

# London South Bank University

## Module Guide



### Reading the Screen 2: **Theory and Aesthetics**

FAM\_4\_RST

Faculty of Arts and Human  
Sciences

2017-18, Semester 2

**become what you want to be**

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## MODULE DETAILS

<b>Module Title:</b>	<b>Reading the Screen 2: Theory and Aesthetics</b>
<b>Module Level:</b>	4
<b>Module Reference Number:</b>	FAM_4_RST
<b>Credit Value:</b>	20
<b>Student Study Hours:</b>	200
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	36
<b>Private Study Hours:</b>	164
<b>Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):</b>	None
<b>Co-requisite Units (If applicable):</b>	None
<b>Course(s):</b>	BA Film Studies; Combined Hons. Film Studies
<b>Year and Semester</b>	2017/18, Sem 2
<b>Module Coordinator:</b>	Donatella Maraschin
<b>UC Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:maraschd@lsbu.ac.uk">maraschd@lsbu.ac.uk</a>
<b>Teaching Team &amp; Contact Details (If applicable):</b>	Borough Road, B 459
<b>Subject Area:</b>	Film Studies
<b>Summary of Assessment Method:</b>	1 x Group Presentation with Individual Reflection and Production Log and 1 x essay

## SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module develops and builds on the work covered in 'Reading the Screen 1: Analysis and Design and introduces students to a range of theoretical approaches to the study of film. It introduces students to the role of film theory as a criterium to understand and analyse movies. The module concentrates on a selection of AngloAmerican and European film theory strands. There will be screenings of films throughout the module to explore the complex and meaningful dialogue between close textual analysis and various theoretical approaches.

## AIMS OF THE MODULE

This module aims to:

- provide an introduction to the theoretical concerns of Film Studies
- introduce students to a range of theoretical perspectives in Critical Theory
- encourage students to enter into a critical dialogue with a range of theoretical perspectives through film analysis

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the module students should have developed:

- an awareness of the theoretical concerns of Film Studies
- the ability to deploy a range of theoretical perspectives in the analysis of film
- the ability to form critical perspectives on film studies based on meaningful links between film theory and analysis

### Transferable Skills

At the end of this module students should have acquired a range of skills:

- oral communication and written skills
- critical appraisal of source material (written and visual)
- extracting and analysing information
- analytical skills in devising arguments, use of relevant evidence and forming judgments
- collaborative work in groups
- time management

## ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

### a. **One Group Presentation (40% of overall grade)**

**Divided into two parts:**

**Group Presentation (50%)**

**Individual Reflection AND Production Log (1000 words) (50%)**

You are required to produce a group presentation in Weeks 8 and 9. The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length. The group will be presented a collective mark. You will be allocated a quote from a theoretical source in the required reading for this semester and you are required to apply this theory to aspects of film covered in the module. It is also an opportunity for you to develop aspects you have been particularly interested in. Your individual paper enables you to go into more specific detail of the area you researched for the presentation. You are required to keep a log of all the meetings and all aspects of your preparation for the presentation in order to encourage a professional conduct concerning group presentations. The log must be submitted with your individual reflection on the presentation. It is YOUR responsibility to find a group to work in, not forming a group may result in failing this part of the overall assessment.

### b. **One Individual Essay (1500 words) (60% of overall grade)**

**Essay questions will be provided mid-way through the course**

## FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the submission of an assignment.

## INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

### Overview of the Main Content

The module is divided into three blocks of study, beginning with an overview of the emergence of film theory (Block A) and leading to the ways, in which film theory evolved over the years and branched into different critical approaches. Particular attention will be paid to two distinct ways of approaching a film, a meta-textual approach (Block B), or a close textual analysis approach (Block C). The module ends with student presentations and a summary of the main critical frameworks explored in this module.

### Overview of Types of Classes

Sessions will consist of a combination of interactive lectures, seminars and film screenings. Students are expected to prepare for the seminars in advance by reading the relevant material from the reading list provided, and will be encouraged to participate in seminar discussions. There will be greater emphasis on the reading of theoretical texts prior to and during seminar time.

### Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

The emphasis in this module is to guide and foster individual, independent study. The teaching sessions enable students to use time for independent study effectively.

Attendance at lectures, seminars and screenings is compulsory. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please notify your tutor in advance of the class by:

- Email;
- In writing.

You are reminded that:

Self-motivation, organization of time, and independent learning are key transferable skills for this module. Students are expected to undertake at least 114 hours of independent study for this module

Learner Support Material:

You will need to use both printed and electronic sources. As well as the recommended readings and references later in this guide, you should use the Web site LISA <http://www.lisa.sbu.ac.uk>

Our Learning and Information Services have created this site as your starting point for information searching. Use it to find books and other printed materials held in the Library, in other libraries, and to access recommended Web sites, electronic abstracting services and full text journal articles. You can also use it to renew your books.

LISA can be used by anyone anywhere, but access to its premium databases and full text article services is restricted to SBU campuses and members of the University at home who apply for off-campus access. Details for off-campus access are on Help Sheet 3 Off-Campus (Remote) Access on LISA at <http://www.lisa.sbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/index.html>

For help with using books, journals and electronic materials use the Information Support Centre (ISC) on Level 3 East in the Perry Library (ext.6627) or Help Desks in the other Libraries. The ISC contains reference and statistics collections and over 15 PCs dedicated to information searching. Staff will guide you to the most appropriate sources.

You can also use our Information Quest package <http://www.lisa.sbu.ac.uk/quest> to learn how to search for materials for assignments.

You may also find the British Film Institute Library a valuable resource, especially for specialist and out-of-print material.

BFI Library, on the SOUTHBANK!!! 15mins leisurely walk from Borough Road!  
Or visit their website at: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/library/>

## Employability

This module will prepare students for roles associated with the media and creative industries. Employability of students is enhanced by specific knowledge gained, and intellectual and practical skills learned on the module. This module promotes high-level verbal and written communication, essential in the workplace. It also provides experience and develops skills in planning, team-working and independent thought, good interpersonal qualities and problem solving. These so-called 'soft' skills are vitally important in all branches of the Media Industries. Transferable skills include analytical skills, communication and technical presentation skills, creative problem solving, and working to a brief.

# THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

## 8.1 Film Screening Programme

The film screening programme is an integral part of the module. Screenings will take place on the following afternoons, attendance for screenings is compulsory.

Week	Film
01	<i>Benny's video</i> (Michael Haneke, 1992)
02	<i>Festen/Celebration</i> (Vinterbeg, 1998)
03	<i>Klute</i> (A. Pakula, 1971)
04	<i>Love affair, or the case of the missing switchboard operator</i> (Dusan Makavejev, 1967).
05	<i>Spellbound</i> (A. Hitchcock, 1945)
06	NO SCREENING
07	NO SCREENING
08	<i>Citizen Kane</i> (Orson Welles, 1941)
09	<i>E.T.</i> (Spielberg, 1982)
10	<i>Peeping Tom</i> (Michael Powell, 1959)
11	<i>The Conformist</i> (B. Bertolucci, 1970)
12	NO SCREENING

### **General Background reading throughout the semester (you are expected to read at least two of the texts recommended below)**

Andrew, D. (1976) *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Braudy & Cohen (eds.) *Film Theory and Criticism*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Oxford: OUP. 1999

Braudy & Cohen (eds.) *Film Theory and Criticism*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Oxford: OUP. 2004

Collins, J; Radner, H; Preacher Collins, A (eds) (1993) *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, New York: Routledge.

Cook, P. & Bernink, M. (eds) (1999) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *The Cinema Book*, London: BFI. [see Part 7]

Gianetti, L. (2002) 9<sup>th</sup> edition, *Understanding Movies*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall [see Chapter 10 'Theory']

Hill, J. & Church Gibson, P (eds) (2000) *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [See section: The Film Text: Theoretical Frameworks].

Maltby, R. (2003) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *Hollywood Cinema*, Oxford: Blackwell. [see Chapter 17, 'Criticism' and Chapter 18, 'Theories'].

Stam, R. (2000) *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Stam, R. & Miller, T. (eds) (2000) *Film Theory: An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

## 8.2 Weekly Programme

### WEEK 1: What is the function and purpose of film theory?

- WELCOME to the module
- Brief overview module guide and Moodle
- Always start with: 'What kind of film is it?'
- Key questions of film theory- issues surrounding **representation, ideology and point of view**

#### Film

*Benny's video* (Michael Haneke, 1992)

#### Readings

See Module Reader and Moodle

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### WEEK 2: Realism 1: Key issues in Cinematic Realism

This class introduces you to core issues in cinematic realism and the nineteenth-century tradition, the realist film theory which includes Lukács, Kracauer, Grierson and Bazin. We will look at the properties of film and its disposition towards the real.

We will focus on the Danish Film Movement Dogme '95.

#### Film

*Festen/Celebration* (Vinterberg, 1998)

#### Readings

See Module Reader and Moodle

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### WEEK 3: Realism 2: Anti-Realism

This week, we will be looking at the discussion about realism from the perspective of theorists and filmmakers who view the film as a tool to mould, interpret and create reality. We will look at the avant-garde and will make some preliminary observations on Colin MacCabe's concept of the 'classic realist text'.

#### Film

Viewing: *Klute* (A. Pakula, 1971, 1h 54m).

#### Readings

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 4: Film language and Semiotics**

In this lecture we will address the rise of structuralism and semiotics in the 1960's and 1970's and the use of a scientific method (The science of Signs) for the deconstruction of the film text by Christian Metz. We will look at the 'Grande Syntagmatique' theorized by Metz and how he applied the semiotics of denotation and connotation to the study of film narrative.

We will focus on the Czech and Serbian New Wave.

### **Film**

*Love affair, or the case of the missing switchboard operator* (Dusan Makavejev, 1967, Yugoslavia, 66m).

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 5: Film theory and Psychonalisys**

This class looks at the encounter between psychoanalysis and the cinema and at the shift of attention in film theory from the film language and film structure to the psychological effects of the cinema apparatus on the subject.

### **Film**

*Spellbound* (A. Hitchcock, 1945)

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 6: GROUP TUTORIALS**

## **WEEK 7: Formally assessed GROUP PRESENTATIONS.**

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## **WEEK 8: Ideology and Politics 1**

This lecture will introduce you to key questions of film theory on issues surrounding representation, ideology and point of view

### **Film**

*Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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# **EASTER BREAK**

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## **WEEK 9: Ideology and Politics 2**

This lecture addresses how mainstream (blockbuster) cinema handles the socio-political world. We will discuss a specific style of American cinema that focuses on the spectacle.

### **Film**

*E.T.* (Spielberg, 1982, 115m)

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 10: Interrogating the 'male gaze'**

This lecture will address psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches to film. Will look at Laura Mulvey's key concept of the 'male gaze' and we will locate the 'male gaze' within the wider *Screen* tradition

### **Film**

*Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, UK, 1959)

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 11: Narration and point of view I: Bordwell and Wilson**

This lecture will introduce key concepts surrounding film narration: the whole, competing elements, cardinal and satellite points in narrative. We will discuss the construction of point of view in film (from *Film as Art* to *Film as Film*)

### **Film**

*The Conformist* (B. Bertolucci, Italy, 1970, 111m)

### **Readings**

See Module Reader and Moodle

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## **WEEK 12: Essay tutorials**

**Group essay tutorials based on your choice of the Essay Question - an opportunity for you to discuss your essay plan and any questions regarding structure or the development of argument in your essay. It is your responsibility to book your slot and confirm your attendance by email the day before tutorials commence. Essay deadline week 13.**

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## 9 LEARNING RESOURCES

### 9.1 Core Materials

- Andrew, D. (1976) *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Andrew, D. (1984) *Concepts in Film Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bould, Mark (2009) *the cinema of John Sayles*. London: Wallflower.
- Braudy, Leo & Marshall Cohen (Eds) *Film Theory and Criticism*. Oxford: OUP. 1999
- Collins, J; Radner, H; Preacher Collins, A (eds) (1993) *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, New York: Routledge.
- Cook, P. & Bernink, M. (eds) (1999) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *The Cinema Book*, London: BFI.
- Gianetti, L. (2002) 9<sup>th</sup> edition, *Understanding Movies*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Hill, J. & Church Gibson, P (eds) (2000) *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nelmes, J. (ed) (2003) *An Introduction to Film Studies*, London: Routledge
- Nichols, Bill (ed), *Movies and methods vol 1 LA*: University of California Press. 1976.
- Nichols, Bill (ed), *Movies and methods vol 2* Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1985
- Robert Stam & Toby Miller (eds), *Film and Theory: An Anthology* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000)
- Purse, L. *Digital Imaging in Popular Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
- Purse, L. *Contemporary Action Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Stam, R. (2000) *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Tasker, Yvonne (2004) (ed) *Action and Adventure Cinema*. London: Routledge.
- Wilson, George M (1986) *Narration in Light*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Wood, Aylish (2007) *Digital Encounters*. London: Routledge.

### 9.2 Optional Materials

- Kaplan, E.A. (1990) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, New York: Routledge.
- Kaplan, E.A. (1997) *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze*, Kaplan, E.A (2000) *Feminism and Film*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Kuhn, A. (1994) *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema*, London: Verso.
- Nixon, S (1997) 'Exhibiting Masculinity' in *Representation: Cultural representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities, Vol 2)*, London: Sage.
- Ryan, M. & Kettner, D. (1988) *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.