

# FI355-15 Film Aesthetics 1

**21/22**

**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**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Required</b>
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	18 hours (12%)
Private study	114 hours (76%)
Total	150 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

### 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 optional for:

- Year 4 of UHPA-RP43 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies with Film Studies

This module is Core option list A for:

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