

FM 212: Freud and Jung Go to the Movies: Psychoanalysis and Film

Seminar Leader: Matthias Hurst

Email: m.hurst@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 13.30 – 15.00, or by appointment

Course Times: Monday, 14.00 – 15.30, Tuesday, 19.30 – 22.00 (film screening),
Thursday, 14.00 – 15.30

Course Description

In this introductory course, basic concepts and structures of psychoanalysis – as theorized by Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung – will be explored in relation to their significance for film and film interpretation. Contemporary with the rise of cinema, psychoanalysis has been both a method of understanding film, and itself a subject of film representation. It has provided a model for cinematic form, through the idea of the dream as an articulation of repressed desire, and the unconscious as the source of the power and vividness of visual images. It has also inspired feminist film theory like Laura Mulvey's concept of the “male gaze” that has become one of the cornerstones of modern film criticism. Considering how the dramatization of psychoanalytic conflicts is staged in cinema, and how the nature and form of cinematic narrative can sometimes be explained in relation to psychological phenomena, we both analyze the representation of psychoanalysis in film – *Freud* (1962, John Huston), *Equus* (1977, Sidney Lumet), *A Dangerous Method* (2011, David Cronenberg), and *Freud's Last Session* (2023, Matthew Brown) – and practice the application of psychoanalytical theories to read and interpret films, for instance *Peeping Tom* (1960, Michael Powell), *Steppenwolf* (1974, Fred Haines), *The Company of Wolves* (1984, Neil Jordan), *Malina* (1990, Werner Schroeter), *Lost Highway* (1997, David Lynch), and *Enemy* (2013, Denis Villeneuve).

Please note / Content warning: Some of the films we will watch and discuss contain disturbing stories and topics, graphic images, explicit and offensive language,

themes of mental disorder, strong violence, sexuality, sexual violence, abusive relationships, murder, and suicide.

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 laptops, 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.

I expect everybody to do their own work and to write their own papers, including correct MLA citation. **Plagiarism or the use of AI are no options**; they are an absolute no-no. Anybody who cheats will fail that particular assignment and may, depending on the severity of the case, fail the class.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes 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.

Please, do not use laptops, cell phones, smart phones or similar electronic devices during seminars and screenings! When you are in class, you need to be there (and not leashed to or distracted by electronic devices). Please turn your phones off before class.

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

Assignments / Assessment

Two screening reports (1000 words each), due in week 3 (deadline for screening report # 1: Thursday, February 12, 2026, 1:45 pm), and week 8 (deadline for screening report # 2: Thursday, March 19, 2026, 1:45 pm). The topics of the screening reports will be announced before the film screenings.

Short **in-class presentations**, based on the weekly film screenings, starting in week 5.

Final essay (3000 words), due in week 15, Thursday, May 14, 2026, midnight.

* **Please note: Graduating students** – Final essay due in week 14, Monday, May 4, 2026, 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 will receive feedback for their course work during and at the end of the semester. 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 (including presentations):	33 %
Screening Reports:	33 %
Final Essay:	34 %

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 organization of presentations and intensity of class discussions

Week 1

Introduction to Class, Film Studies/Cinema and Psychoanalysis (1)

No film screening in week 1!

Week 2

Introduction to Cinema and Psychoanalysis (2): The Imaginary Signifier
Basic ideas of Freud's Psychoanalysis

Freud (1962, John Huston)

The Student of Prague, Caligari, Shadows and Secrets of a Soul: Psychoanalysis in Early German Cinema (1920 – 1926)

Week 3

The Royal Road to a Knowledge of the Unconscious – Film and Dream
Perception and Representation – The Cinema Apparatus

The Woman in the Window (1944, Fritz Lang)

Week 4

God, Sex and Alienation: *The Silence* (1963, Ingmar Bergman)

Week 5

Triumph and Failure of Psychoanalysis: *Equus* (1977, Sidney Lumet)

Mystifying Movies: A Critique of Psychoanalytical Film Theory

Week 6

Scopophilia and Feminist Film Interpretation – The Male Gaze: *Peeping Tom* (1960, Michael Powell)

Week 7

Counter-Cinema: *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen)

Week 8

Dreams and (Feminist) Fairy Tales: *The Company of Wolves* (1984, Neil Jordan)

Week 9

“In Dreams I Walk With You ...”:
Blue Velvet (1986, David Lynch)
Lost Highway (1997, David Lynch)

Spring Break: March 30 – April 6, 2026

Week 10

Freud and Jung: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (1)
A Dangerous Method (2011, David Cronenberg)

No class on Monday, April 6, 2026!

Week 11

Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (2)
Steppenwolf (1974, Fred Haines)

Week 12

Freud's Last Session (2023, Matthew Brown)

Individuation and Archetypes: *Splash* (1984, Ron Howard)

Week 13

“It was murder”: *Malina* (1990, Werner Schroeter)

Week 14

Doppelgänger and other strange guests:
Enemy (2013, Denis Villeneuve)
Mother! (2017, Darren Aronofsky)

Final essay (3000 words) – **Deadline for graduating students:** Monday, May 4, 2026, midnight

Week 15: Completion Week (May 11 – May 15, 2026)

Final essay (3000 words), Deadline Thursday, May 14, 2026, midnight

* **Please note:** **Graduating students** – Final essay due in week 14, Monday, May 4, 2026, 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. "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 and 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.

Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body. Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University press, 1986.

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

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art. An Introduction*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 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.

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

de Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud's Drive. Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. Hounds Mills, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

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.

Freud, Sigmund. *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 24 Volumes. London: Vintage/Random House, 2001.

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

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, 2001.

Indick, William. *Movies and the Mind. Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film*. Jefferson/NC: McFarland & Company, 2004.

Jung, Carl Gustav, and Marie-Luise von Franz (eds.). *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Dell Publishing/Random House, 1968.

Jung, Carl Gustav. *The Essential Jung. Selected Writings*. Selected and introduced by Anthony Storr. London: Fontana Press/Harper Collins Publishers, 1998.

Jung, Carl Gustav. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Second Edition. London: Routledge, 1990.

Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.). *Psychoanalysis & Cinema*. New York/London: Routledge, 1990.

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

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

Lebeau, Vicky. *Psychoanalysis and Cinema. The Play of Shadows*. London/New York: Wallflower Press, 2001.

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. *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.

Münsterberg, Hugo. "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.

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.

Neu, Jerome (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Freud*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

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*. Hounds mills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Rosen, Philip (ed.). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Silverman, Kaja. The Acousitc Mirror. The female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.

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

Screening report No. 1: Week 3, Thursday, February 12, 2026, 1:45 pm.

Screening report No. 2: Week 8, Thursday, March 19, 2026, 1:45 pm.

Final essay: Week 15, Thursday, May 14, 2026, midnight.

* **Please note: Graduating students** – Deadline for final essay: Week 14, Monday, May 4, 2026, midnight.