Art of the Moving Image
Film and Media Studies (FMS) 20/FAH 0092/ILVS 0091
Fall 2015

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1.30pm-2.45pm, Tisch Library Media Room 304

Recitation/Screening: Mondays, 6pm-10pm, Tisch Library Media Room 304;
OR Wednesdays, 6pm-10pm, Tisch Library Media Room 304

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Course Description:

This course will begin with cinema, the first art of the moving image. We will study cinema's principal aesthetic features: its basic stylistic techniques, such as editing, cinematography, mise-en-scene, and sound, as well as its major narrative and non-narrative forms. We will watch a variety of films from the US and abroad that exemplify cinema's myriad forms and styles: mainstream and avant-garde, fiction and non-fiction, narrative and non-narrative, black-and-white and color, silent and sound. We will then consider the extent to which cinema's aesthetic features are shared by television, as well as what is artistically distinctive about TV. Theoretical concepts relevant to moving image art, principally genre, authorship, and character identification, will also be considered. Finally, we will examine debates about storytelling in interactive media such as video games.

No prior study of cinema or other moving image media is required.

Learning Objectives:

This course will acquaint students with the basic aesthetic features of the moving image, and the principal ways they can and have been used by practitioners. Although it will focus primarily on cinema, as the first artistic medium of the moving image, cinema established most of the conventions for using moving images that can be found in other media, including in advertising and journalism. Much of what you learn about cinema in this course will transfer to other moving image media, as we will see in the case of television, although we will also study the differences between film and TV.

You will learn:

• to identify and analyze the narrative and non-narrative structures that recur in moving-image works
• to identify and analyze the distinctive stylistic techniques of moving image works, such as editing and camera movement

• to be attuned to the aesthetic similarities and differences between moving image media, principally cinema and TV

• to be conversant with concepts used in the study of moving images, principally genre, authorship, and character identification

• to enjoy and appreciate moving image works more fully by becoming more aware of the creative choices of moving image artists and how they shape your experience

Media literacy requires the ability to identify and analyze the principal aesthetic features of moving images, which is why this is a required core course for Film and Media Studies students.

Assignments:

• A 2 page short paper, due on Trunk by 5pm on 9/18 (%15)

• A 3-4 page analysis of a clip due on Trunk by 5pm on 10/23 (%25)

• An in-class exam on 11/12 (%30)

• A 6-7 page final paper due on Trunk by 5pm on 12/13 (%30)

A failing grade in any assignment may result in a failing grade for the course. Consistent class participation will positively impact your grade.

The Turnitin electronic anti-plagiarism program may be used for written assignments.

You will do well in the assignments for this course if you watch the screenings attentively, do all the reading carefully, and practice using the concepts we cover outside of class.

Course Textbooks:


• Additional readings marked (X) must be downloaded from Trunk

Events:

There are many exciting film and media studies events this semester around campus, including the FMS launch event on October 30th to which you are all invited. I have listed the confirmed events that I know of on the syllabus. I expect you all to attend as many of these events as
possible. In particular, I ask that you view the exhibit Parallax which opens in the Tufts Art Gallery on September 10th, and attend the artist's talk by Shahzia Sikander in the Aidekman Arts Center at 6pm on October 15th, in preparation for Kristen Nassif (our TA)'s mini-lecture on moving image installation art in class on October 20th.

Schedule:

Week 1

9/8 Class: Introduction: Film as Art
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, Chapter 1

Part 1: Film Form

Screening 9/9: Shadow of a Doubt (Alfred Hitchcock, 1942, 108 min.)
The Killing (Stanley Kubrick, 1956, 85 min.)

9/10 Class: Film Form
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, Chapter 2; and pp. 334-336

Week 2

Screening 9/14: The Killing (Stanley Kubrick, 1956, 85 min.)
Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941, 119 min.)

9/15 Class: Narrative, Narration and Classical Hollywood Cinema
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 72-99; 466-469; 480-483

Screening 9/16: Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941, 119 min.)
High and Low (Akira Kurosawa, 1963, 143 min.)

9/17 Class: Narrative and Narration in Citizen Kane
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 99-110
Carroll, "Interpreting Citizen Kane" (X)

9/18: SHORT PAPER DUE BY 5PM ON TRUNK

Part 2: Film Style

Week 3

Screening 9/21: High and Low (Akira Kurosawa, 1963, 143 min.)
Three Kings (David O. Russell, 1999, 114 min.)

Class 9/22: Mise-En-Scene
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, Chapter 4
Version 2: September 10, 2015

Screening 9/23: Three Kings (David O. Russell, 1999, 114 min.)
The Red and the White (Miklos Jancso, 1967, 90 min.)

Class 9/24: Cinematography
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 160-195

Week 4

Screening 9/28: The Red and the White (Miklos Jancso, 1967, 90 min.)
Zero Dark Thirty (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012, 157 min.)

Class 9/29: The Mobile Frame and the Long Take
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 195-217

9/29, 6pm: Talk: Kelly Golnoush Niknejad on Iranian Media
(Anthropology Department)

Screening 9/30: Zero Dark Thirty (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012, 157 min.)
October (Sergei Eisenstein, 1929, 103 min.)

Class 10/1: Editing
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 218-255

Week 5

Screening: October (Sergei Eisenstein, 1929, 103 min.)
Raging Bull (Martin Scorsese, 1980, 129 min.)

Class 10/6: Alternatives to Continuity Editing
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 255-265; 476-479
Eisenstein, "The Dramaturgy of Film Form" (X)

Screening 10/7: Raging Bull (Martin Scorsese, 1980, 129 min.)
The Bicycle Thieves (Vittorio de Sica, 1948, 93 min.)

Class 10/8: Sound; Stylistic Analysis
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, Chapters 7 and 8

Part 3: Alternative Film Forms

Week 6

Screening: The Bicycle Thieves (Vittorio de Sica, 1948, 93 min.)
Wild Strawberries (Ingmar Bergman, 1957, 90 min.)
Class 10/13: Art Cinema
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 483-85
Bazin, "Bicycle Thief" (X)

Screening 10/14: Wild Strawberries (Ingmar Bergman, 1957, 90 min.)
Ballet Mecanique (Fernand Leger and Dudley Murphy, 1924, 14 min.)
Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren, 1943, 18 min.)

Class 10/15: Art Cinema
Read: Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice" (X)

10/15, 6:00-7:30pm: Talk: An evening with Shahzia Sikander Alumni Lounge,
Aidekman Arts Center

Week 7

Screening: Ballet Mecanique (Fernand Leger and Dudley Murphy, 1924, 14 min.)
Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren, 1943, 18 min.)
Roger & Me (Michael Moore, 1989, 91 min.)

Class 10/20: Experimental Film/Moving Image Installation
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 369-386
Leger, "The Machine Aesthetic" (X)

Screening 10/21: Roger & Me (Michael Moore, 1989, 91 min.)
The Big Bang Theory S1E6 (2007)
NCIS S1E1 (2003)

Class 10/22: Documentary
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 350-369
Jacobson, "Michael & Me" (X)

10/23: CLIP ANALYSIS DUE BY 5PM ON TRUNK

Part 4: Form and Style in Television

Week 8

Screening 10/26: The Big Bang Theory S1E6 (2007)
NCIS S1E1 (2003)
The Sopranos S2E13 (2000)
The Wire S1E1 (2002)

Class 10/27: Narrative in Television
Version 2: September 10, 2015

Read: Butler, "An Introduction to Television Structures and Systems" and "Narrative Structure: Television Stories" (X)

The Wire S1E1 (2002)
Miami Vice S1E4 and S1E5 (1984)

Class 10/29: "Art TV"?
Read: Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television" (X)

10/30, 12pm-7pm: FMS Launch Event: featuring workshops for students, film screenings, a talk by Heather Hendershot, professor of film and media at MIT, and a reception

Week 9

Screening: Miami Vice S1E4 and S1E5 (1984)
True Detective S1E1 (2014)
An American Family S1E1 (1971)

Class 11/3: Television Style
Read: Butler, "An Introduction to Television Style" and "Stylistic Crossover in the Network Era: From Film to Television" (X)

11/3: Talk: "Meta-Games: From Video Art to Video Games," Assistant Professor of Art History and Media Studies, Northeastern University (in Department of Art and Art History, 11 Talbot Avenue)

11/4: Film Screening: Raise the Roof (Yari & Cary Wolinsky, 85 min., 2015), Aidekman Arts Center

Class 11/5: Nonnarrative Television
Reading: Butler, "Beyond and Beside Narrative Structure" and "The Television Commercial" (X)

Week 10

Screening 11/9: NO SCREENING: REVIEW SESSION

Class 11/10: NO CLASS: WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

Class 11/12: EXAM
Part 5: Genre, Authorship and Character Identification in Film and TV

Week 11


Class 11/17: Genre in Film: Comedian Comedy Read: Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, pp. 328-339 Carroll, "Notes on the Sight Gag" (X)


Class 11/19: Genre in TV: Situation Comedy Read: Mills, "Sitcom and Genre" (X)

Week 12


Class 11/24: Authorship in Film: Hitchcock Read: Yacowar, "Hitchcock's Imagery and Art" (X) Allen, "Hitchcock and Narrative Suspense" (X)

Class 11/26: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13


12/1 Class: Authorship in Film: Hitchcock Read: Livingston, "Cinematic Authorship" (X) Gaut, "Film, Authorship, and Collaboration" (X)

12/1: Talk: Sarah Keller, professor of art, UMass Boston, on Maya Deren (in Department of Art and Art History, 11 Talbot Avenue)
Version 2: September 10, 2015


12/3 Class: Authorship in TV
Read: Leitch, "The Outer Circle: Hitchcock on Television" (X) Newman and Levine, "The Showrunner as Auteur" (X)

Week 14


12/8 Class: Identification with Characters in Film and TV
Read: Smith, "Gangsters, Cannibals, Aesthetes, or Apparently Perverse Allegiances" (X) Blanchet and Bruun Vaage, "Don, Peggy, and Other Fictional Friends? Engaging with Characters in Television Series" (X)

Part 6: Interactive Narrative and Authorship?

Screening 12/9: NO SCREENING

12/10 Class: Interactive Narrative and Authorship?
Read: Juul, "Games Telling Stories?" (available on-line at http://gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/) Gaut, "Interactive Narration" and "Interactivity and Authorship" (X)

12/13: FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5PM ON TRUNK

READINGS: Please read the reading assignment(s) before the class for which it is assigned.

SCREENINGS: play a central role in this class, and you are required to attend one screening per week and stay throughout. It is crucial, when studying any art, to experience the art in the way it was supposed to be experienced. Most movies are supposed to be experienced in a darkened auditorium projected on a large screen by a high-quality projector with high quality sound. Due to the larger size of modern TV screens, many TV programs have become more "cinematic" and are also best experienced in a movie theater.

WEDNESDAY SCREENINGS: If you attend the Wednesday recitation/screening, the films/TV shows listed below will not be screened. Copies of them are on reserve in the library for you to view independently before they are discussed in class:

True Detective S1E1 (2014) for class on 11/3
An American Family S1E1 (1971) for class on 11/5
Strangers on a Train (Alfred Hitchcock, 1951, 101 min.) for class on 11/24
Rear Window (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954, 115 min.) for class on 12/1
Mad Men S4E7 (2010) for class on 12/8

WARNING: AS YOU KNOW, MANY FILMS, TV SHOWS, AND OTHER MOVING IMAGE WORKS CONTAIN GRAPHIC SCENES OF PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND OTHER KINDS OF VIOLENCE, AND THEY ADDRESS DISTURBING SUBJECT MATTER. THIS IS TRUE OF SOME OF THE MOVING IMAGE WORKS WE WILL SEE IN THIS COURSE. ALTHOUGH NONE CONTAIN MORE VIOLENCE AND DISTURBING MATERIAL THAN CAN ROUTINELY BE VIEWED AT THE CINEMA OR ON TV, IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU CANNOT WATCH SUCH MATERIAL FOR PERSONAL OR OTHER REASONS, THIS COURSE IS NOT FOR YOU.

POLICIES:

ATTENDANCE: I expect you to attend every class and screening, and will take attendance. If you have to miss class or screening, please let me know. With the third absence, excused or not, I will become concerned and will write to you and your academic advisor. Any absence thereafter will negatively impact your grade, unless you are experiencing a genuine emergency. If you experience any problems that prevent you from attending class or screening, please come and see me.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: I do not permit the use of computers or other electronic devices in class or screening. There is now a considerable body of evidence that, even with the wireless connection switched off, the use of computers impairs one's ability to remember the material covered in class. ("See The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, Psychological Science 25, no. 6, June 2014.) I will post PDFs of the lecture slides on TRUNK after each lecture. Please put away all electronic devices before class and screening. If you are entitled to an accommodation for electronic devices, please let me know.

EMAILS: I will often contact you through your Tufts email, so please ensure you access it at least once per day. I will answer your emails during normal working hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm). If you need to contact me after hours due to a genuine emergency (medical, familial, etc.), please put the word EMERGENCY in the subject line.

PLEASE DO NOT EAT IN CLASS OR SCREENING!

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism consists of representing the ideas or writing of someone else as your own. It is a serious offense and may result in you being asked to leave the university. ALWAYS cite any idea or writing that is not yours. I may use the Turnitin electronic anti-plagiarism program when grading your assignments.