

Englit 2451  
Spring 2007  
Anderson, M.

## FILM HISTORY/THEORY

ENGLIT 2451 (1010)

SPRING 2007

MONDAYS, 1:00 PM TO 4:40 PM

444 CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30 PM  
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### 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:

Allen, Robert C. and Douglas Gomery. *Film History: Theory and Practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1985.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. Trans. Bernard and Caroline Schutze. Ed. Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 2000.

Braudy, Leo and Marshall Cohen. *Film Theory and Criticism*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Cherchi Usai, Paolo. *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory, and the Digital Dark Age*. London: BFI, 2001.

Rosen, Philip. *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

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:

Ramsaye, Terry. "The Pre-History of the Screen," *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture Through 1925*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926: xxxvii-lxx.

Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984: 76-100.

SCREENING:

*Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer*. (US 1974, d. Thom Andersen) 58 minutes.

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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:

Cherchi Usai, Paolo. *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory, and the Digital Dark Age*, 1-133.

FH. Chapters 1 and 2: 3-42.

(x) Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969: 253-67.

SCREENINGS:

*Keepers of the Frame* (US 1999, d. Mark McLaughlin) 70 minutes.

*The First Flickers* (US 1969, WRC-TV, Washington, D.C. Films Incorporated) 24 minutes.

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Monday, January 29 EARLY CINEMA AND HISTORICAL ALTERITY

READING:

*FTC.* Kracauer, Siegfried. "Basic Concepts," from *Theory of Film*, 143-53.

(x) Bruno, Giuliana. "Streetwalking Around Plato's Cave, or The Unconscious Is Housed," *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993: 36-57.

(x) Noel Burch. "Porter, or ambivalence," *Screen* 19:4 (Winter 1978/9): 91-105.

*FTC.* Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early Film and Its Incredulous Spectator," 862-76.

*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.

*The Silent Revolution: What Do Those Old Films Mean? Episode 2: United States 1902-1914, Tomorrow the World* (UK/France 1985, Channel 4/French Ministry of Culture, d. Noël Burch) 26 minutes.

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Monday, February 5 CLASSICAL NARRATIVE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

READING:

(x) Bertsch, Marguerite. Chapters 4 and 5 from *How To Write for Moving Pictures: A Manual of Instruction and Information*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917: 23-31.

*FTC.* Münsterberg, Hugo. "The Means of the Photoplay," 411-17.

*FTC.* Gunning, Tom. "Narrative Discourse and the Narrator System," 470-81.

(x) Münsterberg, Hugo. "Experiments on the Problem of Monotony". *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency*. London: Constable and Company, 1913: 190-205.

(x) Bordwell, David. "Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. Ed. Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986: 17-34.

*FH.* Chapter 4, pages 67-108.

(x) H.D. "The Cinema and the Classics". *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*. Edited by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998:105-20.

SCREENING:

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

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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.

(x) Vertov, Dziga. "Kino-Eye." *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. Ed. Annette Michelson. Trans. Kevin O'Brien. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984: 60-79.

*FTC.* Pudovkin, Vsevolod. "[On Editing]" from *Film Technique*, 7-12.

(x) Pudovkin, Vsevolod. "Theoretical Postulates of Discontinuity," "Rehearsal Work," and "The Editing Image," *Film Technique and Film Acting: The Cinematic Writings of V. I. Pudovkin*. Trans. Ivor Montagu. New York: Lear, 1949: 41-78.

SCREENING:

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

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Monday February 19 CINEMA/INDUSTRY/MASS CULTURE

READING:

*FTC.* Benjamin, Walter. "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 791-811.

*FTC.* Balász, Béla. "The Close-up" and "The Face of Man," from *Theory of Film*, 314-21.

(x) Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Continuum, 1987: 120-67.

*FH.* Chapter 6, pages 131-52.

(x) Cooper, Mark Garrett. "The Public," *Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2003: 77-118.

SCREENING:

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

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Monday, February 26 REMEMBERING THE REALISM OF BAZIN

READING:

*FTC.* Bazin, André. "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" and "The Myth of Total Cinema," from *What is Cinema?* 166-73.

FTC. Bazin, André. "Theater and Cinema," from *What is Cinema?* 418-28.

FTC. Bazin, André. "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," from *What is Cinema?* 41-53.

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

FTC. Deluze, Giles. Preface to the English Edition of *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, "The Origin of the Crisis: Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave," and "Beyond the Movement Image," 240-69.

SCREENING:

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

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Monday, March 5 No Seminar Meeting. Spring Break

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Monday, March 12 MODERNITY AND THE SHAPING OF PERCEPTION

READING:

(x) Singer, Ben. "Meanings of Modernity," *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001: 17-35.

(x) Crary, Jonathan. "Modernity and the Problem of the Observer," *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992: 1-24.

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.

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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.

FTC. Wollen, Peter. "The Auteur Theory," from *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 565-80.

(x) Passolini, Pier Paolo. "The Written Language of Reality," *Heretical Empiricism*, Ed. Louise K. Barnett. Trans. Ben Lawton and Louise K. Barnett. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indianapolis Press, 1988: 197-222.

SCREENING:

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

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Monday, March 26 PSYCHOANALYSIS & APPARATUS THEORY

READING:

FTC. Baudry, Jean-Louis. "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus, 355-65.

*FH*. Chapter 5, pages 109-30.

FTC. Metz, Christian. "Identification, Mirror," "The Passion for Perceiving," and "Disavowal, Fetishism," from *The Imaginary Signifier*, 820-36.

FTC. Dayan, Danial. "The Tudor-Code of Classical Cinema," 106-17.

FTC. Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 837-48.

(x) *Cahiers du Cinéma* Collective. "Morocco de Josef von Sternberg," Trans. Diana Matias. *Cahiers du Cinéma, 1969-1972: The Politics of Representation*. Ed. Nick Browne. (Cambridge, Mass.: Oxford University Press, 1990) 174-85.

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

SCREENING:

*Morocco* (US 1930, Paramount, d. Josef von Sternberg) 97 minutes.

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Monday, April 2 THIRD CINEMA & THE HISTORIES OF DECOLONIZATION

READINGS:

(x) Fanon, Franz. "Concerning Violence," *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963: 35-106

(x) Gabriel, Teshome H. "Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films," *Questions of Third Cinema*. Eds. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen. London: British Film Institute, 1991: 30-52.

(x) Rocha, Glauber. "The Esthetic of Hunger" and "The Tricontinental Filmmaker," *Brazilian Cinema*. Ed. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam. Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1988: 68-71; 76-80.

FTC. Stam, Robert and Louise Spence. "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction," 877-91.

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.

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Monday, April 9      SPECTRAL HISTORIES

READING:

(x) Mayne, Judith. "Looking for Dorothy," *Directed by Dorothy Arzner*. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1994: 151-181.

(x) Bersani, Leo. "The Gay Absence," *Homos*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995: 31-76.

(x) Patricia White. "Female Spectator, Lesbian Specter," *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1999: 61-93.

SCREENING:

*The Haunting* (US 1963, Argyle Enterprises/MGM, d. Robert Wise) 112 minutes.

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Monday, April 16      DIGITAL TERMINUS

READING:

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. Trans. Bernard and Caroline Schutze. Ed. Slyvere Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 2000.

(x) Friedberg, Anne. "The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change." *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams. London: Arnold, 2000: 438-52.

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.

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Monday, April 23      TBA