

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	School of Modern Languages
Subject(s):	<i>World Cinema/Film Studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MODL1030 Introduction to World Cinema 1 MODL1040 Introduction to World Cinema 2 MODL2230 Film Noir to Asia Extreme MODL3230 Cinema in the Digital Age MODL3020 Dissertation
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA (Hons)

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Academic Quality and Standards**
Academic Quality and Standards Team
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards**Matters for Urgent Attention**

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box

N/A

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

N/A – in third year of appointment

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School

N/A – my third year of appointment

1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award

- *The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

Another positive year (my 3rd at Leeds as External Examiner) with a wide range of grades achieved across all modules – the full range of marking has been used throughout, in some cases from 20-80%, and fully deserved across this scale. Where appropriate the penalty system (as clearly indicated on the essay submission sheet) has also been applied and fairly used. From the evidence of assessments that I have seen and discussions with teaching staff, there appear to be high levels of teaching and interaction amongst staff and students pertaining to subject study matters. The learning outcomes and assessment are clear and the standards are more than appropriate for the award.

2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Yes. From the evidence of work that I have seen, communications with staff over email and discussions in person, the subject benchmarks are all being met in line with competitor institutions.

3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
- *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

There is a good range of assessment methods in use and these are all more than satisfactory. This year a new Teaching Fellow was marking on at least 2 or 3 of the modules mentioned above and some issues were noted re lack of clarity in some of the feedback via annotations such as arrows which would be difficult to immediately understand by the students or other members of staff. However, this matter was immediately picked up and addressed by the use of the experienced internal moderator. The Teaching Fellow then also set aside 3 hours per unit for students to come and see <> for verbal feedback in person after receipt of the essay. The use of the moderator for each unit is an excellent quality control procedure and she/he is doing their job well in each case. The marks for MODL2230 Film Noir to Asia Extreme were raised by 3 points for all essays in the 2.2 degree classification, and all 2.1 essays were raised by 2 points. The rationale for this and discussion between the first marker and the more experienced moderator were justified.

4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
- *The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

Yes. There is a range of assessments and a good variety of testing questions at the appropriate levels from years 1 to 3. This year with 2 students proceeding to dissertations in the final year there were two strong and solid pieces of work at 66% and 74% respectively.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

N/A

6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

There is a sustained and continued through-line noticeable across all modules where the programme is brought together through a committed focus on questioning, interrogating and analysing all cinemas through a polycentric framework. This year I was able to again access on campus the on-line Blackboard system that staff and students are using and this also confirms my

point here.

7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

As from my previous two years – all tenured staff teaching on this programme are active researchers publishing at national and international levels. From the course handbooks, reading lists and essays and exams, there was evidence of staff engaging not only with their own work in the field, but also as their own work dialogues and critiques established orthodoxies in the fields of film studies and world cinema. There is also opportunity for early career colleagues/Teaching Fellows to make an active contribution to the teaching and assessment of the courses on offer.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

N/A

The Examination/Assessment Process

9. **The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.**

- *Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

Yes. I received all material in good time and my comments and feedback were all taken up collegially.

10. **Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?**

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes, as above.

11. **Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?**

Yes.

12. **Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?**

Yes.

13. **Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?**

Yes. This year with 2 students proceeding to dissertations in the final year there were two strong and solid marks and work at 66% and 74%.

14. **Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?**

Yes

15. **Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

This must have taken place at another meeting as we did not formally raise this or discuss this at the Exam Board – i.e. to my knowledge it was not the business of this Board to discuss and take decisions on mitigating circumstances via medical evidence.

Other comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form

I am listing here my observations and suggestions for improvement during the course of the next academic year. Points 1-3 were raised and discussed with staff at the exam board and are based on my observations and reading of material relating to an overview of the work that I saw, and in terms of curriculum development and also quality assurance. The crux of my observations and points (1-3) this year relate to the ongoing pedagogical issue of close textual analysis and social and cultural studies.

1. As from the previous two year's discussions, and as I have formally stated in my previous reports, the issue of dealing with close textual film analysis alongside social and cultural studies

contextualisation and analyses of the films, especially as the students progress from years 1 to 3, does need dealing with now. I fully appreciate that the students on the degree programme are working between being based in and choosing modules from across Modern Languages and also the Institute for Communication Studies. I have a sense now that not all students are taught or grounded in a core introduction to film studies analysis in the same way; and if they are, they seem to forget to apply these important analytical skills as they move from years 1 to 3. Might this be a timely opportunity for World Cinema/Film Studies and ICS colleagues to sit around the table and have formal minuted meetings to discuss and find a common ground approach to one or two of the core units that can usefully help all students in this matter?

2. As a way of having an integrated approach to deal with the above point and to help students returning to or new to the study of film in years 2 and 3, the course handbooks for modules in years 2 and 3 could have at the outset or at the end a clear rubric reminding them of the need to offer both film and social and cultural studies analyses in their assessments (wherever relevant). This should be accompanied by a film terms glossary.
3. The World Cinemas/Film Studies staff are already looking into one of my suggestions from the previous year of having a close sequence analysis assessment early on in the second year for one of the modules. This will remind returning year 2 students to film studies and will introduce any new students to film at this stage of the need to engage with close textual analysis as part of their critical and scholarly faculties. I understand that staff are hoping to implement this in the coming academic year 13/14.
4. This year I observed that only 2 FT staff and 1 Teaching Fellow on a fixed-term contract have been utilised to offer provisions for the programme and at times staff have been over-stretched. This does need carefully looking into from the University and School levels in terms of the need for continued, stable staffing so as to protect the coherence of the programme going forward and also to allow for growth in line with competitor HE institutions.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the teaching and administration team on a successful third year in terms of the delivery of the programme, collegial and professional communication between each other and myself, and as always a ready willingness to be attentive to and take on board useful points from our collective work and discussions.

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

FACULTY OF ARTS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

03 October 2013

<>

Ref.: Reply to External Examiner's Report

Dear <>,

Thank you very much indeed for your detailed and overall positive report on the 2012-13 performance of the JH World Cinemas programme. We are pleased to hear that you are generally satisfied with our programme design, and that you have found evidence of excellent teaching and results in our students' assessment portfolios. Equally as rewarding is your identification of robust film scholarship behind our research-led provision, and our transparent and professional marking procedures.

It is also reassuring to hear that you are satisfied with action taken in response to your comments last year. We are nonetheless thankful for the various further comments and suggestions for improvement that you have made, and which I would like to address here:

Close Textual analysis:

As per your suggestion, this will be the focus of our first internal learning and teaching meeting in the 2012-13 session. We will actively work on strategies to overcome the skills gap that sometimes emerges due to the sheer diversity of elective students (who can take our level II and III modules but who might also not have studied with us at Level I). Thank you also for your constructive suggestions as to how we might help improve this situation. Specifically, in relation to point 2, namely that all Level II and II module handbooks should contain clear reminders about the need for detailed film analysis as well as a film glossary, we have already made these changes for the new academic session. Also, in relation to point 3, the introduction of close sequential analysis, I have already changed the 2013-14 assessment for MODL2230 through Chair's action: the unseen, January exam has been removed, and replaced by a detailed film clip analysis that will be submitted in the middle of the first semester.

Thank you again for your detailed appraisal of our programme, and should you need any further clarification or information, please do not hesitate to contact me as per details above.

Yours truly,

<>
World Cinemas Subject Leader