MECO841
Creative Aesthetics for Screen Media
S1 Day 2014
Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Iqbal Barkat
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Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MCrMedia or PGCertCrMedia

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit explores creative aesthetics for screen media, past and present. It highlights key innovations in screen aesthetics with reference to style, mise-en-scene, screen language, design, colour, screen space, cinematography and editing. This unit reveals ways in which creative aesthetics for the screen are being refashioned in the era of convergent screen media. Emphasis is towards a rigorous and sophisticated analysis of the moving image, with particular attention paid to digital aesthetics. This unit combines critical readings and viewing, with a creative production component.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
- Recognise the opportunities offered and challenges posed by digital media to traditional conceptions of screen aesthetics.
- Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.
- Apply theoretical learning in screen aesthetics to practical experience in screen production.
Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6.6.2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13.6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2.5.2014</td>
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**Portfolio**

Due: **6.6.2014**  
Weighting: **60%**

1. Create a portfolio of 3 short screen works. These works are extensions/development the screen works started in the Lab sessions. Each screen work is to be accompanied by a 1000-word reflection. In the reflection:
   - Describe what you think is required for the work based on the screenings, readings, assignment guidelines and your own research.
   - Interpret your completed work based on the screenings, readings, assignment guidelines and your own research.
   - Evaluate the effectiveness of your work and process of making it.
   - Plan on what you would change if you were to make the work in the future.

Additional requirements will be posted on ILearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
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   - Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

**Essay**

Due: **13.6.14**
Write a 3000-word essay on a topic related to screen aesthetics. Topics could include:

- debates on cinema as a valid art form;
- the classical Hollywood cinema and continuity editing;
- realism and neo-realism;
- montage;
- the aesthetics of experimental cinema;
- the aesthetics of digital media;
- the aesthetic engagements in the work of a screen practitioner;
- the aesthetic engagements of a particular form or genre of screen media OR
- any other topic related to screen aesthetics of your choice.

A topic must be selected and a question formulated in consultation with the convenor by Week 6. A 500-word abstract must be submitted to the convenor by the end of Week 7. This abstract constitutes 10% of the total marks for the unit.

Additional requirements will be posted on ILearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
- Recognise the opportunities offered and challenges posed by digital media to traditional conceptions of screen aesthetics.
- Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.

Abstract

Due: 2.5.2014

Weighting: 10%

Write a 500-word abstract on the essay you have decided to write. The essay must be on a topic related to screen aesthetics. Topics could include:

- debates on cinema as a valid art form;
- the classical Hollywood cinema and continuity editing;
- realism and neo-realism;
- montage;
- the aesthetics of experimental cinema;
- the aesthetics of digital media;
- the aesthetic engagements in the work of a screen practitioner;
- the aesthetic engagements of a particular form or genre of screen media OR
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**Delivery and Resources**

**Delivery**

2-hr weekly workshop.

These workshops would alternate between a. **Seminars** (discursive workshops in which key concepts, texts and screen works are discussed) and b. **Labs** (concepts are applied to the students own screen work in a practical, workshop setting).

In the Lab, students begin to conceptualise, plan, shoot and edit short screen works. Students would be given instruction in technologies related to:

- camera operation;
- lighting;
- sound acquisition and
- editing.

**Key Texts:**


Key Screen Texts: TBA

Please refer to ILearn for current information.

**Unit Schedule**

This unit will be delivered through two-hour weekly workshops.

These workshops would alternate between a. **Seminars** (discursive workshops in which key concepts, texts and screen works are discussed) and b. **Labs** (concepts are applied to the students own screen work in a practical, workshop setting).

In the Lab, students begin to conceptualise, plan, shoot and edit short screen works. Students would be given instruction in technologies related to:

- camera operation;
- lighting;
- sound acquisition and editing.

**Week 1 (Seminar)**

**Topic – Art or Non-art?**

Readings:


Wollen, Peter (1976). 'Ontology' and 'Materialism' in Film. Oxford University Press

Introduction to the unit.

Discussion:

- The relation of film to the profilmic world
- The relation of film to the other arts
- Is ‘pure cinema’ possible?
Week 2 (Lab)

Topic – Art or Non-art?

Tour of facility.

OH&S

Introduction to the technology to be used.

Using IMovie or any other NLE tool students attempt to create a short piece of “pure cinema”

Students may shoot their own material or use the material provided.

Week 3 (Seminar)

Topic: Cinema & Photography

Readings:
Image and Text at Work: ‘Let Us Now Praise Famous Men’ and the Photographic Essay Catharina Graf

Discussion
- Traditions of photography in screen works
- Photos in cinematic contexts
- Photo Essays

Week 4 (Lab)

Topic: Cinema & Photography

Students to make a short screen work that demonstrate a relation between screen culture and photography (for example a digital photo essay).

Week 5 (Seminar)

Topic: The Classical Cinema & Realism

Readings


Week 6 (Lab)
Topic: The Classical Cinema & Realism

Students are to script and shoot a short scene in the bedroom set in the Screen Production Studio following the rules of continuity.

Week 7 (Seminar)

Topic: Montage

Readings:

- Eisenstein A Dialectic Approach to Film Form

Week 8 (Lab)

Topic: Montage

Film and edit a sequence that demonstrate the functions and techniques of montage.

Week 9 (Seminar)

Topic: Experimental

Readings


Week 10 (Lab)

Topic: Experimental

Make a short experimental screen work.

Week 11 (Seminar)

Topic: Digital Aesthetics


Manovich – What is Digital Cinema


Discussion:

- Purity, pristine and perfect or errors, glitches and artefacts.
- Transparency/illusion
- Digital vs analogue aesthetic
- Return of manifestoes e.g Eryk Salvaggio’s Six Rules of net.art,
- Recombinant strategies of re-use, appropriation, media-critique, re-presentation, cut-up, etc

**Week 12 (Lab)**

**Topic: Digital Aesthetics**

Make a web mash-up using tools available on YouTube.

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
- Recognise the opportunities offered and challenges posed by digital media to traditional conceptions of screen aesthetics.
- Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.
- Apply theoretical learning in screen aesthetics to practical experience in screen production.
- Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

**Assessment tasks**

- Portfolio
- Essay
- Abstract
PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
- Recognise the opportunities offered and challenges posed by digital media to traditional conceptions of screen aesthetics.
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**Assessment tasks**

- Portfolio
- Essay
- Abstract

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
- Recognise the opportunities offered and challenges posed by digital media to traditional conceptions of screen aesthetics.
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• Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

Assessment tasks
• Portfolio
• Essay
• Abstract

PG - Effective Communication
Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes
• Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
• Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.
• Apply theoretical learning in screen aesthetics to practical experience in screen production.
• Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

Assessment tasks
• Portfolio
• Essay
• Abstract

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens
Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes
• Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
• Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.
Assessment task

• Portfolio

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

• Reflect on past and contemporary debates around screen aesthetics and what constitutes the cinematic.
• Understand the affective and imaginative engagements with screen texts.
• Apply theoretical learning in screen aesthetics to practical experience in screen production.
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Assessment tasks

• Portfolio
• Essay
• Abstract