

Film Studies Summer Work



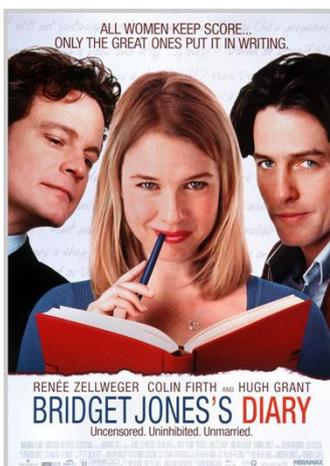
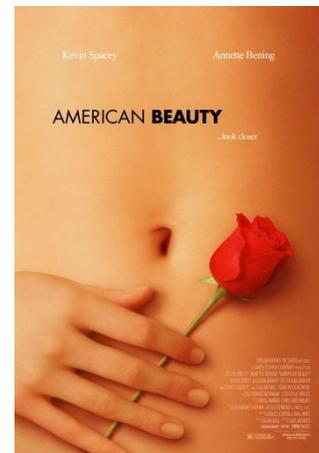
The first few weeks of the Film Studies course will be devoted to learning how to analyse a film at a basic level. We will focus on key elements of film (cinematography, mise-en-scene, sound, editing, lighting, performance) and the ways that films are structured (narrative). We will also consider how spectators respond to film and create meaning through their interaction with the film text.

To facilitate this it is important that all students have shared experiences of film that we can begin to analyse and interpret. We will then be able to start the course immediately with film analysis.

Your summer work is therefore to watch two films that will form the basis for our first few weeks of study.

American Beauty (Sam Mendes, USA 1999)

You will begin your study of film by studying American Beauty. American Beauty won several Oscars and Golden Globes. It is a witty and engaging critique of the American dream, explored through the mid-life crisis of Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey) and the experiences of his family and neighbours. American Beauty is a stylish and complex ensemble piece that deals with some challenging issues. It is the perfect platform for examining a film text and the way audiences respond to it.



Bridget Jones' Diary (Sharon Maguire, UK, 2001)

Based on Helen Fielding's novel, Bridget Jones' Diary tells the story of thirty-something Bridget (Renée Zellweger) who decides to keep a diary of her life as she tries to improve herself and to find love. Our socially awkward yet opinionated heroine smokes too much, drinks too much, eats too much, and tends to be drawn to the wrong man. The film explores the comic love triangle that develops between Bridget, her charming boss (Hugh Grant) and a straight-laced barrister (Colin Firth). This film will form the basis for your exploration of narrative structure, themes, character and messages and values.