

TOPIC OF A COMPETITION PROMOTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Topic: How Films Think: Meaning-Making Beyond Dialogue in Cinema

Goal: To investigate how cinema communicates ideas and experiences through specifically cinematic means—image, framing, montage, sound, silence, rhythm, and point of view—and to examine whether a film can “think” in ways that cannot be reduced to verbal statements or narrative content.

Short description (max. 2000 characters):

Films communicate through dialogue and narrative, but much of what makes cinema distinctive happens without being explicitly said. A camera position can establish a moral perspective; editing can create a relationship that exists in neither individual shot; silence can communicate more than dialogue; changes in rhythm, sound, or point of view can alter the meaning of an apparently simple event.

This project will examine the idea that cinematic form does not merely illustrate a story but actively produces meaning. The student will select a small number of films, scenes, or directors and analyse how cinematic techniques shape what the viewer understands, feels, or notices.

The theoretical foundation can begin with accessible works in film studies such as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson’s *Film Art: An Introduction*, André Bazin’s writings on cinema, and selected texts from philosophy of film. More demanding theoretical perspectives can be introduced depending on the student’s chosen direction.

Possible questions include: Can a film express an idea that could not be communicated equally well in words? Does the camera merely show events, or does it establish a particular way of seeing them? How do montage, sound, silence, and framing participate in interpretation?

The project leaves the choice of films open. Its central problem is broader: is cinema simply a medium for representing thought, or can cinematic form itself become a mode of thinking?

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