating understanding of character development and analysis techniques from Unit 1.
- **Character Interaction:** Groups will outline how their characters' motivations, conflicts, and relationships drive the narrative forward, applying insights gained from Unit 1.

Day 3: Scriptwriting

- **Scene Selection:** Groups will choose one pivotal scene from their story to focus on for the scriptwriting portion of the project, emphasizing effective use of dialogue and visual storytelling techniques from Unit 3.
- **Scriptwriting:** Using the selected scene, students will write a script that effectively conveys character dynamics, plot progression, and thematic elements, applying principles of scriptwriting and film analysis learned in Unit 3.

Day 4: Rehearsal and Feedback

- **Rehearsal:** Groups will rehearse their scene, focusing on character portrayal, dialogue delivery, and scene pacing, integrating feedback received from peers based on Unit 1 and Unit 3 assessment criteria.
- **Peer Feedback:** Students will provide constructive feedback to their peers on the clarity, emotional resonance, and coherence of their scripts and character portrayals, drawing on Unit 1 and Unit 3 formative assessment criteria.

Day 5: Filming and Presentation

- **Filming:** Groups will film their chosen scene, ensuring alignment with the script and effective use of cinematic techniques learned in Unit 2 and Unit 3.
- **Presentation:** Each group will present their filmed scene to the class, providing context on the story and characters, and reflecting on their experience during the "Five-Day Film Challenge," integrating insights gained from all three units.

Assessment Criteria:

- Creativity and Originality of Story Concept (Unit 2)
- Clarity and Persuasiveness of Pitch (Unit 2)
- Depth and Consistency of Character Development (Unit 1)
- Effectiveness of Scene Writing in Conveying Story Elements (Unit 3)
- Collaboration and Contribution within the Group (Across All Units)