

SCREEN FORM AND CULTURE

Media Film and Communication (MFCO) 101

Introduction

MFCO 101: Screen Form and Culture

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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 out 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 think about how to analyse the power and pleasure of 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 and models 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. 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 social and cultural questions raised by media. We are interested in the wider permutations of screens and in particular we focus upon how relationships between youth and screens have been theorised. 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. Either side of this visit we consider two opposite models of youth audiences: either as impressionable and in need of protection, or as active and capable of participating in media consumption and production. Alongside journals, your main assignment for this section is an essay, which asks you to show you can use the research skills, concepts, methods and theories we've introduce on the course towards an analysis of a media case study of your choice.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this course are:

- 1) To introduce research skills and theoretical approaches to the study of film and media
- 2) To introduce audio-visual analysis and semiotics
- 3) To begin to ask questions and consider the forms that big, small and mobile screens take and their cultural and social permutations

Week	Date	Lecture	Readings	Tutorial	Screening
1	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Introduction: what was cinema?  Spectacle on the big screen	Tom Gunning 'The Cinema of Attractions'	Tutorial One	<i>Cinema Paradiso</i> (Giuseppe Tornatore, Italy 1988) [ETV] [Library Reserve, PN1997.C567] 2 hrs 4 mins
2	8 <sup>th</sup> March 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Entertainment I  Entertainment II	Richard Dyer 'Entertainment and Utopia'  Davis et al. 'Interlude on film form'	Tutorial Two	<i>Spiderman</i> [Library Reserve, PN1997.2.S65 2002] 2hrs 1 min
3	15 March 16 March	Spectatorship  The male gaze	Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 'Spectatorship, power and knowledge'	Tutorial Three	<i>Rear Window</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, US 1959) [Kanopy] [ETV] 1hr 55min
4	22 March 23 March	Introducing video essays  The male gaze	Sturken and Cartwright 'Spectatorship, power and knowledge'	Tutorial Four	Video essay workshop – all students must attend  Journal Exercises 1 & 2 Due Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> March by 5pm
5	29 March 30 March	Re-thinking the gaze I  Re-thinking the gaze II	Bell Hooks 'Black Female Spectators'	Tutorial Five	<i>Girlhood</i> (Céline Sciamma, France 2012) [ETV] 1hr 53min
Mid-semester Break 5-9 April					
6	12 April 13 April	Theorising Masculinity on screen I  Theorising Masculinity on screen II	Steve Neale 'Masculinity as Spectacle'	Tutorial Six	<i>L'uccello dale piume di cristallo/The Bird with the Crystal Plumage</i> (Dario Argento, Italy 1970) [Library reserve: PN1997.U34 2000] 1hr 48min

Week	Date	Lecture	Readings	Tutorial	Screening
7	19 April	Semiotics and Representation I	Stuart Hall 'The Work of Representation'	Tutorial Seven	A series of <i>Levis Advertisements</i>
	20 April	Semiotics and Representation II			Video Essay due Friday 23 April by 5pm
8	26 April	No Lecture [Anzac Day] Constructing Youth	'Constructing Youth: Media, Youth and the Politics of Representation' Sharon R. Mazzarella	No Tutorial	No screening
	27 April				Week 7 Journal due
9	3 May	Impressionable audiences I	Sean Redmond 'Impressionable Audiences: consuming celebrity'	Tutorial Eight	Miley Cyrus case study clips
	4 May	Impressionable audiences II			Week 8 Journal due
10	10 May	Regulation: Visiting lectures from the Office of Film and Literature Regulation	Weaver, Kay. (1996). The Television and Violence Debate in New Zealand: some problems of context.	Tutorial Nine	Screening material from OFL will be available online
	11 May				
11	17 May	Active audiences I		No Tutorial	No screening
	18 May	Active audiences II			Week 11 Journal due
12	24 May	Essay Exemplars	See extended readings	Tutorial Ten	No screening
	25 May	Essay Exemplars			No screening
13	1 June				Essay due Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June by 5pm
	2 June				