FILM AND SERIES GENRES

Genres	Key defining elements	Sub genres
Action	A resourceful protagonist struggling against incredible odds, is put in life-threatening situations to defeat a villain or nemesis. The protagonist is thrust into a series of challenges involving chases, fights or physical feats, usually ending in victory for the protagonist.	Superhero film, spy film
Adventure	A narrative defined by a journey. The protagonist has a mission and travels to epic or distant places, while facing obstacles, to get to their destination and accomplish something.	Quest film, pirate film
Comedy	Primarily to make the viewer laugh. Does this by placing the characters in unexpected or unusual situations. Other devices include repetition. Usually has a happy ending.	Slapstick, screwball comedy, satire/parody, buddy comedy, dark or black comedy, chick flick
Crime/mystery	A narrative in which the main character is either the criminal or the 'good guy'. Their journey is defined by an inner conflict and involves either getting away with or solving a crime.	
Drama	A narrative where external pressures in the protagonist's life trigger an internal struggle, that results in self-discovery. They tend to depict everyday people in realistic situations.	Coming-of-age, road movie, buddy film, courtroom drama, sports film, teen drama
Fantasy	Defined by situations that transcend natural laws, and/or take place within a fictional setting or universe. Narratives can be inspired by myths and incorporate magic, mythical creatures or supernatural elements.	Often hybrid e.g. sci-fi fantasy
Historical	Close-to-accurate depictions of a person's life or historical account, or fictional narratives taking place in an accurately depicted time and place in history.	Biopic, period film, historical epic
Horror	Primarily to elicit fright in the viewer, using primal or hidden fears, nightmares, the macabre, revulsions and terror of the unknown. Plots often involve the intrusion of an evil or supernatural force, person or event into the everyday world.	Splatter film, slasher film, zombie horror, found footage horror
Musical	Intertwine performed songs into the narrative to progress the story or further develop the characters. Can involve big stage-like productions which depict important premise or character elements.	Often hybrid e.g. musical comedy

FILM AND SERIES GENRES *CONTINUED*

Genres	Key defining elements	Sub genres
Romance	Love stories usually centering around two characters that explore an element of love like relationships, marriage, sacrifice and obsession. They sometimes explore hardships like infidelity, illness and tragedy.	Often hybrid e.g. romantic drama, romantic comedy, historical romance
Spy	The main character works under an assumed identity, to find or destroy something while battling an inner conflict.	
Thriller	The protagonist is completing a mission with 'ticking-clock' stakes such as escaping a situation where escape seems impossible or solving a mystery in a setting that is menacing. Characters tend to be in conflict with each other or with an outside force. Tension is increased using devices like cover-ups of important information and plot twists.	Crime thriller, political thriller, psychological thriller. Also often hybrid e.g. action thriller, sci-fi thriller.
War	Set in a specific historical war. Entails a main character or group dealing with an inner conflict related to the war.	
Western	Typically set in the American West during the 19th Century, with an individualist main character who is trying to accomplish a goal while battling an inner conflict.	Classic western, contemporary western, revisionist western, spaghetti western
Science fiction	A narrative defined by a scientific or technological premise combined with imaginative or visionary speculation. Tend to include futuristic elements like spacecraft, robots, cyborgs or interstellar travel and therefore rely on special effects. Often focus on political or social issues or explore philosophical issues like the human condition.	Dystopian film, post-apocalyptic film, space travel, time travel, cli-fi

Sources:

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Milne Library, 'What Is Genre and How Is It Determined?'
https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/exploring-movie-construction-and-production/chapter/2-what-is-genre-and-how-is-it-determined/

Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thriller_film

HYBRID GENRE EXAMPLES

Comedy + Drama	= Comedy Drama or Dramedy
Romance + Comedy	= Romantic Comedy
Historical + Drama	= Historical Drama