

University of Wales Trinity Saint David



Understanding Film Technique

HPMF4002

2019-20

UNDERSTANDING FILM TECHNIQUE

HPMF4002

20 Credit Module

Room: TL10

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 10.00-13.00 (Weeks 3-7 Semester One)

Teaching is by Seminar, Production Workshop, and Tutorial

Monday: Seminar 10.00-12.00; Production Workshop 12.00-13.00

Tuesday: Seminar 10.00-12.00; Tutorial 12.00-13.00

Wednesday: Seminar 10.00-12.00; Production Workshop 12.00-13.00

Module Coordinator: Dr Matt Jones

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SYLLABUS

This module will provide an introduction to understanding film technique. Through the close analysis of a variety of texts, we shall look at the ways in which form and content communicate meaning to audiences. Students will be introduced to the formal conventions of cinematography, mise-en-scene and editing, and the concepts of narrative and narrative realism. The ideological aspects of film and media texts will be addressed, alongside the cultural factors at play in film production and reception. Contemporary critical and theoretical approaches to the study of film will also be introduced, and by the end of the module students will have the conceptual, aesthetic and critical framework to analyse a variety of film and media texts.

The module will engage with a number of essential film texts (listed below) to illustrate a variety of techniques, ideological and aesthetic choices, and narrative forms. Students will be given an indication of which film texts are most relevant to each of the specific seminars, but it will be useful for students to familiarise themselves with the full list of films as they will be referred to on an ongoing basis throughout discussions. Students will always take more from seminars if they are able to offer their own views on the films under discussion, and preparation through familiarising yourself with the material is vital.

In addition to seminars that are largely based on film and television texts, there will be sessions on other media forms, such as digital animation and gaming.

MODULE AIMS

- To provide students with an understanding of film representation and the formal elements of film aesthetics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Identify the variety of formal elements that constitute film representations.
- Interpret the form and content of films using appropriate analytical methods.
- Evaluate the stylistic content of films from a variety of genres and historical periods.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Note-taking, giving presentations, research skills, writing essays, communication, evaluative and analytical skills. Recognition of formal techniques involved in the construction of visual media texts.

MODULE EVALUATION

At the end of the module you will be asked to complete a module evaluation form. Please refer to the learning outcomes when making your evaluation.

TIMETABLE

The course will be taught over **5 weeks** between **week 3** and **week 7** of semester one

Student Presentations will take place in **week 3**.

Please see the **Module Outline** on p.6 for details of the timetable

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential

- Bordwell, D. and Thompson, K. (2010) *Film Art: An Introduction* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cook, D. (2016) *A History of Narrative Film* (5th ed.). London: Norton.
- Corrigan, T. and White, P. (2009) *The Film Experience: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Recommended

- Bateman, J. and Schmidt, K.H. (2011) *Multimodal Film Analysis: How Films Mean*. London: Routledge.
- Bignell, J. (2012) *Introduction to Television Studies* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Braudy, L. and Cohen, M. (eds.) (2009) *Film Theory and Criticism* (7th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, B. (2011) *Cinematography: Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Brown, S., Street, S. and Watkins, L.I. (eds.) (2012) *Colour and the Moving Image: History, Theory, Aesthetics, Archive*. London: Routledge.
- Buchan, S. (ed.) (2013) *Pervasive Animation*. London: Routledge.
- Buckland, W. (2007) *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buckland, W. (2009) *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*. London: Routledge.
- Buckland, W. (2012) *Film Theory: Rational Reconstructions*. London: Routledge.
- Coates, P. (2010) *Cinema and Colour*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Cook, P. (ed.) (2007) *The Cinema Book* (3rd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Curtis, D. (2006) *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Dick, B.F. (2009) *Anatomy of Film* (6th ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Elsaesser, T. and Hagener, M. (2009) *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. London: Routledge.
- Etherington-Wright, C. and Doughty, R. (2011) *Understanding Film Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Gaut, B. (2010) *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbs, J. (2001) *Mise-en-Scene*. London: Wallflower.
- Hand, M. (2011) *Ubiquitous Photography*. Oxford: Polity.
- Helsby, W. (ed.) (2006) *Understanding Representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kydd, E. (2011) *The Critical Practice of Film: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Lehman, P. and Luhr, W. (2008) *Thinking About Movies: Watching, Questioning, Enjoying* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lotz, A. and Gray, J. (2011) *Television Studies*. Oxford: Polity.
- McDougall, J. and O'Brien, W. (2008) *Studying Videogames*. Leighton Buzzard: Auteur.

Murphy, R. (ed.) (2009) *The British Cinema Book* (3rd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Nelmes, J. (ed.) (2011) *Introduction to Film Studies* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
Orpen, V. (2003) *Film Editing*. London: Wallflower.
Phillips, W.H. (2009) *Film: An Introduction* (4th ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Sanders, J. (2009) *The Film Genre Book*. Leighton Buzzard: Auteur.
Smith, G.M. (2007) *Film Structure and the Emotion System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Walters, J. (ed.) (2010) *Film Moments: Criticism, History, Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Whittock, T. (2009) *Metaphor and Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wickham, P. (2007) *Understanding Television Texts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Journals

Cinema Journal
Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television
Quarterly Review of Film and Video
Screen
Sight and Sound
Studies in European Cinema

Websites

www.afi.com
www.bfi.org.uk
www.imdb.com

Students will be directed to appropriate online resources over the course of the module. Students should also use the library catalogue to source texts relevant to the study of individual films and filmmakers.

ESSENTIAL TEXTS:

Nosferatu (Murnau, 1922)

Scarface (Hawks, 1932)

Double Indemnity (Wilder, 1944)

The Bicycle Thieves (De Sica, 1948)

The Searchers (Ford, 1956)

North by North-West (Hitchcock, 1959)

The 400 Blows (Truffaut, 1959)

Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960)

Die Hard (McTiernan, 1988)

Thelma and Louise (Scott, 1991)

Jurassic Park (Spielberg, 1993)

La Haine (Kassovitz, 1995)

Rushmore (Anderson, 1997)

Trainspotting (1997)

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (Coen Bros., 2000)

The Proposition (Hillcoat, 2005)

Little Miss Sunshine (Dayton and Faris, 2006)

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Fincher, 2011)

Peaky Blinders (BBC TV series, 2013-present)

The Grand Budapest Hotel (Anderson, 2014)

All DVDs are available in the library.

MODULE OUTLINE:

1. **Cinematography and Editing** (7th Oct) (WEEK 3, 7-11 OCT)
The Searchers; Jurassic Park
2. **Cinematography and Editing** (8th Oct)
Goodfellas, Little Miss Sunshine
3. **Cinematography and Editing** (9th Oct)
The Bicycle Thieves, The 400 Blows, La Haine
4. **Mise-en-scène** (14th Oct) (WEEK 4, 14-18 OCT)
Psycho, The Proposition
5. **Mise-en-scène & Visual Symbols** (15th Oct)
Nosferatu, Scarface; Double Indemnity
6. **Film Narration** (16th Oct)
North by Northwest; Peaky Blinders
7. **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (21st Oct)** (WEEK 5, 21-25 OCT)
The schedule will be published on Moodle
8. **Film Narration and Ideology (1)** (22nd Oct)
Little Miss Sunshine
9. **Film Narration and Ideology (2)** (23rd Oct)
Die Hard; Thelma and Louise
10. **The Musical Soundtrack** (28th Oct 2018) (WEEK 6, 28 OCT-1 NOV)
Double Indemnity; Psycho; Goodfellas; Trainspotting; Peaky Blinders
11. **Digital Post-production** (29th Oct 2018)
Jurassic Park; O Brother, Where Art Thou?
12. **Digital Post-production** (30th Oct 2018)
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

(WEEK 7, 4-6 NOV): Three workshops on Mon 4th, Tue 5th, and Weds 6th Nov to help students prepare for Assignment 2: Essay (Deadline: **Friday 15th November 2019**)

LEVEL 4 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Module:	Understanding Film Technique		
Module code:	HPMF4002	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	MJ	Internal Verifier:	BA
Assignment Title:	Assessment 1: Understanding Film Technique – Presentation	Word count (or equivalent):	2000 eq.
Submission deadline:	Presentations Start 10am Monday 21st Oct 2019 Submission: 12 noon	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	Mon 22nd Nov 2019
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		
Module Learning Outcomes			

(from module syllabus)

- Identify the variety of formal elements that constitute film representations.
- Interpret the form and content of films using appropriate analytical methods.
- Evaluate the stylistic content of films from a variety of genres and historical periods.

TASK DESCRIPTION

ASSESSMENT **Coursework 100%**

Assessment 1 (50%): Presentation (to the equivalent of 2000 words)

To take place on **Monday 21st October 2019 from 10am.**

Presentation of 10-15 minutes, to comprise the close, formal analysis of a selected scene from one of the films or television series studied on the module. (This should evidence awareness of cinematographic and editing techniques, and appreciation of visual compositions and the use of mise-en-scène.)

You must avoid using the same texts and examples or the same subject matter in your two assignments.

Feedback will be given by **Friday 22nd November 2019.**

Presentations scripts and materials **must** be submitted via Moodle.

Work should be double spaced, page numbered, and fully referenced according to the University's Harvard referencing booklet.

Filmographies and bibliographies must be included in the submission of all written work.

A word count should be supplied at the end of your work, which should not include filmographies and bibliographies.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria on the module marking proformer.

A full rubric for the assessment criteria related to this assessment and level of study can be found on the Film and Media Moodle homepage.

1. Engagement with Research

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set. You should provide evidence that you have accessed an appropriate *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate your ability to engage with literature skills by using relevant and focused scholarly materials from an appropriate range of current and/or seminal sources, evaluating the credibility of these sources, and ensure that your work is properly referenced.*

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 4, you should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with your area(s) of study. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the main theoretical discourses behind the film text*

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of your subject(s) of study. You should be able to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to your area(s) of study and/or work. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? You should provide justification for your arguments and judgements using evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of others within the subject area and that you are able to make sound judgements and arguments using data and concepts. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate cognitive and intellectual skills through the critical analysis of the broad principles underlying the text(s) you have chosen, presenting coherent arguments supported by a range of credible scholarly materials.*

4. Practical Skills

At level 4, you should be able to apply the basic underlying concepts and principles to evaluate and interpret these within the context of your area of study. You should be able to demonstrate how the subject-related concepts and ideas relate to real world situations and/or a particular context. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in that context, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or solutions to solve problems, or to create artefacts. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others based on stated criteria.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate practical skills through the close, critical and formal analysis of the genre text(s) you have chosen, forming a connection between your analysis and your main theoretical arguments. You need to demonstrate good presentation skills and effective resource management, including managing your time and display materials.*

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. This includes demonstrating: that you can communicate the results of your study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments; that you can initiate and complete tasks and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills appropriate to the task, demonstrating a professional attitude by engaging*

clearly and directly with your audience, providing clear and well-structured display material and managing your time effectively.



LEVEL 4 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Module:	Understanding Film Technique		
Module code:	HPMF4002	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	MJ	Internal Verifier:	BA
Assignment Title:	Assessment 2: Understanding Film Technique – Essay	Word count (or equivalent):	2000
Submission deadline:	12 noon Friday 15th Nov 2019	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	Fri 13th Dec 2019
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles,		

	etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.
Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)	
• Identify the variety of formal elements that constitute film representations. • Interpret the form and content of films using appropriate analytical methods. • Evaluate the stylistic content of films from a variety of genres and historical periods.	

TASK DESCRIPTION

Assessment 2 (50%): Essay (2000 words)

Assignment due: Noon, 15th Nov 2019.

To comprise critical and theoretical analysis of film and media texts studied on the module. Students should answer ONE of the following questions:

- Consider the use of mise-en-scene in TWO essential texts and provide a critical interpretation of the way in which visual symbols are seen to communicate meaning.
- Discuss the use of visual storytelling in TWO essential texts, examining the way in which the various cinematic elements, e.g. framing, lighting, camera movement, are effective in developing the narrative.
- Critically analyse a single scene from TWO essential texts, focusing upon the way in which the editing is seen to be instrumental in the construction of meaning.
- Provide a critical interpretation of the representation of EITHER gender OR social class in TWO essential texts and how this is seen to affect the film's ideological position.
- Discuss the use of the soundtrack in TWO essential texts and consider the way in which the interaction between music and image adds meaning and value.

You must avoid using the same texts and examples or the same subject matter in your two assignments.

Work should be labelled with your student number, module code, and assignment number and full title. The essay question being addressed should be reproduced in full.

Feedback will be given by 13th Dec 2019.

All written work must be produced in a Microsoft Word compatible document and submitted via Moodle by the deadlines given above.

Work should be double spaced, page numbered, and fully referenced according to the University's Harvard referencing booklet.

Filmographies and bibliographies must be included in the submission of all written work.

A word count should be supplied at the end of your work, which should not include filmographies and bibliographies.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria overleaf.

1. Engagement with Research

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set. You should provide evidence that you have accessed an appropriate *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate your ability to engage with literature skills by using relevant and focused scholarly materials from an appropriate range of current and/or seminal sources, evaluating the credibility of these sources, and ensure that your work is properly referenced.*

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 4, you should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with your area(s) of study. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the main theoretical discourses behind the film text.*

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of your subject(s) of study. You should be able to evaluate the appropriateness of

different approaches to solving problems related to your area(s) of study and/or work. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? You should provide justification for your arguments and judgements using evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of others within the subject area and that you are able to make sound judgements and arguments using data and concepts. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate cognitive and intellectual skills through the critical analysis of the broad principles underlying the text(s) you have chosen, presenting coherent arguments supported by a range of credible scholarly materials.*

4. Practical Skills

At level 4, you should be able to apply the basic underlying concepts and principles to evaluate and interpret these within the context of your area of study. You should be able to demonstrate how the subject-related concepts and ideas relate to real world situations and/or a particular context. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in that context, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or solutions to solve problems, or to create artefacts. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others based on stated criteria.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You need to demonstrate practical skills through the close, critical and formal analysis of the text(s) you have chosen, forming a connection between your analysis and your main theoretical arguments.*

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. This includes demonstrating: that you can communicate the results of your study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments; that you can initiate and complete tasks and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *You must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills appropriate to the task, demonstrating a professional attitude by managing your resources effectively, including your study materials and the time allocated to the task, and through effective communication, including verbal and written communication with your tutors.*

FEEDBACK

Feedback is an essential part of all education and training programmes. It helps learners to maximise their potential at different stages of training, raise their awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, and identify actions to be taken to improve performance.

Feedback can be seen as informal (for example in day-to-day encounters between teachers and students or trainees, between peers or between colleagues) or formal (for example as part of written or clinical assessment). However, there is no sharp dividing line between assessment and teaching in the area of giving feedback on learning. Feedback is part of the overall dialogue or interaction between teacher and learner, not a one-way communication.

During your studies you will therefore receive feedback in many ways, including the following:

- Dialogue between teachers and students in formal classes
- Direct questions and responses from tutors inside and outside formal classes
- Email correspondence between teachers and students
- Interactions between students and teachers using the module message board on Moodle
- Informal comments and responses to pitches and presentations in classes
- Comments and annotations added to written submissions, such as essays and reflective journals
- Formal written feedback in response to assignments recorded on the summative assessment module feedback forms

You will have the opportunity to discuss your feedback with your Module tutor.

Feedback will be returned on assessed work within 20 working days of submission.