COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This seminar presents some of the major film theoretical statements of last ninety years with a concern for their relation to film historical inquiry. Neither an exhaustive survey of film theory nor a methods course in film history, our seminar seeks to critically engage with many of the key concepts of film studies so as to provide you with an increased familiarity with the discipline and its intellectual history. Since this course is a graduate seminar, active student participation is required for its success. You should be prepared to discuss each week’s readings and screenings by sharing your questions and insights with the other members of our class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Besides contributing to the seminar each week by being present and prepared to discuss that week’s assignments, you will also be required to complete the following:

A. A five- to seven-page essay that will be in response to one of several take-home examination questions distributed in class on February 26. This essay will be due in class on March 12.

B. An oral presentation on a book-length work of media history (or on a history of visual culture). Requirements and suggestions for this assignment will be described in a separate handout. Collaborative work on this presentation is possible.

C. A twenty-page research paper on a topic of your own choosing. Please feel free to discuss your research with me at any point in the semester. Final seminar papers will be due by 5:00 PM, Wednesday, April 23.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


Articles on electronic reserve at Pitt Digital Library.

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE:**

**Key:**

- CM = *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory.*
- FH = *Film History: Theory and Practice.*
- FTC = *Film Theory and Criticism.*
- (x) = article on reserve at Pitt Digital Library.

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**Monday, January 8**  
THE DIFFICULTY OF BEGINNING

**READING:**


**SCREENING:**  

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**Monday, January 15**  
NO CLASS.  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

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**Monday, January 22**  
HISTORIAN/THEORIST/ARCHIVIST

**READING:**


*FH*. Chapters 1 and 2: 3-42.


**SCREENINGS:**

*Keepers of the Frame* (US 1999, d. Mark McLaughlin) 70 minutes.  
Monday, January 29  EARLY CINEMA AND HISTORICAL ALTERITY

READING:


FH. Chapter 3: pages 43-64.

SCREENING:
The Life of an American Fireman (Edison 1903, d. Edwin S. Porter) 6 minutes.
The Great Train Robbery (Edison 1903, d. Edwin S. Porter) 12 minutes.

Monday. February 5  CLASSICAL NARRATIVE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

READING:


FH. Chapter 4, pages 67-108.

SCREENING:
Sunrise, A Song of Two Humans (US 1927, Fox, d. F.W. Murnau) 95 minutes.

Monday February 12  SOVIET MONTAGE: PRACTICE IS THEORY

READING:
FTC. Eisenstein, Sergei. "Beyond the Shot [The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram]" and "The Dramaturgy of Film Form [The Dialectical Approach to Film Form]," from Film Form, 13-40.


FTC. Pudovkin, Vsevolod. “[On Editing]” from Film Technique, 7-12.


SCREENING:
Mat [The Mother] (USSR 1926, Mezhrabpom-Russ, d. Vsevolod Pudovkin) 90 minutes.

Monday February 19  CINEMA/INDUSTRY/MASS CULTURE

READING:


FH. Chapter 6, pages 131-52.


SCREENING:
The Crowd (US 1928, MGM, d. King Vidor) 104 min.

Monday, February 26 REMEMBERING THE REALISM OF BAZIN

READING:


CM. Introduction and chapters 1 and 2, pages ix-xxv; 3-41.


SCREENING:
The Magnificent Ambersons (US 1942, RKO, d. Orson Welles) 88 min.
nostalgia (US 1972, Hollis Frampton) 20 min.

Monday, March 5 No Seminar Meeting. Spring Break

Monday, March 12 MODERNITY AND THE SHAPING OF PERCEPTION

READING:


CM. Chapter 3, pages 89-144.

SCREENING:
Sleepy Hollow (Germany/USA, American Zoetrope/KAROL Film Produktions GmbH & Co. KG/ Mandalay Pictures/Paramount Pictures/Scott Rudin Productions, d. Tim Burton) 111 minutes.

Monday, March 19 THE LINGUISTIC TURN

READING:
FTC. Metz, Christian. “Some Points in the Semiotics of Cinema” and “Problems of Denotation in the Fiction Film” from Film Language, 65-86.


SCREENING:
Prima della rivoluzione [Before the Revolution] (Italy 1964, Cineriz/Iride Cinematografica, d. Bernardo Bertolucci) 115 minutes.

Monday, March 26 PYCHOANALYSIS & APPARATUS THEORY

READING:


CM. Chapters 4 and 5, pages 147-224.

SCREENING:
Morroco (US 1930, Paramount, d. Josef von Sternberg) 97 minutes.

Monday, April 2 THIRD CINEMA & THE HISTORIES OF DECOLONIZATION

READINGS:


CM. Chapter 7, pages 265-300.

SCREENING:
*Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol [Black God, White Devil]* (Brazil 1964, Copacabana Filmes, d. Glauber Rocha) 115 minutes.

Monday, April 9  SPECTRAL HISTORIES

READING:


SCREENING:

Monday, April 16  DIGITAL TERMINUS

READING:


CM. Chapter 8, pages 301-49.

(x) Rodowick, D. N. “Dr. Strange Media, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Film Theory.” *PMLA* 116 (October 2001): 1396-1404.

SCREENING:
*Sans Soleil* (France 1982, Argos Films, d. Chris Marker) 100 minutes.

Monday, April 23  TBA