

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

NOTE: THIS IS AN **INDICATIVE** OUTLINE. CHANGES WILL BE MADE YEAR-BY-YEAR.

SCREEN FORM AND CULTURE
Media Film and Communication (MFCO) 101

Course Coordinator: Associate Professor Catherine Fowler



Introduction

MFCO 101: Screen Form and Culture

Moving images surround us, they are part of our daily routine and our lifetime experience, we no longer simply encounter them when we go to the cinema, instead they are on our phones and our laptops, we see them in city streets and around airports. Nowadays, it seems, we live alongside moving images. But how do we study them? What kinds of questions should we ask about them? And what debates and discussions arise from them? *MFCO 101 Screen Form and Culture* is designed to help you find your way through our image-world.

The course divides in two; in the first section on 'screen form' we focus on narrative and fictional moving images: feature and short films, experimental media, adverts and web series. Acknowledging that we live in a 'society of the spectacle' (Guy Debord, 1968) we consider what cinema has contributed by thinking about how films often cast themselves as 'attractions', like fairground attractions: constructed to take us out of the everyday and to make us forget our drab and dreary reality in favour of a 'wow effect' or perfect fairytale ending. In this first section we are interested in how films achieve these effects stylistically. So we interrogate how elements (sound, editing, mise-en-scène, cinematography) are put together. We also look at how systems such as classical narrative, the cinematic apparatus (the projector, a darkened room, seated, passive viewers) and the gaze have been theorized as constructing ideological viewing positions. As part of this first section we will have an exciting expanded cinema performance by local experimenters 'The Rubbish Film Unit'. Your two assignments for this section introduce you to research skills (the journal) and ask you to create an argument using audio-visual materials (the video essay).

In the second section 'screen culture' our focus is upon the social and cultural questions raised by media. We are interested in the wider permutations of screens, and we take in television in both its traditional terrestrial and digital, multi-platform incarnations studying topics such as media and national identity: (how) can public service broadcasting

bring together a nation? Should it? or how do television programmes shame and judge particular parts of the population and engage with public discourses, around housing for example (in the show *Renters*). How do audiences make use reality media to forge friendships? (our cases study is high school students and *New Zealand Idol*). Thanks to a speaker from the Office of Film and Literature Classification we dive in to the complicated world of classification and censorship tackling who gets to decide where free speech ends and objectionable or harmful images begin. All of which turns us finally away from spectators and towards audiences, through audience research and work on fans of media. Your two assignments for this section are an essay and an exam, with the essay asking you to show you can use the research skills, concepts, methods and theories we've introduced on the course towards an analysis of a media case study of your choice.

Course assessment

Assignment 1	Journals	30%	on-going
Assignment 2	Video essay	35%	due: Week 7, Thursday 9 ^h April before 12pm
Assignment 3	Essay	35%	due: Week 13, Monday 25 th May before 5pm

Lecture and tutorial programme

Week	Date	Lecture	Required Readings	Tutorials	Screenings
Part one: Screen Form – Studying the Audio-Visual					
1	24 Feb	1. Introduction: What was cinema?	Gunning, Tom. (2006). <i>The Cinema of Attractions[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde</i>		<i>Cinema Paradiso</i> (Giuseppe Tornatore, Italy 1988)[ETV] [Library Reserve, DVD Blu-ray, PN1997.C567]
		2. Spectacle on the big screen		Tutorial one	
2	2 March	3. Giving us what we want?	Dyer, Richard. (1992 [second edition]). <i>Entertainment and Utopia</i> . Davis et al. 'Interlude on film form'		<i>Spiderman</i> (Sam Raimi, US 2002) [Library Reserve, PN1997.2.S65 2002] <i>La-la Land</i> [can also be used in your video essays if you have a copy]

		4. Let me entertain you...		Tutorial two	
3	9 March	5. From image to apparatus	Stam et al. 'The cinematic apparatus+The Spectator' pp. 142-155. Jean-Louis Baudry 'Ideological effects of the basic cinematic apparatus' Christian Metz 'the imaginary signifier' Ron Becker 'Ideology' 11-22		Expanded cinema performance (from the Rubbish Film Unit)
		6. From apparatus to ideology		Tutorial three	
4	16 March	7. It's the way I tell it: Classical Hollywood Narrative Guest Lectures by Dr Paul Ramaeker	Bordwell, Thompson and Smith "Narrative Form" 72-110		Video Essay Workshop
		8. It's the way I tell it: Classical Hollywood Narrative	Film to watch in your own time: Mad Max Fury Road (George Miller, US 2015) [Library PN1997.2.M33 2015]	No tutorial	Journals due
5	23 March	9. Exploring audio visual essays and argument	Sturken, Marita, & Cartwright, Lisa. (2001). Spectatorship, Power and Knowledge. Beltran, Mary. (2018). Representation.		Rear Window (US, 1975 Alfred Hitchcock) [Kanopy; ETV]
		10. Introducing the male gaze		Tutorial four	
6	30 March	11. Is there a female gaze?	Gamman, Lorraine and Marshment, Margaret. (1988). Introduction.		Girlhood (Celine Sciamma, France 2012)[ETV]
		12. How does She look?		Tutorial five	

7	6 April	13. The work of representation Guest Lectures by Dr Rosemary Overell	Hall, Stuart. (2013). The Work of Representation. Bannister, Matthew. (2008). Where's morningside? Locating bro'Town in the ethnic genealogy of New Zealand/Aotearoa.		t.b.c
		14. The work of representation Guest Lecture by Dr Rosemary Overell		No tutorial	Video essay due
Mid-Semester break: 13 th April-17 th April					
Part two: Screen Culture - Social and Cultural Questions					
8	20 April	15. Television and Nation Guest Lectures by Dr Brett Nicholls	Horrocks, Roger. (2004). Studying New Zealand Television - Themes, Methods, Perspectives. de Bruin, Joost. (2008). NZ Idol: Youth Audiences and Local Meanings.		NZ Idol
		16. Television and Nation		Tutorial six	
9	27 April no lecture [Anzac Day]	17. Televisuality	John Hartley 'Housing Television: a film, a fridge and social democracy' From 'The uses of television' 1999		Housing Problems (John Grierson) Renters (TVNZ on Demand; ETV)
	28 April	18. Televisuality		Tutorial seven	
10	4 May	19. New Zealand + Censorship Visiting lectures from the Office of Film and Literature Classification	Weaver, Kay. (1996). The Television and Violence Debate in New Zealand: some problems of context.		
		20. Visiting lectures from the Office of Film and Literature Classification		Tutorial eight	

11	11 May	21. Fans	Jonathan Gray 'Why study fans?' John Fiske 'Cultural economy of fandom'		Case study: One ring website
		22. Fans		Tutorial nine	
12	18 May	23. Essay review	Case studies towards your essays		
		24. Essay review	Case studies towards your essays	Tutorial ten	Essays due
13	25 May	25. Exam review	Exam screening and review		
		26.			