

Contemporary Film Theory

FTVM 372

Fall 2023

MW 2:30-4pm MLB 2

Screenings 4-6:30 AUD A AH

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This course examines contemporary approaches to film theory. We will explore how different theories and resulting methods of analysis built on structuralist and post-structuralist presuppositions and paradigms have influenced recent film theory and its consideration of narrative practice, the psychological experience of viewing, the construction of moving image representations, and the impact of technology on aesthetic practice.

✱ As an upper level writing course, one goal of this course is to improve your academic composition skills along with your ability to navigate and comprehend complex texts (media and written). You should be prepared to put in the time and effort it takes to do this. In other words, writing counts here! Students with a background in film, television, media, digital studies, art and design, or critical theory are best positioned to succeed in this course. What does this mean? If you are *not* looking to fulfill an LSA ULWR course, you might be better served by taking another class.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

All required reading material is available on **Canvas** under “**files,**” and films are available in the “**media gallery.**”

Many of the essays are contained within the *Film Theory and Criticism* anthology (7th edition), which is on our **Canvas** site under “**BC.**” The essays in this collection are denoted by **BC** on the syllabus (for Braudy/Cohen).

Robert Stam’s *Film Theory: An Introduction* is also on **Canvas** under “**Stam.**” Reading assignments from this text are denoted by **Stam** on the syllabus.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Paper 1 – 20% (7 pages) (Due October 6th)

Paper 2 – 20% (7 pages) (Due November 17th)

Exam - 20% (6 pages) (Due December 8th)

Reading Quizzes and Discussion Posts – 20%

Participation - 20%

Written work will be penalized by one-third of a grade for each day it is submitted after the deadline.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance at both lectures and screenings is mandatory. Please note that arriving to class late and creating a disruptive learning environment will also significantly affect your final grade. **YOU MUST BE IN CLASS ON TIME.**

Your final grade will be lowered if you miss more than two lectures.

Class lectures cover material not always in the readings and contain information that you will need for the written assignments and final exam.

Please Note: Reading assignments may change in accordance with class needs.

Also Note: All electronic devices must be turned off during lectures.

INTRODUCTION AND THE IDEOLOGICAL TURN OF 1968

Week 1

August 28th and 30th

Stam, pages 1-17 (M)

Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" (W)

IDEOLOGY, PART 2

Week 2

September 6th (Wednesday Only)

"Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," by Commolli and Narboni (BC) (W)

"John Ford's Young Mr. Lincoln," by Editors of Cahiers du Cinema (W)

Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Week 3 September 11th and 13th

Stam, pages 158-169 (M)

Baudry, pages 171-189 (BC) (M)

Metz, pages 694-711 (BC) (W)

Peeping Tom (1960)

FEMINISM, PART 1

Week 4 September 18th and 20th

Stam, pages 169-179 (M)

Mulvey, pages 711-723 (BC) (M)

Vertigo (1958)

FEMINISM, PART 2

Week 5 September 25th and 27th

Modleski, pages 723-736 (BC) (W)

Rear Window (1954)

AUTHORSHIP RECONSIDERED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Week 6 October 2nd and 4th

“Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962,” by Sarris, pages 451-455 (BC) (M)

“La Camera-Crayola: Authorship Comes of Age in the Cinema of Wes Anderson,” by Orgeron (W)

***Rushmore* (1998)**

Paper 1 Due October 6th

CULTURAL STUDIES

Week 7

October 9th and 11th

Stam, pages 223-234 (M)

Hall (M)

Sconce (W)

***Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970)**

CULTURAL STUDIES, PART 2

Week 8

October 18th (Wednesday Only)

“Antonio Gramsci” (W)

QUEER THEORY

Week 9

October 23rd and 25th

Stam, pages 262-267 (M)

Doty (M)

“Gays in Film,” by Dyer (W)

Wood (1), “The Incoherent Text” (W)

***Cruising* (1980)**

RACE AND REPRESENTATION

Week 10

October 30th and November 1st

Stam, pages 267-280 (M)

Stam and Spence, pages 751-767 (BC) (M)

“The Chronicle” (M)

Diawara, pages 767-775 (BC) (W)

Crash (2005)

RACE AND REPRESENTATION, PART 2

Week 11

November 6th and 8th

“Films of Melvin van Peebles,” pages 1-10 (M)

The Story of a Three Day Pass (1967)

THIRD CINEMA AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, PART 1

Week 12

November 13th and 15th

Stam, pages 92-102 (M)

“For an Imperfect Cinema,” by Espinosa and Garcia (M)

“Towards a Third Cinema,” by Solanas and Gettino (W)

Lucia (1968)

Paper 2 Due November 17th

THIRD CINEMA AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, PART 2

Week 13

November 20th (Monday Only)

Stam, pages 281-298 (M)

“National Culture,” by Fanon (M)

Black Girl (1966)

POSTMODERNISM

Week 14

November 27th and 29th

Stam, pages 298-307 (M)

“Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” by Jameson (M)

Blade Runner (1982)

Week 15

December 4th and 6th

Readings TBD

EXAM DUE DECEMBER 8th