

# FM 272: Wild at Heart and Weird on Top: The Films of David Lynch

Seminar Leader: Matthias Hurst

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 13.30 – 15.00 or by appointment

Course Times: Wednesday, 19:30 – 22:00 (film screening); Thursday, 15:45 – 19:00

## Course Description

Welcome to the “Luna Lounge” and the dark side of our dreams: We will explore the weird and wonderful immersive cinematic universe of auteur filmmaker David Lynch, beginning with his early short films – *Six Men Getting Sick* (1967), *The Alphabet* (1968) and *The Grandmother* (1970) – to his last feature film, the experimental, multifaceted conundrum *Inland Empire* (2006) – “It’s about a woman in trouble, and it’s a mystery, and that’s about all I want to say about it,” explains Lynch in an uncharacteristically weak moment of total disclosure. In discussing the dreamlike, mysterious world(s) of Lynch, his representations of the uncanny and the sublime, his visions of disturbing anxieties and desires, we will revisit challenging and seminal filmic works of postmodernism like *Eraserhead* (1977), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Wild At Heart* (1990), *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001).

## Requirements

Basic knowledge of film history, film theory, and film analysis.

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 highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

## Attendance

Attendance at all classes and film screenings is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

More than two absences will 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.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2022:** Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

### **Assessment / Assignments**

Individual presentations in class, based on individual research, starting in week 4.

Mid-term essay (1500-2000 words), due in week 7, Friday, October 14, 2022, midnight.

Final essay (3000-3500 words), due in week 15, Friday, December 16, 2022, noon (i.e. 12.01 pm)

\* Please note: Senior students -- Deadline for final essay: Week 15, Monday, December 12, 2022, midnight! \*

The topic of the 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**

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Participation:	25 %
Presentation:	25 %
Mid-term Essay:	25 %
Final Essay:	25 %

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**

\* Tentative schedule depending on official Corona policies, organization of individual presentations and intensity of class discussions

### **WEEK 1:**

Introduction: David Lynch – Postmodernism, "Letting go" or "the tension between reason and the subconscious" (Martha P. Nochimson)

Basic Modes of Film Interpretation (1)

No film screening in week 1

### **WEEK 2:**

Short Films:

Six Figures Getting Sick / Six Men Getting Sick (1967)

The Alphabet (1968)

The Grandmother (1970)

The Amputee (1974)

Dumbland (2002)

Darkened Room (2002)

Boat (2007)

Basic Modes of Film Interpretation (2): Auteur Theory

### **WEEK 3:**

*David Lynch: The Art Life* (2016, Jon Nguyen, Rick Barnes and Olivia Neergaard-Holm)

Basic Modes of Film Interpretation (3): Psychoanalytical Film Interpretation

### **WEEK 4:**

*Eraserhead* (1977)

### **WEEK 5:**

*The Elephant Man* (1980)

**WEEK 6:**

*Dune* (1984)

**WEEK 7:**

*Blue Velvet* (1986)

**WEEK 8:**

*Wild At Heart* (1990)

**Fall Break: October 24 – October 30, 2022**

**WEEK 9:**

*Twin Peaks – Fire Walk With Me* (1992)

**WEEK 10:**

*Lost Highway* (1997)

**Film screening in week 10 will be on Monday evening, November 7, 2022, 19:30 (instead of Wednesday)**

**WEEK 11:**

*The Straight Story* (1999)

**WEEK 12:**

*Mulholland Drive* (2001)

**WEEK 13:**

*Inland Empire* (2006)

**WEEK 14:**

"I like to remember things my own way ..." (Fred Madison)

**WEEK 15:** Completion week

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**Reading / Selection:**

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. "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.

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

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

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.

Bergstrom, Janet (ed.). *Endless Night. Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1999.

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.
- Bushman, David (ed.). *The Women of David Lynch. A Collection of Essays*. Columbus: Fayetteville Mafia Press, 2019.
- Carroll, Noël. *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Dowd, James J. *Social Life in the Movies: How Hollywood Imagines War, Schools, Romance and Social Inequality*. London/New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Elsaesser, Thomas, and Warren Buckland. *Studying Contemporary American Film. A Guide to Movie Analysis*. London: Arnold Publishers, 2002.
- Fisher, Mark. *The Weird and the Eerie*. London: Repeater Books, 2016.
- Frampton, Daniel. *Filmosophy*. London: Wallflower Press, 2006.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny'." In: *Art and Literature. Jensen's Gradiva, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works*. The Penguin Freud Library Vol. 14, edited by Albert Dickson. London/New York: Penguin, pp. 335-376.
- Gibbs, John. *Mise-en-Scène. Film Style and Interpretation*. London/New York: Wallflower Press 2003.
- Gleyzon, François-Xavier (ed.). *David Lynch In Theory*. Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 2010.
- 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.
- Hillier, Jim (ed.). *Cahiers du cinéma 1: The 1950s. Neo-realism, Hollywood, The New Wave*. London: British Film Institute/Routledge, 1985.
- Hockley, Luke. *Cinematic Projections. The Analytic Psychology of C.G. Jung and Film Theory*. Luton: University of Luton Press, 2001.
- Horton, H. Perry. *In Dreams. A Unified Interpretation of Twin Peaks & Other Selected Works of David Lynch*. Independently published, 2019.
- Hughes, David: *The Complete Lynch*. London: Virgin Books, 2001.
- Indick, William. *Movies and the Mind. Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film*. Jefferson/NC: McFarland & Company, 2004.
- Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.). *Psychoanalysis & Cinema*. New York/London: Routledge, 1990.

- 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.
- Lynch, David, and Kristine McKenna. *Room to Dream*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2019.
- 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. *Film Language. A Semiotics of the Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier. Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- 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.
- Nochimson, Martha P. *The Passion of David Lynch. Wild at Heart in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Panofsky, Erwin. "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.
- 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.
- Reid, James D., and Candace R. Craig. *Agency and Imagination in the Films of David Lynch. Philosophical Perspectives*. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books, 2020.
- Rodley, Chris (ed.). *Lynch on Lynch*. Revised Edition. London/New York: Faber and Faber,

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.

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