

AFTRS Screen Studies and Research : Full-time Courses

Screen Studies is a compulsory study unit in all Graduate Diploma and Master of Arts programs excluding Radio.

The Centre for Screen Studies and Research approaches screen culture from three different levels: the context of production, textural strategies and representations, and audience interpretations. The screen is a site of complex intersections between wider cultural processes and specific audiences. Into this mix we place the AFTRS student who is both a producer and consumer of screen culture. Ultimately, we want our students not only to participate in Australian screen culture, but also to inform and direct it as it develops.

In Screen Studies courses we ask students to consider the relationship between theory and practice. We ask students to engage with questions of style and content, to consider the relationship between historical and contemporary practices, and to consider the local with regards to the global. We provide courses on specific genres as well as survey-based courses that introduce students to theoretical tools.

Screen Studies courses offer students the opportunity to develop their own critical skills, but it also offers a space in which we take seriously the pleasures offered by the screen.

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS:

Graduate Diploma Core Units:

SCS210 Thinking the Screen: Introduction to Screen Studies

This unit introduces students to the language and methods of Screen Studies with a particular focus on their application to filmmaking practice. The unit introduces students to a number of critical debates around screen representation, and examines the history, technology and theory of screen forms from film to television, video and digital media. The unit aims to provide students with a foundation of knowledge about the history and theory of screen forms, narrative and style, and to reinforce the

value of a critical and analytical screen culture to a healthy screen industry.

SCS108 Genre: Big Screen, Little Screen

This unit is designed to develop further students' understanding of the rules of particular genres, to provide the conceptual tools necessary to develop genre-based work, and to introduce students to the theory of affect. The first half of this unit examines genre theory and maps historical and contemporary trends in generic transformation and hybridity. The second half of this unit will focus on the theory of affect and the use of different techniques in screen production to create mood and engage the senses.

SCS401 Resonances

This unit provides the opportunity during the development period of a student production for the whole production team to meet together to explore some of the critical, analytical and historical implications and contexts of their film/program. It aims to encourage greater awareness of how other filmmakers have treated (or not treated) themes, issues, codes and conventions etc. of relevance to the student production, and to ensure that the creative ideas of individual students are shared by the whole crew.

SCS103 Program Analysis (Core for TV Students)

This course is structured around a number of close reading exercises of various television factual genres. The course introduces students to the debates surrounding contemporary factual programming and the respective research. It will pay particular attention to the production content of factual examples, and to issues of audiences. Students will have the opportunity to explore in depth a program of their choice and present a seminar on the analysis of this example.

Master of Arts Core Units:

SCS210 Australian Screen Culture

This is a student-directed research course. It will introduce students to a range of methodologies and research strategies.

Students will work collectively in their discipline teams on a research project addressing a question relevant to their discipline and to the broader Australian screen culture. Each group will submit a formal proposal, which will be then used as the basis for a learning contract. Topics are developed in consultation with Screen Studies staff.

SCS201 Representing the Real (Core for Documentary Students, Not a General Elective)

This unit explores the relationship between documentary practice and society – documentary's special claim to represent the real, its development as a form which has changed and responded to social, aesthetic and industrial forces, and its role as a catalyst for change. Students will be introduced to the most distinctive tendencies in documentary, treating them as a palette of options from which they can draw in their individual practice. In contextualising documentary practice historically and theoretically, the unit aims to foreground the relationship between theory and practice.

SCS401 Resonances

Master of Arts students must also complete Resonances.

Electives:

Graduate Diploma and Masters students take one elective.

SCS503 National Cinemas

This short course examines the ideas and aims of national cinemas, as global and local phenomena, and as responses to Hollywood cinema. The emphasis will be on the nexus between national cinemas as commercial and social enterprises, as well as the advantages and paradoxes that such a nexus implies. The unit comprises historical contextualization of the rise and development of national cinemas, analysis of a selection of films from a specific national cinema or cinemas, assessment of the virtues and drawbacks of national cinemas, and speculation about the shape and direction of national cinemas and cultures in the future globalised cinematic economy.

SCS507 Great Filmmakers and Their Films

This unit will explore the work of either an individual filmmaker or a creative team via an investigation of the themes, issues and questions, which occupied him or her throughout his or her career. A selection of the filmmaker's or team's films will be screened and analysed. Formal and thematic elements will be discussed and the works will be considered in their differing contexts of production and reception. Previous filmmakers have included: Robert Bresson, Federico Fellini, Shohei Imamura, Wong Kar Wai and Christopher Doyle.

SCS502 Celluloid Cities – Online

This unit explores how the city and city life in general have been imagined, narrativised and documented in film in a variety of different countries at different periods in history. By analysing representations of particular cities – both real and fictional – the course will chart some of the relationships between modernity, post-modernity and the city. The unit will investigate transformations of urban, architectural and cinematic space over time, and survey questions of place and belonging in different periods. The course employs a multi-disciplinary approach and draws on ideas in film theory, urban studies, architectural design, montage, and political economy to explore the function of the city as physical location, imaginative setting, metaphorical canvas and figurative backdrop for cinematic stories.

SCS508 Screen Adaptation

This unit provides students with the opportunity to explore in depth the theoretical and practical issues arising from adapting stories from a variety of sources to the screen. Source material may include, but is not limited to, novels, plays, short stories, biographies, and events from real life. The unit will examine specific theories of adaptation as well as investigate some of the issues raised in the process of adaptation. Individual adaptations will be viewed and analysed, and comparisons made between original and subsequent versions of the text. Adaptation will be viewed as a creative process that involves invention of screen images as much as fidelity to the pre-existing text.