

Learn to Love Solitude

(ADFM5018)

Overview

At the heart of a good story there is character – in fact some would say that a great story is always about character and the complexities and intimacies of the human condition that it reveals within the context of the stories we tell. In the **Learn to Love Solitude** module, you will investigate notions of the self, silence and solitude whilst being challenged to respond to a series of questions such as **‘what is the difference between ‘aloneness and loneliness?’** or ‘what does it mean to be human?’

Exploring a range of ideas from the society of the spectacle and the urban diversions of the attention economy through to bucolic encounters with ecocriticism and the call of the wild, you will take these ideas and explore answers to these searching questions within the **documentary film form**. Central to the module is the engagement and close readings of a number of key texts that through research, close readings and visualisations will provide a gateway into a deeper engagement with the themes of the **human condition** such as desire, loneliness and solitude.

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Highlights

- Exploring Character – in both interior and exterior worlds
- Visualisation - Finding visual metaphors - solitude and the self — character strengths/psychopathologies
- Experimentation with documentary (or essay film) film form.
- Exploring point of view – psychological, philosophical, political, ecocriticism, the contemporary gaze
- Negotiating cinematic space - landscapes - psychogeography – filming the Sublime
- Contemplating cinematic time - slow cinema – long take v montage
- Audiovisual aesthetics – the sound image in context

Module Outline

- AIM(S)
- To challenge students to **respond to set stimuli. (Learn to Love Solitude)**
- To experiment with different narrative and aesthetic forms.
- LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:
- Respond and create **a series of film ideas.**
- **Experiment** and defend the use of aesthetic and narrative decisions made during film practice.
- Deconstruct and reconstruct ideas into practice.

The Task: (Pitch) Portfolio

You are required to produce and submit a portfolio consisting of up to 10 elements that provides evidence of your engagement with the themes of the module and the development process for a **documentary film**.

Your portfolio should be made up of a series of short exercises and commentaries that document the development of a number of story ideas, visual research and experimentation with film form - leading towards an original concept for a **10-minute documentary film** around the **Learn to Love Solitude** theme.

(Learning Outcome 1)

The exercises will be inspired at times by close readings from a range of key texts, combined with the opportunity for creative writing that will be linked to storytelling and visualisation through different aspects of documentary film practice that will be introduced and explored in lectures and seminars.

There is also the opportunity to focus on an area of specialism within the assignment work and the development of your portfolio. **(Learning Outcome 3)**

The Task: (Pitch) Portfolio

- Exercises will include engagement with ideas/concepts from the following topics (subject to change):
- **(Learning Outcome 2)**
- Exploring Character – in both interior and exterior worlds
- Visualisation - Finding visual metaphors - solitude and the self — character strengths/psychopathologies
- Experimentation with documentary (or essay film) film form.
- Exploring point of view – psychological, philosophical, political, ecocriticism, the contemporary gaze
- Negotiating cinematic space - landscapes - psychogeography – filming the Sublime
- Contemplating cinematic time - slow cinema – long take v montage
- Audiovisual aesthetics – the sound image in context
- Your final submission needs to be a digital portfolio that can incorporate a mixed media approach – that includes a series of short film sequences combined with sketches, photographs, and other visual elements – along with an audio commentary that articulates the critical thinking behind your work.

submission types

- This 8-10 minute portfolio must highlight your engagement with the text and demonstrate your attempts to produce a range of film practice in response to it.
- You will be submitting a portfolio of work of **10 elements**.
- This portfolio might include the following,
 - **Scripts** (revisions of the text and/or work inspired by it)
 - **Director's notes** (this can take the form of your approach to actions, internal conflicts, exhibited emotions etc.)
 - **Filmed scenes** (test shots of scenes discussed on the module)
 - **Editing footage to audio** (could be original or found footage with a voice over of the scripts with sound design)
 - **Visual commentaries** (exploring the themes discussed within the novel and their links to other stories)
 - **Ripomatics** (these ripomatics will explore aspects of the story and visual aesthetics)

...this is a storytelling module

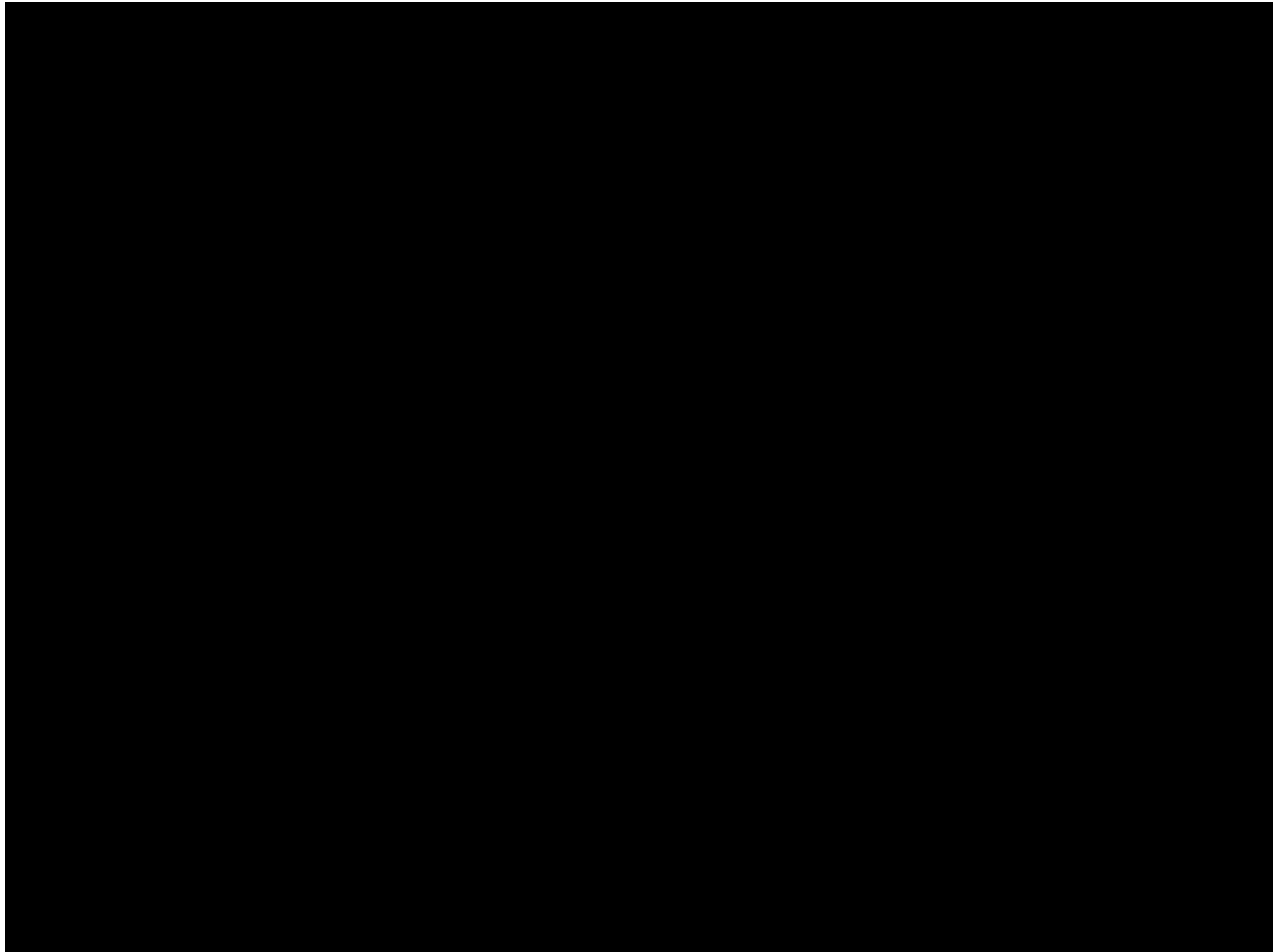
Life does not tell stories:

structuring devices in documentary filmmaking

“Life does not tell stories. Life is chaotic, fluid, random. It leaves myriads of ends untied, untidily. Writers can extract a story from life only by strict, close selection, and this must mean falsification. Telling stories really is telling lies.” (B.S. Johnson, quoted in Jonathan Coe, 2004: 35)

The Girl Chewing Gum (1976)
John Smith

“creative treatment of actuality”



It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say.

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970)

Seminar Exercise

Discuss John Smith's *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976) using both of the quotes to think about life/storytelling and the documentary filmmaking process....