

London South Bank University



Module Guide

People and Place

AME_4_PEP

School of Arts and Creative Industries

2015/ 16

Level 4

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1. MODULE DETAILS

Module Title:	People and Place
Module Level:	Level 4
Module Reference Number:	AME_4_PEP
Credit Value:	20 CAT Points
Student Study Hours:	152
Contact Hours:	48
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	None
Co-requisite Modules (If applicable):	None
Course(s):	Film Practice
Year and Semester	2015/16 Semester 1
Module Coordinator:	Benjamin Johns
MC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	Room. BR326B 103 Borough Rd. Email. Johnsb3@lsbu.ac.uk
Teaching Team & Contact Details (If applicable):	Meloni Poole Email. poolm3@lsbu.ac.uk
Subject Area:	Film Practice
Summary of Assessment Method:	Filmmaking
External Examiner appointed for module:	Dr Liz Greene, Senior Lecturer, School of Communications at Dublin City University.

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This introductory, practice-based module asks students to make two videos: one, a self-portrait, and the other a short documentary/narrative or experimental film of a figure in a landscape on a journey. The first film raises the central question of the module: what is the difference? By thinking about how we see ourselves in relation to how people like us are represented across media platforms, this module introduces students to the mediating effects of representational strategies and technologies. And while 'the personal' is one of the module's concerns, it is not just the idea that our films can be creative expressions of self that we seek to investigate, but also the more complicated idea that our sense of self is already informed by the way other people are represented. The second film is about visualising the many different journeys that are made through time and space. Students will explore the relationship between life journeys and the physical environment, while using the camera as a tool to scan, map, analyse and interpret their world. Informed by filmmaking traditions as varied as the City Symphony, landscape films, experimental cinema and road movies, this Module invites students to get lost in the possible worlds that exist between cinematographic, physical and psychological space

3. AIMS OF THE MODULE

The aims of this module are to:

- Explore filmmaking as a process that mediates knowledge and experience.
- Develop students' appreciation of video technology as a tool for both reflection and critique.
- Develop students' understanding of those factors — e.g. gender, religion, sexual identity and race, that shape us as subjects, and which dominate media constructions of identity.
- Introduce the idea that filmmaking is a process that not only captures and reflects the physical world, but also shapes and changes our understanding of that world.
- Provide students with models of cinematic journeys that serve as alternatives to narrative drama.
- Introduce students to techniques for manipulating time and space in cinematic representation and the relationship between screen space, represented space, and the space in front of the camera.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- Engage with ideas of portraiture, subjectivity and self-representation.
- Recognise that screen journeys are created through editing, sequencing, cinematography, sound design and mise-en-scene.
- Explain the dramatic, conceptual and aesthetic potential inherent in real and represented spaces.

4.2 Intellectual Skills

- Debate the merits of the idea that 'the camera never lies'.
- Evaluate the difference between people and their self-presentation.
- Demonstrate that physical space can be used to communicate abstract ideas and inner, psychological states.

4.3 Practical Skills

- Working in pairs, conceive and develop an original video portrait.
- Work collaboratively on a short video journey.
- Create visual sequences with dramatic, aesthetic or conceptual meaning.
- Work with colour, light and form to create visual interest surprise.
- Explore synchronous and asynchronous sound recording.
- Compose space in three dimensions using digital video cameras.

4.4 Transferable Skills

- Engagement in reflexive film making practice.
- Understand the diversity of human subjects.
- Understand and explore visual composition.
- Analyse the work of other filmmakers in order to inform their own film making practice.
- Develop spatial awareness, technological competencies and visual language.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

5.1 Assignment 1 (Short Video — **Self Portrait**)

Working in pairs, students will produce a 2-minute video portrait. This portrait can involve either or both students as subjects or it can involve a third party subject.

Weighting 35% — Due Week 5 – Tuesday 27th October @ 1 pm

Criteria for Assessment: Students should demonstrate

- An original engagement with video portraiture.
- An ability to respond to the notion that video mediates the self but also that the self is always and already mediated by the environment it is formed in. There is no *unmediated* subject.
- An ability to employ editing, composition, and mise-en-scene to facilitate a particular *kind* of representation of self. This means that the filmmaking techniques employed for your portrait should represent a consistent and cohesive approach, and should be chosen because they are in accordance with the specific idea you want to convey.

5.2 Assignment 2 (Short Video – Figure in a Landscape)

- Students will produce a 3 to 5 minute video that engages with what might be lost or found during journeys through real and imagined spaces and landscapes.

NB: *This video cannot contain dialogue!* You may, however, use voice-over narration if you wish.

Time required to complete assessment, including research (approx 60 hours)

Weighting 60% - Due in Week 12 – Tuesday 15th December @ 1 pm

Criteria for Assessment: Students should demonstrate

- An understanding of space as a metaphor for human or environmental relations.
- An appreciation of the difference between real and represented space.
- An appreciation of how the camera captures, shapes, constructs and moves through space.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the final submission of an assignment or as advised by their module leader.

General feedback, applying to all students, will also be placed on the Moodle site within 15 working days.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

In simple terms this module requires students to think, through their video practice, about the relationship between identity and the media. In more academic terms we could speak of how, as *subjects*, we can only know ourselves through others, including all the *media* representations created by others. We can therefore speak of ourselves as *mediated subjects*. But one of the more cinematic aspects of what mediates the representation of ourselves and others is the space around us as well as all the shape, meaning and drama of that space.

Students are invited to explore the self, to explore techniques of representation, and to experiment with video as a mediating tool that changes everything it comes in contact with. Can it be true that the camera never lies?

The first video assessment offers students a chance to make a video with minimal construction that will nonetheless be mediated by the video camera, shaped and distorted through editing, and finally transformed by the audience who receive it.

Paul Arthur (2003) makes an interesting point about Portrait Films. For him portraits are not biographical, tending instead to exclude personal testimony and stories. Instead they are much more likely to be about what a person does, to be about a physical body in space, to be metaphorical and visual, and to be about the encounter between the subject and the artist/filmmaker (and therefore about mediation). This very idea of portraiture can be seen in the first line of J.D Salinger's novel *The Catcher In The Rye*:

IF YOU REALLY want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

The key idea here is that the truth about this person, if you really want to know it, lies somewhere other than where we might expect to find it. The question is, where will you find the truth in your self-portrait? But also, can the truth be found at all, as long as there's a camera around?

This Module also examines the importance of space in cinema, and the kinds of journeys that might be undertaken in and through space. Given that film is made up of individual shots stitched together according to a range of different criteria (narrative causality, continuity, psychology, rhythm, colour, movement) space is key to achieving a sense of connectivity, of flow, and a sense of worldliness. Space is the ground upon which both human and audio-visual dramas are played out.

Students will be introduced to films from a range of genres that explore space in formal, dramatic or narrative terms, and will also be required to conduct their own analysis of a film from the core filmography.

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

The module runs for one semester, spanning 12 teaching weeks. Classes will be a mixture of lectures, workshops and seminars, including video production and screening sessions.

Note on Attendance

You are expected to attend all classes **punctually**. If you are unable to attend a class you are expected to warn your tutor in advance via phone or email. Due to the technical complexity of this class, all classes will start on time and will not be delayed. If you arrive late or miss a class you run the risk of missing crucial information you will need to support the production of your coursework. It is up to you to liaise with the tutor and other class members to find out what you may have missed in seminars or workshops. In the event of sickness your tutor and the demonstrator team will do their best to assist you in acquiring information and skills you may have missed.

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

Student responsibility in the learning and development process will be emphasised. Students are required to undertake directed self-study and prepare solutions/discussions to questions relative to various topic areas. Students will be encouraged to identify for themselves particular problems of difficulty and to use seminar discussions, where appropriate, for the resolution of these. Students must regularly access the Moodle site for this module. They should download the class/lecture material from the Moodle site, and do the recommended reading, before each lecture/class.

Where appropriate, students are also expected to download the relevant seminar questions and study them in advance of each seminar, in order to derive maximum benefit from seminar time. The programme of teaching, learning and assessment gives guidance on the textbook reading required for each week, the purpose of which is to encourage further reading both on and around the topic.

7.4 Employability

Being able to reflect critically on the politics of representation is a fundamental skill across the media sphere, from journalism, to teaching, to filmmaking. Likewise, being able to simultaneously engage in the creation of a representation (a film about yourself) and a critique of representational strategies in the media demonstrates the sort of conceptual and reflexive thinking that employers across the cultural and creative industries value highly. This module is about developing students as creative, confident and critical thinkers, and this reflects a course ethos of reading appropriate academic sources and critically evaluating them. As students of film you must become more than passive viewers of the films you watch by reflecting on the choices

filmmakers make, by taking notes, and by thinking about the experience of the people both in front of and behind the camera 'thinking through film'.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Lecture All Students: Wednesday 9 - 11 AM Room BR 360 – Borough Road
 Seminar Group A: Wednesday 11- 13.00 - Room BR 361 Borough Road
 Seminar Group B: Wednesday 11- 13.00 - Room LR 332 – London Road

SEMESTER 1		
WEEK	TOPIC	READING / VIEWING LIST
Week 1 — September 30 th	Lecture : What is a Portrait Introduction to module MP & BDJ What is a Portrait ? MP Screening of Chain Camera and previous 2 minute portrait films Seminar Discuss screenings Ice breakers Exercise General Help and Advice	Arthur, P. (2003) 'No Longer Absolute: Portraiture in American Avant-Garde and Documentary Films of the Sixties' in <i>Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema</i> . Durham and London, Duke University Press.
Week 2 — October 7 th	Lecture : Putting people in the frame Mise en scene – MP portrait genres and formats – MP Developing non fiction ideas for a portrait film – BDJ Where do characters come from? BDJ Process for developing non fiction ideas 1 BDJ Screening : The Charming man Nuestro Abuelo Tarnation Seminar Discuss screening Feedback from task one Exercise Tutorials	
Week 3 — October 14 th	Lecture : Being represented – encounter , collaboration and voice Grizzly Man – MP Developing non fiction ideas 2 - BDJ Building relationships and trust with subjects in documentary – BDJ Screening : Grizzly Man Seminar Discussion about the film	

	<p>Discussion about the task</p> <p>Exercise – First production meeting with your partner and start developing your ideas</p> <p>Tutorials</p>	
<p>Week 4 — October 21st</p>	<p>Lecture : Representing others constructing difference</p> <p>When we were kings, race and otherness – MP</p> <p>Effective non fiction shooting in teams of two – BDJ</p> <p>Introduction to language on set and protocols – BDJ</p> <p>Screening : When we were kings</p> <p>Seminar</p> <p>Discussion of When we were kings Feedback from the task</p> <p>Production meetings and Tutorials</p> <p>Shooting and Editing outside of class</p>	<p>This week you will be shooting and editing your portrait films outside of class.</p>
<p>Week 5 — October 28th</p>	<p>Lecture</p> <p>ASSESSMENT 1: Screening student films x 32 approx</p> <p>Students give 1 minute intro to the films</p> <p>Seminar</p> <p>Discussion of films and peer feedback</p> <p>Viewing of people in Landscape short films doc and drama</p>	
<p>Week 6 — Monday 2nd November – Friday 6th November</p>	<p>Independent study time – no lectures or seminars</p>	
<p>Week 7 — November 4th</p>	<p>Lecture : Figures in a Landscape</p> <p>Introduction to the Second Assignment</p> <p>How and why film-makers place their characters in different landscapes – MP</p> <p>Intro to Short Drama or Short Documentary</p> <p>BDJ</p> <p>Case Study : Candy Bar Kid - BDJ</p> <p>Screening – TBC</p> <p>Seminar</p> <p>Discussion about the film screened</p> <p>Discussion about films watched during Study week Screening of other figure in a landscape films.</p> <p>Tutorials</p>	
<p>Week 8 — November 11th</p>	<p>Lecture : The importance of Cinematography</p> <p>Space and time in Cinema looking at composition and framing and movement to explore psychological landscapes and visual story telling. Elephant – MP</p> <p>The Role of the Cinematographer , working with a cinematographer – BDJ</p> <p>Introduction to the language of shots ,</p>	

	<p>Composition and framing – BDJ Screening : TBC</p> <p><u>Seminar</u></p> <p>Discussion about the film screened</p> <p>Exercise – TBC</p> <p>Get into production teams – mini production meeting with your team</p> <p>Tutorials</p>	
<p>Week 9 — November 18th</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: Life Journeys. Dramatic movement and Intensification.</u></p> <p>Nomadism, Diaspora, oppressive, disciplining and violence. Thematic concerns in Samson and Delilah film, which explores the notion of wasted, wastelands and wasted youth/ MP</p> <p>Effective shooting of short drama in pairs Case study – Wisdom keepers documentary – stills and or video BDJ</p> <p>SCREENING – SAMSON AND DELIAH</p> <p><u>SEMINAR</u></p> <p>Production meetings regarding final film in pairs / groups Help from Tutor Risk assessment forms</p>	
<p>Week 10 — November 25th</p>	<p><u>SHOOTING</u> No lectures or seminars – Tutorials available by booking via email</p>	
<p>Week 11 — December 2nd</p>	<p><u>EDITING</u> Edit review tutorials – present a cut of your film to your tutor and receive help and guidance . (assemble edit or beyond)</p>	
<p>Week 12 — December 9th</p>	<p><u>FINAL SCREENING</u> of final submitted films with introduction and discussion Wrap up of module</p>	