

# FM 208

## The Age of Film. The Human Condition Through Visual Representation

Seminar Leader: Matthias Hurst

Course Times: Monday, 14.00 – 15.30; Tuesday, 19.30 – 22.00 (weekly film screening); Wednesday, 14.00 – 15.30

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 13.30 – 15.00

### Course Description

“The process of film joins a deep psychological reality and satisfies our desire to understand the world and each other in a powerful [...] way. The aesthetics of film is based on this psychological truth and need. And so cinema is the greatest of the arts because it meets this need by showing us the process of the transformation of the world. The other arts can show us merely the end result of such transformation, the humanized art world. In cinema human beings tell each other what reality means to them, yet they do so through reality itself, which surrounds their work like an ocean.” (Jean Mitry)

This course is an introduction to Film Studies addressing the basic ideas of film history and theory, film styles and cinematic language, while at the same time exploring the function and the aesthetics of film as a means of profound visual expression that reflects and comments on *reality*, i.e. historical and cultural experiences as well as the human condition in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century: industrialization and technological progress, war and revolution, social conflict and social change, subjectivity and identity, existential crisis and personal development. Thus it will focus on films (by Michelangelo Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman, Charlie Chaplin, Sergej Eisenstein, Elem Klimov, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Yasujirô Ozu, Francois Truffaut, Orson Welles) that both mirror and shaped the sense of life and the critical consciousness of the modern and postmodern age.

Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits

### Requirements

No prerequisites.

Attendance is mandatory for all seminars and film screenings. Students are expected to come to seminars and film screenings punctually and prepared, to participate actively in the class discussions and to do all the course assignments on time.

\* Please, do not use cell phones, smart phones or similar electronic devices during seminars and screenings!

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the

expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

### Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for all seminars and film screenings. Absences will significantly affect the grade for the course.

Absences are registered in all classes, and lateness is registered as absence. Students should notify the instructor if they are unable to attend class.

Notification via e-mail or in-person is required for all excused absences. After four such absences, additional documentation is required (i.e. doctor's note, proof of court date, military obligation etc.) in order for the absence to be excused.

Bard College Berlin cannot offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, whether the absences are on documented medical grounds or not.

Please see the Student Handbook for college policies on absences due to serious illness or other important cause (Leave of Absence request).

### Assessment / Writing Assignments

Two screening reports (1000 words each), due in week 4 and week 8 (Deadline for screening reports: Thursday, February 20, 18.00, / Thursday, March 19, 18.00) and a final essay (3000-3500 words), due in week 15 (Deadline for final essay: Wednesday, May 13, midnight). The topic of this final essay will be a film analysis/interpretation, based on one of the films screened or discussed throughout the semester.

### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

All assignments and written work must be submitted electronically and on time. Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Participation:	33,3 %
Screening Reports:	33,3 %
Final Essay:	33,4 %

If one of these components is graded F, the final course grade cannot be higher than C-.

If two components are graded F, the final grade will be F (i.e. the whole class will be failed).

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1:**

The Age of Film – Film as a cultural and 'anthropological' phenomenon (1)

(Suggested) Reading:

André Bazin. "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." In: André Bazin. *What Is Cinema?* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 9-16.

Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In: Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.). *Film Theory and Criticism. Introductory Readings*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 731-751.

Searle Kochberg. "Cinema as Institution." In: Jill Nelmes (ed.). *An Introduction to Film Studies*. Third edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 3-50.

Siegfried Kracauer. *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality*. [1960] Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1994.

Hugo Münsterberg. "The Photoplay. A Psychological Study." [1916] Excerpt in: Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.). *Film Theory and Criticism. Introductory Readings*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 401-407.

Erwin Panofsky. "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures." [1934/1947] In: Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.). *Film Theory and Criticism. Introductory Readings*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 279-292.

Real life and reel life: *Day For Night (La nuit américaine)*, 1973, François Truffaut

## **Week 2:**

The Age of Film – Film as a cultural and artistic phenomenon (2)

Industrialization: *Modern Times* (1936, Charles Chaplin)

## **Week 3:**

Film analysis: Basic model – Story and Discourse

Structural analysis: The means and elements of filmic storytelling (1)

Primitive Mode of Representation (PMR), Cinema of Attractions

Reading:

David Bordwell. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London/New York: Routledge, 1990.

Larry A. Brown. *How Films Tell Stories. The Narratology of Cinema*. Nashville: Creative Arts Press, 2016.

Noël Burch. "A Primitive Mode of Representation?" In: Thomas Elsaesser (ed.). *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: BFI 1990, pp. 220-227.

Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland. *Studying Contemporary American Film. A Guide to Movie Analysis*. London: Arnold Publishers, 2002.

Tom Gunning. "The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." [1986] In: Thomas Elsaesser (ed.). *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: BFI 1990, pp. 56-62.

James Monaco. *How To Read a Film. Movies, Media, Multimedia*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Allan Rowe and Paul Wells. "Film Form and Narrative." In: Jill Nelmes (ed.). *An Introduction to Film Studies*. Third edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 53-90.

Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell. *Film History. An Introduction*. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill (Higher Education), 2003.

Life Out Of Balance, Life In Turmoil: *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982, Godfrey Reggio)

**Week 4:**

Structural analysis: The means and elements of filmic storytelling (2)

Mise-en-scène and montage, Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR), Cinema of Narrative Integration

Reading:

André Bazin. "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema". In: André Bazin. *What Is Cinema?* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 23-40.

David Bordwell. "Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures." In: Philip Rosen (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 17-34.

Larry A. Brown. *How Films Tell Stories. The Narratology of Cinema*. Nashville: Creative Arts Press, 2016.

Revolution (Two Boat Stories – Double Feature): *Battleship Potemkin* (1925, Sergej Eisenstein) & *Yellow Submarine* (1968, George Dunning)

**Week 5:**

Structural analysis: The means and elements of filmic storytelling (3)

Descriptive Montage, Montage of Attractions, Intellectual Montage, Sound

Reading:

David Bordwell. *The Cinema of Eisenstein*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Ian Christie and Richard Taylor (eds.). *Eisenstein Rediscovered*. London/New York: Routledge, 1993.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *Writings, 1922-1934. Selected Works, Vol. 1*. Edited by Richard Taylor. London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010.

Mark Joyce. "The Soviet Montage Cinema of the 1920s." In: Jill Nelmes (ed.). *An Introduction to Film Studies*. Third edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 389-420.

Al LaValley and Barry P. Scherr (eds.). *Eisenstein at 100. A Reconsideration*. New Brunswick/New Jersey/London: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Anne Nesbet. *Savage Junctures. Sergei Eisenstein and the Shape of Thinking*. London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003.

Identity and Meaning in the Age of Film: *Fight Club* (1999, David Fincher)

Guest lecturer: Dr. Shai Biderman

**Week 6:**

Film semiotics: Signs and codes; denotation and connotation of signs (1)

Reading:

John Gibbs. *Mise-en-Scène. Film Style and Interpretation*. London/New York: Wallflower Press 2003.

Christian Metz. *Film Language. A Semiotics of the Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

The Greatest Mystery Of All – Ambition, Character, And The Good Life: *Citizen Kane* (1941, Orson

Welles)

**Week 7:**

Denotation and connotation of signs (2); paradigmatic and syntagmatic connotations

Parents and Children and Social Change: *Tokyo Story* (1953, Yasujiro Ozu)

**Week 8:**

Modes of film interpretation (1)

Two Sisters and Social Alienation: *The Silence* (1963, Ingmar Bergman)

**Week 9:**

Modes of film interpretation (2)

A Portrait of the Artist as a Confused Man: *8 ½* (1963, Federico Fellini)

**Week 10:**

Modes of film interpretation (3)

Pictures of Reality: *Blow-Up* (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni)

**Spring Break: Monday, April 6 – Monday, April 13, 2020**

**Week 11:**

Modes of film interpretation (4)

Romance and Betrayal: *Days in Heaven* (1978, Terence Mallick)

**Week 12:**

Modes of film interpretation (5)

War: *Come and See* (1985, Elem Klimov)

**Week 13:**

Modes of film interpretation (6)

“We might be through with the past, but the past ain’t through with us ...”: *Magnolia* (1999, Paul Thomas Anderson)

**Week 14:**

The Happiest Moment Of Your Life: *After Life* (1998, Hirokazu Kore-eda)

**Week 15:** Completion Week (May 11 – May 15, 2020)

Deadline for final essay (3000-3500 words): Wednesday, May 13, midnight

**Literature:**

Allen, Richard, and Murray Smith (eds.). *Film Theory and Philosophy*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 2004.

Baudry, Jean-Louis. "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema." In: Philip Rosen (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 299-318.

Bazin, André. *What is Cinema?* Vol. I & II. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971.

Bazin, André. "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema". In: André Bazin. *What Is Cinema?* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 23-40.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In: Leo Braudy / Marshall Cohen (eds.). *Film Theory and Criticism. Introductory Readings*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 731-751.

Blandford, Steve, Barry K. Grant and Jim Hillier. *The Film Studies Dictionary*. London/New York: Arnold, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Bordwell, David. "Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures." In: Philip Rosen (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 17-34.

Bordwell, David. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London/New York: Routledge, 1990.

Braudy, Leo, and Marshall Cohen (eds.). *Film Theory and Criticism. Introductory Readings*. Seventh Edition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Brown, Larry A. *How Films Tell Stories. The Narratology of Cinema*. Nashville: Creative Arts Press, 2016.

Burch, Noël. "A Primitive Mode of Representation?" In: Thomas Elsaesser (ed.). *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: BFI 1990, pp. 220-227.

Carroll, Noël. *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Warren Buckland. *Studying Contemporary American Film. A Guide to Movie Analysis*. London: Arnold Publishers, 2002.

Frampton, Daniel. *Filmosophy*. London: Wallflower Press, 2006.

Gibbs, John. *Mise-en-Scène. Film Style and Interpretation*. London/New York: Wallflower Press 2003.

Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." [1986] In: Thomas Elsaesser (ed.). *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: BFI 1990, pp. 56-62.

Hayward, Susan. *Cinema Studies. The Key Concepts*. Third Edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

Hill, John, and Pamela Church Gibson (eds.). *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Hockley, Luke. *Cinematic Projections. The Analytic Psychology of C .G. Jung and Film Theory*. Luton: University of Luton Press, 2000.
- Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.). *Psychoanalysis & Cinema*. New York/London: Routledge, 1990.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of the German Film*. Revised and expanded edition. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality*. [1960] Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Lebeau, Vicky. *Psychoanalysis and Cinema. The Play of Shadows*. London: Wallflower Press, 2002.
- Litch, Mary M. *Philosophy Through Film*. New York/London: Routledge, 2002.
- McFarlane, Brian. *Novel to Film. An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 1996.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1994.
- Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier. Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Metz, Christian. *Film Language. A Semiotics of the Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Monaco, James. *How To Read a Film. Movies, Media, Multimedia*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In Philip Rosen (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 198-209.
- Neale, Stephen. *Genre and Hollywood*. London/New York: Routledge 2000.
- Nelmes, Jill (ed.). *An Introduction to Film Studies*. Third edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Porter, Burton F. *Philosophy Through Fiction and Film*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education/Prentice Hall, 2004.
- Read, Rupert, and Jerry Goodenough (eds.). *Film as Philosophy. Essays in Cinema after Wittgenstein and Cavell*. Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Rosen, Philip (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Smith, Murray, and Thomas E. Wartenberg (eds.). *Thinking Through Cinema. Film as Philosophy*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2006.
- Thompson, Kristin, and David Bordwell. *Film History. An Introduction*. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill (Higher Education), 2003.
- Wartenberg, Thomas E., and Angela Curran (eds.). *The Philosophy of Film. Introductory Text and Readings*. Oxford/Malden: Blackwell, 2005.

## Essay Deadlines

- Deadline for screening report 1 (1000 words): week 4, Thursday, February 20, 18.00 (6.00 pm)
- Deadline for screening report 2 (1000 words): week 8, Thursday, March 19, 18.00 (6.00 pm)
- Deadline for final essay (3000-3500 words): week 15, Wednesday, May 13, midnight (11.59 pm)