

Course Information Sheet

BA (Hons) Film Studies and Media Studies

Mode and course length – Full-Time (4 years)

Location – ARU Cambridge Campus

Awarding Body – Anglia Ruskin University. As a registered Higher Education provider Anglia Ruskin University is regulated by the Office for Students.

Overview

Prepare for a media-related career with this combination of film theory, media theory and practical skills, including film-making, animation and digital publishing.

Our BA (Hons) Film Studies and Media Studies will introduce you to the key issues of media and film in the 21st century. We will support you to work creatively and think critically, as you learn to analyse and discuss these subjects with confidence.

You'll consider the impact of film and the media on society, including politics, youth culture and technology, and explore some of the skillsets crucial in today's media, such as audio production and online publishing. Television studies will feature prominently throughout your studies. You'll analyse and debate the latest theories and discover the impact of media on all our lives.

You'll also learn the language of film from the perspective of a film-maker, and use this to make your own short films, with the chance to explore camera operation, sound recording and editing. Your work will be screened to both tutors and fellow students, allowing you to receive invaluable feedback.

If there is a particular career that you are working towards, or interests that you want to explore, you can specialise further on our optional modules, including subjects such as screenwriting and film journalism. You can also continue to practise your film-making, and create a project for screening at the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse.

performative, sociocultural, design-based, and political contexts in which games exist, and to engage in critical discussion of the cultural impact of the video games.

Overall, our focus will be on understanding video games as important vectors of contemporary mainstream and alternative cultures. In order to achieve this, we will combine the playing, analysis, and discussion of games with consideration of critical writings by game studies scholars as well as theorists from the broader field of cultural studies.

All years: Anglia Language Programme

The Anglia Language Programme allows you to study a foreign language as part of your course. You'll take one language module in the second semester of your first year in order to experience the learning of a new language. You must select a language you've never learnt before from the following: Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Throughout the course you'll have the chance to take part in extra-curricular events such as the Cambridge Film Festival, as well as attend guest lectures from key figures in the film industry. Our recent speakers have included Larry Sider and William Raban.

Your studies will be supported by our team of expert lecturers and a close community of students and alumni, fostered through our dedicated Facebook group. We also have a Facebook Group dedicated to helping you find work experience on film and video projects.

Course Delivery

Our courses are delivered through teaching and learning methods which provide students with the widest possible exposure to a

modern and innovative higher education experience.

These methods vary and could include attendance at lectures and seminars, undertaking laboratory exercises or work-based activities, practical work, performances, presentations, field trips, other relevant visits and e-learning through Canvas, our online learning management system.

Each course is divided into a number of 'modules' which focus on particular areas, each of which has a specific approach to its delivery. This information is published to students for each module they take via the Module Definition Form (MDF) and Canvas.

Assessment

You'll show your progress through many different methods, reflecting the range of skills demanded by employers. Your written assignments might include case studies, critical essays, screenwriting, journals and log books, evaluation reports, film reviews and analyses. You'll demonstrate your presentation skills, and create portfolios of work. We also use a range of 'hands-on' methods including internet, print and video production and commissions.

Fees

Information about your course fee including any annual fee increases or deposits (if required) can be found in your offer letter.

Modules

Core Modules

Year 1: Foundation in Humanities, English, Media, Social Sciences and Education

This module will provide students with the necessary skills to begin studying at level 4 in courses related to the Humanities, Social Sciences, English, Media and Education.

Students will be introduced to the core skills necessary to succeed in higher education, including thinking critically, researching, and referencing appropriately, demonstrating appropriate numeracy and ICT skills, and communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

In addition to these fundamental study skills, Students will be given an introduction to a broad range of disciplines whose skills and theories are widely applicable.

Students will study a variety of writing styles in order to recognise, deconstruct and replicate various forms of persuasive, analytical, and informative writing. Students will learn the basics of intercultural studies and how these theories can be applied to real-world problems. Students will consider social perceptions held across western cultures, and the difference between social and self-perception, participating in structured discussion and argument. Students will be introduced to the core principles of psychology and will explore various current applications of psychological theory. Students will also be introduced to ethics and will learn about some of the key theories and thinkers in the development of current ethical considerations in a range of scenarios.

The module is made up of the following 8 constituent elements:

- Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC)
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Studies
- Psychology
- Composition and Style
- Ethics
- Social Perceptions

Year 2: Introduction to Film Studies

This introductory module lays the foundations for academic approaches to Film Studies, with a particular emphasis on thinking about how films convey meaning through aspects of film language. Weekly lectures will introduce you to the key elements of film

language, and expose you to a range of filmmaking from a range of different contexts—including avant-garde and experimental film practices, silent films, and films from a range of different cultures. You will also explore the development of film language across the history of the medium, considering how it has developed since its beginnings in 1895, and how it continues to evolve in a digital age.

In seminars you will focus attention on the role of textual analysis as a key form of expository writing in terms of both function and skills, and will develop the skills required through study skills activities, such as note-taking, shot lists, thick description, scene analysis, writing essay plans, checking drafts, and so on. Formative feedback will be offered on study skills tasks throughout the module. Research skills, including literature searches, film diaries and referencing techniques, are introduced through sessions with subject librarians, and reinforced through seminar learning and activities.

Year 2: Media, Culture and Society

This module provides you with an overview of common approaches to media, including theories of media and culture, and the broader issues and questions that have traditionally concerned media theorists. You will discuss various media forms and be introduced to theories of ideology, semiotics and myth, cultural studies, industry structures and issues of representation in different media forms. The module explores how information is presented through the media and how meanings are generated. You will consider the extent to which media both respond to and impact upon the larger culture and in that process, investigate the relationships between media, culture and society. Key theoretical frameworks to be used include: mass society and mass communication; ideology and discourse; the political economy; representation in relation to ethnicity, class, nation, gender and sexuality; and modernity and post-modernity. Throughout this module, you will acquire the essential knowledge of the field, enabling you to make informed choices of other, more specialised modules. In addition, you will develop the skills to write critical essays. Research skills, including literature searches and referencing techniques, are introduced.

Year 2: Introduction to Radio and Audio Production

This practice module provides a basis for the development of a radio portfolio and a grounding for further study in radio. It is a pre-requisite for the Level 5 modules Radio Production and Independent Radio Practice. The module addresses the relationship between theory and practice in radio production through studying and discussing different programme genres and treatments in a range of UK radio stations and networks: public service (BBC), commercial, community, student. The relationship between radio products and audiences is emphasised. Students are encouraged to relate academic theory to the practice of radio production and to the context of radio as a media product. The module teaches and practises the core skills of radio production, with particular focus on research, basic interviewing, scriptwriting and presenting. Technical competence is addressed and achieved through learning and practising skills in recording original audio files on portable recorders and in using specialist on-screen edit software. The module familiarises students with programme treatments that include news and current affairs in order to introduce awareness of fundamental journalistic principles. Students are taught how the requirements of writing for speech on radio differ from writing for print media or for academic study. Students write short radio scripts which may be adapted from various published textual sources or may be based on original ideas.

Year 2: Introduction to Video 1

This module introduces students to the language of film and video, from the point of view of a practitioner, through a series of briefs and exercises that investigate a number of principles regarding filmic conventions. The range of projects will encompass the investigation of principles such as: composition and lighting, shot/reverse-shot sequences, matching on action, the 180 degree rule, continuity editing, eye-line matching, the 'Kuleshov' effect, synch/non-synch sound, and the rhythmic editing of picture and sound. The purpose and outcome for each project brief is not necessarily aimed at students perfecting conventions - experimenting and gaining an understanding of how they work are just as significant. No prior technical experience of film and video is required. The module will incorporate inductions into: camera operation, sound recording and editing. Practical workshops on the module will be complemented by an address to a range of filmic conventions across various form and types of filmmaking, including narrative fiction, documentary and experimental work. In the process of pre-production and planning, students will be encouraged to develop and practise methods of visualising and notating ideas. There will be regular screenings of student's work in a critical forum, in order to gain the feedback of their peers and tutors.

Year 2: Researching Media

This module offers insights into the most common methodologies used to research media as well as the history of these approaches. The module will introduce you to media studies students to the complexity of the various approaches employed in the field as well as the advantages and disadvantages of various theories. In the course of this, you will deal with the dominant debates that inform research methodologies and outcomes. You will look at various approaches to analyse media texts and how media audiences have traditionally been conceptualised.

The module aims specifically to help develop your abilities to employ research approaches. In the course of the module, you will be introduced to some of the history of media studies and the approaches that developed out of it. You will be encouraged to formulate your own research questions and test the usefulness of various approaches.

Year 2: Introduction to Film Theory

This module focuses on theoretical approaches to an understanding of how film works and the relationship between cinema and society, and between cinema and the individual. Via weekly lectures and seminars, you will study a number of key texts and concepts by influential writers who have helped to shape Film Studies as a subject in its own right, and who have contributed to the development of new ways of thinking about cinema. You will discuss the key points raised in each article, debate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and apply these to clips and films screened throughout the module. You will explore some of the following questions: How does cinema mediate our understanding of reality and of social issues? How can a realist film style help to raise our awareness about aspects of reality that might otherwise go unnoticed? How have semiotic concepts been applied to the study of cinema as a language? How can we appreciate the role of the filmmaker as an auteur? What is the relationship between cinema, politics, and ideology? What is the relationship between cinema and the unconscious mind? How have ideas about gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality been debated within film theory?

Lectures provide an overview of a particular theory, seeking to place this within a broader topic. Seminars allow time for you to get to grips with the nuances, merits, and limitations of different methods of film theory, to ask questions, and above all to test out theories through a discussion of the films screened. Seminars will also offer essay writing workshops aimed at continued development of critical and analytic skills, and refinement of essay-writing skills.

Year 2: Introduction to Television Studies

Television as a medium is currently experiencing vast changes and shifts that increasingly force us to understand it as a medium available on multiple screens and in a variety of forms. This module covers a breadth of approaches to study this medium in transition.

This module covers historical approaches to television, definitions of the medium, television as a technology, with a focus on the ancillary technologies that are included in our ideas of a television (VCR, DVD, Video-on-Demand), Television industry, textual analysis, including structuralist approaches to narrative structures, television aesthetics and television's relationship with postmodernism, television genre, audience and reception studies on television, transnational television, and television's relationship with contemporary politics. The module will enable students to analyse television critically and give them a broad overview of relevant theoretical approaches to analyse the medium. In this, it will consider television as a medium in flux, which increasingly shift towards Video-on-Demand and ask students to develop an idea of the medium in its complexity.

The module is delivered in the form of lectures with a 1-hour screening slot to look at specific examples of television to analyse and 1-hour seminars. Viewing specific programmes together serves to get students to engage with known or unknown material critically and apply theories of television. Students are assessed on their ability to engage critically with television theory and apply their knowledge to specific television or Video-on-Demand programmes.

Year 3: Television Genres

The study of television genre has shaped television studies in numerous ways. Most importantly, television genre offers a way to 'order' content for viewers and a way for television studies scholars to come to terms with the vast amount of content available on broadcast television or Video-on-Demand. As such, television genre is essential for developing an understanding of the medium. This module enables students to gain in-depth insights into the complexities and breadth involved in one of the central theoretical approaches to television.

This module introduces students to a variety of ways to conceptualise television genre as well as discussing case studies that position genres within a broader field of cultural, social, political and industrial contexts. Specifically, this module will discuss structuralist, ideological and historical approaches to television genre, will explore the idea of genre as discourse, genre hybridity and postmodernism, more elusive, audience-led genres such as cult TV and look more specifically at case studies of genre. The case studies serve to illustrate to students the different means by which television genres can be studied.

The module is delivered in the form of lectures with a 1-hour screening slot to look at specific examples of television to analyse and 1-hour seminars. Viewing specific programmes together serves to get students to engage with known or unknown material critically and apply theories of television.

Year 3: Classical Hollywood Cinema

This module focuses on the practices, products and institutional frameworks of the classical Hollywood period. You will explore the narrative conventions that continue to shape the majority of mainstream commercial cinema and study the formal and stylistic features of the 'realist' text, the ideologies that inform it and its ideals of normative identities and lifestyles. You will explore coupling and heterosexual romance as a motor of plot development and as an intensely ideological aspect of films made in this period. Similarly, you will consider the significance of the 'happy ending' in maintaining or challenging key ideological norms and values. Drawing from some of the theoretical approaches encountered on earlier compulsory modules (Theorizing Spectatorship), you will think about classical Hollywood cinema's positioning of the spectator, and the implications for the construction of gender and racial identities. Finally, you will also consider the style conventions of different classical Hollywood film genres and debate their significance in helping to align spectators ideologically and emotionally in the narrative action.

Year 3: Theorising Spectatorship

This module examines a range of key approaches to the study of spectatorship in our image-saturated world. Issues of spectatorship and representation are addressed through a range of theoretical approaches, including classical film theory, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, post-cinema, paracinema and cult spectatorship, and ethical responses to film, amongst others. In particular, you will engage with the idea that how we see is as important as what we see: you will consider how changing technologies of image production and exhibition impact on spectators' engagement with, and reaction to, moving images. You will consider key questions about the gendering of the spectator's gaze, and the way that films encourage you to identify with characters, with the camera itself and its ideological operations, or with yourself as an active viewing subject. You will also explore the role of the body, the senses, and emotion as key facets of our involvement in moving image culture. Particularly, you will debate the extent to which the nature of film spectatorship has changed in a "post-cinematic" context, and consider what new ethical frameworks can be brought to bear on our engagement with cinema in a digital network culture.

Year 3: Teenage Kicks: Youth Culture and Media

The module is concerned with popular culture as defined, practised and consumed against and within 'official' or 'high' culture. It explores issues of identity, resistance and consumption, focusing on specific case studies, including, for example, subcultural practices and style. The relationships between taste, style and ideology are critically explored through an analysis of various sites and products, such as the shopping mall, popular musical forms, television, dress, eating, and leisure activities.

Contemporary icons are addressed for what they are able to indicate about forms of resistance, diversity and identity. The social metaphors a cultural group may employ in terms of the spectacular and the public are considered against the more silent and private strategies of consumption involved in, for example, fashioning of the body and identity. The module thus deals with popular culture both on the terms in which it asserts itself and in the wider framework of a politics of pleasure and possibility, whilst also engaging with the question as to whether the scrutiny of the popular from within the academy may represent a form of populism.

Year 3: Online Journalism

The module aims to develop your skills in web-based journalism and online media production using a range of online media formats. Through a series of topic led discussions, reading, class exercises and small project briefs you will examine the language and practice of new/digital media and reflect on its uses. Online Journalism is presented as a distinct practice involving the use of a variety of writing styles from multimedia content to interactive and social media. The course includes examples from factual and non-factual content and addresses a range of topics including fake/false news, blogging, vlogging, the rise of the image driven web, implications of media sharing, online communities, citizen journalism, personal online profile

management, digital storytelling, working with images, building a freelance career.

Year 4: Undergraduate Major Project

The individual Major Project module allows students to engage in a substantial piece of individual research, focused on a topic relevant to their specific course. The project topic will be assessed for suitability to ensure sufficient academic challenge and satisfactory supervision by an academic member of staff. The chosen topic will require the student to identify/formulate problems and issues, conduct literature and other appropriate media reviews, evaluate information, process data, critically appraise and present their findings. Regular meetings with the project supervisor should take place, so that the project is closely monitored and steered in the right direction.

Year 4: Law, Culture and Technology

This module examines legal issues surrounding the creation, use, consumption, and circulation of digital artefacts. Focussing on intellectual property rights, we will consider the legal implications of creative, educational, commercial, and private activities in contemporary British and international contexts of digital culture. This module provides a detailed survey of copyright, trademark and patent law with a special emphasis on how they apply to digital media. The module also reviews the law of contract as it applies to work in the culture industries. Further regulatory topics related to intellectual property issues, regarding telecommunications and broadcasting law, are also investigated from a British as well as an international perspective. Among the questions we will encounter are the following: What assistance does the law offer in the protection of information and digital property? Are the restrictions intellectual property law imposes on our ability to copy and reuse fair? Is the Internet – considered as a marketplace, creative realm, and sphere of political speech – a space of freedom and democracy? What are the privacy, property, and security implications of 'living in the cloud'?

Year 4: Multiplexed: Contemporary Popular Cinema

This module analyses the appeal of contemporary popular cinema and extends critical ideas and theoretical debates explored in the first and second year of the film studies programme. Through rigorous attention to contemporary debates in the field of film studies, the module encourages in depth critical engagement with film theory. It defines and critically discusses the nature of popular cinema and provides an account of the development of multiplex film culture in North America and the UK. Topics include: the pros and cons of the multiplex; analysis of dominant genres and conventions; consideration of the recyclable nature of popular film narratives; the depiction of gender, sexuality, 'race' and class on screen; audience and spectatorship; representations of violence; the rise of the blockbuster and star studies. The module considers the force of popular cinema as an important site for working through societal fears and fantasies by closely examining a variety of films, from, for example *Jaws* (Spielberg, US, 1975) to *Titanic* (Cameron, US, 2000). Students are assessed on the basis of their ability to apply theoretical ideas and debates to a close study of individual films.

Optional Modules

(Subject to availability)

Year 2: Media and Technology

This module is compulsory for students on the Media Studies course. The module explores how the introduction of new technologies transforms notions of space, place and times within which communication occurs. The module critically discusses a variety of theoretical positions concerning how we evaluate the role of technology within communicative practices. Throughout, communicative practices are situated within their specific historical periods. The cultural, social and political significance of the introduction of new forms of technologies on communicative practices is thus also addressed.

Year 2: Introduction to Global Cinema

'Introduction to Global Cinema' enables you to explore cinema in a global context. Traditionally, the concept of 'world cinema' has been used for national cinemas outside Hollywood. By contrast, this module introduces you to a global and transnational approach in which Hollywood forms one part of the globalised commercial and artistic film landscape of the last fifty years. We will study a range of films in order to explore topics which may include Bollywood, Nollywood, Hollywood as global cinema, Chinese Fifth Generation, Mexico, Iranian New Wave cinema, indigenous cinemas of Canada and Australia, the cinema of small countries (such as New Zealand, Scotland and Denmark) and other emergent cinemas. We will address the aesthetic,

economic, linguistic and political contexts of different film cultures, with a focus on how these cultures situate themselves in a global market. In the contemporary world of film and cinema, the professional may be called upon to programme screenings and to accompany programmes with texts, written in a variety of voices. The module is specifically designed to enhance your ability to meet professional expectations and is intended to inform and complement your work in practice-based modules. The process of researching global cinema and of critically synthesising and communicating your findings is addressed in seminars.

Year 2: Introduction to Desktop Publishing

This module is a pre-requisite for the Level 5 module Internet Communication and the Level 6 module Creative Publishing. It introduces students to the theory and practice of print media. In workshops the principles of desktop publishing, writing copy, and picture, text and graphics management are addressed. The module provides opportunities for the practical application of dtp in producing small-scale publications, such as for leaflets, brochures, newsletters, magazines and newspapers. Students are introduced to methods of generating, researching and writing stories in a variety of different formats. They are encouraged to generate original material and to learn and gain competence in interviewing techniques. Throughout the module an emphasis is placed on design principles, headline and lead writing, writing to length, to deadlines, and using appropriate sources. A range of dtp and graphics packages is used in the generation and manipulation of page, text and image. Issues of ethics, copyright and other legal requirements of work in the medium and in journalism are introduced. Similarly, issues of audience, distribution and reception are introduced. Students work to plan and produce a print media product. Through discussion with the module leader, students decide on the purpose of their product, its message and its target audience.

Year 2: A Module from the Anglia Language Programme

Year 3: Cinema and Sound

This module provides a focused address to the role played by sound in the development and appreciation of cinema. It explores: the impact of the introduction of sound in terms of the historical, aesthetic, technological and institutional developments of cinema; the influence of sound on the perception and experience of the film spectator; different aspects of the film soundtrack, such as music, ambient sound, the voice and silence; the construction diegetic and on- and off-screen space through sound; the abstract properties of sound and 'noise' as gleaned through 'reduced listening' (Chion); and the evolving terminology in the field. The aesthetics of sound in the cinema are addressed with reference to films spanning the earliest exploits in sound recording, such as W.K.L. Dickson's *Experimental Sound Film* (1894/5), early sound films by directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, René Clair and Fritz Lang, through to contemporary cinema, encompassing auteurs such as Robert Bresson, Jacques Tati and Andrei Tarkovsky. The theoretical framework that is used to address film sound includes key texts by a range of critics and theorists who have sought to redress the balance in Film Studies (and culture at large), which often tends to privilege the image. The theory of film sound has become a distinct area of study, with figures including Michel Chion devoting much of his writing to the explanation that sound in the cinema is not simply 'added value'. Theories culled from musicology, by the likes of Luigi Russolo, John Cage and Hanns Eisler, also have a bearing on film sound.

Year 3: Web Design and Development

In this module students explore, experiment with and develop skills in internet technology and web design. Techniques of interface, navigation and manipulation are applied to creative composition and to evolve small scale web based products. This involves the use of textual, graphic, moving image and audio material and their amalgamation into an internet product that serves a specific purpose for an identified client/audience. Students engage with the computer tools, software packages and terminology required for effective work in this medium and gain a working knowledge both of the strengths and the limits of the medium. Whilst there is some address to computer 'languages' the major emphasis is on using the internet for creative and professional purposes. Ethical issues, such as those to do with pornography and privacy are addressed as are those to do with copyright and libel. The impact of multimedia on communication in the broader technoculture is also explored. Multimedia studio based sessions allow students to explore a range of selected internet sites and to assess critically the features which contribute to their aesthetic, their clarity of purpose, their ease of use and their mode of address to projected audiences. This module encourages students to reflect on professional practice in this medium. Students design a site and produce an application on disc.

Year 3: Radio Production

This practice module builds on the technical, editorial and production skills which students encountered in Introduction to Radio

and which are required for work in the radio industry. Using specialist facilities for audio recording and for on-screen editing, students are taught to produce the short 'package' format which is a staple of the radio 'magazine programme' and is a widely used form of the feature genre. Good practice is demonstrated through the study of a variety broadcast examples which illustrate suitable subject matter for packages. Critical skills are encouraged and developed by class discussion and review of these. Skills involved in writing cues and links are developed further. Presenting skills are practised in relation to the need to use different overall treatments, depending on programme style and target audience. Skills in recording, editing and mixing audio material are consolidated and there is further consideration of the use of actuality, music and sound effects. The module includes basic study of media law with particular reference to defamation. The issue of using 'bad' language on radio programmes is discussed. The module encourages students to acquire skills needed for working in the media industry environment and a professional approach to time management is emphasised both in individual and team work.

Year 3: Intercultural Encounters in Global Cinema

In recent decades, most 'developed' nations have become countries of very significant immigration and diaspora. The results have been closely monitored and discussed, not only in political discourse but in media as well. Such media portrayals are of key importance, both as potential reflections of popular attitudes, ideas and preoccupations towards migration, and as regards their likely impact on popular views and opinions on the topic. In this module, you will explore filmic representations of intercultural encounters from a global perspective, going beyond the exploration of individual films in their national frameworks to address questions linked to the legacy of colonization, globalization and international migration. Module delivery is by a mix of lectures and seminars, in which you will be encouraged to collaborate with other students, working in small groups and reflecting on your own performance. In preparation for the assessment, you will develop your critical thinking skills (e.g. identifying and evaluating a line of argument, identify hidden agendas) and writing skills (e.g. addressing the question, organising ideas). The module will also help you develop the employability skills of teamwork, self-management and problem solving, and the digital literacy skills of finding, using and managing information as well as problem solving in the digital world. By exploring intercultural encounters and the negotiation of identities in popular film, which mirror and shape mentalities, you will be encouraged to think about sustainability in global, virtual and increasingly multi-ethnic societies.

Year 3: Digital Media Theory

Contemporary media culture is primarily a culture of the digital, mediated through digital computers, mobile communication devices and networks. This module introduces key themes and debates through which to understand digitality not only as a technical characteristic but a cultural phenomenon. The module develops an understanding of the characteristics specific to digital media culture and themes range from aesthetics to new forms of knowledge and communication. Key forms of recent digital media theory debates are introduced. Discussed themes can include game cultures, social media, digital aesthetics, mobile cultures, digital interfaces, human-computer interaction and software from a cultural perspective. For their assignment, students produce a lecture diary, which gives the possibility to reflect and summarize themes from lectures. The lecture diary is supported by a non - assessed formative seminar exercise where students have to prepare discussion topics for the seminar based on the lecture. Students are expected to actively use Internet resources and modes of communication.

Year 3: Documentary Film Theory

This module acts as a co-requisite for the Level 5 practical Video Documentary module for students on the Film Course. Students on other courses may elect to take the practical module as a free standing module. The module provides an introduction to many of the critical discussions and debates surrounding the historical, technological, aesthetic and socio-political developments of the documentary approach to film and video-making. As well as paying full regard to the key trends and film-makers to have contributed to the history of this important genre, the module responds to the renewed public interest in documentary film and its crossover into the mainstream with recent commercial and critical hits such as *When We Were Kings* (Leon Gast 1996) and *Bowling for Columbine* (Michael Moore 2002). The focus is on the nature, specificity and evolution of the documentary form, and its relationship to cinematic realism. There is an address to the historical and theoretical contexts of the study of documentary film, as well as an engagement with topical debates regarding the relationship between reality and representation, documentary ethics, and the role of cross-cultural documentary and ethnographic film. The module also includes discussion of different modes of address in documentary film-making, the role of the documentary film-maker, and the relationship between film-maker and subject(s). Current and future modes of distribution and exhibition for the documentary film are explored, including an address to specialist festivals devoted to documentary. Throughout the module there are opportunities for critical analysis of key film texts.

Year 3: Independent Cinema: US and Beyond

This module allows for critical study of cinema cultures and contexts, with a particular focus on the development, features and impact of independent cinema in the US and beyond. Alongside close study of a number of key films, students consider areas such as the financing and promotion of independent film-making, and investigate how and why certain directors choose to work outside the protective infrastructures and high budgets provided by a studio system. They also look at how US-based film-makers such as John Sayles, Jim Jarmusch and Joel Coen, starting out in the late 1970s and early 1980s, drew on cinematic influences from around the world and developed their own brand of auteur film-making, following in the footsteps of such idiosyncratic director/writer/actors as John Cassavetes and Dennis Hopper. An address is then made to the influence of this seminal period of independent cinema on later international film-makers such as Quentin Tarantino, Gregg Araki, Vincent Gallo and Lukas Moodysson. The development and importance of Awards ceremonies and Film Festivals, both mainstream and fringe, is critically explored and students are required to present research on specific events in seminars. Attention is drawn to the way in which such events provide showcasing opportunities for 'peripheral' cinema, allowing independent film-makers to benefit from many of the promotional and distribution possibilities of globalization. The role of independent distribution companies is critically examined, while industry guest speakers and visits to venues and events encourage further discussion on the status and features of independent film-making. The module emphasizes the professional and vocational contexts and practices of a range of film and cinematic industries and agents and thus affords opportunities for students to develop employability skills and understandings.

Year 3: News and Feature Writing

This intensive reading and writing module is optional for all Writing students. It introduces students of creative and professional writing to the techniques of print journalism, focusing on news reports and feature articles. The skills required for effective news and feature writing are a key component of writing craft in any genre of fiction or non-fiction, providing a discipline that can improve the imaginative work and communicative power of those who practice it. The significance of journalistic writing in contemporary life is explored using examples from a range of British tabloid, broadsheet and local publications. Students practise sourcing news reports, developing feature articles and sub-editing for style and content. Seminar workshops combine analysis of journalistic techniques with practical writing exercises. Topics covered include: researching and pitching a story, interviewing, ethics, embargoes, structure, tension, style, register, layout, puns and rhythm, personal values, precise knowledge of context and audience, working to deadlines and economical use of language. Early in the trimester each student is required to produce a set of briefs that must be approved by the seminar leader. They then produce copy for these briefs, giving and receiving constructive criticism as they work in editorial teams.

Year 3: Digital Media Practice and Creative Computing

This module introduces students to practical work in digital media environments, allowing them to apply and expand knowledge gained in the Digital Media Theory module. Through instruction, hands-on tutorials, and self-directed, project-based exploration, students will familiarise themselves with the area of creative computing, which has become centrally important in the contemporary landscape of computational culture. In doing so, students will learn to use a number of digital tools and acquaint themselves with the basics of code-based expression, programming, and algorithmic logic. Introductions to visual programming, object-oriented programming, live coding, physical computing, and interactive storytelling will allow students to familiarise themselves with important skills, issues, and implications of computational culture. The contexts for these explorations will include video game design, basic robotics, graphical animation, the 'Internet of things,' and electronic sound. Students will learn to understand and build simple electronic circuits, and write basic programs for generating and controlling, image, and interactivity. They will also explore how this knowledge relates to the designing of interactive narratives, such as those found in videogames. Through short lectures and group discussion, insights will be contextualised with material from the Digital Media Theory module. In the second half of the term, each student will choose a digital platform they wish to explore in more detail, and design an individual creative project to be carried out using this platform. This project, which can build one any of the topics explored in the module, should be finished by the end of the term, and will be accompanied by a written discussion of the project's design and execution process, as well as its critical implications.

Year 3: Animation

This module seeks to equip students with critical and practical skills in the field of Animation. The emphasis in this module lies less in developing skills in drawing and three-dimensional design, and more in the possibilities of the frame-by-frame manipulation of time. Students are introduced to a range of conventional and experimental work that helps to inform practical and

conceptual study. Students work in a number of ways, from camera-less film projects to working with the digital image. This broad base encourages an ideas driven and experimental approach to the medium. Key movements in Animation are explored, from the geometric abstraction of Hans Richter and Viking Egging, the rise of Disney and realism (the animation technique of roto-scoping is a particular focus here), the camera-less films of Lye and Brakhage, the reflexive strategies of Chuck Jones's Duck Amuck and Robert Breers Fuji. Also considered is the role animation has played in the development of motion graphics for films. Screening of work is contextualised by theoretical and historic referencing. Work is group or individually driven. Groups should be no more than two. Students are required to develop skills in research by giving a presentation on an animator of their choice, as well as a presentation on their final idea.

Year 3: Non-Fiction Filmmaking

This module explores the nature and practice of documentary filmmaking. It addresses the aesthetics of documentary in relation to expository, poetic, observational, performative, participatory and reflexive modes of practice. Students are encouraged to consider, reflect and implement appropriate responses to the range of issues that might arise in their work, including: the ethical, creative, methodological, theoretical, and technical concerns that relate to documentary. Examples of contemporary, historical, independent, mainstream, television and film documentary are examined in detail to rationalise the subject of non-fiction film and video in terms of forms and conventions of documentary language. A range of work will be screened and discussed during the module, which provides a context for the student projects that are undertaken in small groups. The module begins with students being asked to make a number of concise introductory pieces that explore concepts and aesthetics concerning documentary and 'non-fiction' filmmaking. Students then pitch a more substantial project to the module tutors and seminar group, followed by feedback and further discussion of ethical, creative and practical issues raised by each proposal. Groups should then produce a shooting script and production schedule making sure to gain all permission from interviewees, copyright and location owners, prior to filming. The module tutors will oversee the production and editing processes, and require to see students for group tutorials.

Year 4: Sound and Vision: Music and Media

This module explores the role of sound and music in media, addressing the role and function of popular music as a form of communication. It examines the relationship of popular music to other forms of media, such as print, broadcasting and cinema. The module explores a range of musical forms within contemporary Western culture by focusing on places of consumption (such as clubs and concert halls), modes of reception (such as fandom, aural mnemonics, and identity formation) and modes and sites of production where the focus is on the diverse functioning of the music industry. Music as a form of media practice is addressed, as is the relationship of aurality to vision through an analysis of the use of music in film and television. Cross-cultural musical texts are examined in order to situate the role of music within a variety of cultural and historical contexts. As part of this, music within specific cultural and historical movements is addressed: this includes, for example, romanticism and nationalism. Throughout, issues of ethnocentrism and the constructions and contestations of identity, value and power systems through music are addressed.

Year 4: Narrative in Global Cinema

The module explores the way stories are told in films from around the world. You will study key aspects of cinematic narrative structure, including order, duration, cause-and-effect patterns, and the distinction between fabula (story) and syuzhet (plot). You will also examine how character and voice are handled in film, the function of 'point of view', focalisation, and internal vs external characterisation. You will address theoretical aspects such as narrator and narratee, reception theory, suspense vs surprise, the key 'seven' narrative functions, narrative and genre, and the ideology of 'show vs tell'. You will analyse non-narrative (and anti-narrative) aspects of narratives, such as description, iconic shots, music, and other disruptive elements. You will also be thinking about the different roles of words (dialogue, text, sub-titles) and imagery.

You will study all of these narrative topics with regard to global cinemas. You will compare and contrast mainstream commercial Hollywood movies with non-American examples, ask to what extent continuity narrative has become the dominant pattern across the globe, examine narrative structures that do not fit the mainstream model, and analyse the intersection of global narratives with diverse identity formations. You will view films and clips from various European countries and non-Western regions, in addition to co-productions and transnational examples.

Year 4: Special Topics in Film Studies

This module gives you the opportunity to study a topic that will be taught by a member of staff whose particular academic interests and/or research is reflected in the area. You will extend your knowledge and understanding of a specific subject area that you may have encountered earlier in your studies, and in which there is deemed to be scope for more reading, critical commentary, analysis and discussion. Alternatively, this module may be used to introduce you to a topic which is not found elsewhere in the existing degree provision. A topic may be the study of a single filmmaker (e.g., Charlie Chaplin; Claire Denis) or cognate group of filmmakers (e.g., the French New Wave; New Queer Cinema), a genre (e.g. Global Horror; the Teen Movie), or a topic that allows for in-depth discussion and consideration of a defined area in film theory (Cinema & Sexuality; Digital Aesthetics in Contemporary Cinema; Film-Philosophy).

The designated topics vary from year to year, and topics will be communicated prior to module choice. There are no formal lectures and the module is taught in seminars in which group discussion is encouraged.

Year 4: Independent Film Practice 1

This module is an opportunity for students to develop their own mode of creative film/video practice. Whether students' projects are informed by considerations associated with narrative drama, documentary, animation or experimental work, they are expected to show a critical and reflective attitude towards their practice. Early in the module students present project proposals to tutors and the rest of the group. The Module Tutors will assess the nature of students' project proposals in terms of their merits and practicalities. At a later stage students will be required to show and discuss their work in progress in the context of individual tutorials, and class seminars. There is a strong emphasis on the development of the proposed project through preliminary practical projects, research, pre-production and the open discussion of ideas. Advanced technical workshops will be organised for students as required. Students can work individually or in small groups. On completion of the module there is a screening and crit. At the crit. every student is expected to show at least one finished piece of work. Students who are continuing on to Independent Film Practice 2 should conceive of the film that they produce in this module as a foundation for the work that they intend to undertake in the second trimester.

Year 4: Digital Publishing

This module provides a reflective environment in which techniques of electronic publishing are applied to writing originating within the module, selected from the student's broader portfolio or via a commission. It is expected that, in this module, students are able to draw on their learning experiences in a range of other modules where issues concerning the relationships between information technologies, the processes of globalization and emergent forms of communicative practices have been discussed. Students research and produce a design plan suitable for directing the production of a published document from initial thumbnail sketches through to finished product. Appropriate computer tools as well as software are experimented with as aids to creative practice in this medium. Techniques deployed include those to do with the generation of information, its storage and transfer; copy editing, proof reading and production. Consideration is given to such questions as house style within the broader context of message and audience and the impact of diverse and developing technology on the reproduction of writing in paper based media. In the latter instance regard is given to networks of communication which see institutions such as the publishing house as stations rather than significant termini. Students engage critically with a range of case studies from, for example, underground literature, magazines, photographic journals and artistic showcases. Issues of audience, distribution, copyright and other relevant legal and ethical concerns are addressed. In the process of producing work of publishable standard for assessment students practice and develop project management skills and portfolio presentation skills.

Year 4: Working in English and Media

This module provides a specific focus on work experience activity for students of English, Communication, Film and Media, in preparation for targeted entry into professional occupations in the domain of multi-media, film, TV, cinema, radio, video, teaching, publishing, arts administration and related creative and cultural industries. Students identify, negotiate and carry out a work placement, or produce a commissioned product, in a chosen area, with guidance from the relevant course leader and module leader. Ongoing consultation, supervision and support are provided by the course and module leader in association with the Campus Careers Service. Once agreed by the student, the employer, the relevant course leader and the module leader, the work placement is undertaken in a series or block of hours. In the case of a commission, students draw up a detailed proposal in consultation with the external client or agency involved and the designated project supervisor. Students bring a critical and theoretical address to bear on their work experience or commission, which, together with the experience itself, affords a means

of strengthening a planned and reflective approach to the nature, advantages and constraints of particular work opportunities, as well as to students' own aptitudes and interests. This includes an address to job search, application and selection processes. The knowledge and the range of course-specific, transferable and vocationally oriented skills developed during the course are enumerated and articulated, most particularly in the refinement of the developing portfolio and the critical essay. There are no designated pre-requisites for this module but you must have previously attained credits that enable you to meet the demands of the specific placement and to bring a critical and theoretical address to bear. This module forms part of the ongoing programme of Personal Development Planning.

Year 4: Contemporary Television

This module focuses on contemporary television, exploring a range of different genres, including drama, comedy and 'reality' shows. Specific programmes will be explored and analysed in screenings and seminars. These programmes are examined not simply as texts but as specific examples around which larger areas of debate and discussion (including, for example, genre, feminism, the representation of family, etc.) can be explored. The wider context in which these programmes are situated (e.g. technology, institution, audience and the changing context of television) will also be explored. Students' research and writing skills are refined through an assessed study of a popular television show of their choice. Students are assessed on the basis of their ability to apply theoretical ideas and debates to a close study of individual programmes. Possible programmes for discussion include: Interruptions, The Singing Detective, Twin Peaks, Mad Men, Curb Your Enthusiasm, Modern Family, American Idol, X Factor, The Wire, Borgen, Buffy, Firefly, Dr. Who, Girls, Six Feet Under, End Piece, True Blood, Dexter, Girls, Homeland, Lark Rise to Candleford, Call the Midwife.

Year 4: Critical Approaches to Video Games

Game studies views games as complex cultural objects; its aim is to explore the game 'object,' the player 'subject,' as well as the critical dialogue between them that occurs in real and virtual game spaces. This module offers you an in-depth introduction to the interdisciplinary field of game studies, and the opportunity to develop an advanced research essay on a chosen area of inquiry. Throughout the trimester, you will study video games as cultural artefacts that arise from diverse cultural histories and contexts, and that can provide deep commentary on aesthetic, cultural, socio-political, and economic issues. Through theoretical readings, critical play exercises, and in-depth discussion, you will acquire the critical vocabulary needed to analyse the mechanics, aesthetics and practices of video games. This will allow you to address the textual, performative, socio-cultural, design-based, and political contexts in which games exist, and to engage in critical discussion of the cultural impact of the video games.

Overall, our focus will be on understanding video games as important vectors of contemporary mainstream and alternative cultures. In order to achieve this, we will combine the playing, analysis, and discussion of games with consideration of critical writings by game studies scholars as well as theorists from the broader field of cultural studies.

Year 4: Independent Radio Practice

In this practice module students are expected to demonstrate a high level of editorial and technical expertise in radio production. The module enables students to experiment with, develop and consolidate these skills through planning, writing and producing imaginative work for an appropriate radio market. It considers current models of practice in variety of radio networks / stations. Students initiate and carry forward ideas already suitable for or adaptable to radio. Each student produces a creative piece of radio, targeting a specific audience and aspiring to a professional level of expertise. Critical reflection of each student's own practice is required through the completion of a thorough and rigorous commentary and evaluation. The module content includes guidance in preparing relevant paperwork to market a programme.

Year 4: Independent Film Practice 2

The projects that students propose to undertake in this module should draw on the strengths of the work made in Independent Film Practice 1, developing a particular method of working, or honing a specific approach to practice - whether that is in the context of narrative drama, documentary, animation or an experimental mode. In this respect, students are also encouraged to consider the wider context of their work. The first few weeks of the module will comprise conceptual workshop projects that encourage students to think critically, through practice, and re-examine concepts associated with the fundamental aesthetics of film and video. These projects will also encourage students to develop their project proposals by way of showing and discussing specific images, sounds and their combination. Student Presentations and Work in Progress screenings follow the initial

workshop projects, and for the most part the content of module will be lead by the discussion of issues and concepts that arise in relation to students' projects. The progress of these projects is addressed in detail throughout the trimester in the context of seminars and individual or group tutorials with staff from across the school. A guest lecture by a visiting filmmaker will also be a key element. Students on this module will also be encouraged to assist in organising the final end of year screening. This usually takes place at the Arts Picture House. Staff will oversee the project, but students are centrally involved in writing copy, designing posters and compiling the work. By the end of the module students should also have made their work ready for distributing to film and video festivals.

Year 4: Avant-Garde Film and Experimental Video

This module offers an historical approach to the various movements and themes associated with avant-garde film and experimental video. It sets these in aesthetic and socio-political contexts, while also affording the opportunity to study the work of a number of key film and video-makers in close detail. Throughout, students are expected to consider and reflect upon the coherence of the history of experimental film and video and its association with other artistic forms, as well as its dialectical relationship with the conventions and institutions of the mainstream against which it often rebels. In addition, the movement of the film avant-garde between the cinema and modern art is addressed, while maintaining a focus on the film avant-garde as 'an independent form of art practice with its own internal logic and aesthetic discourse' (Rees 1999). The module investigates the relationship between the aesthetic dimensions of experimental film and video work and the critical perspectives that are associated with the field. This involves an address to: the language of abstraction; means of investigating perception; engagements with the politics of representation, identification and spectatorship; and the impact of technological development in relation to the specificity of film, video and digital media. Students engage with these issues by means of a thorough study of certain works and the discussion of key theoretical texts.