

FI208-15 Silent Cinema

26/27

Department

SCAPVC – Film and Television Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Chris O'Rourke

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces students to a vitally important period in film history, beginning in the mid-1890s and extending to the late 1920s and (in some parts of the world) the mid-1930s, in which the technology to create and present photographic moving pictures was first created, industrial modes of production, distribution and exhibition facilitated its transformation into a mass entertainment medium, and a narrative grammar of film language was gradually developed, refined and frequently challenged.

Module aims

- Introduce some of the most important films, filmmakers and filmmaking trends from Europe, America and beyond in the period between 1895 and the mid-1930s.
- Investigate social and cultural contexts with a defining influence on the early evolution of the cinema.
- Familiarise students with theoretical concepts and models which will help them to discuss and analyse the products of early cinema as complex rather than 'primitive' texts and to formulate hypotheses concerning the uneven development of early representational techniques and stylistic practices.
- Examine filmic representations of class, race, gender, sexuality and national identity within particular moments of social upheaval and cultural crisis in the first three-and-half decades of

the 20th century.

- Familiarise students with the developing industrial structure of the international film industry in this period, and enable them to gain a complex historical understanding of the battle for commercial hegemony between different national and regional film industries.

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.

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 cinema of attractions.

Week 2: Early forms of narrative integration.

Week 3: Film serials of the 1910s.

Week 4: The emergence of the feature film format.

Week 5: The prominence of women filmmakers in the silent era.

Week 7: Slapstick comedy in the silent era.

Week 8: German expressionism.

Week 9: Soviet montage cinema.

Week 10: Japanese silent cinema.

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of early film history and relevant scholarly debates in this field.
- Show familiarity with a range of methodologies necessary to analyse silent films.
- Demonstrate understanding of the social, technological and cultural conditions that underpinned the rise of cinema.
- Communicate ideas effectively, using appropriate academic conventions.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

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 also develops skills required to interpret historical documents pertaining to the film industry and 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 (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	18 hours (12%)
Private study	114 hours (76%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Preparation for seminars; researching and writing assessed coursework.

Other activity description

Compulsory film screenings

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 A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Film Analysis	30%		Yes (extension)
Students will submit a 1,000-word film analysis, written in relation to an early film to be chosen from a selection of examples made available by the module tutor.			

Weighting

Study time

Eligible for self-certification

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Essay

70%

Yes (extension)

Students will submit a 3,000-word independently researched essay. Questions can be chosen from a selection made available by the module tutor.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Published written feedback on film analysis and essay assignments.

Availability

Pre-requisites

To take this module, you must have passed:

- Any of
 - [FI114-15 Film and Television Analysis](#)
 - [FI348-15 Film Analysis and Methods](#)
 - [FI352-15 Film History and Methods](#)

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UFIA-W620 Undergraduate Film Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature