

DRAM 5900/ 7900 (undergrad /grad)

Film Theory

SYLLABUS

Lecture: T/TH 11:00-11:15 in Room 53

Screening: TH 2:00-4:45 in Room 53

Instructor: Antje Ascheid

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Office Hours: Fine Arts Bldg., Room 262 C, T 2-4 pm; Th 10-11 pm or by appointment

Text Purchases

Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)

Leo Braudy, Marshall Cohen, eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*, 7th edition (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005)

All additional readings can be found on electronic reserve at the library. It is expected that you will have completed the reading by the first class meeting of each week AND come prepared with questions for discussion. Password: **theory**

Essays

The final paper (8-10 **typed** pages/2500-3000 words) requires you to write an analysis of one or more films, which relates the films' style and aesthetics to aspects of their formal, thematic and historical specificity. For this assignment paper topics will be handed out well ahead of time, though you may also choose your own topic if you clear it with me first.

Graduate Students

Graduate Students will write a longer final essay (15-20 pages) and must write a mid-term paper (10-12 pages) instead of the exam discussing two film theorists in a comparative analysis.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Quizzes	10%
Midterm	20%
Final Essay	35%
Final Exam	20%
Attendance and participation	10%
Presentation	5%

(more than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lower **overall** grade in the class, excessive absence WILL result in a **final grade** of F in the class)

Good writing skills are a must in this course. If you are not confident about your ability to craft a clearly written, articulate, well-organized essay, I will be happy to read drafts if they are submitted to me well ahead of the due date. **Plagiarism is a serious offense which can result in a failing grade for the class and expulsion from the university. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with footnotes.** Keep a hard copy of your essays and exam book until you have received a final grade for this class. **Please refer to:** http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm

The following outline for the semester may be subject to changes by the professor:

Week 1 (8/18; 8/20): Introduction

Reading: Stam: Introduction, The Beginnings, Early Silent Film Theory
Screening: *October* (Eisenstein, 1927)

Week 2 (8/25; 8/27): Classical formalist theory

Readings: Stam: The Essence of Cinema, The Soviet Montage Theorists, The Historical Avant-Gardes
In Braudy: Pudovkin, "On Editing" 7; Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot," "Dramaturgie of Film Form," 13, Arnheim, "Film and Reality," "The Making of a Film," 282, Balaz, "The Close-Up," "The Face of Man," 273.
Screening: *Umberto D.* (de Sica, 1952)

Week 3 (9/1; 9/3): Realism

Readings: Stam: The Debates after Sound, The Frankfurt School, The Phenomenology of Realism
In Braudy: Krakauer: "The Establishment of Physical Existence," 262; Krakauer, "Basic Concepts," 147; Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction, 665; Bazin, "From; What is Cinema?", The Ontology of the Photographic Image, The Myth of Total Cinema, 159.
Screening: *Only Angels Have Wings* (Hawks, 1939)

Week 4 (9/8; 9/10): Auteurism

Readings: Stam: The Cult of the Auteur, The Americanization of the Auteur Theory.
In Baudry: Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," 451, Wollen, "The Auteur Theory," 455.
Screening: *Top Hat* (Sandrich, 1935)

Week 5 (9/15; 9/17): Structuralism

Reading: Stam: The Advent of Structuralism, The Question of Film Language, Cinematic Specificity Revisited, Interrogation of Authorship and Genre
In Baudry: Metz, "Some Points in the Semiotics of the Cinema," 65; "Problems of Denotation in Fiction Film," 65; Harman, "Semiotics and the Cinema: Metz and Wollen," 78.
Screening: *La Chinoise* (Godard, 1976)

Week 6 (9/22; 9/24): Ideology

- Reading: Stam: 1968 and the Leftist Turn, The Classic Realist Text, The Presence of Brecht, The Politics of Reflexivity.
In Braudy: Commolli and Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," 686; Wood, "Ideology, Genre, Auteur," 592
- Screening: *Total Recall* (Verhoeven, 1990)

Week 7 (9/29; 10/1): Psychoanalysis

- Reading: Stam: From Linguistics to Psychoanalysis;
In Braudy: Metz: "Identification, Mirror," 694; "The Passion for Perceiving," "Disavowal, Fetishism," Baudry, "The Apparatus," 171; Carroll, "Jean-Louis Baudry and the *Apparatus*" 189.
- Screening: *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954)

Week 8 (10/6; 10/8): MIDERM ON 10/6; Feminism

- Reading: Stam: The Feminist Intervention
In Braudy: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 711; Modleski, "The Master's Dollhouse," 723; Cynthia Freedman, "Feminist Frameworks for Horror Films," 627.
- Screening: *The Brood* (Cronenberg, 1979)

Week 9 (10/13; 10/15): Applying Theory: Approaches to Film Genre

- Reading: In Braudy: Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," 552; Schatz, "Film Genre and the Genre Film," 564; Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, Excess," 602.
- Screening: *The Sheik* (Melford, 1921)

Week 10 (10/20; 10/22): Spectatorship

- Reading: Stam, The Birth of the Spectator.
In Braudy, Hansen, "Valentino and Female Spectatorship," 634; Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator," 862; Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," 892.
- Screening: *Unforgiven* (Eastwood, 1992)

Week 11 (10/27;10/29): Cultural Studies/ Postmodernism

- Reading: Stam: The Rise of Cultural Studies; The Post-structuralist mutation; The Poetics and Politics of Postmodernism
On e-reserve: Bennett, "Popular Culture and 'the Turn to Gramsci.'" (1986); Dick Hebdige, "Staking out the Posts." (1988)
In Braudy: Dyer, "From Stars," 48
- Screening: *Mildred Pierce* (Curtiz, 1945)

Week 12 (11/3; 11/5): Cognitive Studies and “Mid-Sized” Theory

Readings: On e-reserve: Bordwell, “Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory.” (1996); Carroll, “Prospects for Film Theory: A Personal Assessment.” (1996)
In Braudy: Bordwell, “Cognition and Comprehension : Viewing and Forgetting in Mildred Pierce,” 427.

Screening: *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991)

Week 13 (11/10; 11/12): Film and Emotion

Readings: Noel Carroll, “Film, Emotion and Genre” on e-reserve.
Greg Smith, “Film Structure and the Emotion System,” on e-reserve.

Screening: *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1999)

Week 14 (11/17; 11/19): Digitization and Globalization

Readings: In Braudy: Manovich. “Synthetic Realism and its Discontents,” 785; Friedberg, “The End of Cinema,” 802; Allen. “The Impact of Digital Technologies on Film Aesthetics,” 824; Whissel, “Tales of Upward Mobility,” 834.

Screening: **No Screening; Papers Due!**

Week 15 (11/24; 11/26): THANKSGIVING BREAK!!

Week 16 (12/1 12/3): Last Week of Classes -- Student Presentations

Final Exam: Monday 12/11 at 12:00-1:30 pm in Room 53