

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department: Communications & The Arts

Programme: MA Film: Science Fiction and Fantasy

FHEQ Level: 7

Course Title: Science Fiction and Fantasy: Storytelling

Course Code: FLM 7102

Total Hours: 200

Timetabled Hours: 39

Guided Learning Hours: 21

Independent Learning Hours: 140

Credits: 20 UK CATS credits

10 ECTS credits

4 US credits

Course Description:

This course explores and critically interrogates the formulaic and innovative approaches to creating fantasy-based film genres and media, both in generating story-worlds and meeting industry 'product standards'. This course focuses on several genre types that follow a fantasy and/or Science Fiction impetus that includes the gothic, horror, utopia, dystopia, superheroes, fairy tales, folklore, mythology, magic, post-apocalyptic fiction, space operas, anime, magical realism and more. Combining theory with professional contexts, the course unpacks commercial expectations of fantasy genre conventions and the socio-cultural themes invested in these tropes. Case studies include film, television, games, comics, commercials in the form of screenplays, novels and storyboards alongside other templates and products.

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites: MA Film: Science Fiction and Fantasy students only.

Aims and Objectives:

- To introduce key and evolving storytelling strategies of fantasy-based narratives.
- To examine closely multiple fantasy-based genres and sub-genre formulas, enabling students to master narrative tropes and devices appropriate to the specific fantasy mediums and/or media of their choice.
- To develop skillsets in academic analysis and 'product review' evaluation.
- To examine fantasy storytelling through the combination of theoretical interrogation and analysis of professional skillsets.

Programme Outcomes:

At the end of the course the student will have achieved the following programme outcomes:

A1, A2, A3, B1, B4, B6

A detailed list of the Programme Outcomes is found in the programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive and systematic knowledge of theories and methods required for examining film in an international setting, drawing on fantasy film analysis and industry
- Show a sophisticated understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary culture
- Demonstrate a critical knowledge of professional storytelling in fantasy film genres and creative cultural industries
- Deploy sophisticated visual literacy including formal analysis
- Show excellent writing skills including logical and structured narratives and arguments supported by relevant primary and secondary evidence
- Understand the skills and experience required to work in creative industries pertaining to storytelling areas.

Indicative Content:

- Fantasy Genre Formulas and Conventions
- Storytelling Strategies in Industry
- Narratology Theories and Principles
- Screenplays, Literary Novels, Graphic Novels, Game Scripts, Advertising Campaigns, Fan Fiction
- Transmedial Storytelling Strategies and Cross-Platform Franchising
- ‘Evaluative Reviewing’ Techniques
- Socio-Cultural, Political, Economic and Historical Interrogations.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and are located at <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

The course will consist of weekly postgraduate seminars, which will follow the structure set out within the course syllabus and will serve a number of functions: seminars provide a

framework of the course; address critically the relevant literature in specific areas, examine concepts, theories and case studies, and enable students to engage in group discussion and dialogue, and autonomous learning. Seminars rely on upon active student participation, mediated by the course instructor. By examining and discussing issues and problems in the seminar setting, students as junior research colleagues will be able to learn from each other and resolve questions that arise in the course of the lectures and readings. Seminars will only be useful to the extent that they are prepared for and participation in discussions and debates is an essential aspect of this. All students will be required to participate. Tutorial opportunities will also be available for research supervision and other academic support.

Indicative Text(s):

- Bellin, J. *Framing Monsters: Fantasy Film and Social Alienation* (Southern Illinois University Press 2005)
- Dowd, T., Niderman, M., Fry, M. Steiff J. *Storytelling Across Worlds: Transmedia for Creatives and Producers* (New York Focal Press 2013)
- Furby J, Hines, C. *Fantasy* (Routledge 2012)
- Freeman, M., Gambarato, R.R. (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies (Routledge Media and Cultural Studies Companions 2018)*
- Glebas F. *Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation.* (Focal Press 2009)
- Howell, A. *Popular Film Music and Masculinity in Action A Different Tune*, 1st Edition. (Routledge 2015).
- Jak, S. *Writing the Fantasy Film: Heroes and Journeys in Alternate Realities* (M. Wiese Productions, 2004)
- Jones, N. *Hollywood Action Films and Spatial Theory*, 1st Edition (Routledge 2017)
- Joyce, S. *Transmedia Storytelling and the Apocalypse* (Palgrave MacMillian 2018).
- McErlean, K. *Interactive Narratives and Transmedia Storytelling.* (Routledge 2018)
- Miller, C.H., *Digital Storytelling 4e: A creator's guide to interactive entertainment*, (CRC Press 2019)
- Thompson, K. *Storytelling in Film and Television.* (Harvard University Press 2003).

See syllabus for complete reading list

Journals:

- *American Cinematographer*
- *American Film*
- *Black Film Review*
- *Camera Obscura*
- *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*
- *Cinema Journal*

- *Feminist Media Studies*
- *Film & History*
- *Film Comment*
- *Film Criticism*
- *Film History*
- *Film International*
- *Film Journal International*
- *Film Quarterly*
- *Film Studies*
- *Filmmaker: The Magazine of Independent Film*
- *Films & Filming*
- *Films in Review*
- *Framework: The Journal of Cinema & Media*
- *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television*
- *Journal of Film & Video*
- *Journal of Popular Film & Television*
- *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*
- *Literature Film Quarterly*
- *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*
- *Screen*
- *Sight & Sound*
- *Velvet Light Trap: A Critical Journal of Film & Television*

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Revision – annual update	May 2023	