**Film Genre:**

A film genre is a stylistic or thematic category for motion pictures based on similarities either in the narrative elements, aesthetic approach, or the emotional response to the film.

Drawing heavily from the theories of literary-genre criticism, film genres are usually delineated by "conventions, iconography, settings, narratives, characters and actors". One can also classify films by the tone, theme/topic, mood, format, target audience, or budget. These characteristics are most evident in genre films, which are "commercial feature films [that], through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters and familiar situations" in a given genre.

A film's genre will influence the use of filmmaking styles and techniques, such as the use of flashbacks and low-key lighting in film noir; tight framing in horror films; or fonts that look like rough-hewn logs for the titles of Western films. In addition, genres have associated film scoring conventions, such as lush string orchestras for romantic melodramas or electronic music for science fiction films. Genre also affects how films are broadcast on television, advertised, and organized in video rental stores.

*Alan Williams* distinguishes three main genre categories: narrative, avant-garde, and documentary.

With the proliferation of particular genres, film subgenres can also emerge: the legal drama, for example, is a sub-genre of drama that includes courtroom- and trial-focused films. Subgenres are often a mixture of two separate genres; genres can also merge with seemingly unrelated ones to form hybrid genres, where popular combinations include the romantic comedy and the action comedy film. Broader examples include the docufiction and docudrama, which merge the basic categories of fiction and non-fiction (documentary).

Genres are not fixed; they change and evolve over time, and some genres may largely disappear (for example, the melodrama). Not only does genre refer to a type of film or its category, a key role is also played by the expectations of an audience about a film, as well as institutional discourses that create generic structures.

**Film Genres and Subgenres:**

* **Action:** Action film is a film genre in which the protagonist is thrust into a series of events that typically involve violence and physical feats. The genre tends to feature a mostly resourceful hero struggling against incredible odds, which include life-threatening situations, an indestructible villain, or a pursuit which usually concludes in victory for the hero.

Advancements in computer-generated imagery (CGI) have made it cheaper and easier to create action sequences and other visual effects that required the efforts of professional stunt crews in the past. However, reactions to action films containing significant amounts of CGI have been mixed, as some films use CGI to create unrealistic, highly unbelievable events. While action has long been a recurring component in films, the "action film" genre began to develop in the 1970s along with the increase of stunts and special effects.

This genre is closely associated with the thriller and adventure genres and may also contain elements of drama and spy fiction. Screenwriter and scholar *Eric R. Williams* identifies action film as one of eleven super-genres in his *screenwriters' taxonomy*, claiming that all feature-length narrative films can be classified by these super-genres.

* **Disaster:** A disaster film or disaster movie is a film genre that has an impending or ongoing disaster as its subject and primary plot device. Such disasters may include natural disasters, accidents, military/terrorist attacks or global catastrophes such as a pandemic. A subgenre of action films, these films usually feature some degree of build-up, the disaster itself, and sometimes the aftermath, usually from the point of view of specific individual characters or their families or portraying the survival tactics of different people.

These films often feature large casts of actors and multiple plot lines, focusing on the characters' attempts to avert, escape or cope with the disaster and its aftermath. The genre came to particular prominence during the 1970s with the release of high-profile films such as *Airport* (1970), followed in quick succession by *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *Earthquake* (1974) and *The Towering Inferno* (1974).

The casts are generally made up of familiar character actors. Once the disaster begins in the film, the characters are usually confronted with human weaknesses, often falling in love and almost always finding a villain to blame. The films usually feature a persevering hero or heroine (*Charlton Heston*, *Steve**McQueen*, etc.) called upon to lead the struggle against the threat. In many cases, the "evil" or "selfish" individuals are the first to succumb to the conflagration. The genre experienced a renewal in the 1990s boosted by computer-generated imagery (CGI) and large studio budgets which allowed for greater spectacle, culminating in the cinematic phenomenon that was *James Cameron*'s *Titanic* in 1997.

* **Martial Arts:** Martial arts films are a subgenre of action films that feature martial arts combat between characters. These combats are usually the films' primary appeal and entertainment value, and often are a method of storytelling and character expression and development. Martial arts are frequently featured in training scenes and other sequences in addition to fights. Martial arts films commonly include hand-to-hand combat along with other types of action, such as stuntwork, chases, and gunfights. Sub-genres of martial arts films include kung fu films, wuxia, karate films, and martial arts action comedy films, while related genres include gun fu, jidaigeki and samurai films.

Notable martial artists who have contributed to the genre include *Bruce Lee*, *Jet Li*, *Jackie Chan*, *Jean-Claude Van Damme*, *Tony Jaa*, *Steven Seagal*, *Chuck* *Norris*, *Gordon Liu*, *Hwang Jang-lee*, *Sammo Hung*, *Yuen Biao*, *Donnie Yen*, *Kim Tai-chung*, and *Robin Shou*.

* **Spy:** The spy film, also known as the spy thriller, is a genreof film that deals with the subject of fictional espionage, either in a realistic way (such as the adaptations of *John le Carré*) or as a basis for fantasy (such as many *James Bond* films). Many novels in the spy fiction genre have been adapted as films, including works by *John Buchan*, le Carré, *Ian Fleming* (Bond) and *Len Deighton*. It is a significant aspect of British cinema, with leading British directors such as *Alfred* *Hitchcock* and *Carol Reed* making notable contributions and many films set in the British Secret Service.

Spy films show the espionage activities of government agents and their risk of being discovered by their enemies. From the Nazi espionage thrillers of the 1940s to the James Bond films of the 1960s and to the high-tech blockbusters of today, the spy film has always been popular with audiences worldwide. Offering a combination of exciting escapism, technological thrills, and exotic locales, many spy films combine the action and science fiction genres, presenting clearly delineated heroes for audiences to root for and villains for them to hate. They may also involve elements of political thrillers. However, there are many that are comedic (mostly action comedy films if they fall under that genre).

James Bond is the most famous of film spies, but there were also more serious, probing works like le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* that also emerged from the Cold War. As the Cold War ended, the newest villain became terrorism and more often involved the Middle East.

* Superhero Film: