

What does Education for Sustainability have to do with Film Studies?

“Film bears a cultural influence greater than art and entertainment alone, and is key to the way we see the world and ourselves within it, and indeed has become fundamental to the way we perceive history itself.” (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/film/about/index.page?>)

As probably the most prevalent cultural form of the 21st century, film plays a critical role in representing, shaping and challenging cultural, political and societal norms. Topic areas of relevance to sustainability already in the Film curriculum include:

- **Understanding other cultures:** expanding understanding of other cultures, beliefs, experiences and foster human empathy; reconnecting humankind and nature; promoting cultural exchange and transfer.
- **Global perspective:** understanding diverse cultural backgrounds; the role of globalisation in changing human, societal, national interactions; film as a global medium.
- **Inequality:** class, gender, sexuality, race; representation of equality and inequality within film; representation within the industry itself.
- **Understanding human emotions and behaviours:** understanding how humans relate to each other, as individuals, in society; reconnecting humans and nature; helping us to understand how to respond to social and environmental injustices.
- **Changing lives:** the joy and personal wellbeing that art and design can bring, through the act of creating as well as through interacting with the created; changing lives and society insight into and sharing of socio-political messages, influencing hearts and minds towards sustainable behaviour; the role of the arts in activism and protest.
- **Representing the world:** the role of film, including documentary, in showing the world as it is; cinema as a way to maintain or change the status quo.
- **Sustainable film industry:** resource use, human wellbeing, employee rights within the industry itself.

Key skills for Film graduates which sustainability teaching cultivates: interdisciplinary working; innovation and creativity; debate and reasoning; teamwork; leadership; problem-solving; oral and written communication skills; self-management; time-management; analysis critical thinking.

Find out more: Contact Julia Kendal (j.kendal@soton.ac.uk) for more information including case studies on teaching sustainability in this area.