

# Introduction to Film: Theory and Criticism

## ENG 3115-16HE

Associate Professor Barbara Mennel

Office Hours: M 4:00pm-6:00pm, W 10:30-11:30am, and by appointment

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Meeting times: Class meeting: M 7-8 and W 7 in TUR 2322

Screening: T E1-E3 (beginning at 7:20pm) (attendance required)

Room: TUR 2322

### Course description and objectives:

This course introduces students to the principal theoretical and critical issues raised by the first century of the cinema. We will cover the main theoretical strands in the history of film, with a particular emphasis on contemporary filmmaking. We will study global cinema through close visual analysis of individual films, stressing the historical and international diversity of cinematic approaches and styles. At the same time, we will study historical and contemporary critical writing on film. We will cover issues, such as viewer identification, ideology, and cultural context, including national cinemas, gender, sexuality, phenomenology, trauma studies, and postcolonial theory. The midterm will reflect theoretical ground covered in class and the final assignment will be a research paper. Active participation in class discussion is required.

### Required Reading:

Books:

Andrew, J. Dudley. *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Braudy, Leo and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory & Criticism*. Seventh Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Elsaesser, Thomas and Malte Hagener. *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. New York City: Routledge, 2010.

### Grading:

Attendance	5%
Participation	5%
Assignment for Film Studies Symposium	10%
Reading Responses (week 5-14)	20%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Paper	30%

**Dates:**Exam **IN CLASS**

Week 8, Monday, February 22

Final Paper **CANVAS UPLOAD**

Week 17, Wednesday, April 27

**Grading Scale:**

A	94-100	940-1000
A-	90-93	900-939
B+	87-89	870-899
B	83-86	830-869
B-	80-82	800-829
C+	77-79	770-799
C	73-76	730-769
C-	70-72	700-729
D+	67-69	670-699
D	63-66	630-669
D-	60-62	600-629
F	0-59	000-599

**General note on grades, gradebook, and canvas:**

I keep gradebook through canvas, where you can access your individual grades throughout the semester. I keep track in a separate document of all excused absences, as excused absences appear in canvas as attended. Your final grade will be mathematically calculated in canvas. I do not adjust grades to the next higher grade, no matter how small the percentage and I do not allow for additional work for you to reach your desired grade. During the semester, you may at any time approach me about your grades, e.g. regarding any accounting or computing error or how to improve your performance. However, once class has ended and you have submitted all your work, I will not discuss any possibility to improve or change your grade because you are unhappy with your final grade. Once you have received your grade on ISIS, I am happy to meet with you and discuss your final paper. Should you want to contest any grade after meeting with me, you should feel free to contact the undergraduate coordinator.

**General note on sensitive material:**

Few of the earlier films, in particular John Ford's 1939 *Stagecoach*, are racist and sexist, while a few of the later films, in particular *Halloween*, *Timbuktu*, and *I am from Titov Veles*, include scenes of (sexual) violence that could be disturbing to some students. If you are personally concerned about the latter, you can either watch the film on your own and fast forward or skip disturbing scenes or watch a different film that is mentioned in the reading of that week. You could drop me a line, so that I do not call on you. Such a substitution would not affect your grade.

**Attendance:**

Attendance in class and at the screenings is mandatory. I take attendance at the class meetings. After drop/add, every class meeting counts for 2 points and any unexcused

absence from class receives 0 points. Any late attendance or early departure without excuse receives 1 point. It is your responsibility to let me know, if you have arrived late to class, to contact me if you have to miss class with an acceptable excuse, and to show me documentation for excused absences as soon as possible, and to make up the material covered in class, which includes viewing the films you have missed and getting notes from class discussion. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate, court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena), and the twelve-day rule: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> You will receive full points for an excused absence. Absence for religious reason do not require written documentation, but you should let me know that you will miss or have missed class for that reason so that I can give you the 2 points for attendance.

### **Oral participation:**

Your oral participation grade reflects the quality and quantity of your contributions to the class, including the productive engagement with your classmates. I will give you your first oral participation grade when I grade your exam. The grade is subject to change pending your performance the rest of the semester. However, I provide you with the grade at mid-semester, so that you are aware of how I assess your performance, in case you want to improve.

### **Assignments and Exams:**

#### **1. Group work on Film Studies Symposium**

On Friday, January 29-30, a Film Studies Symposium will take place at the Harn Museum, with a keynote by a film studies scholar and presentations by PhD students in the Film Studies track of the English Department. Your attendance is required to the degree that you are able to do so. In other words, I will not downgrade you, if you are unable to attend. However, in order to enhance your participation, I have organized the first assignment around your attendance of the symposium. You will select one of the seven presentation and form groups of five to prepare for the talk. The screening of that week will be dedicated time for the group to view the film and the Wednesday session of that week will be dedicated to group work. The questions are under the assignment in canvas. A 250-word essay is due before the start of the symposium, on which the grade will be based. While I cannot require that you attend the symposium, I would appreciate if those who cannot attend will let me know in advance.

#### **2. Reading Responses**

10 reading responses (worth 20 pts each) are due for one reading per week by 5:00pm the day before class (Sunday, 5:00pm for Monday class and Tuesday, 5:00pm for Wednesday class) via email. These are due for week 5-14. Please respond to the

questions in canvas and upload to canvas. These are short assignments, but they might require the kind of research that you should always do when you do close readings of theoretical texts. Late assignments will only be accepted for acceptable excuse according to UF guidelines with documentation (see above). Otherwise you will receive 0 points.

### 3. Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be an in-class, hand-written, closed-book exam. You will need a blue book and you may have one page of typed or hand-written back-and-front notes. You will receive a choice of questions. The midterm exam covers the material up to week 8. It will receive a letter grade. Make-up exams are only given for absence with doctor's notes or other UF acceptable excuses with written documentation.

### 4. Final Paper

The final paper requires that you discuss one film that we have not seen in class in the context of one or several theoretical or critical approaches in film studies. You do not need to use outside sources beyond familiarity with the context in which the film has previously been discussed. The required length is 6-8 pages. The paper will be uploaded to canvas.

Should you experience extenuating circumstances beyond your control that prevent you from handing in your final paper on time, you need to contact me before the deadline with official documentation and negotiate an appropriate and realistic date for submission. If you are unable to complete the course in time for me to grade your final paper and calculate your final grade before final grades are due, we need to sign a contract for an incomplete, which includes documentation of your extenuating circumstances (most likely a doctor's note). These are university regulations. I am unable to give an incomplete without completing this paperwork, which requires your signature and thus your presence.

**Important: If you ever have to submit a copy of your assignment electronically, please submit it in a word document. Consider your assignment as submitted, the moment you receive an email from me that confirms that I have been able to open your attachment and print out your paper. If you do not receive this email, consider the status of your assignment as not submitted.**

### Plagiarism and Cheating:

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dsoufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of the intellectual works of others, including published and unpublished material from the web or friends. I prosecute plagiarism and cheating to the fullest extent possible at UF, the minimum of which is that you will fail this class and receive the letter grade F for this course. Per University policy, I will report all allegations of academic misconduct to the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) in the Dean of Students Office.

**Graded and Submitted Materials:**

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned work until they have received their final grades on ISIS. Should the need for a review of the grade arise, it is the student's responsibility to have and make available all returned assignments and quizzes, as well as all documentation for acceptable absences.

**Special Dispensations:**

If you have a learning disability, hardship, or other dispensation approved by the Office of Student Affairs, please meet with me to discuss your requirements as early in the term as possible. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodation for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Technology Use in Class:**

I allow the use of electronic devices in the classroom. Should I see that you use your electronic device at any point during class time for any activity not related to the course materials or note-taking on this course, your use of individual electronic media will be banned for the rest of the semester and you will count as absent that day.

**Statement on Harassment:**

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sexual, racial, ethnic, gender, and religious discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguie/studentconductcodephp#s4041>

**A Note on Religious Holidays:**

Students who belong to a religious community are not required to attend classes on their religious holidays. Please let me know, so that I can give you credit for that missed day.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

## Week 1

Tuesday, January 5

No screening

Wednesday, January 6

What is Theory?

## Week 2

Monday, January 11

Read: "Preface," "Introduction," "The Formative Tradition," "Hugo Munsterberg," "Rudolf Arnheim," "Sergei Eisenstein," in *Major Film Theories*, v-viii, 3-75 (54).

Tuesday, January 12

Screening: Sergei Eisenstein. *Ivan the Terrible* Part 1 (1945)

Wednesday, January 13

Read: "Bela Balazs and the Tradition of Formalism," in *Major Film Theories*, 76-101. (34)

## Week 3

Monday, January 18

No Class: Martin Luther King Day

Tuesday, January 19

Screening: Luchino Visconti. *La Terra Trema* (1948) **(160 minutes!)**

Wednesday, January 20

Read: "Realist Film Theory," "Siegfried Kracauer," "André Bazin" in *Major Film Theories*, 103-178. (75)

## Week 4

Monday, January 25

Read: "Contemporary French Film Theory: Jean Mitry, Christian Metz and the Semiology of the Cinema," and "The Challenge of Phenomenology: Amédée Ayfre and Henri Agel," in *Major Film Theories*, 179-253. (74)

Tuesday, January 26

Individual screenings in preparation for Symposium and individual group work

Wednesday, January 27

In-class group work and preparation for Symposium

Friday, January 29 and 30: Symposium

Week 5

Monday, February 1

"Preface," "I: Film Language," Vsevolod Pudovkin, "From Film Technique," Sergei Eisenstein, "From Film Form," André Bazin, "From What Is Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (56)

Tuesday, February 2

John Ford. *Stagecoach* (1939)

Wednesday, February 3

Gilbert Harman, "Semiotics an the Cinema: Metz and Wollen," Stephen Prince, "The Discourse of Pictures: Iconicity and Film Studies," Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stagecoach," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (49)

Week 6

Monday, February 8

Siegfried Kracauer, "From Theory of Film," André Bazin, "From What is Cinema," Rudolf Arnheim, "From Film as Art," Jean-Louis Baudry "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema," Noël Carroll, "From Mystifying Movies," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (59)

Tuesday, February 9

Michelangelo Antonioni. *Story of a Love Affair* (1950)

Wednesday, February 10

Jonathan Crary, "From Vision and Visuality," Gilles Deleuze, "From Cinema 1 and Cinema 2," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (34)

Week 7

Monday, February 15

"III The Film Medium: Image and Sound," Béla Balász, "From Theory of the Film," Rudolf Arnheim, "From Film as Art," Stanley Cavell "From The World Viewed," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (35)

Tuesday, February 16

Jean-Luc Godard. *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962)

Wednesday, February 17

Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, "Statement on Sound,"  
Mary Ann Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," John  
Belton, "Technology and Aesthetics of Film Sound," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (25)

Week 8

Monday, February 22

**Exam I: Midterm**

Tuesday, February 23

Michael Curtiz. *Mildred Pierce*. (1945)

Wednesday, February 24

"IV Film Narrative and the Other Arts," Peter Wollen, "Godard and Counter Cinema:  
*Vent d'est*," David Bordwell, "From Poetics of Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (30)

Week 9

**Spring Break February 27-March 5**

Week 10

Monday, March 7

"V The Film Artist," Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," Peter Wollen  
"From *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*," Roland Barthes "The Face of Garbo," Gilberto  
Perez, "From The Material Ghost," Richard Dyer, "From *Stars*" in *Film Theory and  
Criticism* (41)

Tuesday, March 8

George Cukor. *Holiday* (1938)

Wednesday, March 9

James Naremore, "From *Acting in the Cinema*," Molly Haskell "From *From Reverence to  
Rape*," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (9)

Week 11

Monday, March 14

"VI Film Genres," Thomas Schatz, "From Hollywood Genres," Paul Schrader, "Notes on  
Film Noir," David Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice," *Film Theory  
and Criticism* (38)



Tuesday, March 15

John Carpenter. *Halloween* (1978)

Wednesday, March 16

Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," Tania Modleski, "The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror Film and Postmodern Theory," Cynthia A. Freeland, "Feminist Frameworks for Horror Films," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (47)

Week 12

Monday, March 21

"VII Film: Spectator and Audience," Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," Christian Metz, "From The Imaginary Signifier," Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Tania Modleski, "From *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*," Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (99)

Tuesday, March 22

Julie Dash. *Daughters of the Dust* (1991)

Wednesday, March 23

Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction," Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (41)

Week 13

Monday, March 28

"VIII Digitization and Globalization," Lev Manovich, "From The Language of New Media," Anne Friedberg, "The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change," Kristen Whissel, "Tales of Upward Mobility: The New Verticality and Digital Special Effects," Stephen Crofts, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema(s)," in *Film Theory and Criticism* (68)

Tuesday, March 29

Abderrahmane Sissako. *Timbuktu* (2014)

Wednesday, March 30

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The Difficulty of Being Radical: The Discipline of Film Studies and the Postcolonial World Order," and Wimal Dissanayaka, "Issues in World Cinema" in *Film Theory and Criticism* (22)

## Week 14

Monday, April 4

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, "Acknowledgments," "Introduction: Film Theory, Cinema, the Body and the Senses," "Cinema as Window and Frame," *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (34)

Tuesday, April 5

Vincent Dieutre. *Joures* (2012)

Wednesday, April 6

"Cinema as Door—Screen and Threshold," *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (20)

## Week 15

Monday, April 11

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, "Cinema as Mirror and Face," "Cinema as Eye Look and Gaze," *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (53)

Tuesday, April 12

Teona Strugar Mitevska. *I am from Titov Veles* (2007)

Wednesday, April 13

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, "Cinema as Skin and Touch," *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (21)

## Week 16

Monday, April 18

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, "Cinema as Ear—Acoustics and Space," "Cinema as Brain—Mind and Body," *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (41)

Tuesday, April 19

Isao Takahata. *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988)

Wednesday, April 20

Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, "Conclusion: Digital Cinema—The Body and the Senses Refigured?" *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (18)

**Wednesday, April 27****8:00 AM FINAL PAPER DUE**