The comparative study requires the exploration of one film from the Classical Hollywood period and one from what is generally referred to as New Hollywood. There will be clear points of comparison suggested by the institutional and production contexts of the films: films in the 1940s and 1950s were produced during the Hollywood studio era and its immediate aftermath and effectively established the 'Classical Hollywood style'. The films produced between the later 1960s and later 1980s can all be seen in terms of 'New Hollywood', where a new generation of directors began to show new influences, especially from European cinema. All films are characterised by directors who may be considered auteurs – sometimes working with other key filmmaking figures. This enables learners to apply a critical approach to the films based on the idea of the auteur.

Building on this contrast in institutional context, the study considers more generally how contexts are reflected in film, including the contrasting social contexts of the two groups of films, how knowledge of contexts increases understanding and how films generate meanings and responses. Learners will thus explore the relationship between contexts and films through considering key elements of film (cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing,
sound and performance), the structural elements of film (narrative construction and, where relevant, genre), aesthetic and representation issues.

Vertigo is a 1958 American film noir psychological thriller film directed and produced by Alfred Hitchcock. The story was based on the 1954 novel *D'entre les morts (From Among the Dead)* by Boileau-Narcejac. The screenplay was written by Alec Coppel and Samuel A. Taylor.

The film stars James Stewart as former police detective John "Scottie" Ferguson. Scottie is forced into early retirement because an incident in the line of duty has caused him to develop acrophobia (an extreme fear of heights) and vertigo (a false sense of rotational movement). Scottie is hired by an acquaintance, Gavin Elster, as a private investigator to follow Gavin's wife Madeleine (Kim Novak), who is behaving strangely.

Vertigo received mixed reviews upon initial release, but is now often cited as a classic Hitchcock film and one of the defining works of his career. In 1989, Vertigo was recognized as a "culturally, historically and aesthetically significant" film by the United States Library of Congress and selected for preservation in the National Film Registry in the first year of the registry's voting.

Vertigo was voted in first place in *Sight & Sound*'s 2012 poll of the greatest films of all time, both in the crime genre and in general, displacing Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* from the position it had occupied since 1962. Commenting upon the 2012 results, the magazine's editor Nick James said that *Vertigo was "the ultimate critics' film. It is a dream-like film about people who are not sure who they are but who are busy reconstructing themselves"*
and each other to fit a kind of cinema ideal of the ideal soul-mate." In recent years, critics have noted that the featuring of James Stewart as a character who becomes obsessive and disturbed was a daring choice of casting that enhances the film's unconventionality and effectiveness as suspense, since Stewart had been known to audiences as an actor of warm-hearted and sympathetic roles.

Scottie has just rescued Madeleine from drowning. What does this shot suggest about how men and women were often represented in films of the 1950s (social context)?

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Director Alfred Hitchcock’s heroines are often: sexual, mysterious and reserved. How does Madeleine’s behaviour in this scene conform to the definition of a “Hitchcock blonde”?
James Stewart was a star of the 1950s famous for playing All-American good guys. How does Scottie’s behaviour both reinforce and undermine Stewart’s screen persona?
Voyeurism (pleasure from watching others in secret) is one of Hitchcock’s major themes. How does Scottie’s job make him a voyeur? How are cinema audiences voyeuristic?
Blade Runner is a 1982 American neo-noir science fiction film directed by Ridley Scott and starring Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, and Edward James Olmos. The film, written by Hampton Fancher and David Peoples, is a loose adaptation of the 1968 novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick. The film depicts a dystopian Los Angeles in which genetically engineered replicants, which are visually indistinguishable from adult humans, are manufactured by the powerful Tyrell Corporation. The use of
replicants on Earth is banned and they are exclusively utilized for dangerous or menial work on off-world colonies. Replicants who defy the ban and return to Earth are hunted down and killed ("retired") by special police operatives known as "Blade Runners". The plot focuses on a group of recently escaped replicants led by Roy Batty (Hauer), and the burnt-out expert Blade Runner, Rick Deckard (Ford), who reluctantly agrees to take on one more assignment to hunt them down. **During his investigations, Deckard begins a relationship with Rachael (Young), an advanced replicant who causes him to question his and the replicants' humanity.**

*Blade Runner* initially polarized critics; some were displeased with the pacing, while others enjoyed its thematic complexity. The year following its release, the film won the prestigious Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. *Blade Runner* underperformed in North American theaters, but has since become a cult film. Hailed for its production design, depicting a "retrofitted" future, it remains a leading example of the neo-noir genre. It brought the work of Philip K. Dick to the attention of Hollywood and several later films were based on his work. Ridley Scott regards *Blade Runner* as "probably" his most complete and personal film. In 1993, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant". *Blade Runner* is now regarded by many critics as one of the all-time best science fiction films.
Rachael has just rescued Deckard from Leon. What does this shot suggest about how the representation of men and women was changing in films of the 1980s (social context)?

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Director Ridley Scott’s heroines are often: strong, determined and intelligent. How does Rachael’s behaviour in this scene conform to the definition of a Ridley Scott heroine?

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Harrison Ford is a star famous for playing Han Solo and Indiana Jones. How is the role of Deckard both similar and different from the roles which define Ford’s screen persona?
Identity (and the forces which shape human identity) is one of Ridley Scott’s major themes. Why is Rachael so uncertain of her identity? How are actors similar to “replicants”?