



THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY, OKO, KWARA STATE

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

COURSE CODE:

MCM 208

COURSE TITLE:

INTRODUCTION TO FILM CINEMA AND LITERATURE

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LECTURER IN CHARGE:

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Module 1: WHAT IS FILM?

Film is also called a movie or motion picture. Nwanwene (2002) defines film as a series of motionless images projected onto a screen so fast as to create in the mind of anyone watching the screen an impression of continuous motion. Such images are projected by light shining through a corresponding series of images arranged on a continuous band of flexible material.

According to Mamer (2009:3), film is made up of a series of still photographic images. When projected in succession, these images provide the illusion of movement. Each individual photographic image is called a frame. A sequence of frames is called a shot, which is commonly defined as the footage created from the moment the camera is turned on until it is turned off. Despite several styles of films that have specialised approaches, the shot is generally considered the basic building block of a film. The industry standard for projection and shooting is 24 individual frames per second (fps), also known as the frame rate. Nwanwene (2002) explains further that, to understand film, one needs to understand the process of illusion of motion also known as persistence of vision. He states that motion picture photography (an optical mechanical/chemical process) is affected by exposing a series of still images (or frames) in quick succession. When the series of frames are projected, the illusion of motion is achieved. The eye because of the phenomenon known as persistence of vision or retina retention is unable to distinguish the separate images and merges them into a continuous motion.

What is Cinema?

Cinema on the other hand is largely attributed to a movie theatre. Professionally however, cinema refers to the movie industry or the business of making movies. Moura (2012) asserts that cinema, or motion

picture, is the art of moving images; a visual medium that tells stories and exposes reality. This therefore implies that cinemas are moving picture or the process of film making.

Video

Video is usually referred to as the visual part of television. It is something that has been recorded on videotape, especially a movie or music performance. Video is described as a cold medium due to its

clinical interpretation of life. Picture and sound are converted into digital data or analog tape. Projecting video has a noticeably harsh quality than its film counterpart.

Module 2 TYPES OF FILMS

Feature Films

Documentary Films

Avant-garde Films

Feature Films

These films are manipulated, organised and not merely based on reality, but on the subjective imagination of the film director. Feature film producers emphasise aesthetics in the production. The duties and responsibilities of actors are specified and controlled in order to achieve the objectives outlined by the director. The subjective imagination of the director leads to creativity which is meant to impress the audience (Nwanwene, 2002:17). Examples of feature film include:

Action films

Adventure films

Animated films

Comedy films

Epic films

Horror films

Musical dance films

Romantic films

Science fiction films

Documentary Films

Documentary films portray more of reality than subjective imagination. In effect the producers do not introduce lighting so as to deceive the audience. Whatever one sees in the film is exactly how it is in reality.

The producers here explore reality and show real things as they are in real life situation. This means that there is no manipulation of lens and other special effects or false shots and angles (Nwanwene, 2002:17). Although, characters could be used in some cases but the story line is never manipulated. Examples of documentary films include:

- Independence day documentation
- Historical events (such as Civil War, Jazz, Baseball, or World War II, etc.)
- Biographic film
- Well known events
- Concerts
- A compilation film of collected footage from government sources
- An examination of a specific subject area (e.g., nature- or Science-related themes).

The Avant-Garde (AG) Film

Avant-garde (AG) films popularly known as experimental films portray the taboos of the society. The films manipulate things to show reality though what they tend to emphasise is what the society does not cherish - for example pornographic films (Nwanwene, 2002).

According to Moura (2012), experimental films are rare and totally unpopular. Some people may spend their entire lives without ever catching a glimpse of an experimental movie. Most will never sit

through one. As the word “experimental” suggests, this type of movie is trying something new or different. In simple terms, experimental films are incredibly easy to define but quite difficult to understand since most people have no preconception of what they are. Imagine a movie that is neither narrative nor documentary. What remains may be chaos, disorder or incoherence. An amalgam of ideas forced together by the filmmaker without any regards for characters, structure, or theme. The vast

majority of avant-garde films are not screened in theatres, aired on TV, or sold in discs – they are not mainstreamed and have no commercial life whatsoever.

- Pornographic films
- Cult films

Module 3: FUNCTIONS OF FILM

Economic Functions

Political Functions

Cultural Functions

Social Functions

Economic Functions

Film is a source of income for government and individuals. Government gets an income through licensing of films and value added tax, while individuals get their money through acting, distribution and marketing.

Film generates employment opportunities for the teeming population of the country. Individuals are employed at various stages of film production. There are a lot of careers in the film industry.

Political Functions

Film can be used as political tool for laundering the image of the country. Film is also a powerful tool of hegemony among countries.

Government can use film during mass mobilisation and orientation programmes. Films influence opinions and mobilise people for development project. For instance, electioneering, health care campaigns, HIV stigma eradication etc. Film makers are people who come out with ideas about something they want to say or something they want to tell someone. Films can also be used for propaganda.

Cultural Functions

Film can be a potent tool for showcasing rich cultural heritage of a nation. Film is an important tool in building cultural institutions and reinforcing cultural pride. Film could be used to heal the psychological wounds created by slavery and colonialism and to provide moral upliftment. Film reflects culture and also serves as an avenue for cultural preservation. Most films depict Nigerian culture or that of a particular ethnic group thereby inculcating and preserving culture from one

generation to another. The uses of cinema for cultural projection are very important because 'the functioning of every human body is moulded by the culture within which the individual is born and reared.

Social Functions

Film is a means of socialisation in the society. That is the process an experience that helps the individual to become sensitive to the expectation of other members of the society, their values and culture.

Some other functions of films

1. Film is a powerful form of communication. Through sound and images filmmakers make use of technical, symbolic, audio and written codes to convey strong messages. These themes are portrayed in all types of films such as documentaries, features and commercials. Thus, through films we can communicate ideas, morals, ethics, facts, events etc effectively.
2. Every film is a lesson meant to be learnt. As such every story, every image, or every sound has an impact on the society, either visually and/or emotionally.
3. Film serves as entertainment and relaxation for people. The function of a film is to provoke thought as well as feeling and to provide an experience that transcends the time spent actually sitting in the theatre.
4. Film is a powerful vehicle of education. Most people learn manners, eating habits, health education, scientific innovation etc. from films.
5. Through films people's history can be documented.
6. Films make great writings accessible to many who don't read.
7. Films are or can be an art form in themselves.
8. Film is a reflection of society, both present and past. As such, movies are stories.

Module 4: Object Placement Elements

Under this we have the following:

Image: All filmmaking uses a light capture/recording device. It is then projected upon a screen. In theatres powerful lamps are used to project the image through a focusing lens. In television a vacuum tube projects lines of electrons upon a phosphor coated screen. Although the image is a recording of captured light the aesthetics of what we are viewing is still determined by the use of the basic elements and principles of static, fine art.

Time: Film has two types of time. The first is the actual length or duration of the film, for example, a run time of 90 minutes. The other type of time is called diegetic time, or time that is the result of the story

or narrative. The story may span for a few minutes, a few hours, a few days, a few years or a lifetime although it may only take 90 minutes to tell the story through the film. Diegetic time also works with

simultaneous actions, using a technique called cross cutting. Film makers can quicken time or retard time. Often, stories are told in short sections of real time edited together in sequence. Anything unimportant to the story is omitted.

Motion: Motion pictures, whether video or film, give the illusion of motion by the movement of many still frames through a projector. Because of a physical property of the eye and brain called the persistence of vision' you are able to perceive the illusion of motion using motion picture technology. This illusion of motion distinguishes motion picture photography from still photography. Frame rates of motion pictures are 24 frames per second. That means that the camera records 24 shots per second and it is played back at the same rate. If it is played too quickly the motion appears to quicken and if it is played back too slowly then it appears slow. If you were to shoot at twice the speed, say 48 frames per second, you would achieve a slow motion look when the film is played back at 24 frames per second. The video frame rate is 29.92 frames per second, however for simplicity sake we will refer to the rate as 30 frames per second.

Sound: Sound is not essential to a motion picture however sound is so common in film that it is included as an essential element. For the first 30 years of cinema motion pictures did not have sound tracks; sound technology evolved more slowly than the motion picture technology.

Since films had no sound track, an organist, pianist or small ensemble would accompany the film. The score was played live. Now sound is an integral part of the film and it has been since 1928. For a few years, sound technology, since it lagged behind photo technology, forced cinematographers to return to more primitive filming styles. Many of the camera motions had to be abandoned because the microphones could not record sound at a distance. Most films now include dialogue recorded on the sound stage, sound effects that are included during post production, music scores, narrations and voice overs. The explosions, gunshots, car crash sounds, wind, rain, and thousands of other sounds are all added during post production by sound designers.

Lighting: When we record using photographic instruments we record light. We do not record objects, people, buildings or anything at all – we record light. Image is what the mind does to the light once it is recorded and played back. Cinematographers strive to have control over lighting conditions. The most experienced ones have full control over lighting and work with the director to create mood and effect as well as consistent continuity throughout the film. Like sound technology, lighting is expensive and requires knowledge to use it effectively.

Sequence: After filming is complete, the editing process begins. The editor and director together will decide the length and order of the shots and piece them together to create a sequence. The sequence tells the story using the visual language of film, or film syntax. We have a specific way of viewing shots that makes the most sense to us as an audience. The most common way of ordering and arranging shots is called continuity editing.

Composition: Composition is the use of the visual elements and principles to create a frame that is aesthetically interesting, attention holding, and consistent with overall continuity. Composition is the placement of the shapes within the frame that enhance the film reality or "mise en scene". Because the frame has a fixed boundary, composition will happen automatically. However, good composition must be made to happen. It is rare that it happens by accident. Directors work with

set designers, costume designers, lighting technicians and cinematographers to create the best possible placement of "filmic" objects. Actors must be blocked (placed) carefully in each shot so they can be clearly seen by the audience. Choose a film you have seen many times and pause on a frame. Look carefully at how the director has placed the actors and objects in the shot. All the actors were carefully placed on their "mark."

Module 5: Camera Shot Elements

Here, we have the following shots as provided by Hayward (1996) and Nwanwene (2002).

Extreme close-up: The subject is much larger than the frame; provides more detail than a close-up.

1. Close-up: The subject is as large as or larger than the frame; reveals much detail.
2. Medium close-up: The subject is closer than a medium shot and further than a close-up.
3. Medium shot: A camera shot from a medium distance, usually showing the characters from the waist up; allows the audience to see body language, but not as much facial expression.
4. Long shot: A camera shot from a great distance, usually showing the characters as very small in comparison to their surroundings.
5. Wide shot (also called establishing shot): The first shot of a new scene and establishes location.
6. Low angle: A low angle places camera below the character. This exaggerates the importance of the subject, making that character appear larger than life.
7. Dutch angle (also called canted angle or canted shot): This shot is tilted and is used when something crazy is about to happen.
8. High angle (also called bird's-eye view): The camera looks down at a character.

THE FILM PRODUCTION PROCESS

Development Stage

Pre-Production Stage

Production Stage

Post Production Stage

Distribution

Development Stage

The development stage is the first step in film production. This has to do with developing an idea or the ideation as to why the film project will be embarked upon. The set goals and objectives of the film are clearly stated at this stage.

Pre-Production Stage

This is the preparation phase of the project. Every scene, every shot, every logistical detail is planned out. It is impossible to anticipate everything that might happen, and improvisation will be required in

production but the more variables you can eliminate in pre-production, the more creative freedom you will have in production. This stage of film production usually begins with a script.

The film maker or film

producer also prepares a budget for the film estimated cost and arranges for financing. During the pre-production stage, locations (that is sites where the film will be shot) are scouted. Other activities involved in this stage include preparation for: Writing your script (a general term for a written work detailing story, setting, and dialogue).

Drawing storyboards for your film: A sequence of rough sketches, created by an illustrator to communicate major changes of action or plot in a scene.

Funding for your film: Once you've finished your script and storyboards, you may want to send them off to certain companies to try and get financing for your film, allowing you to hire professional equipment or people.

Presentation is very important. If you can, get an illustrator to draw some of your key storyboards.

Finding cast and crew for your film: Cast and crew are obviously vital if you are to make your film successfully. There are a number of resources available to find the people you need. Finding the right person for your film is tricky. You must devote a lot of time towards finding the right actor for your role. Don't just hire the first person you meet (unless of course you have auditioned everyone else and they are less suited to the role).

Scouting for locations: This is the site for your film shooting. Filming which occurs at a place not constructed specifically for the production is said to be "on location". This is usually outdoors, at a well-known location, or a real place which suffices.

Filming in any location will require plenty of space for cast and crew, as well as moderately easy accessibility for all the camera/sound and lighting equipment.

Preparing a shooting script: This is the script from which a film is made. It contains scenes placed in order of filming. Also, it usually contains technical notes and/or drawings. A shooting script is essentially a script that breaks the film into scenes, placed in sequence as they are to be filmed on set/location.

These can include any sketches or photographs of locations, include ideas you may wish to film in as well as scene breakdowns, types of shot and technical drawings.

Organising a schedule: Your schedule is to accompany your shooting script.

A schedule gives you control over the day-to-day shooting of the film. You can allocate how much time you feel is needed for each shot, by looking at your storyboards and shooting script

simultaneously. Scheduling will certainly test your patience. You will need to make countless calls and send countless e-mails to make sure all your cast and crew are available on the days you want to shoot. If one person can't make it, then you will need to re-organise the whole day again.

□ Writing and distributing call sheets: A call sheet is a list of which cast should arrive for make-up, what time actors/crew are due on set, what scenes they are in and what special requirements (if any) are needed. It is essentially a daily breakdown of the shoot. You should also include pick-up times and locations if you have arranged transport.

□ Equipment for filming: The range of digital video equipment varies greatly.

□ Depending on your budget, you have different options available to you. When buying a camera it is worthwhile getting additional extras; buying an extra battery is incredibly useful for outdoor filming and having camera equipment such as tripods or monopods available to you help with the filming process.

□ Lighting: For indoor filming, you are going to need lighting. Do not underestimate the importance of lighting. It can make all the difference to a shot being the best you have filmed, or ending up on the cutting room floor. (i.e not appearing in the final cut of the film). Scenes or shots are usually dropped because of time constraints or an error in the filming process.

Production Stage

Production is fairly self-explanatory and the phase most people are familiar with. It is the execution of carefully crafted plans made in pre- production and designed in development stages. Nwanwene (2002) asserts that, production stage begins when the camera rolls. During production, film footage is sent to the laboratory for processing. The footage that comes back from the laboratory is called rushes or dailies

because on large production it is rushed back and viewed every day. Rushes are usually work print that is a protection copy of the original film (that is the film which actually went through the camera)

Post Production Stage

Post production is also a reasonably familiar term for most. However, Post Production is not limited to editing. Editing is only the first step in the post production process. Sound design and music are critical to the success of the movie and is, in some ways, more important than the image. Colour correction, visual effects and titling are all essential elements as well and easily within reach of the independent producer.

Distribution

This is a part that really matters. This is where we actually get our projects in front of an audience. If you are a professional, this is where you make all of your money. Distribution is the most rewarding phase of

the process but also the most difficult for many. It can be hard to put your work in front of others without knowing how they will react. It is difficult trying to get attention in a media overloaded world. It is not impossible and those that do get their works out there reap the rewards.

Module 7: FILM PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Above-the-line Personnel

Below-the-line Personnel

Above-the-line Personnel

We have the following personnel under this category of film production:

i. Executive Producer – He is the owner of the film project and as such, the ultimate authority for the project. Sometimes the executive producer is merely the money or the “bank” behind the project and has very little creative input or interest in the project. The main interest is managerial concern for a financially profitable project. Executive producers usually hire a team of qualified

producers, directors and writers to take care of the creative aspects of the film project. If you were having a house

built for you, you would be considered the executive producer since you would have the ultimate authority over whom you hire as your architect, general contractor, and subcontractors, and you are also responsible for paying all of the wages for the workers as well as all the bills for all of the materials to build the house.

Executive producers do not belong to any unions or professional guilds because they are management.

ii. Producer: He is hired by the executive producer to be in charge of the creative quality of the film project. The producer is the team captain who makes final decisions about all aspects of your project from beginning to end. The producer is usually responsible for assigning jobs to crew members and coordinating the writing and production crews.

iii. Associate/Assistant Producer (AP) – He assists the producer in any manner needed. Some producers have a lot of responsibility in coordinating the creative aspects of the show, while other AP's

are merely glorified secretaries that assist in coordinating schedules, telephones, and contracts in non-creative, clerical roles.

Director (DGA) – He is hired by the producer or executive producer to be in charge of coordinating the daily responsibilities on the set for the shooting of the actual film. The director is the person who oversees the details of filming. Perhaps more than anyone else in the crew, the director will keep track of the film's progress and influence the film's look and feel through camera work and set design. The director is responsible for:

- Setting up camera angles and movement;
- Lighting directions;
- Overseeing rehearsals and the final recording. The director's role is similar in nature to that of the general contractor who is in charge of directing at the construction site –the masons,

carpenters, plumbers, and electricians who will actually build your house. Although in movie or film production the director is primarily responsible for coaching or getting the performance out of the actors.

iv. Actors – These are referred to in the film industry as “talent” and are primarily responsible for supplying the dialogue and visual action in front of the camera for the film. In fact, anyone whose voice or body appears on camera is considered “talent”. Actors traditionally take their orders from the director (except for some actors who are big enough in the business to tell the director what to do). They are responsible for:

- Memorising their lines and cues; Writer– The writer or writers create the film’s script. They are also responsible for making changes and improvements as shooting progresses. Writers are primarily responsible for writing the script or teleplay which contains the film’s dialogue or spoken lines.

vi. Music Director–He is primarily responsible for composing and/or arranging accompanying music for the film project. Although, in most cases the film’s theme song is usually written by another composer, a film’s music director is primarily responsible for composing and arranging the film’s music scores

and bumpers.

vii. Production Assistant (PA) –He assists just about anyone during a production. Again, a PA can serve a very important role in some productions, or merely perform menial tasks such as running errands, photocopying scripts, or making deliveries all over town. Depending on the production and the particular

producer for whom the PA works, the job is sometimes an above- the-line position with a good salary.

Below-the-line Personnel

e have the following personnel under this category of film production: i. Assistant Director (AD) – He assists the director in the control room by readying camera shots, timing scripts, and coordinating

cues or on the set by coordinating the extras in the scene. Becoming an AD is not a stepping stone to becoming a director. AD's are specifically trained to work with extras and not actors.

Several AD's usually assists a director on films that are shot on location.

ii. Technical Director (TD) – He executes the director's commands by selecting and mixing various cameras and video sources on the switcher (SEG) to go out over-the-air or to the master video tape recorder (VTR). The TD performs the fades, dissolves, cuts, keys, and electronic special effects such as wipes, chroma keys, and DVE that are used to electronically edit and combine the various video sources for a show.

iii. Camera Operator – Also known as the cinematographer. He is primarily responsible for framing the shot, focusing the shot, zooming in or out, and performing any camera moves on-the-air
Audio Technician – He or she is primarily responsible for making, mixing, and sweetening the audio for the film.

ii. Character Generator (CG) - Primarily responsible for operating the CG or Chyron which produces the electronic titles and graphics used in a film such as the roll credits at the end of a film.

iii. Video Editor - Is primarily responsible for electronically editing on video tape.

iv. Video Engineer- Primarily responsible for maintenance and repair of all equipment used in production.

iv. Floor Manager/Stage Director (DGA) - Primarily responsible for coordinating the action on the set or stage by relaying the director's commands to the crew and talent via hand signals.

v. Grip (Stage Hand)- Primarily responsible for moving and erecting scenery, flats and props on the set.

vi. Gaffer (Electrician) - Primarily responsible for handling lighting instruments, dimmers, cables, generators, and other electrical equipment. Just as a gaffer is not allowed to touch scenery or props, a grip is not allowed to touch any lighting equipment.

vii. Unit Manager- Is primarily responsible for coordinating the logistical aspects for support services of the production such as transportation, food, lodging, location clearances, union contracts, etc.

viii. Runner - Primarily responsible for running errands and making tape and script deliveries.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Completion of the course "Film, Cinema, and Literature" includes the prerequisite of producing at least one movie. This requirement aims to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application, ensuring students gain hands-on experience in the creation and execution of cinematic works. By successfully fulfilling this criterion, students demonstrate proficiency in translating literary concepts into visual storytelling, thereby enhancing their understanding and appreciation of film as an art form. This practical endeavor equips students with essential skills and prepares them for future endeavors in the realms of filmmaking, media production, and literary adaptation.