

FILM 201: Critical Approaches to Film Studies



Trimester 1 2016
29 February to 29 June 2016
20 Points

StreetDance 3D (2010) Directed by Max Giwa and Dania Pasquini

IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates:	29 February to 5 June 2016
Easter break:	24 to 30 March 2016
Mid-trimester break:	25 April to 1 May 2016
Last assessment item due:	3 June 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Monday	9.00-11.50	Hugh Mackenzie HMLT104
Wednesday	9.00-10.50	Hugh Mackenzie HMLT104

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the FILM 201 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorial instructions” and then follow the instructions carefully. Remember to record your tutorial time, day and

room for future reference. Tutorial rooms will be listed on myAllocator, Blackboard and on the noticeboard *outside the administration office, 83 Fairlie Terrace.*

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff:	Dr. Miriam Ross
Email:	Miriam.Ross@vuw.ac.nz
Phone:	04 465 9655
Room:	103, 85 Fairlie Terrace
Office Hours:	Wednesday 11.00-12.00

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

Additional information will be announced at the start of lectures; in tutorials; posted on blackboard; and via email. In particular, you should be sure to check Blackboard frequently for further updates, suggested readings and other material.

PRESCRIPTION

This course involves a survey of the significant theoretical approaches that inform Film Studies. Topics will vary from year to year but may include realism, formalism, semiotics, narratology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and/or postmodernism. In 2016 it will focus on embodied cinemas, that is to say cinemas that encourage physical, bodily and sensory responses from viewers such as horror films, 3D cinema, pornography, haptic cinema and dance films.

COURSE CONTENT

Operating broadly under the umbrella of film phenomenology, a number of scholars in recent years have paid attention to the way cinema is able to produce embodied, tactile relationships between viewers and films that incorporate and make use of all the senses. They examine the affective modes that films use in order to elicit bodily reactions and demonstrate how cinema produces moments that defy narrative comprehension and explanation. Using a week by week thematic approach, this course will look at particular types of cinema that emphasise and encouraged sustained bodily reactions. It will also question whether these responses can be universalised or whether contextual factors and viewer subjectivity also plays a role in physical reactions to the films. For this reason, the weekly film screenings are an important part of the course because they allow participants to witness how their peers respond to and engage with these types of cinema.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate general knowledge of the key theoretical debates and questions in Film Studies relating to embodied approaches to cinema, with in-depth knowledge of specific texts
2. Demonstrate a good understanding of critical terms and concepts relating to embodied approaches to cinema and be able to apply them to specific debates and/or analyses of films
3. Analyse and critique a range of perspectives in Film Studies relating to embodied approaches to cinema
4. Research critical and theoretical material in Film Studies relating to embodied approaches to cinema
5. Communicate ideas and arguments about course materials in a persuasive manner whether in written, spoken or audiovisual form

TEACHING FORMAT

This course will involve a screening session followed by a lecture session each week. Lectures will be interactive. There will also be a weekly tutorial where students will discuss the issues raised by screenings, lectures and readings.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. attend at least 7 out of the 9 tutorials

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester. In addition to spending around 58 hours attending lectures, screenings and tutorials, you should spend approximately 42 hours on reading, preparing for tutorials, and reflecting on lectures. The remaining 100 hours should be spent preparing for and working on assignments (for example, an assignment worth 30% should take a minimum of 30 hours). The exact times spend on such activities will vary depending on your personal needs. Preparation for assignments should take place a number of weeks in advance of the due dates.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Tutorial Lead (5 min)	15%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	In tutorials
2	Annotated Bibliography (1250 words)	20%	2, 3, 4, 5	Mon 4 April, 3pm
3	Video Essay (3-4 min)	30%	2, 5	Mon 2 May, 3pm
4	Essay (2500 words)	35%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Fri 3 June, 3pm

Assignment One: Tutorial Lead (5 min): In Tutorials

Your tutor will assign you a tutorial week and one of the readings for that week. You are to present a summary of the reading and a brief discussion of how it can be applied to the screening and lecture material. You will then pose a series of questions to be discussed by your tutorial peers (please distribute hard copies of the questions). Your discussion and questions should take no more than 5 minutes, leaving 10 minutes for your peers to discuss the questions. Further information about this assignment will be provided by your tutor in the first tutorial.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Effective summary of the reading
- Clear analysis of how the reading can be related to class material
- Understanding and correct application of any terms and concepts
- Clear articulation of questions leading from the reading/material

Assignment Two: Annotated Bibliography (1250 words): Week 6, Mon 4 April, 3pm

Choose ONE of the weekly topics (the information provided on pages 9-11 will provide you with more information). Using the JSTOR or MLA databases, seek out 4 articles relating to this topic. Provide a 250-word summary of each article followed by a 250-word explanation of the extent to which, *collectively*, they examine embodied responses to cinema. Discuss each article by completing the Annotated Bibliography form provided in class. You must choose a different topic from the one you are covering in Assignment 1.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Use of the correct databases
- Clear analysis of the material presented in the articles
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in the articles
- Quality and fluency of your expression
- Accurate and complete referencing of the articles.

Assignment Three: Video Essay (3-4 min): Week 9, Mon 2 May, 3pm

You will produce a 3-4 min video essay that illustrates some of the main points and themes in one of the weekly readings. Choose one of the weekly readings and extract quotes that provide salient points.

Combine these quotes with examples from either one film or from multiple films and/or other audiovisual sources to create the video essay. Guides for how to source and edit together audiovisual material are available on Blackboard and further information will be provided in class during Week 4. You must choose different topics and readings from the ones you are covering in Assignment 1 and 2.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of engagement with the ideas discussed in the reading
- Effective application of the ideas to audiovisual material
- Creative execution of the video essay
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources in the video essay

Assignment Four: Essay (2500 words): Week 13, Fri 3 June, 3pm

Choose one of the essay questions provided in class. Supplement your previous research by seeking out further scholarly articles and books relating to the essay topic. You will need to develop a critical position on the topic and construct a persuasive argument in essay form to communicate your findings. You may draw upon research you have undertaken in the previous assignments.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in class
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and fluency in your essay
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography.

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool. There is no need to submit work to Turnitin unless requested to do so by your tutor.

Hardcopy assignments (essays and USB sticks with video essays) are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: **83 Fairlie Terrace**. Attach an assignment cover sheet found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your tutor in tutorials or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the administration office.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 29 June 2016**

Penalties

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day, for a maximum of four days. **Any assignment submitted more than 4 days late, without an extension, will receive a 0 grade.** Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

REQUIRED READING

There is no set text for this course but there are weekly readings to be completed. A full list of these is listed on pages 9-11.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

This is the first time this course has been taught and so there is no previous feedback.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	29 Feb/2 March	Introduction	
Week 2	7/9 March	Horror and Disgust 1: Horror Cinema	first tutorial
Week 3	14/16 March	Horror and Disgust 2: Medical Hygiene Films	
Week 4	21/23 March	Researching Embodied Cinema: Essay and Video Skills	no tutorial
Easter Break:		<i>Thursday 24 to Wednesday 30 March 2016</i>	
Week 6	4/6 April	Haptic 1: Video Haptics	Assignment 2 due Monday 4 April 3pm
Week 7	11/13 April	Haptic 2: Plastic Haptic	
Week 8	18/20 April	New Technologies 1: Mobile Phone Films	
Mid-trimester Break:		<i>Monday 25 April to Sunday 1 May</i>	
Week 9	2/4 May	New Technologies 2: 3D Cinema	Assignment 3 due Monday 2 May 3pm
Week 10	9/11 May	Kinetic Cinema 1: Dance Films	
Week 11	16/18 May	Kinetic Cinema 2: Rollercoaster Cinema	
Week 12	23/25 May	Pornography 1: Titillation	
Week 13	30 May/ 1 June	Pornography 2: Hard Core	no tutorial Assignment 4 due Friday 3 June 3pm

Week 1: Introduction

This week introduces the concept of embodied cinema: those cinemas that demand heightened and measurable bodily reactions from viewers and that have their own embodied presence in order to do so. It will show how film phenomenology can help make sense of these cinemas and will also set the parameters for how we understand our individual and collective responses to these cinemas.

Screening: *The Piano* (1993) Dir. Jane Campion (Library: CAM PIA 1992, 2 hrs 1 min)

- Sobchack, Vivian 'What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh' in Sobchack, Vivian, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) pp.53-84

Week 2: Horror and Disgust 1: Horror Cinema

Although there are many ways to research and discuss Horror cinema, this week focuses on the embodied reactions that Horror cinema evokes: quickened heart rate, sweat, muscular tensing, averted eyes, shrieks, disgust. It will look at the way the film's rhythms can enhance these responses as well as the ways in which gender might or might not play a role in these responses.

Screening: *Paranormal Activity* (2007) Dir. Oren Peli (Library: TBA, 1 hr 26 min)

- Williams, Linda, 'When Women Look: A Sequel', *Senses of Cinema*, 2001
<http://sensesofcinema.com/2001/freuds-worst-nightmares-psychoanalysis-and-the-horror-film/horror_women/>
- Carroll, Noël 'The Definition of Horror' in Carroll, Noël, *The Philosophy of Horror, Or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 12-42

Week 3: Horror and Disgust 2: Medical Hygiene Films

Following on from the discussions of disgust in the previous week, this week will consider how a different type of film, the medical hygiene film, also produces disgust. Medical Hygiene films were produced around the mid-twentieth century, ostensibly for education purposes although they also thrilled audiences with their risqué depictions of sex and diseased human body parts. This week discusses how we, and the original audiences, might react to the 'disgusting' bodies shown on screen.

Screening: *Mom and Dad* (1945) Dir. William Beaudine (NO LIBRARY COPY, 1 hr 37 min)

- Plantinga, Carl, 'Disgusted at the Movies', *Film Studies*, 8 (2006), 81–92
- Schaefer, Eric, 'Of Hygiene and Hollywood: Origins of the Exploitation Film', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 30 (1992), 34–47

Week 4: Researching Embodied Cinema: Essay and Video Skills

This week uses David Lynch's *Eraserhead* to discuss how to approach researching, writing and producing video essays on embodied cinemas. It will cover basic research skills as well as how to apply them in an embodied cinemas context.

Screening: *Eraserhead* (2004) Dir. David Lynch (Library: LYN ERA 1977, 1 hr 29 min)

- SEFTMS handbook (available on Blackboard)
- Mcwhirter, Andrew, 'Film Criticism, Film Scholarship and the Video Essay', *Screen*, 56 (2015), 369–77

Easter Break

Week 6: Haptic 1: Video Haptics

This week looks at what Laura U. Marks terms haptic cinema: cinema that often draws more attention to the 'skin' of the film than the action within it in order to provoke sensory responses. The video work that Marks analyses will be discussed as well as other films that function in this way.

Screening: Glass Jaw (1991) Dir. Michael O'Reilly (<https://vimeo.com/21537966>, 17 min) All Star: Short Films (various) Dir. Todd Verow (<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/allstar/105581635>, 41 min)

- Marks, Laura U., 'Video Haptics and Erotics', *Screen*, 39 (1998), 331–48
- Beugnet, Martine, 'The Aesthetics of Sensation' in Beugnet, Martine, *Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 63-124

Week 7: Haptic 2: Plastic Haptic

While the ideas around haptic cinema have normally been applied to artist cinema and video, this week explores what happens when they are applied to computer generated animations that also have sensory and tactile surfaces. This allows discussions of how our sense memory plays a role in the way we approach these animations.

Screening: Toy Story (1995) Dir. John Lasseter (Library: LAS TOY 1995, 1 hr 21 min)

- Howes, David, 'Hyperesthesia, Or, The Sensual Logic of Late Capitalism', in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, ed. by David Howes (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004), pp. 281–303
- Mori, Masahiro, 'The Uncanny Valley', *Energy*, 7 (1970), 33–35
<http://www.androidscience.com/theuncannyvalley/proceedings2005/uncannyvalley.html>

Week 8: New Technologies 1: Mobile Phone Films

This week considers the way the recent surge in mobile phone filmmaking has produced its own types of embodied images. On the one hand, the shaky hand-held effect and intimate subject matter of many films creates embodied transference between subject and viewer. On the other hand, the ergonomic qualities of the phones as viewing devices also create embodied relationships.

No screening

- Wilson, Gavin, 'A Phenomenology of Reciprocal Sensation in the Moving Body Experience of Mobile Phone Films', *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image*, 3, 62–83 <http://cjpmi.ifl.pt/3-contents>
- Ross, Miriam, 'Vertical Framing: Authenticity and New Aesthetic Practice in Online Videos', *Refractory*, 24 (2014) <http://refractory.unimelb.edu.au/2014/08/06/ross/>

Mid-trimester Break

Week 9: New Technologies 2: 3D Cinema

While mobile-phone filmmaking operates at the low budget, DIY end of cinema, this week's topic, 3D cinema, operates at the large scale, high budget end. 3D cinema is examined to understand how its unique visual regime asks for sensory, embodied responses that are not available or less apparent in 2D versions of the same film

Screening replaced by visit to Reading/Embassy Theatre to view a current 3D film

- Ross, Miriam, 'The 3-D Aesthetic: Avatar and Hyperhaptic Visuality', *Screen*, 53 (2012), 381–97
- Ross, Miriam, 'Stereoscopic Visuality Where Is the Screen, Where Is the Film?', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 19 (2013), 406–14

Week 10: Kinetic Cinema 1: Dance Films

This week considers how dance films have specific, kinetic motion, that asks our bodies to respond accordingly. Often this motion is expressed through the dancers on screen and body mimicry, producing a type of kinesthetic empathy, is encouraged.

Screening: StreetDance 3D (2D Version) (2010) Dir. Max Giwa and Dania Pasquini (Library: TBA, 1 hr 38 min)

- Lindner, Katharina, 'Spectacular (Dis-) Embodiments: The Female Dancer on Film', *Scope*, 20 (2011), 1–18 <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/scope/issues/2011/june-issue-20.aspx>
- D'Aloia, Adriano, 'Cinematic Empathy: Spectator Involvement in the Film Experience', in *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, ed. by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), pp. 93–107

Week 11: Kinetic Cinema 2: Rollercoaster Cinema

This week continues the focus on kinesthetic empathy but focuses more acutely on the way the film's body (its editing rhythms, camera work, and mise-en-scene, for example) ask for embodied correspondence between it and its viewers. In particular, this week looks at a type of rollercoaster cinema most commonly found in the action blockbuster.

Screening: Transformers (2007) Dir. Michael Bay (Library: BAY TRA 2007, 2 hrs 21 min)

- Barker, Jennifer, 'Musculature', in *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 69–119
- Shaviro, Steven, 'Post-Continuity', *The Pinocchio Theory* <http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=1034>

Week 12: Pornography 1: Titillation

This week begins the process of understanding how sex on screen asks for embodied responses from viewers. It considers films that have elements that could be considered pornographic but are presented within mainstream commercial circuits of distribution.

Screening: Fifty Shades of Grey (2015) Dir. Sam Taylor-Johnson (Library: TBA, 2 hrs 5 min)

- Andrews, David, 'Soft v. Hard', in *Soft in the Middle : The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 23–44
- Barker, Meg., 'Consent Is a Grey Area? A Comparison of Understandings of Consent in Fifty Shades of Grey and on the BDSM Blogosphere', *Sexualities*, 16 (2013), 896–914

Week 13: Pornography 2: Hard Core

This week shifts the focus on pornography to that which is deemed hard core, usually exhibited outside the mainstream and asking for private embodied responses from viewers.

No screening

- Williams, Linda, 'Power, Pleasure and Perversion: Sado-masochistic Film Pornography', in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible': Expanded Edition*, Expanded ed edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 184–228
- Maddison, Stephen, 'The Limits of Pleasure? Max Hardcore and Extreme Porn', in *Hard to Swallow: Hard-Core Pornography on Screen*, ed. by Claire editor Hines, Darren editor Kerr, and Feona author Attwood (London ; New York: Wallflower Press, 2012), pp. 113–25