

FA 349

FILM THEORY

Instructor: Tuba AY

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Lectures: Thursdays 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm at JF 108

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to major developments in film theory and criticism and aims to develop an advanced understanding of film as a complex cultural medium through the discussion of classic and contemporary theoretical and critical approaches influenced by aesthetics, phenomenology, narratology, linguistics, psychoanalysis and theories of subjectivity and difference.

Policies:

- **Attendance is strictly required and failure to attend lectures more than 5 times will result in a final grade of F.** Excused absences are those that have been discussed with me ahead of time or for which you can provide reasonable documentation. In addition, class participation and excellent attendance can make a difference if student is hovering between two grades. **Mind that coming in late is disruptive, so be on time.**
- Before class meetings, you are required to watch the selected film of the week on your own. If you can't find the movie please contact me earlier.
- You are required to read the material assigned on the syllabus in order to fully understand the weekly lecture and to prepare for the class discussions. **Check the Moodle course page often as there may be additional resources to read or to watch.**
- Make-up exams are only possible for medical reasons and will be administered when a proper medical documentation is submitted by the student in order to justify his/her absence. Do not demand to take a make-up exam if your grades are low due to either midterm or final exam.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense, which can result in a failing grade for the class. **Acknowledge all reading and research sources with footnotes and use quotation marks for your citations as the guide in your paper handout indicates. Otherwise, the paper you submitted will not be graded.**
- If you want to get in touch with me, best way is by e-mail. If you need to discuss something with me at greater length, you can meet with me by appointment.

Required Texts:

Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*, 7th edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Recommended Books:

Thomas Elsaesser & Malte Hagener, *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*, New York: Routledge, 2010.

Richard Rushton and Gary Bettinson, *What is Film Theory?: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates*, Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill: Open University Press, 2010.

Apart from the compulsory readings from the assigned book, you are required to read some additional texts. **You can find your readings on the Moodle course page** aligned according to the topics listed below.

Course Requirements and Grading System:

Midterm	%30
Paper	%40
Final Exam	%30

The paper mentioned above will be graded as a substitute for the second midterm and should be submitted at its designated due date to qualify for full credit. **Papers received later than due date will be penalized one letter grade per day. Late submissions after three days of its due will not be accepted.** Paper due date will be notified in class and you will be given a detailed handout regarding the subject of your paper along with some important rules of citation that will prevent you from being condemned of plagiarism by the Turnitin system.

WEEK 1 Introduction

WEEK 2 **Classical Film Theory –REALISM**

Readings:

Siegfried Kracauer, 'Basic Concepts', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 147-158.

Siegfried Kracauer, 'The Establishment of Physical Existence', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 262-272.

André Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 159-163.

André Bazin, 'The Myth of Total Cinema', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 163-166.

Rudolf Arnheim, 'The Complete Film', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 167-170.

Rudolf Arnheim, 'Film and Reality', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 282-286.

Recommended Reading:

André Bazin, 'De Sica: Matteur-en-scène', *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th edition, pp. 38-42.

Film: *Umberto D* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952)

WEEK 3

Classical Film Theory – FORMALISM: The Aesthetics of Montage

Readings:

Vsevolod Pudovkin, 'On Editing', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 7-12.

Sergei Eisenstein, 'Beyond the Shot', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 13-24.

Sergei Eisenstein, 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 24-40.

Béla Balász, 'The Close-up', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 273-275.

Béla Balász, 'The Face of Man', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 275-281.

Film: *Stachka*, aka "Strike" (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)

WEEK 4-5

The Textual System: SEMIOTICS and STRUCTURALISM

Readings:

Christian Metz, 'Some Points in the Semiotics of the Cinema', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 65-71.

Christian Metz, 'Problems of Denotation in the Fiction Film', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 71-77.

Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', *Mythologies*, New York: Noonday Press, 1972, pp. 109-159.

Film: *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1977)

WEEK 6

Auteur Theory

Readings:

Andrew Sarris, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 451-454.

Peter Wollen, 'The Auteur Theory', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 455-470.

Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image, Music, Text*, Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, pp. 142-148.

Film: *Zelig* (Woody Allen, 1983)

WEEK 7

Genre Theory

Readings:

Rick Altman, 'A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 552-563.

Thomas Schatz, 'Film Genre and Genre Film', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 564-575.

Robin Wood, 'Ideology, Genre, Auteur', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 592-601.

Recommended Reading:

Frank Krutnik, 'Genre and the Problem of Film Noir', *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity*, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 15-29.

Films: *Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill, 1969)

Midterm Exam!

WEEK 8 & 10 **Psychoanalysis**

Readings:

Christian Metz, 'Identification, Mirror', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 694-701.

Christian Metz, 'The Passion for Perceiving', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 701-705.

Christian Metz, 'Disavowal, Fetishism', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 705-710.

Film: *Lost Highway* (David Lynch, 1997)

WEEK 9 Spring Break

WEEK 11 **Screen Theory – The Apparatus: The Spectator's Look and SUTURE**

Readings:

Jean-Louis Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 171-188.

Jean-Louis Baudry, 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus', *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th edition, pp. 302-312.

Daniel Dayan, 'The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 106-117.

WEEK 12 **FEMINISM: The Spectator and Sexual Difference**

Readings:

Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 711- 722.

Cynthia A. Freeland, 'Feminist Frameworks for Horror Films', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 627-648.

Mary Ann Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator', *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th edition, pp. 758- 772.

Recommended Reading:

Tania Modleski, 'The Master's Dollhouse: *Rear Window*', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 723-735.

Film: *Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes, 1975)

WEEK 13 **Narrative Studies in Film: The Cinematic Excess**

Readings:

Kristin Thompson, 'The Concept of Cinematic Excess', *Film Theory and Criticism*, 6th edition, pp. 513-524.

Jeffrey Sconce, 'Trashing the Academy: Taste, Excess, and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style', *Film Theory and Criticism*, 6th edition, pp. 534-554.

Linda Williams, 'Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess', *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 602-616.

Film: *Audition* (Takashi Miike, 1999)

WEEK 14 Final discussions