

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

**Unit code:** D7MC 35

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is about examining the importance that narrative structures and techniques play in engaging, directing and maintaining reader/audience involvement. The first two Outcomes examine narrative techniques in relation to fiction and film respectively, while the third Outcome considers the technical, artistic and commercial factors involved in the process of transforming fiction narratives into film.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Analyse literary texts in terms of narrative techniques
2. Analyse film narrative in terms of cinematic codes and techniques
3. Analyse the means by which literary narrative is transformed into film

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8))

*SCQF (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) brings Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels ranging from SQA Access 1 to doctorates. The SCQF includes degrees; HNC/Ds; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. Each SQA Unit is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at a specific level. 1 SCQF point = 10 hours of learning. HN candidates are normally expected to input a further number of hours, matched to the credit value of the Unit, of non-contact time or candidate-led effort to consolidate and reinforce learning.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre, however it would be beneficial if the candidate had competence in one of the following:

- National Unit EE3T 12 (7110055) *Communication* (NC)
- National Unit E9X8 12 *Literature 1*
- Higher *English and Communication* or its component Units
- Higher *Media Studies* or its component Units

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is taught as part of a group award it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

## **Higher National Unit specification: General information for centres (cont)**

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

**Assessment:** The three Outcomes will be best delivered and assessed in chronological order, using structured questions for Outcomes 1 and 2 with an essay question for Outcome 3. It is strongly recommended that the potential to integrate assessment material from Outcomes 1 and 2 be considered as a focus for the comparative essay at Outcome 3.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Analyse literary texts in terms of narrative techniques

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Distinguishing between story and narrative structure
- Narrative structure; enigma structure; short and long term enigmas; conflict development to crisis, narrative climax and resolution
- Narrative patterns; equilibrium, disruption, closure
- Reader involvement strategies: omniscient and involved narrators; point of view
- Evaluating representations of character and setting in relation to theme and ideology of text
- Genre factors

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- distinguish clearly plot and narrative structure
- explain the narrative structure of given text supported by detailed reference to the text
- explain the contribution of selected examples of language and literary technique to narrative construction and development
- show how representations of character and setting relate to theme and ideology in given text
- explain genre or key generic influences.

The candidate should provide written or oral evidence in the form of answers to a set of questions. Written responses should total approximately 1000 words while oral responses should be in the form of a presentation lasting approximately ten minutes. The assessment should be open-book, with each candidate allowed access to his/her own notes. Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

### **Assessment guidelines**

The candidates should be presented with a series of questions to prompt his/her response to texts, one of which should belong to a popular literary genre.

### **Outcome 2**

Analyse film narrative in terms of cinematic codes and techniques

### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Conventional (aka ‘Classic Hollywood narrative’)
- Non-conventional narrative
- Editing
- Point of view
- Mise en scene
- Basic semiotic analysis
- The role of dialogue
- Sound effects
- Forms of music in film – inside/outside narrative
- Thematic concerns
- Analysis of Ideology in film
- The influence of genre
- Character
- Setting

### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- outline the narrative framework of a given film supported by detailed references to the film narrative
- clearly explain how key cinematic codes have been employed
- explain the contribution of key audio codes in the development of film narrative
- effectively summarise the contribution that representations of character and setting have made to thematic development and ideology of given film
- relate overall analysis of narrative to genre.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

The candidate should provide written evidence in the form of a series of answers totalling a minimum of 750 words. The assessment should be open-book, with each candidate allowed access to his/her own notes. Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Candidates should be encouraged to use terminology learned in Outcome 1, added to which will now be key terminology such as 'editing', 'shots', 'point of view' and 'mise en scene'. Appropriate application of such basic terminology will be important in expressing critical knowledge of the visual narrative techniques and audience involvement strategies employed by film makers.

### **Outcome 3**

Analyse the means by which literary narrative is transformed into film

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Differences between film and fiction narrative due to different codes of presentation
- Technical factors affecting the translation of fiction narratives into film narratives
- Non-technical factors affecting the style and content of film versions of literary texts, such as casting, marketing considerations, and the audience widening potential of film medium
- Factors affecting the translation of character and setting from fiction to film – representational practices
- Genre considerations in film making

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need written evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- compare the narrative structure of a literary text with its film version
- identify significant differences between the versions
- evaluate the extent to which these differences may be due to the technical codes of the film medium
- demonstrate how representations of character and setting in original literary text have been translated into film
- evaluate the translation of stated central themes and ideas from print to film medium
- evaluate the extent to which differences in the film version may be due to genre and/or marketing considerations.

The extended response should be a minimum of 1000 words.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

### **Assessment guidelines**

#### **Extended response to a printed text that has been translated into film**

Appropriate texts should be offered to candidates by the assessor. Candidates may choose to analyse the film version of a fiction text studied for Outcome 1.

In designing the assessment instrument the assessor should devise questions which would reflect each of the evidence requirements thus guiding the candidate to a comprehensive response.

---

### **Administrative Information**

**Unit code:** D7MC 35

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

**Superclass category:** KC

**Date of publication:** October 2001

**Source:** SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2001

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50 (minimum order £5.00).

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Narrative in Fiction and Film

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

In two of the Outcomes the content will be the application of critical analysis to narrative. A number of narrative extracts and complete texts will be examined and discussed, applying a systematic form of analysis. This will be based upon an understanding of the structure of classic realist texts, which follow a predictable, if often complex structural logic. Through systematic and consistent forms of analysis candidates initially will develop reliable skills of narrative analysis within two separate media contexts: in print fiction and film. Finally they will demonstrate their grasp of narrative construction in the evaluation of a text that has been translated from printed fiction into film, showing appreciation of the similarities, but applying knowledge in their analysis of the way that the demands of film are influenced both by technical and non-technical factors which inevitably alter the original text.

Semiotic analysis will be an important aspect of the focus of Outcome 2, as will other codes of film language such as editing and point of view. The context of Outcome 2 will also take account of narrative development factors related to mass audience and other major aspects of film exhibition. These also need to be considered within the context of translation from printed fiction to film narrative in Outcome 3.

In Outcome 2 an assessment could reflect evidence requirements as follows:

Compare and contrast the film and fiction versions of one of the following:

YYY or XXX

In your essay topic the following paragraphs or sections should be developed:

1. Giving a brief generic outline of the original text and evaluating the effectiveness with which this has been translated into film
2. Comparing the narrative structures of film and fiction versions
3. Comparing and contrasting variations in representational practices involving characters, setting, events and/or theme.
4. Suggesting how differences in meaning, ideas, themes, issues etc between the two versions are due to technical or other considerations.

The systematic analysis of narrative offered by HN Unit D7MC 35 *Narrative in Fiction and Film* will be a useful complementary option to the core HN Unit D7LR 34 *Writing for the Media*.





## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

**Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

If HN Unit D7MA 34: *Literature Close Reading Skills* were to precede this Unit and HN Unit D7M9 34 *Critical Analysis of Texts* were to follow at a later point this would give helpful support to candidates wishing to progress English, Film and Television and Media Studies degree applications.

Texts studied in HN Unit D7MA 34 *Close Reading Skills* and HN Unit D7M9 35 *Critical Analysis of Texts* could also be studied in this Unit. One text should belong to a popular literary genre.

A wide selection of film extracts will have been studied initially to establish the technical codes and applications required for analysis. This will have been followed by the study of several complete film sequences, which will allow reinforcement of film code discussion, as well as the development of theories of film narrative construction. It is anticipated that at least one complete film narrative be then viewed and analysed. Films of any length may be used, and due to time constraints it is possible that assessors may use short films for both formative and summative assessment as well as longer length features.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

It may be best to select films with strong representational content, films belonging to straightforward genre categories for example. For a response to meet the basic standards of the instrument of assessment it will be necessary to show character representation over two or three scenes from different stages in the narrative, and it would be useful to build such advice into the instrument of assessment. On the other hand mixed genre films will prove a stimulating subject for some other candidates who may find the genre spotting approach to the assessment both enriching and enjoyable.

### **Open learning**

Subject to copyright this Unit is suitable for open and distance learning. Film materials in particular may be subject to copyright clearance; however suitable materials are available from BFI and “off air” materials may be available from television.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 — publication code A1030).

### **Special needs**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs and Candidates for whom English is an Additional Language* (SQA, 2000).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title:** Narrative in Fiction and Film

Narrative is a word commonly used in discussion of novels, films and entertainment media in general. The story-telling process is enjoyed by most of us whether we are the narrators or the consumers.

When you go more deeply into analysing these stories, you can apply the concept of narrative to enable us to be critical and detached as well as appreciative. What will quickly be apparent is that enjoying the written word and viewing a film are very different experiences, although many aspects are shared.

By comparing the narrative devices used by two different media of communication – literature and film – you will note the way that different codes of communication must be applied in different media if the objectives of narrative structures are to be achieved, and highlight the kinds of changes that must be made when a “narrative” is translated from one medium into another.

This Unit will be particularly good preparation if you wish to progress to further courses in English, Film and Television Studies.

There are three Outcomes. The first covers fiction narratives. Popular fiction entertains millions of people and reaches many more when these narratives are turned into television series and/or films. The Unit looks closely at the techniques of an effective fiction narrative. The second Outcome examines film narratives and the third Outcome considers fiction narratives as they translate into the medium of film.

Assessment of Outcomes 1 and 2 will be by structured questions with a comparative assignment for Outcome 3.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Analyse literary texts in terms of narrative techniques
2. Analyse film narrative in terms of cinematic codes and techniques
3. Analyse the means by which literary narrative is transformed into film