

Glossary

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) and E.T. Extra-Terrestrial (1982)– Genre, Narrative & Context

Component 1 - Section A: US Film Comparative Study

Term	Definition
Box office	The financial success or failure of a movie measured by the total value of ticket sales.
Auteur	A filmmaker whose individual style and complete control over all elements of production give a film its personal and unique stamp.
Genre	The categorization of films into stylistic groups based on shared characteristics, typically including shared ways of using iconography, characters, visual style (aesthetic), narrative, themes & issues and setting.
Science fiction	fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets.
Convention	The established characteristics and key elements that films in a specific genre use.
Blockbuster	Any film that takes over 100 million dollars at the American box office. They usually have huge production and marketing budgets.
Cold War	The non-violent conflict between the US and the former USSR after 1945 that would last until 1990.
Communism	A system of social organization in which all property is owned by the community and each person contributes and receives according to their ability and needs.
Multiplex	a large movie theater building that has several separate movie theaters inside it.
High-concept films	Movies with simple ideas at their heart that could be pitched in one or two sentences making them easily marketable.
Re-boot	To discard all continuity in an established series in order to recreate its characters, timeline and back story from the beginning.
Film budget	The money available to make a film.
Major film studio	A production and film distributor that releases a substantial number of films annually, and consistently commands a significant share of box office revenue in many markets. The current major film studios operating in Hollywood are: Warner Brothers, 20 th Century Fox, Paramount, Universal Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Walt Disney Studios.
Hays Codes	a set of industry guidelines for the self-censorship of content that was applied to most motion pictures released by major studios in the United States from 1934 to 1968.
Superpower	A country with a dominant position in international relations that has the power to exert influence on a global scale. This is done through the combined means of technological, cultural, military and economic strength, as well as diplomatic influence.
Breadwinner	a person who earns money to support their family, typically the sole one.
Latch key kid	a child who is at home without adult supervision for some part of the day, especially after school until a parent returns from work.
Republican Party	One of the main US political parties (the other being democratic), favouring a right-wing (traditional) stance, limited central government and tough foreign policy. Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower was in office from 1953-1961 and Ronald Reagan was in office from 1981-1989. In hindsight, Eisenhower had a less intense Republican administration compared to Reagan in the 1980s.
Conservative views	Seek to uphold traditional family structures and social values. Religious conservatives typically oppose abortion, LGBT behavior (or, in certain cases, identity), drug use, and sexual activity outside of marriage.
American Dream	The idea that every person has the freedom and opportunity to succeed and attain a better life.
Paradox	A situation where two contradictory ideas exist at the same time. For example, in the 1950s, the white picket fence American Dream contradicts with the segregation in society and fear of communism.
Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) (1991)	An agreement made between the US (led by Ronald Reagan) and the USSR (led by Gorbachev) which helped to gradually bring the Cold War to an end in 1991.
Nuclear family	A family unit that includes two married parents of opposite genders and their children living in the same residence.
Zeitgeist	The spirit of the time; general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of a particular period of time.
Verisimilitude	Establishing the truth and reality of a fictional world, and its believability, successfully suspending a spectator's disbelief.
Time lapse photography	A way of filming that appears to make slow action happen quickly. For example, the cloud background in the opening scene of IOTBS.
Film noir	A cinematic term used primarily to describe stylized Hollywood crime dramas, particularly those that emphasize cynical attitudes and motivations and utilising highly stylised chiaroscuro lighting and dark settings.

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Back projection	A technique in which pre-recorded footage is projected onto a screen in the background of a shot while the main action, such as a character driving, running and jumping, is to simplify effects by avoiding the use of expensive stunts or scenery, is filmed in the foreground.
Lens flare	An effect that occurs when a strong source of light (generally the sun in landscape photography) hits the lens.
Continuity editing	A film and video editing technique that combines shots into a sequence to create a consistent narrative.
Chiaroscuro	an effect of contrasted light and shadow.
Subgenre	A smaller category of film that fits within a larger genre. For instance, the subgenre within science fiction that <i>IOTBS</i> and <i>E.T.</i> belongs to is 'alien invasion'.
Allegory	a storytelling technique used to convey something symbolic to the audience.
Credit	Credit, in a financial context, is the ability to borrow money or access goods or services with the understanding that you will repay the value later, usually with interest.
Xenophobia	Fear of the unknown.