

BHQFU
Winter 2010
Philosophy of Motion Pictures Part II
Introduction to Film Theory
Wednesdays 7pm—10pm
Starting July 14, 2010

"What is at stake, first of all, is an adventure of vision, a conversion of the way of putting questions to any object posed before us...." Derrida, Force and Signification

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Sign-Up Sheet for course: [Online form](#)

Location: 225 West Broadway, NYC 10013 (located near 1 train, Franklin stop, or A train, Canal Street)

Map link: [Google Maps](#)

Course Description

This course will investigate the content and structure of films, using methodologies and concepts culled from linguistics, psychoanalysis, semiotics, anthropology, and continental philosophy. We shall familiarize ourselves with, and evaluate the major issues and debates within, film theory, while critically engaging with films from a socio-historical context that rigorously confronts the heterogeneity of meaning, interpretation, and authorship. Along the way, we shall also consider relevant issues in narrative theory and literary texts.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Carefully read and critically evaluate essays written by philosophers.
2. Explain how the films viewed in class relate to the course readings.
3. Identify and critically evaluate philosophical content found in motion pictures.

Teaching Methods

We will use lectures, class discussions and presentations, and film-viewing.

Required Texts (*pdfs of readings are provided each week*)

1. *Film Theory, An Introduction*, edited by Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake (Manchester University Press, 2006 2nd Edition). The text can be purchased through a variety of internet retailers, for approximately \$28. We'll provide hard copies of the articles for your own personal use.
2. *Film Narratology*, Peter Verstraten
3. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, Gilles Deleuze (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). The text can be purchased through a variety of internet retailers, for approximately \$14. We'll provide hard copies of the articles for your own personal use.

4. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Gilles Deleuze (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). The text can be purchased through a variety of internet retailers, for approximately \$14. We'll provide hard copies of the articles for your own personal use.

Recommended Texts

1. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, edited by Susan Hayward, 3rd edition

Readings and Films

The following list is a tentative guide to the readings and screenings. Changes will be announced in class.

Introduction: On Theory

1. Meet, greet and drinks
- Screening: *Sunshine*

Prolegomenon, Criticism and the Enlightenment

1. Reading: Film Theory, Foreword
2. Reading: "What is the Enlightenment?" Michel Foucault

Politics

1. Reading: Film Theory, An Introduction, Chapter 1
2. Reading: "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction" by Walter Benjamin
3. Reading: Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

Semiotics

1. Reading: Film Theory, An Introduction, Chapter 2
 2. Reading: "The Purloined Letter" by Jacques Lacan
 3. Reading: "The Purloined Letter" by Edgar Allen Poe
- Screening: *Salo or the 120 days of sodom*

Psychoanalysis

1. Reading: Film Theory, An Introduction, Chapter 3
 2. Reading: "The System and the Speaking Subject", and "Ethics and Linguistics", by Julia Kristeva
- Screening: *The Girlfriend Experience*

Hermenutics

1. Reading: "Courtly Love", Slavoj Zizek
2. Reading: "Truth and Method", Hans-Georg Gadamer

Screening: *Crying Game*

Authorship

1. Reading: "From Work to Text" by Roland Barthes

Narrative I

1. Reading: "Essay on Abjection" (intro), by Julia Kristeva

Screening: *Blue Velvet*

Narrative II

1. Reading: Film Narratology, Chapters 6 and 7

2. Reading: Preface to Anti-Oedipus, Michel Foucault

Screening: *The Comfort of Strangers*

Realism

1. Reading: Film Theory, An Introduction, Chapter 6

2. Reading: Film Narratology, Chp 8

3. Reading: Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Chapter 2, Freud

Genres and Excess

1. Reading: Film Narratology, Chp 9 and 10

2. Reading: Thousand Plateaus, Introduction: Rhizome, Gilles Deleuze

Screening: Adaptation

The Avant-Garde I

1. Reading: Film Theory, An Introduction, Chapter 7

2. Reading: Film Theory: a retrospect, Afterword

3. Reading: Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting, Bertolt Brecht

Screening: *The Rules of the Game*

The Avant-Garde: Cruelty and Representation II

1. Reading: Theater of Cruelty Manifesto, Artaud

3. Reading: The Theater of Cruelty and The Closure of Representation, Jacques Derrida

Screening: *Claire's Knees*

Gender Trouble

1. Reading: Gender Trouble, Judith Butler

Screening: **TBD Class Pick**

Bazin and Renoir

1. Reading: The evolution of the language of cinema, André Bazin

Screening: Rules of the Game

The Movement and Time Image

1. Reading: Cinema 1, Chapter 2, Gilles Deleuze
 2. Reading: Cinema 2, Chapter 1, Gilles Deleuze
- Screening: *8 1/2*

The Movement and Time Image

1. Reading: Cinema 1, Chapter 4, Gilles Deleuze
2. Reading: Cinema 2, Chapter 3, Gilles Deleuze

The Movement and Time Image

1. Reading: Cinema 1, Chapter 7, Gilles Deleuze
 2. Reading: Cinema 2, Chapter 5, Gilles Deleuze
- Screening: *Trial of Joan of Arc, Bresson*

The Movement and Time Image

1. Reading: Cinema 2, Chapters 6 and 7, Gilles Deleuze
- Screening: *Stavisky*

White Cube

1. Reading: White Cube, Black Box and Grey Areas: Venues and Values, Gregor Stemmrich

Art and Cinema

1. Reading: Some Critical Reflections, Mark Nash