

**DEPARTMENT OF FILM AND TELEVISION STUDIES
MA IN FILM AND TELEVISION STUDIES**

2018-2019 Autumn Term Modules: Outlines and Summer Preparation

SCREEN CULTURES AND METHODS (Core Module 2018-19)



This core module aims to explore significant methodologies and conceptual frameworks which are central to the study of audio-visual media. The module will be divided into four sections engaging with issues concerning: textual analysis; television; theoretical paradigms; and the historical study of film. The module provides a grounding in key concepts and methods, but will also encourage an advanced level of reflection on the key areas addressed. The module is taught through a combination of screenings, presentations, reading and discussion and this document suggests some reading which will enable you to begin the module in a position of preparedness. We look forward to seeing you in October.

Dr Jon Burrows (convenor)
Dr Michael Pigott
Dr Rick Wallace
Ms Claire Jesson

Week 1: Introduction (Claire Jesson, Rick Wallace, Michael Pigott, Jon Burrows)

The first week of the module will be spent looking at a single film text from some of the different methodological perspectives that will be explored on the module.

Weeks 2 and 3: Textual Analysis (Claire Jesson)

This part of the module will allow you to practice and refine skills that will be crucial to your own work. Textual analysis involves, among other activities, observing the details of a film; 'reading' it closely. Through analysis we might form a deeper understanding of a film and build our own critical responses and arguments from this basis.

These two weeks will introduce, or reacquaint you with, close reading. (The films we watch and analyse are yet to be selected.) We will also spend time reflecting critically on the value of textual analysis as a methodology in film studies.

Summer preparation:

- If you are new to film studies, familiarise yourself with the basics of analysis, and its terminology, by perusing one of the following textbooks: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*. There are eleven editions (published between 1979 and 2017) so look at the most recent edition you can lay your hands on. **Or** try: Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction*, which has four editions.

- John Gibbs and Douglas Pye (eds), *Style and Meaning: Studies in the Detailed Analysis of Film* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005). This is an edited collection of detailed analyses you can read in concert with viewing the films analysed. (Your own responses to the films discussed might agree with, or challenge, these analyses.)
- VF Perkins' seminal book on 'understanding and judging movies' provides an overview of the approach to textual analysis we will adopt in our sessions: VF Perkins, *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies* (1972. Reprints 1991, 1993).

Weeks 4 and 5: Television (Rick Wallace)

Week 4 will discuss classic theories of the television text (how television is formed, how we experience it textually) and their applicability to our screenings and the ways that we watch television. Week 5 will concentrate on historiographical issues and methodologies specific to Television Studies. It is designed to help develop students' empirical research skills and to discuss the value of archival and other sources in contextualising television texts over time and examining the history of television viewing.

Summer preparation:

- Milly Buonanno, *The Age of Television: Experiences and Theories* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2008).
- John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge, 1982). Chapter 7: 'Broadcast TV as Cultural Form', pp. 111—126 & Chapter 8 'Broadcast TV as sound and image', pp. 127—144.
- Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds), *The Television Studies Book* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).
- Karen Lury, *Interpreting Television* (London: Hodder Education, 2005).
- Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1974).

The reading listed here is a short list of some key pieces of reading related to the study of television. The Buonanno is an excellent overview of a number of the key debates in television studies, some of which we will address in weeks 1, 4 and 5. You should also try and read Karen Lury's exploration of television analysis which will be particularly important for week 4's work. Geraghty and Lusted's edited collection provides an overview of many of the key debates in the field of Television Studies. If you have time, it will also be to your great advantage to have read Raymond Williams's (short, but important) book and the suggested chapters from John Ellis's *Visible Fictions* as we will be discussing their different theorisations of the television text (e.g. 'flow', 'glance theory', 'the segment') in more detail in weeks 1 and 4.

Week 6: Reading Week

Weeks 7 and 8: Theorising Film (Michael Pigott)

In this part of the module we will look at how cinema can be theorized as an audio-visual artform. We will pay critical attention to the relationship between the sound track and the image track, consider the status of recorded sound in the context of the recorded image, and learn to separate and analyse the distinct sonic layers of the film soundtrack. This section of the module will combine a theoretical approach to cinema with close textual analysis as a means of testing and refining our understanding.

Summer preparation:

- Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: BFI, 1987), pp. 1-30, 'Introduction' and 'Narratological Perspectives on Film Music'. Part of the work we will do is to disentangle the complex relationship between musical score, sound design, and diegetic sound in the film soundtrack. Gorbman's work is a seminal text for the study of film music and still a key reference point.
- Michel Chion, *Audio-vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). Michel Chion originated a number of vital concepts for the study of sound on screen, many of which are first delineated in this book. If you are interested in exploring Chion's extensive and rich work on cinema sound you may also want to seek out *Film: A Sound Art* (Columbia University Press, 2009), *The Voice in Cinema* (Columbia University Press, 1999) and *Sound: An Acoulogical Treatise* (Duke University Press, 2016).
- Rick Altman, 'Four and a Half Film Fallacies' in Rick Altman (ed) *Sound Theory/Sound Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35–45. This piece is useful for thinking about the nature of phonographic sound in relation to the photographic image of cinema.
- Béla Balázs, 'Theory of the Film: Sound' in Elizabeth Weis and John Belton (eds), *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 116-125. Originally written in 1945, this precedes many of the major movements in film theory. Its author Béla Balázs was an early theorist of cinema, and this provocative and speculative piece offers a manifesto for what sound film was and could be.

Weeks 9 and 10: Historical Methods and Approaches (Jon Burrows)

The final part of the module will concentrate upon historiographical issues and methodologies specific to Film Studies. It is designed to help develop students' empirical research skills and to discuss the value of archival research in contextualising film texts and examining the history of film exhibition and cinemagoing. The final week of the module will also discuss some of the controversial aims and ideas underpinning the emerging field of Media Archaeology.

Summer preparation:

- Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1985). This was effectively a manifesto for what became known as 'New Film History'. It usefully outlines a variety of different approaches to the study of film history, operating both as a helpful instruction manual and a considered discussion of the assumptions underpinning them. It remains the single most important 'textbook' concerned with the study of film history.
- Richard Maltby, 'How Can Cinema History Matter More?', *Screening the Past*, 22 (December 2007) <<http://tlweb.latrobe.edu.au/humanities/screeningthepast/22/board-richard-maltby.html>>. This is a very influential – and highly contentious – think piece, arguing that the study of film history needs to look beyond the contextualisation of individual films in order to enter into meaningful dialogue with historians working in other fields.
- Jussi Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012). This has become the standard introductory 'map' for this subject, though that's not to suggest that it is a particularly easy read.

Film Criticism, Film Style (Autumn Term Optional Module)
Module Tutor: James MacDowell



Rear Window (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)

MODULE OVERVIEW

The focus of the module ‘Film Criticism, Film Style’ is the close observation, description, and interpretation of particular films in precise detail. Its aim is to help improve the penetration of your observations about the significance of film style, to refine your ability to engage with some of the best film criticism, and to enable you to better articulate in the medium of words what you see and hear in the medium of film: from music to mise-en-scène, editing to performance, composition to camera movement.

This module will be equally accessible to those who have little experience of film analysis as to those who wish to deepen their existing skills. It is imperative always to continue striving to improve the keenness with which we perceive and respond to film style, since everything else that we might wish to discuss about films – their value, themes, emotional effects, political meanings, etc. – are only ever manifested *through* their style. The aim of this module is to reflect upon and wrestle with the challenge of this fact, and to help you rise to that challenge in your analyses.

The module will include lectures, seminars, readings of outstanding film criticism, presentations by students, and a 5000 word assessed essay, the title of which can be developed in consultation with the module tutor.

The films to be studied on the module are TBC, but they will cover a broad historical range, and will include works by at least some of the following: Alfred Hitchcock, Michael Haneke, Douglas Sirk, Mary Harron, Max Ophuls, the Coen Brothers, Jean Renoir, and/or Paul Thomas Anderson.

SUMMER READING

The following are suggested readings that you might consider undertaking, or at least perusing, before term begins. The texts have been selected for the generality of their discussion on matters of film criticism or film style, but also because they are freely accessible online. They range from short articles or chapters to entire books, so I don't expect you to have completed them all by October. Where appropriate, I have suggested sections that would be particularly helpful introductory reading for this module.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (1997) 'The Shot: Mise-en-Scene', from *Film Art: An Introduction* (5th Edition). Chapter downloadable here: <http://bit.ly/2ud4lqP>

Alex Clayton and Andrew Klevan (eds.) (2011) *The Language and Style of Film Criticism*. Especially the chapters 'Introduction' (Clayton/Klevan), 'Coming to Terms' (Clayton), and 'Description' (Klevan). Entire book downloadable here: <https://bit.ly/2GJbUsQ>

Timothy Corrigan (2001) *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* (4th Edition). Especially the chapters 'Beginning to Think, Preparing to Watch, and Starting to Write', and 'Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing'. Entire book downloadable here: <http://bit.ly/2uVjAIL>

John Gibbs (2001) 'The Elements of Mise-en-Scène', from *Mise-en-Scène: Film Style and Interpretation*. Chapter downloadable here: <http://bit.ly/2tMxKXU>

Paisley Livingston and Carl Plantinga (eds.) (2008) *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film*. Especially the chapters 'Authorship' (Aaron Meskin), 'Emotion and Affect' (Carl Plantinga), 'Interpretation' (George Wilson), and 'Style' (Noel Carroll). Entire book downloadable here: <http://bit.ly/2rPq7xm>

V. F. Perkins (1981) 'Moments of Choice'. Article accessible here: http://www.rouge.com.au/9/moments_choice.html

Television History and Aesthetics (Autumn Term Optional Module)



AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The aim of this module is to introduce students to key debates in Television Studies around genre and aesthetics, at the same time encouraging the development of debate and critique of scholarship in the field. This module will, then, operate simultaneously at introductory and advanced levels and will thus be taught through a combination of introductory presentations, screenings, discussion and small group work. This will enable you to further refine and practise the skills in textual analysis acquired and developed on the module(s) taken in the Autumn term.

Our focus will be predominantly on US and UK television with key examples drawn from other national television systems. Building upon the television historiography exercise undertaken on the core module during the Autumn term, our viewing will range across historical and contemporary programming within genres, in order to prompt consideration of development across time and to historicise the study of contemporary television.

By the end of this module, students will have a firm grasp of some key debates in Television Studies, and will be able to interrogate critical and theoretical scholarship in the field, using their further defined skills of textual analysis to test existing arguments and propose new ones. Many of our foci of study will be areas prompted by the module tutor's own research interests, and in which little research exists to date. Accordingly, the module aims to encourage students to undertake original research on television topics.

Summer Preparation

If you intend to take this module in the Autumn term, the best preparation that you can do is to view as widely as possible, outside the range of your typical television viewing habits. You might try to become familiar with British television listings magazines, such as the *Radio Times*, to get a sense of the different channel identities and schedules. You can also explore this online. Keep an eye on popular television criticism in British broadsheet newspapers such as the *Guardian* and *Observer*, as well as on scholarly blogs such as www.csonline.tv and www.flowtv.org. Below are some suggestions for key pieces of television theory that will be points of reference during the module, and some recent books which address the changing nature of television – and the challenges this produces for television history, theory and criticism – in the digital age. It would be useful to read one of these before the module begins, to have a sense of the contemporary debates in the field.

John Corner (1999) *Critical Ideas in Television Studies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;
James Bennett and Nikki Strange (2011) *Television as Digital Media*, Durham: Duke University Press.
Marijke De Valck and Jan Teurlings (2013) *After the Break: Television Theory Today*, Amsterdam University Press.
John Ellis (2000) *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty*, London: I.B. Tauris;
Karen Lury (2005) *Interpreting Television*, London: Hodder Arnold
Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (eds.) (2004) *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, Durham: Duke University Press.
Graeme Turner and Jinna Tay (2009) *Television Studies After TV: Understanding Television in the Post-Broadcast Era*, London: Routledge.

FILM CULTURES

(BA Year 3/MA Autumn Term Optional Module)



**Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin**



Module Leader: Dr. Alastair Phillips

The idea of 'film culture' rests at the heart of the many ways in which filmmakers, audiences, curators, distributors, exhibitors, journalists, critics and scholars engage with the medium of the moving image. But what does it mean? How have these meanings changed over time? What is the relationship between the idea of 'film culture' and broader trends in today's cultural landscape?

This module will introduce you to various debates and perspectives that will illuminate the field and allow you to gain an important practical, as well as critical, sense of what 'working in the film industry' might entail for you.

MODULE AIMS

'Film Cultures' aims to provide you with a sophisticated grounding in the various ways by which film culture has been conceptualised, articulated and disseminated at key moments in the history of the moving image. You will be able to reflect on an enormous variety of methods, text and experiences ranging from the 1930s through to the present day.

Important and innovative dimensions of this module will include:

- its international range
- a fieldwork visit to a major film festival

- a visiting speaker programme
- the opportunity to replace a conventional written assignment with a practical curatorial project.

It will pay close attention to certain forms, spaces and sites of meaning that have sustained global film culture such as:

- the specialist film journal
- the cinematheque
- the museum
- the local and the global film festival
- contemporary DVD publishing
- the internet (including contemporary streaming platforms, blogs and websites).

MODULE OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, you should be able to understand and critique the various ways by which international film culture has been conceptualised, curated, disseminated and discussed over the years. You will have an informed grasp of critical debates surrounding the related phenomena of film clubs, film festivals, film journals, film museums and archives, film publishing labels, and contemporary online film portals such as streaming services, blogs and websites. You will possess a historicised grasp of the notion of the film canon and how it has been formulated, challenged and resisted at key moments in film culture. You will also have a practical and nuanced understanding of how many of these concepts and ideas are articulated and experienced within contemporary forms of screen curatorial practice.

SUMMER PREPARATION

I strongly recommend you start exploring the diverse ways in which contemporary film culture is being conceptualized and disseminated via a range of online and publishing platforms. You might, for example, want to start a run of recent issues of journals such as *Sight & Sound* or *Film Comment*. How do these publications reinforce or manage reader expectations about questions of cultural value and critical taste? How do they cover contemporary film festivals, book and DVD publishing and cinema programming? How are recent film releases discussed and reviewed? You might also want to follow an online streaming service such as MUBI or BFI Player and assess their programming decisions and online presentation. I recommend thoroughly acquainting yourself with a leading DVD publisher such as Criterion and evaluating their catalogue and supplementary materials, much of which is published online. Finally, you may wish to select the programming and marketing decisions being made by a local, regional or national film theatre or cinematheque in order to gain a sense of their current policies regarding the development of a diverse moving image audience.

SUMMER READING

Peter Bosma (2015) *Film Programming: Curating for Cinemas, Festivals & Archives*

Matthias Frey and Cecilia Sayad (eds.) *Film Criticism in the Digital Age*

Dina Iordanova (ed.) (2013) *The Film Festival Reader*

Marijke De Valck and Malte Hagener (eds.) (2005) *Cinephilia: Movies, Love, Memory*

Marijke De Valck (2007) *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*