



# MECO841

## Screen Aesthetics

S1 Day 2016

*Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Iqbal Barkat

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Y3A-154

Tuesdays 4 pm to 6 pm. Please make appointment by email.

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MCrMedia or MCrInd

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://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-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

| Name             | Weighting | Due      |
|------------------|-----------|----------|
| <u>Portfolio</u> | 60%       | 9.6.2016 |
| <u>Essay</u>     | 30%       | 5/5/16   |
| <u>Abstract</u>  | 10%       | 14.4.16  |

### Portfolio

Due: **9.6.2016**

Weighting: **60%**

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 500-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 process of making your work and its effectiveness based on your objectives.

### Assessment Criteria

1. Originality of concept
2. Visual and aural strength of sequence
3. Shape, structure and unity of sequence
4. Strength and clarity of objectives and depth of research as evidenced in the reflection

Additional requirements will be posted on ILearn.

Assessments are to be submitted online 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.
- 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.

## Essay

Due: **5/5/16**

Weighting: **30%**

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.

### Assessment Criteria

- a. Demonstrate relevant research and productive engagement with the main issues of the topic.
- b. Demonstrate analytical and synthetic skills.
- c. Able to construct and control a coherent argument.
- d. Demonstrate a coherent response to the question/topic.
- e. Demonstrate effective use of concepts and examples to construct arguments.
- f. Demonstrate effective use of written English and academic conventions (e.g. citations)

Additional requirements will be posted on ILearn.

Assessments are to be submitted online 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: **14.4.16**

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
- 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 14.1.16 . This abstract constitutes 10% of the total marks for the unit.

Assessment Criteria:

- a. Demonstrate a coherent response to the question/topic.
- b. Demonstrate effective use of concepts and examples to construct arguments.
- c. Demonstrate effective use of written English and academic conventions (e.g. citations)

Additional requirements will be posted on ILearn.

Assessments are to be submitted online 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.

## Delivery and Resources

### Delivery

3-hr 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.

Students are expected to screen and discuss their own works during the workshops.

### Key Texts:

Bordwell, David (2006). *The way Hollywood tells it : story and style in modern movies*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. ; London

Company, David & ebrary, Inc (2008). *Photography and cinema*. Reaktion, London

Creeber, Glen (2013). *Small screen aesthetics : from TV to the Internet*. New York a BFI book published by Palgrave Macmillan

Cubitt, Sean (1998). *Digital aesthetics*. SAGE, London

Rabiger, Michael (2008). *Directing : film techniques and aesthetics* (4th ed). Elsevier/Focal Press, Amsterdam ; Boston

Rothman, William & American Council of Learned Societies (2004). *The "I" of the camera : essays in film criticism, history, and aesthetics* (2nd ed). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK ; New York

Key Screen Texts: TBA

Readings available via the library.

Please refer to ILearn for current information.

## Unit Schedule

This unit will be delivered through three-hour workshop.

These workshops would include

1. **Seminars** (discursive workshops in which key concepts, texts and screen works are discussed) and
2. **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.

Students are encouraged to be proactive in acquiring technical knowledge outside of class times. Technical support will be provided by the technical officers in the department.

### Week 1 (3rd March 2016)

#### Topic – Art or Non-art?

Readings:

Thomson-Jones, Katherine (2008). *Aesthetics and film*. Continuum, London ; New York. Chapter 1 Films as Art.

Jarvie, I. C. (Ian Charles) (1987). *Philosophy of the film : epistemology, ontology, aesthetics*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York. Chapter 2 Arguments Against Films as Art

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

Introduction to the unit.

Tour of facility.

OH&S

Introduction to the technology to be used.

Discussion:

- The relation of film to the profilmic world
- The relation of film to the other arts
- Is 'pure cinema' possible?

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 2 (10 March 2016)**

### **Topic: Cinema & Photography**

Readings:

Campany, David & ebrary, Inc (2008). *Photography and cinema*. Reaktion, London. Chapter 2  
Stillness

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

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

## **Week 3 (17 March 2016)**



## Topic: The Classical Cinema & Realism

### Readings

Hansen, Miriam (1999). *The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism*. The Johns Hopkins University Press

Watson, Robert (1990). *Film and television in education : an aesthetic approach to the moving image*. Falmer Press, London ; New York. Chapter: Snapshots to the Long Take

Bordwell, David (2006). *The way Hollywood tells it : story and style in modern movies*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. ; London. Chapter: Intensified Continuity: Four Dimensions

Thomson-Jones, Katherine (2008). *Aesthetics and film*. Continuum, London ; New York. Chapter 2 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 4 (24 March 2016) Week 5 (31 March 2016) - No classes. Students to work on assignments.**

**Week 6 (7 April 2015)**

## Topic: Montage

### Readings:

Eisenstein A Dialectic Approach to Film Form

Aumont, J., & Barnard, T. (2013). *Montage*. Montréal: Caboose. Chapter: The Fate of Montage

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

**Week 7 (28 April 2016)**

## Topic: Experimental

## Readings

Ruiz, Raúl (2005). *Poetics of cinema*. Editions Dis Voir, Paris. Chapter 5 For a Shamanic Cinema

Small, Edward S (1994). *Direct theory*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale. Chapter: Experimental Film/Video as Direct Theory & Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre

Make a short experimental screen work.

**Week 8 (5 May 2016) & Week 9 (12 May 2016) No classes. Students to work on assignments.**

**Week 10 (19 May 2016)**

## Topic: Digital Aesthetics

Creeber, Glen (2013). *Small screen aesthetics : from TV to the Internet*. New York a BFI book published by Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 1: Towards a new methodology of Media Aesthetics.

Landesman, O. (March 28, 2008). In and out of this world: digital video and the aesthetics of realism in the new hybrid documentary. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 2, 1, 33-45.

Lev Manovich *The Paradoxes of Digital Photography in Photography after photography: Memory and representation in the digital age*. (1996). Amsterdam: OPA.

Manovich – What is Digital Cinema

Cubitt, S. (1998). *Digital aesthetics*. London: SAGE. Chapter: Reading the Interface

## 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

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

### Week 11 (26 May 2016)

View & discuss rough cuts in class.

**Week 12 (2 June 2016) No classes. Students to work on assignments.**

### Week 13 (9 June 2016)

Students screen work in class.

## 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:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

**New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016** [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html). For more information visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new\\_assessment\\_policy\\_in\\_place\\_from\\_session\\_2/](http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/)

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

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/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

Additional information MMCCS website [https://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/faculties\\_and\\_departments/faculty\\_of\\_arts/departments/faculty\\_of\\_arts/departments/media\\_music\\_communication\\_and\\_cultural\\_studies/mmccs](https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/mmccs)

Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <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](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### 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.
- Develop a body of screen work that engages with aesthetic concepts in screen media.

#### Assessment tasks

- Portfolio
- Essay
- Abstract

### PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

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.
- 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 - 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.
- 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 - 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