

MODULE: Film Studies (course code BAJH-F)

Griffith College Dublin – Journalism and Visual Media

Fall Semester

This module has no pre-requisites.

Introduction

This module will give students an understanding of the development of primarily, but not exclusively, Western film-making traditions that have subsequently influenced television, contemporary video techniques and multimedia innovations. It will provide students with a critical overview of the way in which film has been produced, understood and made sense of, by the societies which produce them. In this regard the module will focus on critical concepts, methods and debates in film study.

The national cinemas of Italy, France, Germany and Russia are analysed. The module also examines the genre in Hollywood cinema and looks at Irish cinema, examining among other themes, how it portrays both an older society as well as the 'Celtic tiger' era. Students will demonstrate an ability to apply a critical analysis to any film text based on knowledge of key conceptual readings and will be able to identify and critique the thematic concerns of selected film directors and genres.

Module Aims

This module aims to enable the student to:

- Critically discuss and write about the chronological and diachronic development of movements and innovations in film in both Europe and America.
- Critically discuss and write about the development of the film industry, the aesthetics of film-making, the development of film as an industry and the impacts of technology.
- Critically discuss and write about the ways in which film text is intermeshed with a whole set of economic, technological, social and cultural practices.
- Critically discuss and write about the role which government and state have played in relation to film production and exhibition, as well as the larger socio-cultural context in which film is made and received.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of selected film genres and film cycles.
- Illustrate an advanced understanding of key concepts in Film Studies.
- Critically evaluate and discuss the directorial techniques of selected film directors within their socio-cultural contexts.

- Demonstrate independent critical judgement and analytical skills in relation to critiquing film and to apply this to both their academic and film review writings.
- Pursue further study and research in media/communications and/or related humanities based disciplines.

Indicative Module Content

Introduction

Present film trends; contemporary film history; basic concepts of film form. Introductory Principles of Film Analysis: Screenings: *La Haine* (Matthieu Kosssovitz, 1995), *The Piano*, (Jane Campion, 1993).

Early Hollywood, Early Europe 1895 - 1917

Primitive cinema; early film practices. The Complete Film: Screenings: Lumiere & Melies shorts, *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1917).

Germany 1918-1931

Film and reality; film as a distinct artform; film and society. Screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1919), *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931)

Soviet Union 1918-1931

The development of montage. Artistic considerations of the development of sound. Screenings: *The Battleship Potemkin* (S. Eisenstein, 1925), *Earth* (A. Dovzhenko, 1930).

Hollywood's Golden Era 1917-1946

The studio system. The development of sound. Screenings: *The Gold Rush* (Charlie Chaplin, 1925), *Public Enemy* (William Wellman, 1931).

Hollywood's Golden Era 1917-1946

The star system. The development of colour film. Screenings: *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1934) *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (James Curtiz, 1938).

France Pre WWII 1930s

The Evolution of the Language of Cinema. Poetic Realism. Fascism and film. Screenings: *La Grande Illusion* (Jean Renoir, 1937), *La Règle du Jeu* (Renoir, 1938)

Britain Pre WWII 1905-1939

The development of the British film industry. The birth of the British documentary movement. Screenings: *Blackmail* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929), *Man of Aran* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1934).

Hollywood in WWII 1941-1946

Hollywood's involvement in WWII. The rise and fall of Orson Welles. Screenings: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Welles, 1942).

Post WII Italy 1942-1959

The Italian film industry & fascism. Neorealism. Screenings: Rome, Open City (Roberto Rossellini, 1945), Bicycle Thieves (Vittorio De Sica, 1949)

Film Noir 1942-1958

The introduction of the study of film. Post WWII American realism. Screenings: The Stranger (Welles, 1946), A Touch of Evil (Welles, 1956).

Assessment

This module will be assessed by three essay assignments (Continuous Assessment 100%) being one on Irish film and two on European and American film. Students will be assessed on their ability to express their understanding of the development of specific film movements, aesthetic traditions, technical developments and directorial legacies within their socio-cultural contexts.