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Film Theory and World Cinema

Sessions: Wednesdays 4:30-7:10, German House Seminar Room
Office hours: Wednesday 10-11 or by appointment, German House 303A

Description:

This course will serve as an introduction to film theory and criticism from the inception of cinema to the present. It seeks to help students develop the vocabulary and analytical skills essential for teaching and research within cinema studies and to expose them to international film movements.

We will focus on a variety of theoretical concerns, including the interrogation of realism, auteurism, genre, avant-garde and third cinema movements, psychoanalytic and feminist approaches, spectatorship and subjectivity, star studies, (post)national cinema, and the impact of digital technology. Each week we will view one or two films, which will be discussed in class together with the required readings.

Readings and discussions will be in English. Readers of German and French are encouraged to read the texts in the original where possible. The assigned readings are on reserve (Sakai). The films will be available at the Media Library on Douglass Campus as well as Alexander Library for viewing. Many films are available via Netflix.

The suggested further readings point students toward additional relevant criticism, but are not expected for class; the same holds true for the suggested films.

This course is necessary for completion of the graduate certificate in film studies.

Requirements:

Active class participation/attendance

Weekly papers (1-2 pp.)

Oral Reports (15 min.)

Short outline of proposed final project and bibliography (2-4 pp. double-spaced)

Final paper (20 pp.)

Suggested books:

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

*André Bazin, *What is Cinema*, I and II

* Robert Burgoyne, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, and Robert Stam, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*

* Timothy Corrigan, Patricia White, and Meta Mazaj, *Critical Visions in Film Theory*

David Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*

Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*

Gerald Mast et al., *Film Theory and Criticism*

*Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*

Annette Michelson, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*

*Philip Rosen, *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*

1st class (1/22): Introduction: Early Cinema

Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat (France, 1895; dir. Louis and Auguste Lumière)

Voyage to the Moon (France, 1902; dir. Georges Méliès)

The Great Train Robbery (US, 1903; dir. Edwin S. Porter)

* Siegfried Kracauer, excerpt from *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*

2nd class (1/29):

- view: *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR, 1925; dir. Sergei Eisenstein)
The Smiling Mme Beudet (France, 1923; dir. Germaine Dulac)
- read: Sergei Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions" (1924); "A Dialectical Approach to Film Form" (1929)
Germaine Dulac, "Aesthetics, Obstacles, Integral Cinégraphie"
Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde"
Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein"

3rd class (2/5):

- view: *Man with a Movie Camera* (USSR, 1929; dir. Dziga Vertov)
The Blue Light (Germany, 1932;
- read: Dziga Vertov, "We: Variant of a Manifesto" (1922), "The Fifth Issue of Kino-Pravda" (1922); "Kinoks: a Revolution" (1923); "The Factory of Facts" (1926); "Kino-Eye" (1926); "On the Organization of a Creative Laboratory" (1936); "The Man with a Movie Camera" (1928); "From Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye" (1929)
Belà Balasz, "The Creative Camera" ("Die produktive Kamera"), "The Close Up" ("Großaufnahme"), "The Face of Man" from *Theory of the Film (Der Geist des Films)*, 1930)

4th class (2/12):

- view: *Berlin, Symphonie of a Great City* (Germany, 1926; dir. Walter Ruttmann)
Entr'acte (France, 1924; dir. René Clair)
- read: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility"
Siegfried Kracauer, "Little Shop Girls Go to the Movies", "The Mass Ornament"

5th class (2/19):

- view: *The Blue Angel* (Germany, 1930; dir. Josef von Sternberg)
Vertigo (US, 1958; dir. Alfred Hitchcock)
- read: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema"
David Bordwell, "Classical Hollywood Cinema"
Tania Modleski, "Hitchcock, Feminism, and the Patriarchal Unconscious"

6th class (2/26):

- view: *Vampyr* (Germany/France, 1932; dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer)
- read: Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Psychoanalysis" from *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*
Christian Metz, excerpt from *The Imaginary Signifier*
Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus"
Teresa de Lauretis, "Through the Looking Glass"

7th class (3/5):

- view: *Sunset Boulevard* (US, 1950; dir. Billy Wilder)
High Noon (US, 1952; dir. Fred Zinnemann)
- read: Rick Altman, Introduction to *Film/Genre*
Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Theodor Adorno, "Transparencies on Film"

8th class (3/12):

- view: *Breathless* (France, 1960; dir. Jean-Luc Godard)
La Jetée (France, 1960; dir. Chris Marker)

read: John Caughie, Introduction to *Theories of Authorship*, 9-16; 123-30
Peter Wollen, excerpt from *Theories of Authorship*
Luc Moullet, "Jean-Luc Godard"
Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"
Michel Foucault, "What is an Author"

9th class (3/26): reading week – **paper outline and bibliography due via email**

view: *The Life of Oharu* (Japan, 1952; dir. Kenzo Mizoguchi)
Stray Dog (Japan, 1949; dir. Akira Kurosawa)

10th class (4/2): Rhiannon Welch

view: *Mamma Roma* (Italy, 1962; dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini)
read: André Bazin, excerpt from *What is Cinema?*
John David Rhodes, introduction from *Taking Place*
recommended: *Roma, città aperta* (Italy, 1945; dir. Roberto Rossellini)
Richard Dyer, excerpt from *Stars*

11th class (4/9):

view: *The Big City* (India, 1963; dir. Satyajit Ray)
read: Dudley Andrew, excerpt from *An Atlas of World Cinema*
André Bazin, "DeSica: Metteur en scène" from *What is Cinema?*
Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury"

12th class (4/16):

view: *Syndromes and a Century* (Thailand, 2006; dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul)
Chungking Express (Hong Kong, 1994; dir. Wong-Kar Wai)
In the Mood for Love (Hong Kong/France; dir. Wong Kar-Wai)
Deleuze and Guattari, "What is a Minor Literature?"
Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, excerpt from *Unthinking Eurocentrism*
Hamid Naficy, excerpt from *An Accented Cinema*

13th class (4/23):

view: *Import Export* (Austria/France/Germany, 2007; dir. Ulrich Seidl)
The State I am In (Germany, 2000; dir. Christian Petzold)
read: Gilles Deleuze, Ch. 8 from *The Time Image*
Andrew Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema"
Stephen Crofts, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s"
recommended: Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*

14th class (4/30):

view: *Caché* (France/Austria/Germany/USA/Italy, 2005; dir. Michael Haneke)
Benny's Video (Austria/Germany, 1992; dir. Michael Haneke)
read: Michel Chion, "The Acousmètre"
Mary Ann Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space"
Lev Manovich, "What is Digital Cinema?"
recommended: Roy Grundmann, "Haneke's Anachronism" in *A Companion to Michael Haneke*

5/9 **FINAL PAPER DUE, 5 PM via email (no late papers accepted)**