IMAGES & SOUNDS
Audiovisual Language

Carol Lorac

Chapter 6
Composers and Composition
Media Arts in a University

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Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language
Chapter 6 Backstory

Media Arts in a University

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Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language (chapter 6 Composers and Composition: Media Arts in a University) described placing audiovisual language (composing and comprehending) into the centre of a Media Arts undergraduate and postgraduate programme at Royal Holloway University of London. Composing in images and sounds was at the core: divided equally between a study of a 'corpus of published film and television works', and a study of generative audiovisual composing, as well as commercial practices. However, chapter 6 only focuses on audiovisual composing: not on audiovisual comprehension of film and television works. It doesn't explain how the Media Arts programme developed or how it was structured, organised and managed. This backstory addresses these other issues.

Context

The Royal Holloway University of London Media Arts programme took place in a traditional, UK university in the early 1990's and the following story addresses the context, underpinning rationale and innovative organizational solutions that were required for such an endeavour.

This backstory provides an historical snapshot of media studies as an emerging university discipline: and in particular shares the story behind the structuring of a media arts undergraduate and postgraduate degree programme that placed the language of audiovisual composing at the core; divided equally between a study of a corpus of professionally published audiovisual compositions (film and television) and a practice concerning generative, as well as professional, audiovisual composing.

The academic study of film and television provided a knowledge of theorized media practice: and at the same time contributed to the development of a wide range of transferable skills - research, critical thinking and professional expertise that are associated with humanities degrees. While the teaching of audiovisual composing provided professional preparation for careers in established film and television industries and generative composing skills that were appropriate for the innovative audiovisual and multimedia requirements of the electronic communication industries servicing the needs of education, commerce, the social services, arts institutions and the internet.

Developing ideas surrounding a media arts programme that was premised on the concept of an audiovisual language, which comprised both the study of a corpus of film and television and the acquisition of generative and professional audiovisual composing necessitated thinking about the processes, as well as the contents, of the degree programme. The processes comprised not just the audiovisual composing processes, but the organisational processes that would facilitate a coherent, integrated learning experience.

At the time of initiating this media arts degree programme there was a tendency of underestimating the depth of theoretical study associated with media practice. Analyzing film and television fell naturally into the notions of appropriate intellectual activity within a humanities degree; but practically making film and video productions was relatively un-theorized. Approaching a study of the media from the perspective of teaching and learning a language meant that both the analysis of published works and using composing processes in the creation of works, required theoretical underpinning.

From a practical standpoint theoretical studies, in most academic courses, comprised a systematically developed set of discipline specific topics and themes, covering significant concepts and theories that underpin each discipline. The topics were usually explored through weekly lectures with sets of readings associated with the relevant concepts and theories; screenings (for the study of the media) where the concepts and theories could be analyzed; and weekly seminars where the lecturers and students could discuss the topics. This was followed by the production of an essay where a student could express what they have understood about the topic - concepts and theories.

As a way of addressing the intellectual rigour of 'theory' (comprehending film and television) and 'practice' (audiovisual composing) both aspects of audiovisual composition were taught using the same processes - lectures, readings, screening and either seminars (for analyzing film and television 'texts') or workshops (for producing audiovisual 'texts') followed by the submission of a written or audiovisual piece of work.

Apart from addressing the academic requirements of teaching audiovisual theories and practices there was another potentially thorny challenge. This related to time management and the different sorts of intellectual activities used for analytically deconstructing film and television or practically engaging in audiovisual composing. In addition to the lectures, readings and screenings, media theory required uninterrupted time for reading, viewing and writing essays: while audiovisual composing required flexible time in various locations recording audiovisual material and then further time in an editing suite. Clearly, this would need an innovative solution to overcome any conflicts of different interests.

For audiovisual composing it was difficult to predict the exact length of time required by a video shoot because it depends on so many factors – travelling to and from the location, setting up and packing away, number of re-takes and so on. Duration is also difficult to accurately predict when editing, so edit suites and multimedia facilities were made available, in the Department of Media Arts, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with sensible guidelines and booking arrangements that ensured good personal time management and time to sleep! Good time management also applied to the theoretical study of the media where reading theoretical texts and viewing associated films could extend into the night. The potential risk was that a student might want to complete some theoretical research and at the same time be required, by their video group, to participate in a location recording session: so time had to be allocated to minimize this possibility. The other challenge was that a video recording session might over-run and clash with a lecture or seminar. To overcome these potential problems it was necessary to construct a timetable that facilitated optimum working practices.

With careful planning it was possible to design a timetable for all three years of the undergraduate programme so that the staff and students had two full days each week for the academic study of film and television, with a further two days of professional practice in audiovisual composing. The fifth day was used for individual study, for either film and television studies, or audiovisual composing according to individual students' needs and desires.

This timetable enabled a learning experience where the students did not feel divided between the different activities of audiovisual comprehension and composition. Practice assignments could over-run on a particular day and this did not result in a conflict of interest between the recording processes and the demands of a film lecture. Similarly, students could fully concentrate on an analysis and reflection of film and television texts by attending a lecture, spending time pursuing the ideas in the library or in groups, without having to change direction and rush off to record or edit a practical project. Theoretically, this organisational structure encouraged un-problematic working practices; but of course, in practice video shoots were missed when film essays were due and seminars on television drama were missed when a video shoot or edit was seen as urgent. However, by and large, having an organisational structure that encouraged concentrating on the twin sides of their study, on two separate days, together with an explanation of the rationale behind this, meant that a facilitation process was put in place. No student could say that a practice class ended late and that is why they missed a film or television seminar!

Staffing could have been problematic when organizing this media arts degree. It was fairly straightforward to recruit academic staff for teaching the study of a corpus of film and television. Focusing on academics with literature, drama and film backgrounds ensured that their expertise could embrace the particular issues surrounding teaching media arts from 'literature', 'language' and 'performance' perspectives. By coincidence the first member of staff appointed in this area also had previous, professional media production experience. However, appointing staff to teach generative audiovisual composing and professional media practices was more difficult.

Some of the difficulties stemmed from traditional methods for appointing university staff. Although all applicants had academic degrees and relevant professional media expertise, Royal Holloway University of London, like most universities were reluctant to appoint academic lecturers without sufficient teaching and research experience. Some applicants were able to satisfy those criteria and were appointed as academic lecturers. However, others had concentrated on their professional media careers and had not taught before. It was also difficult to claim that research for the production and creation of feature films or broadcast drama and documentary programmes was acceptable as 'research' understood within a university setting; even though such research resulted in 'published' audiovisual 'texts' that could be evaluated in a similar way to written texts.

The interdisciplinary nature of the media arts degree presented another challenge. Teaching generative audiovisual composing required, not only fine artists for visual literacy, but also musicians for sound literacy. While fine artists are recognized within art departments and musicians in music departments, it was difficult to appoint such staff within a media degree programme.

These issues were resolved by creating new posts called producers who were on an academic related salary scale and therefore able to teach; but without the position of a

full academic lecturer. In this way several media practice producers were appointed and assisted the academic lecturers in media practice by attending the lectures and jointly teaching the workshops. This experience contributed to the development of teaching skills and research portfolios and within a few years these staff were up-graded to lecturer positions in open competition. Graduates in art and design and music, with teaching and research backgrounds, capable of gaining lectureships in university departments of art and music, respectively, also had to start their careers in media arts as producers. After the first five years of teaching the Media Arts degree the producer positions were phased out for three reasons: more media practitioners were able to demonstrate teaching and appropriate research experience; interdisciplinary areas became recognized; and professional industrial expertise became valued by universities as media degrees began to mature.

During the initial period of the media arts programme, media practice staff worked collaboratively, however, when the full complement of staff were appointed they worked predominantly within their own specialism. [1]

There was one final challenge: convincing the university authorities that the electronic resources and technical spaces required for a degree programme comprising media practice could be likened to laboratories and that they should be recognized for funding and staffing in a similar way to science laboratories. This proposition was eventually accepted and although the funding and status was never quite comparable with science laboratories, the media arts programme was well supplied with television studios, editing suites, location shooting units, multimedia facilities and art and design studios. Regarding technical staffing, there was no difficulty with recruiting technical support: as electronic engineers were already recognized as university staff and could be appointed on academic related scales so that appropriately qualified technicians were able to instruct small groups of students.

Media Arts Curriculum

I designed the curriculum for the media arts degree programme, as an outline framework, broadly describing the structure and contents of the curriculum and proceeded to get it accredited by the University of London. Each year, for the next three years, new staff were appointed so that eventually all the specialists required, by this degree programme, were in place. As each new specialist arrived she or he took the outline framework of the structure and contents of a particular course unit and fleshed it out, bringing it to life as they developed the details of each teaching unit. At meetings, designed to discuss the concepts relating to the contents and form of this emerging degree programme, staff described each developing course unit and an internal coherency was achieved by each member of staff having both a detailed working knowledge of their own course units and an overall view of the whole degree programme and how each unit fitted together with the others.

Describing the design of the media arts undergraduate programme, in some detail, provides an opportunity for exploring and explaining one way of developing a degree

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[1] In the first year of the programme, with just thirty students, I was joined by John Quick to cover audiovisual composing; while Adam Mills, an existing member of staff, was joined by Stella Bruzzi and embraced the teaching of a 'corpus of published film and television works'. As I progress through the various areas of audiovisual composing, I mention in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language* particular people who led those areas in the footnotes. Stella Bruzzi had both academic and professional media experience.

programme centered on a concept of an audiovisual language, combining both a study of a corpus of film and television works and a practice comprising generative and professional audiovisual composing. The following descriptions come from the early years of the Media Arts programme, predominantly 1994/5 and 1995/6. As time passed the curriculum was modified and developed; but I thought that a description of the early moments would provide some idea of our initial thinking about what might constitute an undergraduate study in audiovisual composing and composition. Many years have passed since that time and media education has evolved in numerous ways influenced by the rapid development in electronic technology, the growth of innovative media companies and the Internet. This, in turn, has increased the communicative uses for audiovisual composing. Within this context, this back-story offers an historical snapshot of an emerging university discipline in audiovisual composing.

I provide a general rationale and brief description of the approaches and contents of the media arts degree programme, one year at a time, to show what is being learnt in each year. This offers the possibility of seeing the inter-relationships in the gradual progression of knowledge building and skills development. Although I argue that comprehending (studying a corpus of film and television works) and composing (creating a story in images and sounds) are inter-related: I also explain that for intellectual and organizational reasons they were taught separately.

The media arts degree programme was equally divided between comprehension and composing: with two courses, in each area, each year. In the first year the students studied film, television, generative audiovisual composing (broken down into visual literacy, sound literacy, performance for screen and media practice), and professional practice (as screen drama, screen documentary, screenwriting and producing).

Studying a corpus of film and television works

The concept of studying film and television was not new: most media studies courses included analyses of film and television 'texts'. However, these studies were often carried out within broader sociological, economic or cultural frameworks. Within sociological perspectives such film and television 'works' were often seen as 'products' and considered in relation to the policies governing their production. Economic rationales, results of industrial regulation, audience studies, or commissioning, scheduling and distribution choices would be used as a way of explaining the development of contents. In these scenarios analyzing the content reveals the underlying commercial decision-making processes and strategies carried out by the film and television industries. Another way of studying 'film and television works' involved using cultural studies as a theoretical tool: interestingly, these courses often focused on film or television, as cultural 'artifacts'.

The media arts programme analyzed a 'corpus of film and television works' from the perspective of comprehending audiovisual compositions. The choice of which corpus of audiovisual works was determined by the particular emphasis on audiovisual language, which focused on fictional story making in film and television drama; and factual stories as film and television documentaries, for three reasons.

First, drama and documentary are seminal audiovisual story forms. Previous chapters in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Composing* developed theories that begin to explain how stories are created using images and sounds exploiting a three-layered generative

framework for audiovisual composing. Understanding story construction was central to audiovisual comprehension and composing.

Secondly, the audiovisual compositions being studied should relate, in some way, to the audiovisual composing being developed by the students. Exposure to generative audiovisual composing in the comprehension of published audiovisual compositions (on film and television) was seen as crucial reinforcement for understanding and acquiring skills for composing in images and sounds. Studying drama and documentary, in film and television, were seen as fundamental to this process.

Finally, there already existed coherent theories for analyzing drama and documentary 'texts', predominantly taken from within film theory, but also incorporating emerging theories relating to television 'texts'. This facilitated a secure foundation for an emerging curriculum that placed the emphasis for its underpinning rationale on audiovisual 'language' and its 'corpus of published audiovisual works'.

From these general parameters, three main theoretical strands gradually emerged. The first strand was concerned with providing an analytical framework for exploring film and television from a number of perspectives, incorporating established theories. For instance, appropriate theoretical models from critical studies, cultural studies, aesthetics, English studies, drama (and in particular performance studies) and gender studies, informed the emerging syllabus.

The particular emphasis or angle developed by members of the teaching team depended on their experience and preferences. Some staff used an 'audiovisual language lens' for relating these established theories to a corpus of drama and documentary, film and television 'texts'. Others, unfamiliar with approaching film and television from an audiovisual language perspective just used these theoretical paradigms in a more traditional way. This was not problematic because, although a range of diverse disciplines were used to study film and television, part of that study covers content which leads directly to an implicit study of the audiovisual composing processes. Other staff questioned the notion of an audiovisual language, which reflected the whole 'film language' debate and was an essential point of discussion for this innovative venture.

The second strand comprised the history of the moving image, which provided, not only knowledge of seminal compositions within a historical context, but also an understanding of how audiovisual composing evolved. In *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, chapter 3, *Recording Images and Sounds and Creating Audiovisual Stories*, a brief history of film and television was explored from a perspective of audiovisual composing. So it is not necessary to elaborate on this area here. Only to say that the underlying approach expounded in that chapter informed some areas of these studies. What became invaluable was the combination of academic qualifications (often in English and drama), and practical professional production experience, which some of the staff brought with them. This particular combination enabled an understanding of how audiovisual composing works: and how it is revealed through the history of moving images.

The third strand covered aspects of close textual analyses, using literary, aesthetic and philosophical approaches.

Other related issues to do with the creative and media industries, for instance, film

company structure and working methods: or policy issues within the television industry, for example, broadcast scheduling, production values and audience studies were given some attention, but were not the central theoretical thrust of this degree programme.

There was continual discussion about the amount of time to be apportioned to these various theoretical strands, the emphasis placed on them and their role in the structure of the study.

For instance, should the studies of a 'corpus of published film and television works' be chronological; or based on key concepts that included a fairly representative number of filmic 'texts', which could illuminate the historical strand. The latter won over the former, which clearly had an impact on the type of curriculum that emerged.

Studying generative audiovisual composing and professional practices

Designing a curriculum for *audiovisual composing* was a complex task. Most languages, for instance, English, mathematical, scientific, or historical discourses that are intended to be used, and extended, within a university setting by students are well practiced and have reached a particular level of attainment before starting university courses. However, this was not the case with audiovisual composition.

As explored in the first part of *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, an implicit understanding about space and time would have been gained as the students had grown up. They would have recognized groundings - foregrounds, middle and backgrounds; panning, tilting and tracking through space; discovering different angles: enjoying transitions – movement (in its many forms), light (as it revealed shapes in space) and sound (as the voice, music and sound effects came together). The students would have been exposed to illustrated children's books and family photographs, which aided their visual literacy; and comics, which would have begun their process of understanding visual stories and storyboards. If they had access to art, drama, dance and music they would have acquired a range of repertoires of expressive forms and techniques from the arts, which would facilitate some competencies in audiovisual composing. However, these concepts and their related skills would need to be made explicit.

Exposure to film and television would have created an awareness of audiovisual story structures. Recording techniques, such as close-ups that supply intimacy and detail; and long shots, which provide context would have been absorbed: together with the potential of logical continuity, or parallel action, enabled through editing. However, these concepts may not have been thought about consciously and a vocabulary may not have been developed to talk about them.

Formal education would have prioritized print and therefore the students may not value the understanding and knowledge that they have acquired, leaving their audiovisual sensibilities lying dormant. Never the less, all students would have had access to the repertoires of forms and techniques for composing in images and sounds; even if they had not, as yet, used images and sounds to show and tell stories. Teaching audiovisual composing would build on the extensive abilities residing within the students, enabling implicit knowledge to become explicit, transforming this into practice.

A significant aspect of studying media as a 'language' was the need to build, not just a programme that integrally combined the study of a corpus of film and television works with audiovisual composing; but one that also realized the fundamental importance of generative, as well as professional, composing practices. The concept of generative audiovisual composing that could be made available to all as a 'language' was not common currency; although audiovisual skills required for the production of alternative audio, visual, video and multimedia presentations, together with the new demands of the Internet, indicated that such generative audiovisual practitioners would be in demand.

With those challenges in mind, the design of the media arts programme comprised established media production skills, covering conventional genres and styles, so that students' were equipped with current professional practices for traditional media industries. However, they used generative composing to underpin the professional work and create space and skills for the production of innovative compositions in images and sounds for other industries, education, social services and the emerging opportunities available through global audiovisual and multimedia communications facilitated by the Internet.

The curriculum design encouraged the acquisition and use of audiovisual composing, by exploring and examining its processes, characteristics and functions. The three-layered generative framework for audiovisual composing provides one way of describing these processes. The physical environment enabled a *base* layer in audiovisual composing that embraced space and time and generated *groundings* (planes, angles and panoramas) and *transitions* (from stillness to movement, darkness to light, silence to sound).

Audiovisual composing usually takes place in environments rich in images and sounds. Interior and exterior locations are selected carefully for fictional drama and factual documentary making so that many of the audio and visual elements will be 'found' and discovered, rather than created from scratch. For instance, a dramatic sequence, taking place at a railway station will have a visual 'look' that already exists, which can, to some extent, be modified; but many structural features will already be present and contribute significantly to the underlying processes of the generative base layer for audiovisual composing. Or an interview for a documentary in a factory will provide an opportunity to video record the interviewee in a significant space providing a rich visual context, which can be enhanced by further detailed video recording on the factory floor overlaying the 'talking head', at appropriate moments, to 'show' what the interviewee is talking about.

Locations provide, not only physical environments (exploiting the groundings in the *base* layer for audiovisual composing), but they also supply natural movement, light and sounds (utilizing the transitions in the base layer), which may or may not need to be supplemented. Exploring interior and exterior locations with a camera reveals the generative base layer for audiovisual composing and it is this knowledge that needs to be made explicit.

The physical environment is also populated by social interactions. The social actions of active agents (all kinds of creative practitioners - artists, directors, actors, dancers, musicians, film and video makers) make possible a *meta* layer in audiovisual composing facilitating the *visual, semantic, and transactional relations* between a *story*, the *'characters'* in a story and an *audience* through five significant processes. These comprise: *narration*

(the capacity to relate a story), *direction* (the ability to translate a story into images and sounds), *performance* (the capacity to express a story through dramatic and musical actors), *cinematography/editing* (the ability to record and rearrange a story), and *score/soundtrack* (the capacity to express a story through sound and music).

Furthermore, these physical and social environments encourage conceptual activities using experience, ideas, imagination, intuition, reason and knowledge, which form a *synthetic* layer in audiovisual composing that address ways of *creating* and *building audiovisual stories*. The synthetic layer comprises an understanding of the ways in which particular contents take specific forms in shaping a story; addresses top down and bottom up story authoring construction; story processes – strategies, structures, codes, conventions and techniques; and how scenes are linked in (linear and non-linear) sequences.

First Year

In the first year the students studied 'a corpus of published audiovisual works' in *film studies* and *television studies*. They also studied 'generative audiovisual composing' in *visual literacy*, *sound literacy*, *performance for screen* and *media practice* and 'professional media practices' in *screen drama*, *screen documentary*, *screenwriting*, and *producing*.

Within *film studies* and *television studies* fictional dramas and factual documentaries were explored and analyzed as seminal strands of a corpus of published audiovisual works.

Film Studies

The first year established a foundation for *film studies*, which comprised an introduction to the basic concepts, film history and close textual analysis, initiating a wide range of critical and theoretical approaches. Many of the concepts covered in this course have been explored in the first part of *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, for instance, narrative, mise-en-scene, editing, authorship, genres, content, form and ideology: and were related specifically to the generative three layered framework for audiovisual composing. Here, as part of the film studies course, various theoretical concepts have been attributed to understanding these areas.

Films are stories, shown and told in images and sounds, so understanding narrative structure was central. Film studies covered definitions of film narrative, comprising specific Hollywood narrative genres and non-narrative forms, which were explored using the narrative theories of Aristotle (mimesis and unities), Todorov (stability /instability) and Bordwell (cause and effect narrative form and ideology).

Mises-en-scene is where and how audiovisual stories are shown and told: imagined in the *synthetic* layer for audiovisual composing, through the conceptual activities for creating and building stories. They are designed and used by active agents in the social *meta* layer, facilitating the visual, semantic, and transactional relations between a story, the 'characters' in a story, and an audience: and implemented in the physical *base* layer for audiovisual composing based on space and time, which generates groundings (planes, angles and panoramas) and transitions (from stillness to movement, darkness to light, silence to sound).

Film studies approached mise-en-scene by introducing polemics taking into account, for example, the work of Artaud. Exploring the role of the director in developing mise-en-scene the students used readings from Cahiers du cinema teasing out such questions as 'how is what': by looking at examples of mise-en-scene in practice: and some of the different ways mise-en-scene has been interpreted. The students also explored the ways in which music and sound are used in narrative film, as generators of meaning, and how they play a role in the ways in which the mise-en-scene works: together with costume and design.

Film studies introduced the role of editing, discussing the contrast between continuity and non-continuity editing; looking at early American cinema and Soviet cinema of the 1920's (particularly Eisentein and Pudovkin); and the ways in which the two traditions have evolved and been appropriated. De-constructing the editing processes contributed to discovering meanings: and revealing underlying ideology.

Showing and telling stories in images and sounds raises many questions around authorship: and how this concept pertains to films and film makers, due to the collective nature of film production where, as well as, the 'voice' of the screenwriter in creating the film script, and the director who transforms the written script into images and sounds, each individual specialist, whether, for instance, music composer, scene designer, cinematographer or editor, contributes to the sound and visual look of the film. A number of films were analyzed: those, which could immediately be recognized as the work of particular directors, and others, which were obvious collaborations, with directors using the same musical composers, designers and cinematographers.

Audiovisual stories can be grouped together as genres: and were explored, for instance, through specific reference to the gangster film, from the 1930's to the present day: and melodrama, looking at iconography, visual style, masculinity, evolution and race. The relationship between ideology and form, content and spectatorship in a cross section of Hollywood films, which are all in some sense 'political', was dealt with. As were the feminist critiques of Hollywood by examining feminist writing on Hollywood from the 1970's onwards focusing on issues of representation and gender.

Television Studies

Television studies examined the cultural, political and institutional contexts of television, the development of a specific television aesthetic and television's various forms and genres including single plays, serials, soap operas, and documentary dramas.

In a similar way to film studies, television studies began by exploring the different ways in which audiovisual stories are created. Stories are embedded within cultural and historical contexts and so television as a cultural form was examined, taking into consideration what distinguishes television drama from more traditional forms of dramatic representation in literature, or theatre. The origins of television drama, in the broadcast stage play, were explored looking at the semiotic and social differences between stage and screen. Television drama was also set within the context of other television programming, other sorts of audiovisual story making.

The issue of 'realism' was examined by looking at the realism, naturalism debate, for instance, Barthes concepts of traditional and revolutionary forms: and television's

interaction with mass culture: examining whether the 'naturalistic' style furthers or inhibits radical political agendas, for example, through looking at such texts as *Cathy Come Home*. The relationship of drama to documentary was questioned in relation to their use as public policy documents, social polemic and communication of complex policy issues: and investigated such questions as how television impacts and intervenes in contemporary social issues, in terms of effectiveness and integrity, by studying for instance, *Days of Hope*. Notions of fantastic realism were also explored in, for example, Potter's *Singing Detective*. The role of technical elements in creating a sense of 'realism' was considered, for instance, the use of outside broadcasting techniques, hand held cameras, use of amateur actors, actuality style and so on.

Television studies examined 'Soaps' and what makes them different from conventional serials or single plays: the implications for continuity and expectation, exploring normative/social narrative assumptions. Considering 'Police' dramas as crucial mediators of socio-cultural anxieties – posed such questions as - do they seek to reassure or alarm or both? What makes mysteries popular? Historically the genre has opened up to television, topical or controversial issues and concerns. The detective genre was traced showing how it has evolved over the years; and at what point genre decays into formula. The tension between generic presupposition of closure (solution, arrest) and increasing ambivalences about society and the part police play in it was looked at; and how this tension is manifested in narrative terms.

Television studies also addressed the question of authorship covering the theories of authorship, creative processes, vision, role of the writer and the relationship between notions of 'production' rather than 'authorship'.

Generative Audiovisual Composing and Professional Media Practices

'*Generative audiovisual composing*' and '*professional media practices*' formed two strands for audiovisual composing. The curriculum for generative audiovisual composing covered such areas as *visual literacy*, *sound literacy*, *performance for screen* and *media practice* resulting in the creations of visual, audio and audiovisual essays and poems, installations and experimental pieces. The curriculum for professional media practices comprised *screen drama*, *screen documentary*, *screen writing* and *producing*, resulting in the production of screen dramas and documentaries, screenplays, and production documentation.

Generative Audiovisual Composing

In the first year generative audiovisual composing introduced the ways in which stories are shown and told through images and sounds. The complex processes comprising audiovisual story making are focused in separate disciplines - *visual literacy*, *sound literacy* and *performance for screen* and then synthesized in *media practice* where all the specialized repertoires of expressive forms and techniques can be integrated using the framework for generative audiovisual composing. In this part of the programme audiovisual composing is used, rather like written composing in education, for exploring, reasoning and expressing various ideas, topics and themes. Such audiovisual forms as essays, poems, records and documents, case studies, diaries, and experimental shorts that do not fit easily into any category, were the audiovisual outputs.

Visual Literacy

Visual literacy, which has been explored throughout *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, began by considering the principles underlying the creation of fine art, photography, graphics and the moving image. At the centre were the vocabularies of the arts – the creative deployment of line and form, texture and colour. Visual composition was examined formally and conceptually and visual awareness was encouraged, imaginatively and practically. Visual composition takes place within framed space representing place, architecture, grouping of people, foregrounds and backgrounds, perspective and planes, colour and light: informing the ways in which audiovisual shots use framed space.

Initially, actual art works and installations were created because kinesthetic processes experienced in making two and three-dimensional forms that use different materials were seen as invaluable. Later, with the arrival of digital media, visual literacy was explored through computer-based art, graphics and photographic manipulation in a virtual world preparing and developing skills and knowledge for non-linear video editing and audiovisual composing. Although some kinesthetic awareness may have been lost in the concentration on virtual space, time was made available for acquiring a range of new computer skills necessary for audiovisual composing. In any case, as part of audiovisual composition, art direction and design for all video productions provided an opportunity for creating architectural, social and abstract design concepts and then physically making three dimensional sets, costumes, and props, working with different materials.

Studying the history and theory of fine art and photography was vital for the development of articulate audiovisual composing. These studies offered an awareness of the represented visual world and provided a crucial knowledge base that informed the processes of research: which are critical to, and underpin, the students' own creative processes.

Performance for Screen

Performance for Screen included dramatic, dance and screen performance. Performance occurs in most audiovisual composing and takes many forms. A great deal has been said about performance in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Composing* and performance for screen covered such areas as mime and movement, improvisation and acting, vocal techniques and dialogue, and facial expression and gesture. It also dealt with such dramatic techniques as the ways in which the space between performers creates particular meanings; the importance of dramatic structure, pace and movement together with dramatic conventions such as, the build up of tension, the role of climax and the need for resolution. Performance for screen also examined the uses of costume, set design, exterior and interior locations and make-up. These areas were considered in terms of the ways in which they worked in both dramas and documentaries: and many of these activities contributed to the development of scripts, as well as to performance on screen.

Directing performers for camera was a central feature of this course. Performers could be, for instance, actors, presenters, narrators, interviewers or ordinary people engaged in some activity. The audiovisual composition might be, for example, a screen drama, screen documentary or experimental audiovisual short. Whatever the genre or performance requirements knowing where to place a 'performer' and camera in

relation to each other; and how to then add movement in front of the camera, as well as behind it, required a detailed understanding of audiovisual composing. Close textual analysis of films and television was used as a way of exploring these skills, together with practical demonstrations by professional directors and lighting camera operators. These media professionals and lecturers encouraged the students to immerse themselves in dedicated practice as they carried out their assignments.

Performance for screen also embraced dance. An experience of dance was seen as crucial for audiovisual composing because of the importance, indicated in the generative layers of audiovisual composing, of the transition 'movement' in space, informing timing and tempo: the relationship between the performer and the camera who must learn to dance together: in the use of rhythms and pace inside a shot and overall within a sequence: and in the ways in which movement is choreographed in front of the camera together with the camera movements in, for instance, panning and tracking; and in the need to create flow in the editing process. Apart from this generative use of movement in audiovisual composing some students pursued an experimental pathway, using dance for the contents of their audiovisual compositions.

Sound Literacy

Sound literacy was perceived as pivotal: the sound track is an orchestration of music, sound effects and 'live' and voice-over speech. Music and sound effects provided the basic repertoires of expressive forms and techniques for a 'language' of sound as it relates to a 'language' of images. The course in sound literacy began by creating sound compositions, including sound essays and poems as a way of developing an awareness of the expressive capacities of music and sound effects; before introducing the combination of sound and image as a multiple compositional system: where the content determined the configuration of sound and image.

Each image and sound needs to be considered in the greatest detail. Meanings are created through structure and style. For instance, a close-up of a stone staircase begins to suggest the possible characters and actions that will occur up, down, under and behind it. The narrative may be further developed and revealed by hearing muffled laughter (and then as the camera tracks or zooms back a part of an old ruin is shown) with traffic noise (and on the camera pulling further back the image shows that the ruin is in the centre of a traffic round-a-bout surrounded by very modern buildings). This is followed by a loud bang and a traffic accident is suggested but, (on the camera slowly tracking to the back of the stone stairs, the bang is revealed to be children letting off fireworks). The accompanying music, for such scenarios will also add to the richness of the audiovisual experience and meanings. Voices; as dialogue and commentary, using 'live' and voice-over techniques; will provide yet another layer of richness and meaning to the story being created. This kind of attention to the details, behind each sound and its image, begins the process of becoming articulate in audiovisual composing.

Media Practice

Media practice integrated the acquisition of the repertoires of expressive forms and techniques founded in fine arts (explored through visual literacy), drama (explored through performance for screen) and music (explored through sound literacy). The audiovisual medium has its own repertoires of expressive forms and techniques that can create fictional spaces, manipulate time and orchestrate the movement between

the subject, the camera and the editing process, in a moment of sublime motion.

Using the three-layered generative framework for audiovisual composing. Exercises were designed that encouraged exploration of the physical environment facilitating the use of a *base* layer for audiovisual composing that embraced space and time and generated *groundings* (planes, angles and panoramas) and *transitions* (from stillness to movement, darkness to light, silence to sound).

Space and the relationship between the three-dimensional world of real life and audiovisual representation via a two dimensional screen was explored: introducing notions of screen time and movement, contrasting still frame and moving image compositions, analyzing the complexity of movement within the frame; and camera movement - panning, tilting and tracking through specific environments. Light was explored: and the knowledge gained in sound literacy was applied.

The *meta* layer for audiovisual composing was used when the social actions of active agents (all kinds of creative practitioners - artists, directors, actors, dancers, musicians, film and video makers) facilitated the *visual, semantic, and transactional relations* between a *story*, the *'characters'* in a story, and an *audience* through five significant processes. These comprised: *narration* (the capacity to relate a story), *direction* (the ability to translate a story into images and sounds), *performance* (the capacity to express a story through dramatic and musical actors), *cinematography/editing* (the ability to record and rearrange a story), and *score/ soundtrack* (the capacity to express a story through sound and music). Each of the creative processes – narration, direction, performance, cinematography/ editing, and score/ soundtrack were explored and practiced through practical projects.

Finally, using audiovisual composing, some key concepts for storytelling were considered that addressed the different ways of *creating* and *building audiovisual stories*. The conceptual, *synthetic* layer for audiovisual composing is where experience, ideas, imagination, intuition, reason and knowledge contribute to an understanding of the ways in which particular contents take specific forms, in shaping a story. Taking into account top down and bottom up story authoring construction; story processes – strategies, structures, codes, conventions and techniques; and linking scenes in (linear and non-linear) sequences.

Media practice explored the ways in which stories were created using images and sounds; the historical development of visual, audio and audiovisual repertoires of expressive forms and techniques; the cultural, social and artistic context implicit when using audiovisual composing; the question of individual and collaborative authorship; underpinned by the generative framework for composing in images and sounds.

Professional Media Practice

Professional media practice introduced the students to *screen drama*, *screen documentary*, *screenwriting* and *producing television*.

Screen Drama

Screen drama explored dramatic form, characterization, locations, events and stories: examining conflict, climax and resolution. Plot structure was analyzed using short dramatic sequences, which were then used to look at the 'blocking' of actors moves, and the relevant positioning of the camera. The importance of lighting was discussed,

covering some basic lighting techniques: together with the ways in which the mise-en-scene, costumes and props contribute to the creation of meanings in dramatic stories.

As an initial task, each individual student created a short scene of around three minutes, produced in small groups, which had one location and no more than two characters. The scene should be a 'plot point' that showed a clear development. They had to present their original idea, the research that they had carried out, the characters as imagined and then developed, the 'plot point' and how it fitted into a sequence, the dialogue and its development, the selected location and any other relevant information that they thought related to their production of this short scene.

Screen Documentary

Screen documentary introduced documentary practice by tracing the historical relationships between television documentary and journalism. The role of the presenter in documentary story making is vital. Ideas are controlled through presentation techniques: the ways in which meaning is created through direct address to camera and the use of off-camera eye line, the role of presenter / journalist as auteur - taking into account the viewers point of view. The presenter may also be the interviewer: the function of the interview in documentary practice is central; but complex, so differing styles and techniques were explored.

As a way of supporting practice the students viewed television documentary programmes examining content and style. The processes of editing and editorial influences were discussed together with developing and building arguments, looking at the dramatization of argument through juxtaposition, interchange, and movement / position of interview material. In these ways the students explored the imaginative processes used in factual storytelling and creative editing and were able to incorporate them into their own documentary practice. Guest lecturers shared their own professionally broadcast documentaries and discussed research, storytelling, filming and editing techniques.

Screenwriting

Screenwriting introduced writing a script as a 'blueprint' of a work, not a form final in itself: defining structure, pace, description, dialogue, layout, characterization, camera positions / movement, drama, sales document and so on.

The processes that underpin dramatic writing were introduced. For instance, the Aristotelian theory on dramatic narrative structure, exploring premise and theme together with examining genre and its purpose: the nature of stories and values, concepts and ideas. The three-act structure was explained and why there were rules for structure: exploring beginnings and endings. Discussions on dialogue demonstrated the complexity of finding the right kind of discourse appropriate to each character, so that a character was believable and came to life. An emphasis was placed on the important requirement of dialogue to be succinct and not repeat what the images are already telling us. Finally, the significance of pacing and fulfillment were addressed.

Producing Television

It was important that the students understood the role of a producer. The course on *Producing Television* aimed to cover that role. However, it was also about how television works in terms of its structure and creative output. Creative roles were

described: from runner to producer: exploring the value of a creative idea and how to develop it. Narrative processes and journalism in filmmaking were discussed leading to exploring the processes involved in researching an idea and writing a proposal. The processes of gaining broadcast commissions were talked about. Budgeting procedures, technical processes and everything a producer should know was covered - from film cameras to non-linear and on-line editing.

At the end of the first year students had been introduced to the concepts and theories related to a study of film and television, generative audiovisual composing and professional media practices. The second year built on this learning.

Second Year

The study of a corpus of audiovisual works, in the second year, provided a general framework for understanding the principles of film art and the place of films in contemporary culture and society. Employing a more complex range of theoretical material and by examining key concepts and close textual analyses, a critical awareness of the various techniques available to film makers, which underlie style and the creation of meaning in film discourse was developed. The nature of art, and the aesthetic, was examined from a broadly philosophical point of view to show how the characteristic questions and puzzles that animate this area of enquiry have a bearing on both film and cultural theory. These areas were explored in *Film Studies* and *Aesthetics and Cultural Theory*.

Film Studies

I am not going to go into detail about the theories and concepts used in *Film Studies*. There are many good books covering these subjects. I will briefly outline the areas that were covered and some of the film compositions that were used as a way of providing a very brief overview of the kinds of diverse viewing experiences that the students were receiving. This course had a significant influence in shaping the students own understanding of audiovisual composing.

Film studies introduced early European film studying for example, Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike*, Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera,* Lev Kuleshov's *West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, and Fritz Lang's *M*. This was followed by studies in early film, from primitive to classic, and comprised viewing and analyzing Noel Burch's *Correction Please; Or, How We Got Into the Movies*, Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* and E. von Stroheim's *Greed*. Extracts from some of these films can be seen in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language* chapter 3 audiovisual annotations.

A study of genres followed, using a specific genre for in-depth study. These changed from year to year; but for instance, when melodrama was studied, such texts as Irving Rapper's *Now Voyager*, Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce*, Max Ophuls' *Letter From an Unknown Woman* and Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* were analyzed.

Surrealism was explored through Luis Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou* and *Belle de Jour*. European Art Cinema through Frederico Fellini's *81/2* and Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*. While the New Wave films were studied through, for instance, Jean-Luc Godard's *Weelkend*, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun*.

These studies on Early Film, European Film, Film Genres, Surrealism, European Art

Cinema and the New Wave completed the second year film studies course. All these film texts had readings attached to them. They were screened, contextualized and elaborated on, in lectures, discussed in seminars and then expressed in extended essays.

Aesthetics and Cultural Theory

Aesthetics and Cultural Theory examined belief systems, values and ideology, which are embedded within all languages. They are dominant in a specific way within audiovisual compositions because of the nature of visual representation and the use of oral language. It was essential that in audiovisual composing the students were aware of the ways in which they were using images and sounds becoming critical of the positions they take and meanings that they create.

The concept of art was introduced and the challenging series of debates, which have centered on it. These included the problem of definition, the nature of aesthetic qualities, the problem of representation and expression and the difficulties surrounding artistic value. This was followed by an introduction to the materialist analysis of culture, which has as its starting point Marx and Engels' critical reflections on the notion of ideology.

Aesthetics and experience were examined, taking into account, for instance 'rightness' and 'appropriateness', the proportions of a room seem 'right'; or it seems 'appropriate' to intersect this part of the story with that part, or this characters experience with that character. Such experiences naturally provoke many questions. Is there a way of marking out these kinds of experiences? How do we understand disputes and disagreements over meaning and value? What kind of experience is an aesthetic experience? What kind of judgment is an aesthetic judgment, how does it differ from a moral judgment or a judgment of fact? What, if anything, are aesthetic concepts and what distinguishes them. Is there a distinct logic of use governing their application? The works of Hume and how he tries to resolve his subjectivist theory of aesthetic qualities with his commitment to their being a standard of taste was explored: and Kant and his thoughts on form and beauty. How does Kant account for the normative dimension of aesthetic judgments? Does he believe that aesthetic judgments can be true or false or does his theory commit him to this claim?

Representation was examined: What kinds of things can be represented? Is the phrase 'a representation of …' ambiguous? Is our ability to see what a picture is a picture of, being under an illusion, or is it a matter of noticing resemblances. Why do neither of these explanations seem satisfactory. What kind of theory is appropriate for explaining representation? Can pictorial understanding be explained on the model of, or understanding of, language? What is aspect seeing and might this notion provide the basis for an account of representation?

Expressive properties were explored and questions posed about why we attribute emotions to things. Why does it seem natural to say that a picture is joyful, a piece of music is sad and a landscape is melancholic? How can things of this kind literally be said to have such properties? Will a single theory account for this metaphorical use of emotional terms?

Finally, the students were introduced to the work of Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, Derrida and deconstruction, and Marxism and aesthetics were examined: using the

thinking and ideas of such writers to come to grips with criticism – evaluation, meanings and intentions, interpretation and understanding.

Media Practice

Generative audiovisual composing, as *media practice*, took another direction in the second year. During the first year, coming to grips with all the processes, identified in the framework for audiovisual composing, initially took place within various 'real world' locations because this is where the generative vocabularies for audiovisual composing reside.

However, in the second year, audiovisual composing was going to be practiced in a recording studio. In this environment it was necessary to create every foreground and background, every angle, every three dimensional object, whether bed-sitting room with kitchen sink or fifteen foot transparent pyramid with coloured plastic on one side, intricately woven string and silver streamers hanging from the other sides creating entrances and exits. Every light source had to be designed, and organized so that it illuminated the mise en scene revealing the shapes, colours and textures of the sets, together with the performances of actors, dancers and musicians. Every sound had to be produced 'live' as well as in post-production. Every movement had to be created. The importance of this intense audiovisual composing experience that took place in basically a large black- blue box was that it was necessary to imagine and construct every image and sound from scratch, reinforcing the framework for audiovisual composing. This was an imagination factory where a deeper understanding of the use of images and sounds was enabled through precise creation. There was no support from the physical and social environment. Every environment had to be produced. The intention was that on returning to an image and sound rich environment greater awareness and selectivity would take place.

Media Practice began by exploring the studio and its technical components with an introduction to basic terms and the effects that can be achieved through the use of lighting, camera positions, vision and sound mixing. The space was considered an area of action and ambience in which anything can be made to happen. A short dramatic text was supplied which had to be translated into a screen drama. This entailed developing the mise-en scene by designing and building recognizable locations or experimental environments. Performances were prepared for a three-camera shoot taking into account the lighting requirements. Moving studio cameras on pedestals and mixing between them on a vision mixer came next. The use of studio microphones to capture any 'live' studio action was mixed on a vision mixer, with post-production sound tracks completing the task.

A range of stimuli was provided: poetry was translated into audiovisual compositions taking into account the metaphoric use of language and image, of rhyme and meter. The intentions of the poet and the audiovisual composer were explored using subjective and analytical responses to potential meanings by exploring the content and its effect. Sculptures and three-dimensional objects were used as a way of exploring three-dimensional objects, in a two-dimensional medium, learning how to convey impressions of height, width, texture and the creation of rhythm and ambiance through the use of camera angles, composition, lighting and cutting. Music was explored by creating visual interpretations for different types of music. Music on television was analyzed conceptually, technically and socially, covering all genres from orchestral recordings to *Top of the Pops* and MTV, taking into account how the rhythm

of the music determines the rhythm of camera movements and cutting between shots and sequences. The process of translating dance into television was also addressed. Video examples from contemporary, post-modern and classical/romantic ballet were analyzed, exploring the different use of the camera as either a medium to record the dance, or as an interpretative element. The similarity between the dance, and the camera, in the use of movement as a means of exploring, conveying and depicting emotion was examined: and the way in which montage equates the dance's juxtaposition of detail and pattern in order to illicit a response. Choreographic intention were discussed and ways in which that may be distorted or enhanced by audiovisual treatments.

The role of the arts in audiovisual composing were covered in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, chapter 2, and using the arts in a studio environment contributed to those identified repertoires of expressive forms and techniques being developed within generative audiovisual composing. Throughout media practice ideas and themes were translated into expressive pieces, using screen drama, art and sculpture, dance and music.

Professional Media Practice

Professional media practices offered six options in the second year, of which two could be selected. This enabled greater in-depth study. These were *screen drama, screen documentary, screenwriting, producing television, contemporary arts*, and *sound production*. Contemporary arts and sound production built on the courses in visual literacy and sound literacy in the first year providing an opportunity for specialization in art direction and design and sound production. These courses also enabled an experimental strand in art and design and sound production using the arts as their source of inspiration and major contents.

Screen Drama

Screen Drama built on the first year and developed an awareness of this visual narrative form by addressing the dramatic characteristics of a story: whether in a shot, scene, sequence or whole story. The students worked out what the dramatic characteristics are, and how best to express and capture them. These dramatic characteristics were explored in three ways: by using a range of classic films to analyze their various dramatic features; developing practical exercises based on the particular characteristics covered each week; and encouraging the use of such dramatic characteristics for the final individual five-minute screen drama assignment.

The individual screen drama productions required an exploration of initial ideas and themes taking into account how they can be structured into an audiovisual story. Research led to the concepts being developed. Following this, the process of screenwriting was undertaken, considering in detail, character development and dialogue. Organization and logistics were required for casting - finding performers that can make the characters come to life, putting together a crew, scheduling the production, arranging costumes and props, selecting locations, acquiring equipment. Then came the processes of shooting, editing, presenting and critically evaluating the screen dramatic short.

Screen Documentary

Screen Documentary built on the first year and concentrated on the development of practical and conceptual skills associated with the genre of documentary by analyzing many clips from a range of documentary styles. The students deconstructed the composing components, for instance, the type and use of voice-over's, presenter's, interviews and use of graphics and titles. Journalistic and research skills were identified and developed. For instance, recognizing stories and angles, comparing storytelling techniques in newspapers with television and understanding features versus news. The students examined the concepts, aesthetic values and practical pathways that make up the established documentary form.

The course in screen documentary analyzed and discussed published documentary works taking into account ideas and themes; promoting greater social, political and intellectual awareness; and stimulating opinions, ideas and personal expression. Practical skills were acquired. For instance, sound and lighting techniques that supported the production of documentary work. For the short documentary assignment individual ideas were explored and researched. Documentary story outlines were constructed based on an understanding of narrative structure and the integrity of their idea. The students developed arguments that increased their confidence in the development and continuity of the story. Professional proposals were developed and presented. Different shooting methods were examined, presenter's selected, interviews set up, crew put together, video material shot and viewed, rushes analyzed and rough cuts created in an editing suite. Following this, editorial decisions were taken and alternative approaches considered, with consistent intellectual and conceptual justification for this, confirming coherence of approach and ensuring that ideas were translated into practice. The final post-production stage comprised the laying in of soundtracks and video effects; and when the final cuts were completed the individual documentaries were presented and evaluated.

Screenwriting

Screenwriting introduced the concepts and principals underlying this art form and provided an opportunity to put them into practice: building on notions of story structure, pace, description, dialogue, layout, characterization, camera position and movement, drama and so on. Short individual scripts were written consolidating these concepts exploring, for instance, conflict between two fictional characters, addressing such questions as: who and where they are, their problem and how is it resolved. The students read *Macbeth*, chapter 1 from Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* and viewed Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*. These texts supported the students' written task.

Following this, further discussions around characterization took place, examining outer and inner motivation and notions surrounding antagonists, protagonists and secondary characters; which led the students to develop three characters, giving them each full personalities and explaining their relationships in detail.

The professional process from the beginning of an idea through to writing a full screenplay was clarified. Outlines and treatments were explained: and ideas were developed into outlines with concepts related to genre and goals identified in the whole story as well as in individual scenes. Beginnings and endings were revisited and further attention was given to creating dialogue: reading the screenplay at the pace of film time remembering the importance of the juxtaposition of images.

Producing Television

Producing Television built on the first year course and covered the knowledge and skills required in the professional production of a television programme, whether as a product produced by an independent video production company, or an in-house broadcast company: examining the procedures from idea to delivery.

Rather than dealing with this topic at a purely theoretical level, practical experience was incorporated. The reasoning for this lies in the fact that it is possible to, for instance, cover finance and budgeting. However, the process of budgeting for a production lies not in the abstract manipulation of figures; but in how it affects decisions in other areas. The amount of money that is available constrains the project on the one hand, but on the other suggests where finance might sensibly be sought.

The first task for the students was to develop an individual production idea for a single programme, designed for a half hour slot. They were required to produce an outline of their idea, critique it constructively, carry out further research, transform it into an outline proposal and 'pitch' it. This process enabled an exploration of the gap between the proposal and the commission. If successful at this stage the outline proposal was turned into a script outline. At this point the need to be able to tell a good story becomes evident, so journalistic and dramatic stories are explored. A treatment for the script was developed via the script outline: examining the role of the script in different types of production. Budgets were introduced and presentation techniques provided, before specific budgets were created for the developed proposal together with a schedule. The budget should demonstrate that all the managerial, organisational and technical requirements have been taken into account.

The infrastructure of independent production companies and television organizations were covered, together with the role of producers, examining the differences between, for example, executive producers, associate producers, series producers, series editors, assistant producers and plain producers.

Contemporary Arts

Contemporary Arts built on visual literacy from the first year and focused on art direction and design. The role and work of the art director was covered, discussing how this role can vary depending on the scale and type of production and the relationship with the director. The students were introduced to the skills and activities required for designing sets, locations, costumes and props. There was an emphasis on cultural and historical research and the development of concept designs and sketchbooks, encouraging creativity by experimenting with a range of materials and visual styles.

Art direction was studied by working on a design concept for a specific screenplay. A wide range of potential design concepts were depicted and visual communication skills developed by discussing different responses to the play. The richness of visual composing demonstrated through the use of colour and form in very specific ways was illustrated by analyzing a variety of film clips. Concentrating on the screen design elements the students distilled the mood and emotions contained within the play. This contributed to an understanding that related associations and relevant images provided clues to possible design solutions. The young art directors were guided to look for images beyond their own immediate knowledge and to be fearless in their

research.

The student art directors created individual design concepts showing the kinds of materials that influenced their design: whether it was fabric samples or classical paintings. Practical implementation of design concepts required knowledge about scenery design and construction, from abstract concept to technical drawing, examining floor plans and using scale rulers, planes and elevations. With this understanding an explanation, or model, of how each design concept could be realized was developed. The available options were considered, for instance, studio versus location, animation or multimedia, painted cloths versus projection and abstraction versus realism: taking into account the restraints of cost and time, which would curtail their design. An examination of the relationship between set and locations (mise en scene) and the costumes took place, bearing in mind the many ways in which they communicate. Final decisions on the props depended on their role in the performance, as dressing for the scene, and / or action props.

Sound Production

Sound Production built on the use of music and sound effects in soundtracks covered in the first year and was concerned with developing practical and conceptual skills associated with producing sound for films and television, through the planning and development of coherent sound design schemas. It comprised aesthetic and technical elements of all aspects of designing and creating sound specifically for sound tracks.

The role of the sound designer was explored taking into consideration pre-production and post-production sound planning. Working with a completed sequence from a film, detailed individual sound designs were developed comprising lay-off and lay-back techniques, time code and synchronization. 'Production' sound was rescued and enhanced where necessary.

Advanced sound sampling and simple 'flash' effects were available. Hard disk recording together with aspects of non-linear audio composition for film and television was introduced.

Experimenting in the use of voice-over and dialogue replacement took place, the creation of specialist sound effects, composite effects compilation, Foley theory and practice, disguising post-production sound and 'room' tones.

Individual sound tracks were created using pre-recorded music and a sequence of images as a way of editing the musical structure to suit the needs of the images. In this process visual and musical phrasing was explored, together with sound mixing and mastered dynamically balancing sound. Surround sounds and the specific sound requirements for film and television were discussed.

Third year

Film Studies, Television Studies and Aesthetics and Cultural Theory

The study of a corpus of audiovisual works, in the third year, offered options from within *film studies, television studies* and *aesthetics and cultural theory* with the requirement of selecting one area for in-depth research and analysis. In addition *Media management* was introduced as a way of bringing in a study of media institutions, professional practices and possible career pathways.

Selecting from a range of detailed film, television and aesthetic and cultural studies options: facilitated focusing on, for instance, a particular theory, genre, author, or national cinema and have the required time to delve deeper into the concerns surrounding that topic. Thus, in this way, a general framework was provided for understanding the principles underlying film and television texts and their place in contemporary culture and society. By examining key concepts and close textual analysis within this framework critical awareness of the various techniques available to film and television makers, which underlie style and the creation of meaning in audiovisual discourse, was developed.

Media Management

Media Management covered media institutions, broadcasting history and key concepts and issues in broadcasting: exploring the present day structure and the likely future of broadcasting. Organization and regulation of the media in a democratic society was addressed. The growth of the independents and the advent of satellite television was looked at; scrutinizing the ways in which television deals with politics; externally, in its relationship with the government and internally, for example, with trade unions. The role of documentary and advertising was examined, together with digital television, international broadcasting, monopolies and takeovers.

Questions of quality, and quality thresholds were discussed; exploring television ethics covering the pursuit of 'good television': just how far should a producer go? Guidelines were supplied covering the producer and the law. Various types of programming was examined, for instance, the organization of soap operas, with a guest lecture by an *Eastenders'* producer who provided an analysis of a production discussing the complexities of casting, script writing and organization in a, then, three times a week drama.

Media management also covered the development of proposals and the processes of writing treatments, 'pitching', and presenting yourself and your ideas. Screenwriting and producing had dealt with this area, in previous years, but only for those taking these options. The management structures, decision-making processes and career pathways were discussed as a way of contextualizing audiovisual composing within a publishing environment.

Generative Audiovisual Composing and Professional Media Practices

In Year three, there were no specific courses on generative audiovisual composing or professional media practices. The students concentrated on the development of one extended audiovisual composition. Of course generative audiovisual composing underpins professional media practices; but professional media practices tended to deal with the kinds of audiovisual compositions, which are associated with the film and television industries; while generative audiovisual composing provided a more open framework in terms of approach, contents and forms.

In the digital world of today there is a blurring of the edges between different kinds of output, however, the purposes for audiovisual composing are usually reflected in the forms of compositions that are created. There were seven options: generative audiovisual composing continued to have a presence in *contemporary arts, sound compositions* and *studio works:* while professional media practices were focused within *screen drama, screen documentary, screenwriting* and *producing television.*

Screen Drama

Screen drama offered the students an opportunity to write and direct a short, individual, video drama: which required adapting or writing the screenplay, developing a schedule for the production process, auditioning and rehearsing a cast, providing a brief and organizing the production crew, video shooting and editing the screen drama. Screen dramas were submitted with production notes, which provided an intellectual critique.

Screen Documentary

Screen documentary offered the students an opportunity to create a short, individual, video documentary. The students were encouraged to progress towards a more individual and confident voice within a documentary form, challenging orthodoxy's and allowing alternative creative approaches, developing intellectual enquiry and relevant skills transferable to the industry. Pushing the boundaries of form and genre involved much more substantial challenges in considering the structure, more complex storytelling, decisions on whether to use narrative or non-narrative strategies, in-depth research, logistical planning, and for instance, the rhythm in shooting and editing. Attention was given to technical skills such as lighting and sound recording. Ideas were developed through research, planning and conceiving the video shooting. Obstacles were overcome by critically examining structures and themes that forced re-thinking: feeling a way towards a final edit that fulfilled the objectives and maximized the potential of the material, producing an interesting final cut. Screen documentaries were submitted with production notes, which provided an intellectual critique.

Screenwriting

Screenwriting comprised writing an outline for an entire film in a style that was individually, developed: clearly reflecting, as cinematically as possible, the contents of each scene as it would appear if it were produced: together with writing the first act, or the first thirty pages of the screenplay, in film format. In depth research was carried out by: interviewing relevant people, viewing particular films with similar subject matter or genres, reading selected screenplays and using special libraries or visiting relevant locations. Screenplay outlines and the first act or thirty pages of the screenplay in film format were submitted.

Producing Television

Producing television focused on practical and conceptual skills associated with producing and researching drama programmes: including aesthetic decisions, resource implications and all roles and procedures related to television production. A television drama was de-constructed in term of its budgeting and scheduling, exploring co-production, music copyright and contractual matters.

The role and creative contribution of a drama producer was explored within the context of a production addressing for instance, the assessment of scripts, writing reports, and finding and working with a writer. Using a specific script, financing its production and using key terminology was covered, together with legal and contractual issues and finding the right market and co-producers. The principles involved in scheduling, night work, cast availability, choice of locations and script

layouts were discussed and an analysis of a schedule was produced. The production and development of contracts was introduced. The terminology and methodology of budgeting was explained and a budget prepared. The role of a producer during production was examined covering the preproduction processes, casting and the shoot: the producers relationships with the crew and director, monitoring finance, overspends and budget adjustments: together with the producers role in the post production phase; managing the editing, dubbing and music processes; the delivery of materials and publicity. Finally general guidelines for producers were discussed covering such matters as insurance, errors and omissions and the law of libel. A budget, schedule and cash flow, for a given script, formed the final output.

Contemporary Arts

Contemporary Arts worked towards the creation of an experimental audiovisual composition or an art direction and design concept for a specific screenplay. The experimental audiovisual composition used the concepts, processes and techniques explored and explained in previous courses and could be realized in the studio, on location or a combination of environments: using a wide range of computer packages for design and image manipulation and non-linear video editing. Research was encouraged through, for instance, visiting art galleries and museums and viewing a variety of films and video's. Experimental audiovisual compositions were responses to given material, using visual and intellectual ideas to create an audiovisual composition, of between two to eight minutes in length. For instance, responding to Norman McLaren's statement that 'A basic quality of us human beings, and, in fact, all living creatures, is that we are always, moving. It is very difficult for us to remain static even for a short time. Try remaining dead still, try fixing your gaze on a single detail in front of you, try keeping your mind on a single thought; it rapidly becomes unbearable and impossible. We are creatures of movement. Almost all sensory stimuli picked up by our sense receptors are in movement; if not by the motion of the world around us, then by the motion of our bodies.' The resulting audiovisual composition had to clearly demonstrate an ability to work creatively and imaginatively using a range of techniques and materials, which had to be accompanied by research notes and preliminary studies that may be in the form of video sketches, paintings, models or photographs.

Art direction comprised a design concept for the sets, costumes and properties for a final year studio or location (screen drama or screen documentary) production. The ideas were communicated using models, drawings and sample boards (indicating for example, sources of research, selection and rationale for colour and texture being used). Working with the director and technical crew, the art directors oversaw the building of the sets and the construction of the costumes and properties. The final video production was submitted with research notes and preliminary studies that could be in the form of video sketches, paintings, models or photographs.

Sound Production

Sound Production developed audio (optionally with video) compositions conceived and designed from individually selected themes. Students also worked as sound designers for a final year studio or location (screen drama or screen documentary) production. For the individual audio compositions, specific themes were used to develop a structured sound composition that followed through from initial concept and studio tests to a developed recording or recordings, demonstrating an understanding of

structure, using exposition and development, and studio techniques to produce original sound compositions. Working as a sound producer, post-production sound tracks were developed that utilized music, sound effects and dialogue. The audio compositions were submitted (audiovisual – if images accompanied the sound composition): together with post-production sound tracks. The conceptual content, creative element and scope of ideas, grasp of techniques and procedures and technical qualities were evaluated.

Studio Composition

Studio Composition produced experimental audiovisual compositions using interdisciplinary or mixed media forms that explored the parameters and conventions of art forms in general, but with particular reference to performance and visual arts. In small groups a theme was selected and developed into a composition. Each member of the group had to demonstrate a significant contribution to the development and execution, of at least one of the following areas: camera direction and / or performance direction (for example choreography), script-writing and /or devising, production design and / or art direction, cinematography (for instance lighting and / or shot design), score composition and / or sound track design, special / visual effects design, editing and / or live multi-camera vision mixing, and production. Assessment took into account the construction and quality of the visual and intellectual ideas, the imaginative and creative use of the studio space and facilities, the grasp of appropriate production techniques and procedures, and an ability to work co-operatively with commitment within a group.

Some Final Thoughts on the Media Arts Undergraduate Programme

The media arts programme placed a language of images and sounds at the centre of its studies, divided equally between comprehending a corpus of professionally published audiovisual compositions - film and television; and audiovisual composing, a practice comprising generative audiovisual composing, as well as professional media practices, taking into account their place in contemporary culture and society.

I have only provided an outline of the contents of the studies, as a way of trying to contextualize some parts of a corpus of published audiovisual works, together with an approach to becoming competent in audiovisual composing. Within these contents reside the ways in which comprehension and composing could be integrated. However, only a detailed analysis of the complete courses, comprising contents and processes would provide that understanding and that would require another book! I hinted at the importance of integration between audiovisual comprehension and composing early in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, chapter 6, and I will supply one more instance to illustrate the richness of this process.

One such concept was the temporal / spatial quality of continuity and in particular the way that such continuity was being used in the process of story telling in images and sounds. In this case, through the study of a specific film meanings were being sought by analyzing how the shots were set up and how the editing contributed to the sense of the story, alongside the influences of ideology, culture, production values and so on. Having grasped the significance of temporal / spatial continuity, further films and television can be analyzed by bringing this concept to bear on an understanding of new

works. But how does this knowledge relate to a practice of audiovisual composing and creating audiovisual compositions.

Initially, audiovisual composing may be intuitive and it may not seem necessary to think about the ways in which the spatial / temporal continuity processes need to be controlled to create coherent meanings in images and sounds. Part of a creative experience is just sensing that what is being done in the shooting or editing process feels, looks and sounds right. However, if the sequence does not look or feel right a solution needs to be found. Problem solving requires analysis and it may be at this point that the value of considering spatial / temporal continuity needs to be used to find a solution. Solving the problem may require analyzing whether the timing of an event works and if it needs to be linked to another space to become more meaningful. Such theorized thinking is crucial for intelligent audiovisual composing to take place.

Having said that, of course the introduction of a concept like 'space and time' into courses on a study of film and television and the practices of audiovisual composing may well be different. Notions of the continuity of space and the use of subjective and objective time, from the point of view of analyzing a finished film or television work, would be introduced within theoretical paradigms; while in the practice of audiovisual composing, the nature, role and practices of shooting and editing techniques, which can create spatial continuity and elongate or shorten time, or create flash backs and forwards, would be tried out practically. However, for manipulating space and time it is important to understand *why*: and this is enabled through the parallel development of a theorized study of film and television works and practice in audiovisual composing that provide reflective discourses for space and time.

A significant point about using the concept of an audiovisual language, which has a composing process and a corpus of published profession works, is that not only is comprehending and composing brought together in this process; but that by requiring analytical written compositions for comprehension and audiovisual compositions for composing, both written and audiovisual composing processes are used. Understanding the relationship between content and form: interpreting and translating factual and symbolic material within a composing process based on images and sounds and critically evaluating the results applies to both comprehending and composing.

Assessment is required within most educational endeavours and if audiovisual composing is used alongside written composing as a way of students expressing what they have learnt; then it is important that teachers are confident of being able to assess the development of the students' knowledge and skills. Assessing audiovisual compositions is not very problematic in that the processes of assessment are very similar to those involved in assessing written compositions. It is necessary to look at how well the audiovisual composition addresses the assignment, what evidence there is of thorough research having been undertaken, the quality of the academic and intellectual content and the skills with which the student has been able to shape the form that carries the content.

Considering formative and summative assessment was significant because it had a huge impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Formative assessment was highly valued and consciously implemented throughout the process: taking place during weekly film and television seminars, together with the production of regular non-formally assessed essays: and in workshops where the whole audiovisual composing process was evaluated as work in progress, together with the final compositions. At the end of

each year summative assessment, in the form of written and audiovisual compositions, took place. Gradually assignments became more complex and sophisticated with written dissertations and an extended audiovisual composition in the final year. During the first five years only one course was formally examined, under timed examination conditions and that was aesthetic and cultural studies, in the second year. Continuous, and self-assessment, techniques were seen as most productive with sufficient time provided for personal research and developing responsibility for independent study.

All audiovisual compositions (whether audiovisual essays, poetry, dramas or documentaries) were accompanied by written critiques that explained and defined the underlying ideas, describing the research strategy (providing a bibliography, videography and discography), clarifying any issues that affected the production process and developing a critical analysis and evaluation of the audiovisual composition. This reflective activity went some way in making the intentions and comprehension of the intellectual task more objective when using audiovisual composing. Written composing in the critique complemented the written essays and dissertations experienced in the study of professionally published film and television works.

Finally, it is important to address the question of the collaborative nature of audiovisual composing and the implications of this on assessment. It is possible for audiovisual composing to be a relatively individual process when one person writes a short screenplay, casts and rehearses the characters, creates the mise-en-scene, directs, records and edits the screenplay: or where one individual develops, directs and edits a documentary. However, audiovisual composing is usually collaborative and it is important to address the issues surrounding collaborative authoring.

With small group audiovisual composing projects it is possible to identify individual contributions through observation of the production process and in the individually written critiques of the audiovisual process and composition. A given proportion can go towards an individual mark based on: observation of the production process, the written critique and presentations delivered throughout the progress of the project; together with a proportion awarded as a joint mark for the final audiovisual composition.

In the final year, audiovisual compositions were created where each individual took the lead roles (developing, writing, directing and editing) using other students in such tasks as performance, cinematography, lighting and sound production. Everyone had to contribute towards each other's projects. Sometimes courses ware linked, for instance, a sound production student would get half their marks for an individual audio composition and half for their contribution to a post-production sound track for a screen drama or experimental piece.

Using the concept of an audiovisual language that integrated the study of a corpus of professionally published audiovisual compositions with the practical processes associated with generative audiovisual composing and professional media practices developed ways of thinking about theoretical frameworks and aesthetic puzzles, which underpin audiovisual composing: leaving little doubt that learning to critically read and appreciate film and television strengthened audiovisual composing for each individual.

After the establishment of the undergraduate programme in media arts, postgraduate programmes were developed.

Postgraduate Study

The most interesting development, in terms of extending the boundaries of generative audiovisual composing, was the Doctorial programme, which respected both the use of written and audiovisual composing in the research activity and in the dissertation. Written and audiovisual compositions were accepted as source materials and data: and the final dissertation could be in a joint audiovisual and written form with no time constraint for the audiovisual composition and no stipulation about a minimum number of words, although a maximum number of words were specified. This provided discretion for the supervisor, postgraduate student and external examiner to appreciate the particular requirements of different research proposals: with each research proposal seen in its own terms as far as agreeing what relationship there should be between the written and audiovisual inputs and outputs.

The taught Masters programmes followed more traditional pathways. Initially, there were four taught Masters programmes: Film Studies, Documentary by Practice, Production and Screenwriting.

Media Arts Department

In 1999 the media arts programme, instead of being part of the Drama and Theatre Studies department, became a department in its own right. As the first head of that department I was able to extend the visibility of media arts, which enabled greater validation of the value of approaching audiovisual composing, and professionally published compositions, as a significant language, in a digital communication era.

Since then other colleagues have become head of the Department of Media Arts and the programme now reflects their interests and specialist fields and that of the many new staff who have been appointed since the inception of Media Arts at Royal Holloway University of London. This case study only reflects the activities emanating from 1993 – 1999, and in particular, focuses on the curriculum developed between1994 -1996. Only a few staff from that period still work in the Media Arts department and this account only covers the staff and the curricula that they developed during that earlier period. I would like to thank all those staff for their contribution to this paper. I am sure that they will see their ideas and courses reflected here: Stella Bruzzi, Adam Mills - *Film Studies*; Barry Langford - *Television Studies*; Adam Mills - *Aesthetics and Cultural Theory*; Susanna Capon - *Television Production*; Kate Houghton - *Visual Composing and Art Direction and Design*; Andrew Campbell – *Sound Composing and Sound Production*; Sian Busby, Kate Houghton, (Ron Hagell joined later)) *Audiovisual Composing - Studio*; Jenny Wilkes, Gideon Koppel, (Peter Wyeth joined later) - *Screen Drama*; John Quick, (Cahal McLaughlin joined later) – *Documentary;* Susan Rogers – *Screenwriting*.

Conclusion

Introducing audiovisual composing into the curriculum of the Media Arts undergraduate degree programme, and significantly into the postgraduate doctoral

programme, was a unique approach. The opportunity for such innovation and creativity within a university system always requires a special set of conditions to be present. In the case of the approach outlined here, six such conditions were present at Royal Holloway University of London that collectively ensured the success of the endeavour. It was a particular moment in time when new horizons could be forged.

First, Royal Holloway University of London had an established Drama and Theatre Studies Department that had embraced a curriculum which combined, within the curriculum contents, 'text and performance': and integrated within the pedagogy 'seminars and practical workshops'. These factors were crucial in the validation process for the Media Arts programme because they reinforced a precedent for theorized practice within humanities programmes in the university. The Department was also sympathetic to the development of a complementary programme in the area of the media. The head of department was David Bradbury followed by Jacky Bratton.

Secondly, the incumbent Principal of Royal Holloway University of London, Norman Gower, had been Vice Chancellor of the Open University and could empathize with the notion of an audiovisual language. During his term at the Open University he had been involved in the creation of television programmes, which had combined mathematical and visual languages, with the textual. He explained how, when attempting to *visualize* abstract mathematical concepts, the process of translation often revealed new insights in mathematical understanding.

Thirdly, the rapid development of the new electronic technologies provided both the hardware and software for such innovation, at cost levels that were within the economic grasp of higher education.

Fourthly, the growing importance of an emerging global information and communication era was signaling the demand for skilled graduates in audiovisual composing and multimedia communication, which both paralleled and were complementary to written expertise.

Fifthly, my previous history in the field of audiovisual composing provided experience and knowledge for the development of such a distinctive curriculum within higher education.

Finally, a crucial factor that influenced the success of this endeavour was the possibility of acquiring staff with both a robust theoretical background combined with professional media production experience. This enabled a balanced integration of theory and practice and ensured that the practice was appropriately theorized.

This innovative Media Arts programme did well on a range of academic, vocational and industrial evaluation criteria; but this was not the only aim of the programme. It was hoped that this initiative, along with the other innovations and case studies in *Images and Sounds Audiovisual Language*, would set a precedent for the use of generative composing in images and sounds at all levels of education, in the future. Where audiovisual composing was no longer a skill reserved only for media professionals, but an activity for everyone.