

FI115-15 Film Theory

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - Film & Television Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Karl Schoonover

Credit value

15

Assessment

50% coursework, 50% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Module aims

- To provide an understanding of central debates about the moving image.
- To provide the opportunity to reflect on different theoretical frameworks.
- To encounter complex writing and learn how to read it with precision.
- To practice using conceptual and theoretical language with precision.
- To apply theoretical models, creating close textual analyses of specific film texts.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1 – The cinematic image

- Andrew, Dudley, 'Cinema & Culture' Humanities 6:4 (August 1985) pp. 24-25.
Screening: Le Crime de Monsieur Lange (Jean Renoir, 1939, 77 min.)

Week 2 – Affinities

- Kracauer, Siegfried, 'The Establishment of Physical Existence' and 'Inherent Affinities' from Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality (Oxford University Press, 1960) pp. 41-74.
Screening: The Gleaners & I (Agnès Varda, 2000, 82 min.)

Week 3 – Movement

- Metz, Christian. 'On the Impression of Reality in the Cinema' in *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. (Oxford University Press: 1974) pp. 3-15.
Screening: *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Paul Greengrass, 2007, 115 min.)

Week 4 – Affect

- Sontag, Susan. 'Against Interpretation' in *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays*. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966) 3-14.
Screening: *Il posto* (Ermanno Olmi, 1961, 93 min.)

Week 5 – Ideology

- Comolli, Jean-Luc, and Paul Narboni. 'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism' *Screen* (1971) 12 (1): pp. 27-38.
Screening: *Written on the Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1956, 99 min.)

Week 6 – Reading Week

Week 7 – The Male Gaze

- Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' *Screen* (1975) 16(3): pp. 6-18.
Screening: *Gilda* (Vidor, 1956) 110 min.

Week 8 – The Raced Gaze

- Gaines, Jane. 'White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory.' *Cultural Critique*, No. 4 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 59-79.
Screening: *Mahogany* (Berry Gordy, 1975) 109 min.

Week 9 – Gaming and POV

- Galloway, Alex. 'Origins of the First-Person Shooter' in *Critical Visions in Film Theory*, edited by White & Corrigan, (Boston/New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2011) pp. 1070-1081.
Screening: *South Park*, "Make Love, Not Warcraft" (writer/director Trey Parker), Ep. 8, Season 10, Comedy Central (US air date: 4 October 2006).

Week 10 – The Digital Multitude

- Whissel, Kristin. 'The Digital Multitude' *Cinema Journal* vol. 49. no. 4 (Summer 2010) 90-110.
Screening: *Starship Troopers* (Paul Verhoeven, 1997) 129 min.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a sound understanding of the key questions of theoretical debates around the moving image.
- Understand how theory differs from other forms of inquiry.

- Demonstrate an ability to deploy and to analyse argument in a rigorous way.
- Demonstrate an ability to apply the theory to specific films, adding other dimensions to close textual analysis.
- Demonstrate an ability to use a close analysis of a theoretical text using an analysis of a film to open up, expand, or trouble the theoretical text's conceptual framework.

Indicative reading list

Dictionaries

Hayward, Susan. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Kuhn, Annette, and Guy Westwell. *A Dictionary of Film Studies*. [Oxford]; [New York]: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Cook, Pam. *The Cinema Book*. London: BFI, 2007.

Basics of film aesthetics

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2012.

Yale Film Analysis website: <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>

Key anthologies of film theory [i.e., collections of key film theory essays]

Baudy, Leo, and Marshall Cohen. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Corrigan, Timothy, Patricia White, and Meta Mazaj. *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.

Rosen, Philip. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Stam, Robert, and Toby Miller. *Film and Theory: An Anthology*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Malte Hagener. *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Feminist Film Theory

Kaplan, E. Ann. *Feminism and Film*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Thornham, Sue. *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

McCabe, Janet. *Feminist Film Studies: Writing the Woman into Cinema*. London; New York: Wallflower, 2004.

* Shortcuts series

Subject specific skills

No subject specific skills defined for this module.

Transferable skills

No transferable skills defined for this module.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	10 sessions of 1 hour (25%)
Seminars	10 sessions of 1 hour (25%)
Other activity	20 hours (50%)
Total	40 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Other activity description

1 two to three-hour screenings per week

Tutorials: As required to discuss essays and progress

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group C1

	Weighting	Study time
Essay	50%	
Online Examination	50%	

Weighting

Study time

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Feedback on assessment

Students will receive detailed written feedback on each piece of written work, as is the departmental practice, and verbal feedback on examinations where requested. \r\nThere will be several formative exercises which will allow students to refine their argumentation skills in relation to the module texts and in preparation for the essay or exam. \r\n\r\n\r\n\r\n

[Past exam papers for FI115](#)

Availability

Post-requisite modules

If you pass this module, you can take:

- FI354-15 Film Aesthetics 2

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UFIA-W620 Undergraduate Film Studies
- Year 1 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature