CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES COURSES – PAST COURSES

AY 2012-2013

Autumn 2012

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>C LIT 520</td>
<td>Methods &amp; Issues in Cinema Studies</td>
<td>J. Bean</td>
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This course is designed to give graduate students a basic grounding in the theory, history and criticism of cinema and media studies, and introduce them to central debates, topics, and methods in the field. The central objectives of the course include familiarizing class participants with the:

* theories most germane to film and media critics since the early 20th century
* methods and problems of textual analysis and interpretation of films
* representative cannon of films and related media texts from diverse historical periods
* historical and cultural paradigms as they relate to film and media studies (mass culture/modernity/nationalism/etc.)

In order to achieve these goals, this seminar meets twice a week. One session each week will be devoted primarily to discussion of theoretical, methodological and historical readings. The second weekly session will be devoted primarily to screening the “feature” film(s) of the week, although the screening session will often begin with a series of clips or excerpts from an array of films, and these presentations will foster techniques for assessing and teaching film’s many formal and stylistic registers: editing, cinematography, sound, mise-en-scene, etc, in a historical context. Throughout the quarter, your reading materials will mention films or media products that we do not have the opportunity to watch together. I encourage you to view as many of these titles on your own as time allows, so as to engage more specifically with the theories under discussion, and to broaden your knowledge of film and media history more generally.

Since another of our overarching goals is to encourage a professional relationship to the field of cinema and media studies, the quarter will end (last week of class) with a "course conference" in which each member will present a 20-minute presentation of their research to that point. Presentations will be organized into respective panels, and q&a will follow each respective panel. Participants will then revise and expand their conference paper for the final seminar paper.

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<tr>
<td>C LIT 596</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit Chinese Cinema</td>
<td>Y. Braester</td>
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The seminar is designed as a crash course for graduate students who wish to get familiar with the discipline of Chinese cinema, for future research and teaching, and provides an introduction to the history, critical practices and current scholarship of Chinese film.

Class discussions will be based on a weekly assignment of one book and two films. Topics covered include: early cinema; the Cultural Revolution; the Fifth Generation; Urban Cinema; Documentary; Taiwanese cinema; Hong Kong cinema.
C LIT 497 | Special Topics in Cinema Studies | Early Russian and Soviet Film | G. Diment
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The course will examine early Jewish films (in Yiddish or Russian) produced in tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and Poland in the span of 25 years, from the very beginning of silent film to the early years of sound film, from the twilight years of Russian monarchy (and the notorious Pale of Settlement) through Bolshevik Revolution and up to the spread of Hitlerism in Europe. No prerequisites. All reading and discussions will be in English. All films have English intertitles or subtitles.


C LIT 596 | Special Studies in Comp Lit | German Documentary in a Global Context | E. Ames
---|---|---|---
A survey of the genre and the particular forms it has taken in Germany from 1895 to the present, this course will focus on key examples, including cinematic precursors and experimental forms as well as authored films by Walter Ruttmann, Leni Riefenstahl, Romuald Karmakar, Harun Farocki, and Werner Herzog. These examples will in turn be compared with films from Britain, France, Denmark, Japan, Israel, the US, and the USSR. Materials to be discussed will include (but are not restricted to): actualities, travelogues, avant-garde films, Kulturfilme, party-rally films, Holocaust documentaries, long-term studies, observational films (direct cinema and cinéma vérité), and essay films. While the course is organized as a survey, discussions and assignments will concentrate on developing strategies of formal analysis as well as on framing new research questions. Documentary is not a fiction like (or unlike) any other. It has a history of its own, and one that is worth exploring—especially as documentary forms become increasingly central to media cultures across the board. In English.

COM 519 | Visual Cultural Studies Methods | R. Joseph
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At the center of visual cultural studies is what is often called a “visual event.” A visual event encompasses the entire network of subjects and institutions which make a visual image possible and meaningful. The phrase is useful because it describes not only a static image but the production, transmission, and reception of that image. This course will give students multiple methods to understand visual meaning. We will examine how we learn to interpret images, the role of technology, in the broadest sense of the word, in producing and disseminating those images, and how we account for context in understanding the impact of those images.

Methods and Theories
The relatively new field of visual culture was formed in response to what many felt was a limiting disciplinary distinction between different kinds of visual analysis. As a result, what we might now term as visual culture studies draws from multiple fields including art history, comparative literature, women and gender studies, ethnic studies, sociology, and, of course, communication. Rather than impose a false coherence to the field, then, this course will introduce students to the heterogeneity of both the object studied and the methodological approaches to those objects.

The course will be organized around two axes, the first is genre (fine art, photography, film, cyberspace) and the second is interpretive approach (semiotics, marxism, psychology, feminism, cultural studies, and post-colonial studies). Students will also develop their own writing skills by examining the structure of the arguments they read. How do the critic’s frame their topic? How do they justify their approach? What sorts of evidence do they use? How effective is their argument?
For each of the two week segments, students will study various approaches to these forms of visual culture, discuss why certain methods have become dominant, explore alternative methods, and apply a method. Students will then choose a particular method or combination of methods for a final extended analysis due at the end of class.

**Course Objectives**
By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Identify several major methodological approaches to visual cultural analysis
- Demonstrate your familiarity with the fundamental theories used in the field
- Analyze a visual event using multiple methods
- Develop your own argument and present it in written and oral form
- Research and understand the issues in specific subfields of visual culture on your own

### Spring 2013

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<tr>
<td>C LIT 497</td>
<td>Special Topics in Cinema Studies</td>
<td>J. Alaniz</td>
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<td>C LIT 596 A</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit</td>
<td>J. Tweedie</td>
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This course examines the origins and development of animated film in Russia and the former Soviet sphere (especially Czechoslovakia, Poland and Estonia). Long considered a children’s medium, animation served as a vehicle for state propaganda but also – throughout its history in these closed, authoritarian societies – for politicized and even critical expression. More broadly, the course examines how popular culture interacts, reinforces and at times resists hegemonic structures. Artists covered include Władysław Starewicz, Nikolai Khodataev, Jan Švankmajer, Yurii Norstein, Fyodor Khitruk, Vyacheslav Kotenochkin and Yurii Kulakov. All films and readings in English translation.

This course will focus on three key topics in contemporary film and media theory. The first section of the course will examine the recent revival of interest in the relationship between philosophy and cinema. Reading may include work by Stanley Cavell, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Rancière, and Slavoj Zizek. A second section will consider the role of archives and theories of the archive in recent cinema and media studies, with emphasis on both the collection and preservation of film and other images (that is, an archive viewed in the more technical sense of the term) and the documentary quality of moving images (that is, film and media serving as a form of historical object and testimony, as an archive in another sense). A third section will consider the challenges posed by new media to film studies, to philosophy, and to our understanding of the archive. Within all of these sections, the overarching goal of the course will be to study the extremes of film studies, from the abstractions of philosophy to the materiality of the archive and production conditions, and to introduce some of the diverse methods and perspectives at work in the discipline today.
### Autumn 2011

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<tr>
<td>C LIT 596</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit</td>
<td>Detective Narrative in Latin America: Novel into Film</td>
<td>C. Steele</td>
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An overview of the development of the detective novel in Mexico and Argentina, along with a comparison of film adaptations of the novels in question. We will examine the basic tenets of the detective genre and of film adaptations of literature, and will analyze how Mexican and Argentine authors and directors have adapted the U.S. hard-boiled crime novel to comment on Latin American society at various sociopolitical junctures over the past half century. The crimes addressed range from serial murders to political conspiracies and repression of dissidents; the authors’ approaches combine elements of psychoanalysis, Marxism, anti-imperialism, feminism, and the critique of neoliberalism.

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<td>C LIT 596</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit</td>
<td>Contemporary Film Theory</td>
<td>L. Mercer</td>
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This course will give students a theoretical grounding in the development of Spanish film history and familiarize them with major trends in Spanish cinema, from the silent era to the globalized present. We will focus particularly on the uneven processes of modernization that have affected Spanish filmmaking. Included in the course are films by directors such as Segundo de Chomon, Luis Bunuel, Salvador Dali, Juan Antonio Bardem, Luis Garcia Berlanga, Carlos Saura, Pedro Almodovar, Iciar Bollain, and Juan Jose Bigas Luna.

### Winter 2012

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<tr>
<td>C LIT 497</td>
<td>Special Topics in Cinema Studies</td>
<td>Russian Jewish Film</td>
<td>G. Diment</td>
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The course will examine early Jewish films (in Yiddish or Russian) produced in tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and Poland in the span of 25 years, from the very beginnings of silent film to the early years of sound film, from the twilight years of Russian monarchy (and the notorious Pale of Settlement) through Bolshevik Revolution and up to the spread of Hitlerism in Europe. No prerequisites. All readings and discussions will be in English. All films have English intertitles or subtitles.

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<td>C LIT 596</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit</td>
<td>Cinephilia: Cinematic Experience in Historical Context</td>
<td>Y. Braester</td>
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Histories of Cinema in the Digital Age — How has the history of film been rewritten in the past twenty years, especially through the cinematic medium itself? To what extent are these new histories the result of new technology — shooting in Digital Video, editing on computers distribution on VHS/VCD/DVD and P2P, and critical reception through online reviews and the blogosphere? To what extent is it because of political and ideological changes — the advent of globalization, the turn to post-socialism, and the rise of neoliberalism? To inquire into these questions, we will examine closely a number of films directly interested in the history of film, such as Jean-Luc Godard’s Histoire(s) du cinéma, Dan Geva’s Description of a Memory, Tsai Ming-liang’s Goodbye Dragon Inn and the omnibus film To Each His Cinema. The seminar is designed to coach graduate students through the various stages of a research project during the term.

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<td>C LIT 574</td>
<td>Special Studies in Comp Lit</td>
<td>Scandinavian Auteurs</td>
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Since the 1960s, auteur filmmaking has predominated as the standard of comparison in the production and reception of Scandinavian cinema. SCAND 470/570-C LIT 574 is a seminar devoted to studying notions of authorship as they are relevant to understanding Scandinavian cinema, and in particular the careers of one or
two Scandinavian auteurs. Students will develop an understanding of theories of film authorship, but also
develop an ability to apply their theoretical understanding to the study of Scandinavian film. In spring 2010, we
will focus our studies on the films of Aki Kaurismäki and Lars von Trier, the two most important and influential
Scandinavian auteurs since the 1980s.

C LIT 596  Special Studies in Comp Lit  Historiography  J. Bean

"Historiography and the Archive: Rethinking "American Cinema"

This course is, on one hand, a practicum in archival research. We will learn to utilize new digital databases, as
well as microfilm and multiple reference sources, in order to facilitate the course members' experience of
working with editors at the American Film Institute to write entries for the new AFI catalogue of post-1975 film.
This class, in short, will be linked to the AFI affiliate network.

At the same time, this course engages with the question of what it means to "write film history," and to trace
and challenge the historiographical procedures inaugurated with the discipline of history in the 19th century in
Western-European culture. To that end, readings will include recent humanistic inquiries into historical "meta-
narratives" (i.e. Haydn White/Michel Foucault), and will focus on how these broader reflections might enable us
to reconsider the history of U.S. cinema as something other than a "global Hollywood" positioned in opposition
to an aggregate of national cinemas.

Films and readings throughout the course will enable students to emerge with a broad grasp of key moments,
directors, genres, and debates over American cinema, from the inception of the U.S. film industry in the early
1910s, through the flourishing of a studio-era between 1920-1960, and on to the present.