

FI355-15 Film Aesthetics 1

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - Film & Television Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

James MacDowell

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Film Aesthetics approaches film first and foremost as art, and lets you grapple with the fascinating questions raised by doing so. The module considers how key, longstanding problems in the philosophy and sociology of art might apply to the medium of film, as well as aesthetic issues that seem to be raised by audiovisual media in particular.

Module aims

To equip students with the ability to formulate nuanced, well-evidenced answers to questions such as:

- What role might inferences about intention play in the way we interpret and evaluate films and audiovisual media?
- Are some interpretations of films more justifiable than others? Why or why not?
- Are some evaluations of films more justifiable than others? Why or why not?

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.

SECTION 1: Are some evaluations better than others?

Week 1: Lamarque, Peter (2009) 'Artistic Value', in *Central Issues of Philosophy*, John Shand (ed), Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 231-243.

Week 2: Durnat, Raymond (1976) 'The Mongrel Muse', in *Durnat on Film*. London: Faber & Faber, 17–28.

Week 3: Beardsley, Monroe (1958) 'Critical Evaluation: Reasons and Judgements', in *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (Second Edition, 1981), Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 454-99

Week 4: Lyas, Colin & Robert Stecker (2009) 'Intention and Interpretation', in *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Second Edition), Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, David E. Cooper, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 366-9.

SECTION 2: Are some interpretations better than others?

Week 5: Eco, Umberto. (1992) 'Between Author and Text', in Collini, Stefan (ed), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 67–88.

Week 7: Stecker, Robert (2009) 'Meaning Constructivism' in *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Second Edition), Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, David E. Cooper, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 418-21.

Week 8: Shusterman, Richard (2009) 'Popular Art', in *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Second Edition), Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, David E. Cooper, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 476-8.

SECTION 3: Medium specificity and the evaluation of television

Week 9: Frith, Simon. (1996) 'The Value Problem in Cultural Studies', in *Performing Rites: on the Value of Popular Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-20.

Week 10: Jaramillo, Deborah C. 'Rescuing television from "the cinematic": The perils of dismissing television style', in: Jason Jacobs and Steven Peacock (eds), *Television Aesthetics and Style* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 67-75.

Learning outcomes

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

- (1) Be familiar with debates surrounding several key issues in the field of aesthetics
- (2) Be familiar with some of the ways in which such debates might apply to audiovisual media specifically
- (3) Have improved their skills in precisely analysing style to mount interpretations and evaluations

Research element

Both essay and seen-examination options will require research.

Interdisciplinary

The history, aesthetics and sociology of art.

International

To varying degrees both readings and screenings will originate from a range of national film/art cultures.

Subject specific skills

This module develops skills of audio-visual literacy, through close textual and/or contextual analysis in relation to the moving image and sound. It may also develop understandings of historical, theoretical and conceptual frameworks relevant to screen arts and cultures.

Transferable skills

Critical and analytical thinking; independent research skills; team work; clarity and effectiveness of communication, oral and written; accurate, concise and persuasive writing; audio-visual literacy

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Other activity	18 hours (7%)
Private study	114 hours (46%)
Assessment	100 hours (40%)
Total	250 hours

Private study description

Reading and preparation time for seminars, plus research time for essay/seen examination.

Other activity description

Screenings

Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Books and learning materials		Department	£0.00

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Written Assignment (5000 words)	100%	100 hours
Choice between 1 x 5000 word essay or 1 x 2 hour centrally timetabled seen examination		

Assessment group B

	Weighting	Study time
Online Examination	100%	

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Feedback on assessment

Tabula feedback plus optional tutorial

[Past exam papers for FI355](#)

Availability

Pre-requisites

To take this module, you must have passed:

- Any of
 - [FI204-15 World Cinema](#)
 - [FI249-15 Hollywood Cinema: History, Theory, Industry](#)

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 3 of UFIA-W620 Undergraduate Film Studies

- Year 4 of UFIA-W621 Undergraduate Film Studies (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 4 of UFIA-QW26 Undergraduate Film and Literature (with Study Abroad)

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 4 of UGEA-RP33 Undergraduate German with Film Studies