

# Liverpool Film Seminar

2014 - 2015

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Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites six experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

## **Professor Phil Powrie** (University of Surrey)

### **Soundscapes of Loss: Songs in Contemporary French Cinema**

In 2003 I hypothesized that contemporary French films are increasingly using Anglophone songs in their compilations. A recent survey of a large sample of films that I have recently undertaken suggests that something like 20% of the 2250 or so films produced since 2000 are likely to be dominated by English-language songs.

This paper explores the use of English-language songs in a small sample of these films using a range of strategies: the film that has a large number of almost exclusively English-language songs; the film that has very few, but where the songs are all the more striking; the film where songs are sung in English by French singers; and finally the film which demonstrates how English-language and French-language songs work in counterpoint. This last comparative element of the paper allows me to claim that the use of English-language and French-language films in contemporary French cinema functions in very different ways. The former's function is to define a contemporary space and culture, while the latter's function is to retrieve a communitarian past in nostalgic mode.

## Biography:



Phil Powrie is Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences and Professor of Cinema Studies at the University of Surrey. He has published a number of books mainly on French cinema, amongst them *French Cinema in the 1980s: Nostalgia and the Crisis of Masculinity* (1997), *Jean-Jacques Beineix* (2001) and *Pierre Batcheff and Stardom in 1920s French Cinema* (2009). He leads the Association for Studies in French Cinema and is the chief general editor of its journal, *Studies in French Cinema*. He is Chair of the British Association of Film Television and Screen Studies. He is currently preparing a book on the French film musical.