

Spring 2017: FILM 480/580 CONTEMPORARY FILM THEORY

Tuesday and Thursday 4:00-5:50
Lincoln Hall 211

Instructor: Dr. Dave Colangelo
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12-1pm

Course Description:

A survey of film theory and criticism from the 1960s to the present day. Students are introduced to key concepts and major figures from Structuralism, Semiotics, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, transnational perspectives, Digital and Media theory, and Posthumanism. We will study film as a language, as a psychological and ideological apparatus, and as a combination of objects and ideas that continue to migrate and transform, and we will do so in a variety of ways: through short assignments, group and individual presentations, and written essays.

Course Objectives (KSA = Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical film theories to a variety of films and cinematic situations (K, S)
2. Formulate arguments about cinema and film in class discussions, assignments, presentations, and papers (K, S)
3. Discuss the functions and effects of film and cinema, both in content and form, and their relationship to identity, agency, and social justice (A)

Required Readings:

- Online readings; additional readings and screenings included with notice.

Bibliography

Baudry, J. L. (1974). Ideological effects of the basic cinematographic apparatus. *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Winter. 1974-1975), P. 39-47.

Casetti, Francesco. *The Lumière Galaxy : Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Web. Film and culture; Film and culture.

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Higson, A. (2010). "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema." *Cinema and nation*. Eds. Hjort, M., & MacKenzie, S. London: Routledge.

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hooks, b. (2015). *Black looks : Race and representation*. New York: Routledge.

Johnston, C. (1973). "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema" in Claire Johnston (ed.), *Notes on Women's Cinema*, London: Society for Education in Film and Television, reprinted in: Sue Thornham (ed.), *Feminist Film Theory. A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press 1999, pp. 31–40.

Manlove, C. T. (2007). Visual "Drive" and Cinematic Narrative: Reading Gaze Theory in Lacan, Hitchcock, and Mulvey. *Cinema Journal*, 46(3), 83-108.

Naficy, Hamid. (2001). *An Accented Cinema : Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Metz, C. (1981). *The imaginary signifier: Psychoanalysis and the cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism : Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 1999: 833-44.

Rodowick, D. N. (2007). *The virtual life of film*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.08243>

Shohat, E. (1997). "Framing Post-Third-Worldist Culture: Gender and Nation in Middle Eastern/North African Film and Video. CUNY-Graduate Center. <https://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v1i1/SHOHAT.HTM>

Stam, Robert. (2000). *Film Theory : An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Wolfe, Cary. (2011). *What Is Posthumanism?* 3. Minneapolis, Minn: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Wollen, P. (2007). On Gaze Theory. *New Left Review*, (44), 91-106.

Assignments:

1. Discussion and Regular Participation (20%) – every day!
Discussion is central to this course. You must come prepared to class every week. This means that you should have completed all of the readings BEFORE the first class of the week. You should be ready to listen attentively to your classmates' presentations and participate in discussions. You are also required to be present during screenings and participate in any discussions or activities on the days of our screenings.
2. Journals (40% - 2.5% x 8 weeks + 20% for portfolio)
For discussion each week (starting Week 2), you will prepare a typed, individual journal about the week's assigned readings (750 words). The journals should be more formal than notes or an outline, but do not need to be as formal as an essay. They are due online on D2L by Tuesday, 4 PM each week. You are required to print enough copies to be shared in a small group in class on Tuesdays. I will provide comments for you on D2L, and comments will be provided by your fellow classmates. You are required to revise and resubmit your journals at the end of the term for grading as a portfolio.
3. Final Essay Presentation (10%) – week 10, as assigned
Prepare and deliver a five-minute presentation in which you outline your thesis, your main points, your evidence for these points, and your analysis. After your presentation, we will have five minutes of discussion so that we can all provide you with feedback and encouragement.
4. Final Essay (30%) – due during finals week, TBD
The essay is 3000-3500 words typed with one-inch margins, double-spaced. Use MLA style. Only use assigned readings from the class. Your essay should discuss one specific topic in relation to one film of your choice. You do not need to include a formal analysis of films or cinematic situations, but such background analysis might help you to focus your ideas. Make sure to provide specific evidence from the readings and from the films and cinematic situations, not generalized comments.

Grading Standards:

A 93-100

B- 80-82

D+ 67-69

A- 90-92

C+ 77-79

D 63-66

B+ 87-89
B 83-86

C 73-76
C- 70-72

D- 60-62
F 0-59

Advising

Advising is essential to your success as a Film Major or Minor. Meeting with your advisor will help to make sure that you are making timely progress towards your degree, provide you with a valuable connection, and increase your opportunities to participate in school activities and in professional film and television opportunities, such as internships. See the school website for all advising information.

Schedule

Course schedule and reading is subject to change. You will be notified in advance if/when such changes occur. Be sure to check the course website (D2L) and your school email account for updates!

Week 1

Structures and Systems

April 4th and 6th

TUESDAY: Class Introduction

THURSDAY: Journal Discussion (Example by Professor)

- Metz, selections from "The Imaginary Signifier"
- Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus"

Week 2

Structures and Systems?

April 11th and 13th

TUESDAY:

- NO CLASS!
- Watch on your own: *Solaris* (1972) + viewing questions will be posted
- <http://psu.kanopystreaming.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/video/solaris>

THURSDAY:

- Deleuze, "Recapitulations of Images and Signs"
- Stam, "Semiotics Revisited"
- Stam, "Just in Time: The Impact of Deleuze"

Week 3

Not All Spectators are Created the Same

April 18th and 20th

TUESDAY:

- Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
- Manlove, Clifford T. "Visual "Drive" and Cinematic Narrative: Reading Gaze Theory in Lacan, Hitchcock, and Mulvey." *Cinema Journal*, 46, Number 3, Spring 2007.

THURSDAY:

- Screening, Hitchcock, *Rear Window* (1954)

Week 4

Hello, Not all Spectators are Created the Same

April 25th and 27th

TUESDAY:

- hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators"
- Stam, "The Coming Out of Queer Theory"
- Stam, "Multiculturalism, Race, and Representation"

THURSDAY:

- Cultural Analysis
- Screening TBD

Week 5

Gender and Nation

May 2nd and 4th

TUESDAY:

- Johnston, "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema"
- Higson, "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema"

THURSDAY:

- Screening TBD

Week 6

Transnational Perspectives

May 9th and 11th

TUESDAY:

- Hamid Naficy, "Situating Accented Cinema"
- Ella Shohat, "Post-Third-Worldist Culture"

THURSDAY:

- Screening TBD
- Final Essay Working Session

Week 7

Cinematic Relocations and Expansions: Cinema as Idea

May 16th and 18th

TUESDAY:

- Francesco Casetti, "Relocations"
- Dave Colangelo, "An Expanded Perceptual Laboratory: The Cinematic Effects of Superimposition, Montage, and Apparatus/Dispositif in Public Art."

THURSDAY:

- Activity: cinematic relocations

Week 8

Dissecting the Body of Film: The Digital Life of Film

May 23rd and 25th

TUESDAY:

- Rodowick, D.N. Selection from "A New Landscape (Without Image)." *The Virtual Life of Film*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007.
- Colangelo. "Hitchcock, Film Studies, and New Media"

THURSDAY:

- Activity: Analyzing film with film

Week 9

Stepping down from the pedestal: Posthumanism

May 30th and June 1st

TUESDAY:

- Wolfe, "What is Posthumanism?"
- Hauskeller et. al, "Posthumanism in Film and Television"

THURSDAY:

- Screening *Leviathan* (2012)

Week 10

Final Essay Presentation

June 6th and June 8th

TUESDAY: Group #1

THURSDAY: Group #2

Journal Portfolios Due

FINALS WEEK

Final Essay Due (DATE TBD)

University and Course Policies

- ❖ Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the Dean of Students in accordance with Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility, Procedures for Complaints of Academic Dishonesty. See <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode.html>.
- ❖ Requirements of this class may include class meetings, assignments and/or performances that will be held off-campus. Students/participants will provide his/her own method of transportation to the off-campus location, UNLESS the department arranges for van/bus transportation as part of the particular trip/event/activity

- ❖ Any student who, because of religious beliefs, is unable to attend classes on a particular day shall be excused from attendance requirements and from any examination or other assignment on that day. The student shall make up the examination or other assignment missed because of the absence. Students should make arrangements with their instructors prior to the holy day.
- ❖ Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities
PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <http://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
 - Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
 - Please be aware that the accessible tables or chairs in the room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not useable.
 - For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<http://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.
- ❖ As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find [a list](#) of those individuals. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module [Creating a Safe Campus](#) in your D2L.