

Register Number:

Date:

**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**VI SEMESTER - B.A. COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2024**

**(Examination conducted in May / June 2024)**

**CE 6322: FILM WRITING**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time- 2 hrs Max Marks- 60**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper is for students of VI SEMESTER COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH Film Writing elective.**
2. **This paper has THREE SECTIONS and THREE printed pages.**
3. **Please provide word counts following every response that you make.**
4. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
5. **Read the following extract from an essay by Shohini Ghosh, titled “The Irresistible Badness of Salman Khan” and answer the questions below.**

The resounding success of Dabangg changed everything. An action-comedy set in the rural badlands, Dabangg was not only a sensational hit in Salman’s traditional fan-base, but also captured the imagination of the urban middle-classes, who were prone to deride Salman-starrers as lacking “class” and “taste”. Salman Khan described the film as a “sten-gun assault on the polite multiplex crowd” who he hoped would “whistle and dance on the chairs”. That is precisely what happened. …

Even though Salman is a part of the ‘Khan Triumvirate’ with Aamir and Shahrukh, his stardom has always stood out. Salman possesses neither Aamir’s acting versatility nor Shahrukh’s on-screen charisma. Unlike the duo, he has seldom worked with top directors or big banners and has begun to be selective about his films only recently. Shahrukh started his career playing dark and unconventional roles in films like Baazigar, Darr and Anjaam but stopped experimenting after achieving stardom with big-budget entertainers like Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai. His career now remains parked within the safe confines of corporate respectability and countless endorsements. An inventive professional and exceptional actor, Aamir Khan is the hero of urban multiplex audiences and, as testified by the success of Satyamev Jayate, the new poster-boy for corporate social responsibility. Both are admirable icons for an optimistic and upwardly-mobile, post-liberalisation generation spread across India and the diaspora. In contrast, a very large slice of Salman’s traditional fan-base is comprised of those for whom the changes unleashed by the forces of globalisation did not accrue any immediate benefits. Provincial towns, suburban areas, urban slums and mohallas are spaces where Salman reigns. This is also a constituency that matters little to the multiplex economy. This expansive cross-class appeal is what makes Salman Khan’s stardom distinct.

But despite his popularity, Salman Khan is a troubled ‘hero’. Print and electronic media as well as the annals of cyberspace are replete with stories of his violent fits, unstable personal life and criminal allegations over the hunting of protected blackbucks and driving rashly over a sleeping pavement dweller. These stories—of which many versions exist—cast a long shadow over his success. Equally popular are the stories about his generosity and philanthropic work, but even at the best of times, Salman Khan walks a risky tight-rope. There is no telling when he will slip and fall from the Olympian heights of superstardom into the dark crevasse of notoriety.

The entire decade of the 1990s and a large part of the next, witnessed a heightened communalisation of public spaces as Hindu Right forces consolidated political power following the demolition of Babri Masjid. Muslims were cast as unreliable citizens whose loyalties were perpetually in doubt. The anxiety suffered by the ordinary Muslim—who could be randomly targeted for interrogation, torture and incarceration merely on the basis of suspicion—found reflection, as it were, in the unpredictable vicissitudes that beset Salman Khan. Like Sanjay Dutt before him, Salman was sent to jail, brought to trial and hasn’t yet been declared innocent. Neither success not stardom served as protection. At such a juncture, Salman’s ability to survive the odds may explain why among his billion fans, under-privileged Muslims form a devoted constituency.

Film scholarship on stardom demonstrates how stars are able to embody anxieties and aspirations of the mainstream while also inviting ‘resistant readings’. During a period of escalating prejudice against Muslims, films like Tumko Na Bhool Payenge and Garv: Pride and Honour made room for the articulation of dissent. In Garv (2004), conscientious cop Arjun Ranawat (Salman Khan) believes that “traitors have no religion”. When Haider Ali (Arbaaz Khan), a trusted colleague, is transferred on grounds that Muslims cannot be trusted to fight Muslims, Arjun takes his protest to the highest echelons of power. In a scene that marshals all the dramatic conventions of Bombay cinema, Arjun condemns this “reprehensible communal mindset” as “unconstitutional” and responsible for alienating thousands of young Muslims. Delivered with rage and passion, the power of the dialogue is underscored by having the words “communal” and “unconstitutional” spoken in English.

1. **Answer the following questions in about 5-8 sentences each. (3x5=15)**
2. The author says, “Salman possesses neither Aamir’s acting versatility nor Shahrukh’s on-screen charisma.” Are these qualities you look for in a mainstream hero? Explain.
3. The author gives instances of how the star Salman Khan was able to embody anxieties and aspirations, and yet invite resistance readings. Name another star actor (not a Khan) who is able to do that. Give instances that demonstrate such an ability.
4. If, as per the author, the 1990s and the subsequent decade saw a communalisation of cinema, what would you, looking back at the cinema from 2010s and 2020s’ say were the big political movements impacting it?
5. **Answer any THREE of the following questions in about 150 words each. (3x10=30)**
6. Think back to any of the films we watched this semester and write a short note on how many ways you were able to derive meaning from the film, or how you were able to break it down to talk about it?
7. What would you say makes for a great “popular” film? Are there elements — storytelling, cinematography, sound design, editing, narrative themes or other aspects — that distinguishes a very good popular film from what would be described as art film?
8. What do you understand by the term ‘Male Gaze’, and how does it help you understand and respond to a film?
9. What’s your favourite bit of film music? Can you now imagine a scene in your favourite film without that music? Explain.
10. The Hindu group is looking to hire you as a writer to cover films and entertainment, but wants to know what new perspectives or ideas you can bring to film reviews. **Compose a response in not more than 200-250 words. (15 marks)**

**\*\*\*\*\***