

MFCO 101: SCREEN FORM AND CULTURE

Please note: the following is a shortened example of a course outline as it has been taught in past years. As such it is **indicative only**: the assessment and schedule may change. If you require any further information please contact the department: mfco@otago.ac.nz.

Introduction:

Screens have proliferated in contemporary society. Where once there was cinema, then cinema and television, now we engage with audiovisual content in innumerable forms: gifs, videogames and YouTube et.al.; laptops, tablets, and phones; animated billboards, public installations, and art galleries. With so many new ways to encounter film and television, our engagement with those media will never be the same. Yet no matter how we encounter audiovisual media- and no matter what technology is used in its production- the language, the grammar of screen-based media remains remarkably constant. This paper is designed as an introduction to basic analytical and critical skills applied to the study of screen media. Our primary focus is the analysis of the cinematic text, but the skills and concepts in the study of film form that you learn will also be applied to examples from television and digital media.

Aims and Objectives:

By the end of this paper, you should be able to:

- Understand key terms, concepts, and methods in the analysis of media texts
- Use those terms, concepts, and methods to closely examine media texts, and to form the foundation of your critical arguments in film and media analysis

This paper is designed to enhance the following skills:

- Formal and stylistic analysis of film and media
- Use of critical tools and methods in the analysis of film and media
- Critical engagement with complex arguments
- Independent argumentation using critical and analytical skills
- Written presentation of ideas

Course Assessment:

Online Quiz:	8%
Descriptive and Analytical Essay:	15%
Library Exercise	7%
Critical Essay:	25%
Final Examination:	45%

Course Schedule:

I. Introduction

Week 1: 25 February-1 March Introduction and course overview	<i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i> (Miller, 2015) <hr/> NO TUTORIAL	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 1-2
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II. Screen Style

Week 2: 4-8 March Editing and Mise-en-scène	<i>His Girl Friday</i> (Hawks, 1939)	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 6, ch. 4
Week 3: 11-15 March Mise-en-scène and Cinematography	<i>The Exorcist</i> (Friedkin, 1973)	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 4, ch. 5
Week 4: 18-22 March Cinematography and Sound	<i>The Conversation</i> (Coppola, 1974)	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 5, ch. 7

III. Screen Form

Week 5: 25-29 March Narration	<i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941) <hr/>	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 3, ch. 8 ***** ONLINE QUIZ Due by Thursday 28 March
1-5 APRIL	MID-SEMESTER BREAK	
Week 6: 8-12 April Television Narrative	TBA <hr/> NO TUTORIAL	Butler, “Narrative Structure: Television Stories” Newman, “From Beats to Arcs” ***** Descriptive/Analytical Essay Due Monday 8 April
Week 7: 15-19 April Documentary Guest lecturer: Kevin Fisher	<i>The River</i> (Lorentz, 1938), <i>Gap Toothed Women</i> (Blank, 1987), <i>Lessons of Darkness</i> (Herzog, 1992)	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 10 pp. 350-369 Herzog, “On the Absolute, the Sublime, and Ecstatic Truth”
Week 8: 22-26 April Experimental Cinema	A selection of short <u>experimental films</u> NO TUTORIAL	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 10 pp. 369-386 Small, “Experimental Film/Video as a Major Genre” ***** Library Exercise Due Friday 26 April

IV. Critical Methods and Screen Cultures

Week 9: 29 April-3 May Authorship	<i>Touch of Evil</i> (Welles, 1958)	Konigsberg, "auteur" Crofts, "Authorship and Hollywood" Cook, "Orson Welles"
Week 10: 6-10 May Genre	<i>The Cabin in the Woods</i> (Goddard, 2012)	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 9 Worland, "Undying Monsters"
Week 11: 13-17 May Fandom and Participatory Culture	TBA	Busse and Gray, "Fan Cultures and Fan Communities" Jenkins, "Interactive Audiences?"
Week 12: 20-24 May Stars Guest lecturer: Catherine Fowler	TBA <hr/> NO TUTORIAL	Bennett, Hickman and Wall, "Star" ***** Critical Essay Due Friday 24 May
Week 13: 27-31 May Summary and Conclusion	No screening	<i>Film Art</i> , ch. 12