

Introduction to Cinema Studies

The New School, Schools of Public Engagement
NFLM 2400, CRN 1171
Fall 2018, Wednesdays, 6:00 PM - 7:50 PM
Building: 6 East 16th Street, Room: 913

Instructor: Joel Neville Anderson

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (Room: 1621), and by appointment

Course Description:

A survey of major theories and the critical literature on film from the 1920s through to the present. The course builds an overall view of film theory and criticism with respect to the various modes of inquiry that have impacted on the study of cinema including Structuralism, Semiotics, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Race and Ethnicity Studies, Post-Colonial Theory, Queer Theory, and Cultural Studies. Students additionally become familiar with key concepts in Cinema Studies including realism, montage, auteurism, genre, and Star Studies. As students acquire a general familiarity with the literature that defines film theory and criticism, they become better prepared to form surer and sounder judgments about their own film experiences and to speak and write about those judgments with greater clarity and skill. Pairing readings with screenings and discussions about a range of films students expand and refine their own impressions and responses to the cinema, variously incorporating and responding to the theories, key concepts, and critical approaches studied in class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should possess the following abilities and knowledge:

1. A fundamental familiarity with the major movements in film theory and criticism with respect to the various modes of inquiry that have impacted the study of film including Formalist and Realist theories, Structuralism, Semiotics, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Race and Ethnicity Studies, Queer Theory, and Cultural Studies.
2. A basic familiarity with key concepts in cinema studies including realism, expressionism, auteurism, and genre.
3. A familiarity with a body of films and the ways in which they can be understood and contextualized with respect to the literature that defines film theory and criticism.
4. Ability to apply critical and analytic tools essential for film scholarship and related fields of aesthetic inquiry grounded in a familiarity with the critical literature on film.

Reading and Viewing Assignments:

All texts assigned for reading are either downloadable as PDFs via Canvas or on reserve at the New School List Center Library (6 East 16th Street, 8th Floor). All films and videos assigned for viewing are available as a DVD on reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library (55 West

13th Street, 2nd Floor) or via online streaming platforms as indicated by the instructor. After completing the weekly reading and viewing assignments, bring your own copies of the relevant readings to class (either as a printed copy or PDF on a laptop or tablet) to reference during lecture and discussion. Whatever device you choose to watch the viewing material on I encourage you to do so in an environment free of distractions so you may concentrate on the creators' work. Texts and film/video offered on weekly basis as "Recommended" sources are optional and meant for students with a particular interest in the topic, possibly for later reference as part of the Final Essay assignment.

Film Analysis and Reading Responses:

Each week, students are required to respond to the assigned viewing and reading material, analyzing the form and content of given cinematic works, and incorporating the historical contexts, theories, or arguments of the texts. This is not an informal film review, but an opportunity to demonstrate the modes of analysis we are learning in the course, while offering your own thoughtful observations and questions. Each written response should address at least one film/video and at least one text assigned for that week. Responses will be graded based on the degree to which they analyze and respond to the material together in an integrated and cohesive manner. Printed copies of journal entries are due every week at the start of class, and should be a minimum of 400 words in length (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with simple citations including author and page number[s] in parentheses). I will return these Film Analysis and Reading Responses to you with comments on a regular basis throughout the semester. Students can miss one response out of the ten total due and still receive full credit. If you miss more than one response please discuss a makeup assignment with me. *Due at the start of class beginning the second week, and due every following week except the day the Book Report is due, and several weeks before the end of the semester to give students time to work on their Final Essay.*

Book Report:

Students are required to put their skills interpreting and analyzing cinema history and theory to intensive use in this assignment, in which they select a cinema studies book from a list of potential titles based on their interests. Using the analytical tools and reference points learned until midway through the semester, students write a report first summarizing and then contextualizing the argument of the book (3-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style citations). This detail-oriented assignment will be good preparation for the cohesive historical and theoretical analysis required in the Final Essay. *Due at the start of class midway through the semester.*

Final Essay:

Students are required to write a final essay analyzing a cinematic work and topic related to material from the class (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style citations). I will distribute a prompt listing potential films/videos and topics, along with further guidelines. Students may consult with me during office hours to choose from the suggested films/videos/topics and discuss their approach, or propose a new one. Students are

encouraged to choose which works and theoretical models they engage with, but if you would like to pursue titles and topics outside the list of prompts, it must be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance. The “Recommended” readings each week will be useful in furthering students’ original research. *Due at the start of the final class meeting.*

Grading:

Attendance/Participation: 25% of final grade

Film Analysis and Reading Responses: 25%

Book Report: 15%

Final Paper: 35%

Policies and Guidelines:

- Attendance: Your attendance at each class is mandatory, and repeated absences will result in a lowered grade. Please clear any expected absences with me in advance, and provide appropriate documentation (such as record of a medical visit). If you do miss class, please check with me or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts. Arriving to class after the start time on two occasions will be recorded as one absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes after the start time will be considered an absence.
- Preparation and Participation: Approximately two to three hours of screening material, in addition to one to two articles or book chapters will be assigned each week. Students are expected to review the material in detail, and come prepared to participate in discussion. Your thoughts are valuable to me and your fellow students. Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent, unless otherwise discussed.
- Classroom Technology: Laptops or tablets may be used during class for note-taking and referring to class readings only, unless otherwise discussed. Laptops or tablets may also be used during class presentations. Use of mobile phones is not permitted, and will result in students being asked to leave the classroom and a lowered participation score.
- Email Correspondence: Please check your university email regularly for announcements and updates to the syllabus and assignments.
- Canvas: Canvas will be an important resource for this class, and students should check it regularly for announcements.
- Instructor Delay: In rare instances, the instructor may be delayed arriving to class due to an emergency. If the instructor has not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, students must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for the instructor’s arrival before leaving. In the event that the instructor will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom.

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

- Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.
- Students are responsible for understanding the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating,

presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at <http://www.newschool.edu/policies/>.

- Resources regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it can be found on the Learning Center's website: <http://www.newschool.edu/university-learning-center/student-resources/>
- Intellectual Property Rights: <http://www.newschool.edu/provost/accreditation-policies/>
- Grade Policies: <http://www.newschool.edu/registrar/academic-policies/>

Resources:

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence. These resources include:

- University Libraries: <http://library.newschool.edu/>
- University Learning Center: <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center/>
- University Disabilities Service: www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/

In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

Religious Accommodations:

If you require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please speak with me as soon as possible to consider a reasonable modification.

Certificate Students:

This course may count as an elective toward the Certificate in Film Production. If you are a non-credit student planning to pursue the Certificate, make sure you are registered as a Certificate student (before the second week of class). Students must be registered as a Certificate Student in order to count this class towards their requirements and students must complete all assignments and do minimally the equivalent of "B" work for the class to earn an AP (approved) grade. Simply turning in a final project is not enough. For more information please contact: mediastudiesadvising@newschool.edu.

CT Labs:

The CT lab is a critical course designation for continuing education, non-credit courses to account for the myriad activities, projects, and work that happens outside the NFLM and NSRW coursework. In each enrolled NFLM or NSRW course, students will be assigned projects that include an average of three hours a week of outside commitment. These projects and assignments can include but are not limited to:

- Weekly independent screenings of full length and short form films and videos.

- Group oriented film shootings that take place outside of class time at locations on campus and away from The New School, usually on weekends.
- Planning and attending group production meetings (including pre production and post production project meetings) outside of scheduled class time.
- Scheduling independent and group sessions to edit projects in designated on-campus labs outside of class.
- Attending events such as film festivals, screenings, lectures, and symposiums both on campus and in the NYC region that relate to your course material.
- Visiting museums, places of business, and cultural centers in the NYC region that relate to your course materials.

Please refer to your course syllabus for how these projects, events, and tasks fold into your assignments and impact your grading.

Student Course Ratings:

During the last two weeks of the semester, students are asked to provide feedback for each of their courses through an online survey. They cannot view grades until providing feedback or officially declining to do so. Course evaluations are a vital space where students can speak about the learning experience. It is an important process which provides valuable data about the successful delivery and support of a course or topic to both the faculty and administrators. Instructors rely on course rating surveys for feedback on the course and teaching methods, so they can understand what aspects of the class are most successful in teaching students, and what aspects might be improved or changed in future. Without this information, it can be difficult for an instructor to reflect upon and improve teaching methods and course design. In addition, program/department chairs and other administrators review course surveys. Instructions are available online at <http://www.newschool.edu/provost/course-evaluations-student-instructions.pdf>.

Course Schedule:

(Note: all readings/screenings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned)

Week 1 (August 29): Course Overview and Introduction (Early Cinema's Pre-Histories)

Week 2 (September 5): The Cinema of Attractions and the Roots of "Classical Hollywood"

Watch: Auguste and Louis Lumière shorts: *Demolition of a Wall* (1895, streaming at [Alexander Street](#)), *Baby Meal* (1895, [AS streaming](#)), *Mounted Police Charge* (Edison Studios, 1896, [AS streaming](#)), *A Trip to the Moon* (Georges Méliès, 1902, [AS streaming](#)), *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903, [AS streaming](#)), *The Gay Shoe Clerk* (Porter, 1903, [AS streaming](#)).

Read: Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 1-80. Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 381-388.

Recommended: Allyson Nadia Field, “Introduction,” *Uplift Cinema: The Emergence of African American Film and the Possibility of Black Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 1-31. Selections on disc 1 of the “Early cinema: primitives and pioneers” DVD collection at the NYU Bobst Avery Fisher Center.

*** Film Analysis and Reading Response due today and all following weeks unless noted.**

Week 3 (September 12): German Expressionism and Weimar Cinema

Watch: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920, streaming at Alexander Street), *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927, AS streaming).

Read: Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (excerpt). Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 101-118.

Recommended: Andreas Huyssen, “The Vamp and the Machine: Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*,” *New German Critique*, no. 24/25 (Autumn 1981 - Winter 1982): 221-237.

Week 4 (September 19): No class—enjoy

*** Students are expected to visit the Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) located in Astoria, Queens (open Wednesday through Sunday) prior to the September 26 class, and integrate their response to the permanent exhibition Behind the Screen into their 9/26 Film Analysis and Reading Response.**

Week 5 (September 26): Soviet Montage

Watch: *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925, streaming at Alexander Street), *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929, streaming at Kanopy with ideal image quality, and Alexander Street with alternate score).

Read: Sergei Eisenstein, “A Dialectical Approach to Film Form.” Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye* (excerpt). *Film History: An Introduction*, 119-142.

Recommended: Malcolm Turvey, “City Symphony and *Man with a Movie Camera*,” *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 135-161.

Week 6 (October 3): Documentary's Invention

Watch: *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922, streaming at Kanopy), *The Gold Rush* (Charlie Chaplin, 1925, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: Fatimah Tobing Rony, “Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography: Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*,” *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 99-126. *Film History: An Introduction*, 184-186.

Recommended: Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33-50.

*** Guidelines for Book Report assignment distributed today.**

Week 7 (October 10): French Impressionism, Dada, and Surrealism

Watch: *Les Vampires, Episode 1: The Severed Head* (Louis Feuillade, 1915-16, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library), *Judex, Episode 1: The Mysterious Shadow* (Feuillade, 1918, streaming at [Alexander Street](#)), *Un Chien Andalou* (Louis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: *Film History: An Introduction*, 85-100, 167-184. Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto” (1918). André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism” (1924). The Surrealist Group, “Manifesto of the Surrealists Concerning *L'Age d'Or*” (1930), (ed.) Scott MacKenzie, *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 31-37.

Recommended: Malcolm Turvey, “Surrealism and *Un Chien Andalou*,” *The Filming of Modern Life*, 105-134.

Week 8 (October 17): Poetic Realism, Fascism, Spectacle, and Marxist Critique

Watch: *Zero for Conduct* (Jean Vigo, 1933), *The Great Dictator* (Charlie Chaplin, 1940). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility.” *Film History: An Introduction*, 283-302, 261-282.

Recommended: Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament,” 75-86. Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Actuality, Antinomies” in *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 75-103.

Week 9 (October 24): Realism and Neorealism

Watch: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), *Umberto D.* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” “The Myth of Total Cinema,” “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” “An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism,” “Umberto D: A Great Work,” *What is Cinema? Film History: An Introduction*, 353-372.

Recommended: Cesare Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema.”

*** Book Report assignment due today. (No Film Analysis and Reading Response due.)**

Week 10 (October 31): Auteurism and Transnational Exchange

Watch: *Diary of a Country Priest* (Robert Bresson, 1951), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford, 1962). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: *Film History: An Introduction*, 325-351, 415-436. Andrew Sarris, “Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962.” Peter Wollen, “The Auteur Theory [Howard Hawks and John Ford].” Pauline Kael, “Circles and Squares,” *Film Quarterly* 16, no. 3, (Spring 1963): 12-26.

Recommended: François Truffaut, “A Certain Tendency in French Cinema,” *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*, 133-142.

*** Potential films/videos and topics for Final Essay assignment distributed today.**

Week 11 (November 7): Apparatus Theory, Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism

Watch: *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958), *Now Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: Jean-Louis Baudry, “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus.” Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” Mary Ann Doane, “Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator.”

Recommended: Doane, “The Desire to Desire,” in *The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 1-37.

Week 12 (November 14): Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies

Watch: *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash, 1991), *Duel in the Sun* (King Vidor, 1946). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: Laura Mulvey, “Afterthoughts on ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ Inspired by King Vidor’s *Duel in the Sun*.” bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators.”

Recommended: Manthia Diawara, “Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance.” Sara Kaplan, “Souls at the Crossroads, Africans on the Water: The Politics of Diasporic Melancholia,” *Callaloo* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 511-526.

*** Students should have chosen topics for the Final Essay by today.**

Week 13 (November 21): No class—enjoy

Week 14 (November 28): Third Cinema, Post-Colonial Theory and Revolution

Watch: *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966, streaming at [Kanopy](#)), *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, 1968, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,” *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*, 230-249. Robert Stam and Louise Spence, “Colonialism, Racism and Representation: An Introduction.” *Film History: An Introduction*, 391-414, 535-578.

Recommended: Serge Daney, “The Tracking Shot in Kapo,” in *Postcards from the cinema*, translated by Paul Douglas Grant (New York: Berg, 2007).

*** Last Film Analysis and Reading Response due today.**

Week 15 (December 5): Personal Documentary, Memory, and Queer Theory

Watch: *Halving the Bones* (1995, 70 min., Ruth Ozeki), *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (1991, 34 min., Rea Tajiri), and *The Body Beautiful* (1991, 23 min., Ngozi Onwurah) on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library. *The Ties That Bind* (1984, 55 min., Su Friedrich, streaming at [Alexander Street](#)).

Read: Julia Erhart, “Performing Memory: Compensation and Redress in Contemporary Feminist First-Person Documentary,” *Screening the Past* (2001). Michael Renov, “Domestic Ethnography and the Construction of the ‘Other’ Self,” in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, eds. Michael Renov and Jane Gaines (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999): 140-155.

Recommended: Diana Adesola Mafe, “Misplaced Bodies: Probing Racial and Gender Signifiers in Ngozi Onwurah’s *The Body Beautiful*,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008): 37-50. Rocío G. Davis, “The Asian American Family Portrait Documentary: Multiplying

Discourses,” in *Relative Histories: Mediating History in Asian American Family Memoirs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011): 116-139.

Week 16 (December 12): Conclusion and Final Screening

*** Final Essays due at start of class today.**