

<p style="text-align: center;">University of Stirling Communications, Media & Culture FMS9SC: The Body in Screen Culture Spring Semester 2014</p>

Module code and title:

FMS9SC – The Body in Screen Culture

Pre-requisite:

One fourth semester advanced module in Film and Media Studies or Journalism.

Module overview:

Film and media theory have a long history of using (parts of) the body, both metaphorically and literally, to explain the significance and 'nature' of media forms and technologies: from Dziga Vertov's "camera eye" and Marshall McLuhan's understanding of the media as "extensions of man", to Laura Marks' discussion of the "skin of the film" and Gilles Deleuze's suggestion that "the brain is the screen". Some theorists also point to the increased significance of our hands and fingers (digits!) in the context of the digitalisation of (screen) culture.

This module will engage with a range of media forms and technologies by using the body and the senses as organising principles. It will make links between theoretical understandings of the body and the sense and the construction of different kinds of bodies and identities in a range of different genres and contexts: from mainstream to experimental cinema, and from music videos to cyberspace. This will allow us to explore the ways in which the construction of different kinds of bodies within representation feeds into larger socio-cultural understandings of gendered, raced and classed identities. It will also allow us to account for the ways in which different media forms and technologies engage our body and our senses in different ways, producing different kinds of affect.

There is a set of central questions that provides an overarching frame and that we will keep returning to throughout the module:

- What role do our bodies and our senses play in our engagement with various media forms and technologies?
- How do media forms and technologies impact on our understanding, perception and experience of our own and other's bodies?
- What is the relationship between media representations and technologies and the ways in which (gendered and raced) identities are embodied within the wider socio-cultural context?
- How are the body and the senses conceptualised within film and media theory?

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the module students will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the key concepts and debates relevant to the study of bodies and embodiment in relation to different media forms.
- identify the (historically shifting) significance of the body and the senses in film and media theory.
- analyse a range of media texts and forms in relation to questions of embodiment, sensuousness and affect.

Transferable Skills:

University study not only aims to provide you with knowledge and skills in a particular academic discipline, but also with research, work and expression skills that will help you beyond your studies. This course is designed to help you develop your skills in:

- critical thinking
- film and media analysis
- guided independent research
- written communication
- applying complex (theoretical) material to different (practical) contexts
- leading and contributing to discussion

Module Structure:

There will be a weekly **lecture** of up to two hours plus a one-hour **seminar/workshop**. There will also be a **screening** of up to two hours every two weeks.

Assessment:

There will be two components to the assessment for this module. It is anticipated that these will take the form of:

1. A single piece of coursework of 2,000 words (+/- 10%) worth 50% of the final grade.
2. End of Semester Exam, also worth 50%.

In both these assessments you will be asked to demonstrate an understanding of, and critical engagement with, the theoretical approaches covered in the module and apply these to specific media examples.

Preliminary reading:

These books provide an excellent introduction to the main themes of the module:

- Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener (2010) *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. London: Routledge.
- Fraser, Mariam and Greco, Monica (2005) *The Body: A Reader*. London: Routledge.

The following literature provides an indication of the central issues and concerns of the module:

- Jennifer Barker (2009) *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Laura Marks (2000) *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*. London: Duke University Press.
- Marshall McLuhan (1964) *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man*. London: Routledge.
- Lisa Nakamura (2008) *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Vivian Sobchack (2004) *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Steven Shaviro (1993) *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Steven Shaviro (2010) *Post-Cinematic Affect*. Ropley: O-Books Publishing.
- Iris Marion Young (2005) *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.