

INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES (<http://class.osu.edu>)

This course responds to the question: “how do you study film?” During the quarter, we will examine several important critical approaches to film analysis. Some pay particular attention to the specific properties of the text or medium (film language; digital); others highlight the commonalities that distinguish a particular group of films (genre; auteur); and still others focus on the ways in which films dialogue with larger discursive trends and ideological currents (feminist film theory, questions of racialized representation).

The reading on the day of the film will prepare you for the issues to think about during the screening; a short lecture before the film will further emphasize the basic tenets of the theoretical focus for the week. The follow-up class will review other readings and explore, through lecture and discussion, the implications, limitations, and assumptions of the theory/methods covered that week.

Text and Other Readings

Braudy, Leo and Marshall Cohen, Eds. Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Other readings are designated with an asterisk (*). They will be available through electronic reserve after the first week of the course. To access electronic reserve, go to OSCAR on the library website (<http://library.ohio-state.edu/search>). On the left side of the page, hit one of the designations for “Find reserves by...” (course: SPAN 694 or Prof/TA: Podalsky)

Screenings

All of the films will be screened in class with three exceptions. You will be asked to see *Memories del subdesarrollo / Memories of Underdevelopment* outside of class on Wednesday, November 2 (Hagerty Hall 180 at 7:30 p.m.). You will also have to see one film (to be announced) outside of class over Thanksgiving break. Finally, you will have to screen the film for your film analysis outside of class.

Evaluation

Participation	15%
Take-home midterm	25
Film Analysis (5-6 pages)	30
Final Exam	<u>30</u>
TOTAL	100%

Participation

Active participation during class is absolutely essential. You should come to class prepared to comment on the films and the readings under discussion. In order to do this, I encourage you to take notes on the films that you see in class (on central themes; on important sequences) as well as on the readings that you do outside of class (on the central argument and main supporting points). Note-taking will help you understand the material, better articulate your observations, and formulate questions.

Exams

Both exams will be in essay format and cover films, readings, and class materials. You will be given a choice of several questions and asked to respond in a cogent manner to 2-3 of them. The mid-term is a take-home exam and the final is an in-class exam.

Film Analysis

For your paper, you will have to analyze a single film according to 2 critical methods that we have discussed in class. In order to complete the assignment, you will have to select a film (in consultation with the professor) and choose 2 analytical approaches that offer provocative interpretations of the film. A list of potential topics will be available on our course website (see below).

Extra credit

The great Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea once credited his friend Néstor Almendros, a Cuban cinematographer who had left the island, for having encouraged him to see ALL sorts of films. Almendros told Alea that you learn from everything –from “art cinema” to the schlockiest of B-films. In order to celebrate that sensibility and to support our local arts institutions, I will give students extra credit for films that they see at the Wexner Center or at either of the Drexel theaters, as these are venues that feature films that are not widely distributed. In order to receive the extra credit, you must write me an e-mail on the course website (see below) in which you provide a brief analysis of the film (2-3 paragraphs) according to one of the critical methods we are studying in class; thoughtfulness and originality are important. Extra credit will NOT determine your grade. It will be used at the end of the course to “swing” grades upwards that are already leaning that way (e.g. from a B+ to an A-).

Course Website

The syllabus for this course and other useful materials will be available through WebCT. To use WebCT, to <http://class.osu.edu> and log in using the same username and password that you use to check your OSU e-mail. If you experience problems or have a question about accessing WebCT, please contact the Help Desk (688-HELP or webct@osu.edu).

Calendar

September

- Thurs 22 Introduction
To see: *Touch of Evil* (US, Orson Welles, 1958, 113')
- Tues 27 Formalist Approaches: Montage Theory
To see: *Now!* (Cuba, Santiago Alvarez, 1965, 5') and *A Movie* (US, Bruce Connor, 1958, 12')
To read: “Film Language” (pp. 1-3); Pudovkin, “On Editing”; Eisenstein, “The Dramaturgy of Film Form”
- Thurs 29 The Long Take and Questions of Realism
To read: Bazin, “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema”; “On the Ontology of the Image”; “Myth of Total Cinema”

October

- Tues 4 Genre Studies
To see: *Psycho* (US, Alfred Hitchcock, 1960, 109')
To read: “Film Genres” (pp. 657-661); Altman, “A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre”; Schatz, “Film Genre and Genre Film”
- Thurs 6 The Horror Film
To read: Williams, “Film Bodies”
- Tues 11 Auteur Theory
To see: *Rear Window* (US, Alfred Hitchcock, 1954, 112')
To read: “The Film Artist” (pp. 555-557); Sarris, “Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962”; Wollen, “The Auteur Theory”

- Thurs 13 The Signature of Alfred Hitchcock
To read: *excerpts Truffaut, Hitchcock; TBA
- Tues 18 Stardom and Performance
To see: *Blond Venus* (US, Josef von Sternberg, 1932, 93')
To read: "The Film Artist" (pp. 557-558); Ellis, "Stars as Cinematic Phenomenon";
Schatz, "The Whole Equation..."
- Thurs 20 Marlene Dietrich's Star Text
To read: *Marshall, "The Cinematic Apparatus"; *Garber, "From Dietrich to
Madonna"
TAKE HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED TODAY
- Tues 25 Psychoanalytical Approaches
To see: *Das Tripas Coração / Herat and Guts* (Brazil, Ana Carolina, 1982, 100')
To read: Baudry, "The Apparatus"
TAKE HOME MIDTERM MUST BE TURNED IN TODAY **IN CLASS**
- Thurs 27 Feminist Film Theory
To read: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure..."; *deLauretis, "Rethinking Women's Cinema"
- November
- Tues 1 Politics and Ideology
To read: Comolli and Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism"; Woods, "Ideology, Genre,
Auteur"
- Wed 2 To see (**outside of class**): *Memorias del subdesarrollo / Memories of Underdevelopment*
(1968, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 97') in Hagerty Hall 180 at 7:30 p.m
- Thurs 3 An Imperfect Cinema
To read: *García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema"; *Gutiérrez Alea, "Viewer's
Dialectic"
- Tues 8 Questions of Race and Ethnicity
To see: *Daughters of the Dust* (US, Julie Dash, 1991, 112')
To read: Stam and Spence, "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation"; *Hall,
"Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation"
- Thurs 10 Resistant Readings
To read: Diawara, "Black Spectatorship"; *Hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze"
- Tues 15 The Place of the Audience / The Question of Spectatorship
To see: *Blair Witch Project* (US, Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999, 86')
To read: *Mayne, "Paradoxes of Spectatorship"; *Jenkins, "In My Weekend-Only
World"
- Thurs 17 Horror Revisited
To read: *Castonguay, "The Political Economy of the Indie Blockbuster"
- Tues 22 The Digital Revolution?
To see: *Lola Rennt / Run Lola Run* (Germany, Tom Tykwer, 1998, 80')
To read: Belton, "Digital Cinema"; *Majer O'Sickey, "Whatever Lola Wants..."
FILM ANALYSIS DUE IN CLASS
- Thurs 24 No class –Thanksgiving Break
- Tues 29 The Virtual and the Real
To see (*before class*): TBA
To read: Friedberg, "The End of Cinema"; Prince, "True Lies..."
- December

Thurs 1 The Virtual and the Real
To read: *Stam and Shohat, "Film Theory and Spectatorship..."
REVIEW FOR THE FINAL

PLEASE NOTE:

The FINAL EXAMINATION will take place on Wednesday, December 7 from 1:30-3:18

Readings beyond the Textbook

Castonguay, Jim. "The Political Economy of the Indie Blockbuster: Fandom, Intertextuality, and *the Blair Witch Project*." In Nothing That Is: Millennial Cinema and the Blair Witch Controversies. Sarah L. Higley and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, eds. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004.

de Lauretis, Teresa. "Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema." In Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television. E. Deidre Pribram, ed. London: Verso, 1988.

Garber, Marjorie. "From Dietrich to Madonna: cross-gender icons." In Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader. Pam Cook and Philip Dodd, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

García Espinosa, Julio. "For an Imperfect Cinema." In New Latin American Cinema: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations. Vol. 1. Michael T. Martin, ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997.

Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás. "The Viewer's Dialectic." In New Latin American Cinema: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations. Vol. 1. Michael T. Martin, ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation." In Film and Theory: An Anthology. Robert Stam and Toby Miller, eds. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.

Hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze." In Robert Stam and Toby Miller, Eds. Film and Theory: An Anthology. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.

Jenkins, Henry. "'In My Weekend-Only World...': Reconsidering Fandom." In Film and Theory: An Anthology. Robert Stam and Toby Miller, eds. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.

Marshall, P. David. "The Cinematic Apparatus and the Construction of the Film Celebrity." In The Film Studies Reader. Graeme Turner, ed. London: Routledge, 2002.

Majer O'Sickey, Ingeborg. "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets (Or Does She?): Time and Desire in Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run*." Quarterly Review of Film and Video 19.2 (2002): 123-131.

Mayne, Judith. "Paradoxes of Spectatorship." In The Film Studies Reader. Graeme Turner, ed. London: Routledge, 2002.

Stam, Robert and Ella Habiba Shohat. "Film Theory and Spectatorship in the Age of the 'Posts.'" In Reinventing Film Studies. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, eds. London: Arnold, 2000.

Truffaut, François. Hitchcock. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967.