

D 27-2 Contemporary Film theory

Kleinhaus M 9-10, W 9-11, F 9-11

The goals of the course are:

1. To provide a basic introduction to some major trends and developments in post-Bazin, post-auteur film theory and criticism for people studying contemporary theory for the first time.
2. To provide the student with background in primary theoretical work (sometimes not dealing with film per se) which can be used to evaluate the validity of different theoretical positions.
3. Through lectures, some examination of specific films, and reading a sample of important and/or representative articles on film, to understand a variety of issues being developed and debated in recent theory.
4. To concentrate on three important and interrelated areas: marxism, particularly the concept of ideology; semiology, the linguistics-influenced science of communications; and psychoanalysis (Freudian psychology).

The ⁶ course will consist of lectures providing background and analysis, readings, films, and discussion aimed at clarifying and applying the lectures and readings. Required work includes active participation in discussion, one ten-page paper due at the end of the seventh week (May 13) which reflects the student's reading of two book-length related studies (suggestions to be supplied). Final essay: either written in class from topics given in advance or written paper applying the course to a specific film (group work is possible).

Contemporary Film Theory

Week One

introduction to course; overview of film theory since WW2; introduction to marxism and marxist ~~on~~ cultural theory.

Study (=read carefully, studying the argument and its details)

FOR WED
PR: Lenin, "Karl Marx" (article)
Lenin, "3 Sources and 3 Component Parts of Marxism" (article)
Marx-Engels, "Communist Manifesto"
Mao Tse-tung, "On Practice," "On Contradiction" (articles)

Read (=read quickly for the main points)

Hess, "La Politique des auteurs" (articles critiqueing autheur theory)

Week Two

marxist ~~concept~~ concept of ideology; Divide and Conquer as overt ideology; concept of ideology in art and mass culture

Film: Divide and Conquer (Why We Fight; Capra & Litvak, US, 43)

Study

Lefebvre, "Ideology and the Sociology of Knowledge"

Read

Marx-Engels, The German Ideology (1)

Week Three

critiques of dominant ideology; The Searchers as mainstream Hollywood film.

Film: The Searchers (Ford, 56)

Read

Adorno, "The Culture Industry"
Marcuse, "New Forms of Control" and "The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness" from One-Dimensional Man
Millet, Sexual Politics, (I & II)
Ward, "Super Fly: A Political and Cultural Condemnation by the Kuumba Workshop"
Newton, "He Won't Bleed Me: A Revolutionary Analysis of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song"

Week Four

realism and anti-realism: Brecht and Lukacs; Godard and Mosfilm-Paramount

Study:

Brecht, various essays from On Theatre

Read

Lukacs, Realism in our Time (I & II)
Wollen, "Counter Cinema: Vent d'est"

Contemporary Film Theory

Read (cont'd)

Lesage, "Wind From The East: Looking at a Political Film Politically"

Week five

ideology and form and content; Persona; form vs. content?; contradiction in reception

F

Film: Persona (Bergman, Sw. 68)

X Read

Comolli & Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" 1969

Kleinhans, "Contemporary Working Class Film Heroes"

Week six

Film Semiology; Citizen Kane as semiological text

Film: Citizen Kane (Welles, US 41)

Study

collective text, "Semiotics and Citizen Kane"

Metz, corresponding sections of Film Language

Kael, Citizen Kane Book

Week seven

Kane; semiology and realism

Read

Barthes, "Myth Today"

Mayne, "S/Z and Film Criticism"

Lesage, "S/Z and Rules of the Game"

Week eight

psychoanalysis and film; introduction to concepts, traditional Freudian interpretation of narrative; response

~~Read~~

Read

Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response

Bellour, essay on North By Northwest, depending on translation

Mulvey, "Narrative Cinema and Visual Pleasure"

Week nine

psychoanalysis: the example of comedy

Films: WR: Mysteries of the Organism (Makavejev, 71); Monkey business (extract)

Study

Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious (selections)

Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (selections)

Week ten

technology; comparison of applied criticism

Study

Eckert, "Marked Woman: Anatomy of a Proletarian Film"

Read

Contemporary Film Theory

Read (con'd)

Comolli, articles on technology (Film Reader 2?)

additional articles representing applied criticism: to be determined (eg Heath on Jaws; Biskind on ~~1975~~ Jaws)

Week eleven

summary; The Searchers reconsidered or discussion of a current commercial film.

inhans

Contemporary Film Theory--texts

Lenin, Lenin on Marx and Engels (Peking, Foreign Lang. Publishing) 50¢ (China Books)(Chicago)

Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto (Peking, For. Lang. Pub.) 35¢ (China Books)

Mao Tse-tung Four Essays on Philosophy (Peking, For. Lang. Pub.) 60¢ (China Books)

Marx and Engels The German Ideology (part one) (NY: International Publishers, New World Paperback) \$2.25

Lefebvre, Henri The Sociology of Marx (NY: Random House/Vintage Paperback) \$1.95

Millet, Kate Sexual Politics (NY: Avon paperback) \$2.25

Ward, Francis "Super Fly": A Political and Cultural Condemnation by the Kuumba Workshop
(Chicago: Institute of Positive Education, 7524 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago) 35¢

Brecht, Bertolt Brecht on Theatre ed. John Willet (NY: Hill and Wang paper) \$2.45

* Film Reader 1 \$2.50 Film Reader 2, \$3.00

Freud, Jokes and their relation to the Unconscious tr, Strachey (NY: Norton paperback) \$1.45

Holland, Norman The Dynamics of Literary Response (NY: Norton paperback) \$4.45

~~Matz, Christian Film Language (NY: Oxford U Press) \$10.95~~

* Kael, Pauline The Citizen Kane Book (NY: Little, Brown Paperback) \$4.95

Lukacs, Georg Realism in Our Time (NY: Harper Torch paperback) \$2.25

Jump Cut no. 4 (50¢) no 12/13 (\$1.00) (instructor will supply)

*(most students may already have this)

Adorno, Theodor W., "Culture Industry Reconsidered" in New German Critique no. 6, Fall 1975
pp 12-19.

Marcuse, Herbert. "The New Forms of Control" and "The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness:
Repressive Desublimation" in One-Dimensional Man pp. 1-18, 56-83.

Newton, Huey P. "He Won't Bleed Me: A Revolutionary Analysis of Sweet Sweetback's Baadass Song"
in To Die for the People 112-147

Volen, Peter "Counter Cinema: Vent d'est" in Afterimage (London) no. 4, Autumn 1972, pp 6-16.

~~Lesage, Julia "Wind From the East: Looking at a Political Film Politically" Jump Cut no 4, pp 18-21.~~

Hess, John "La Politique des auteurs" Jump Cut no 1 pp 19-22 and no 2 pp 20-22.

Kleinhans, Chuk "Contemporary Working Class Film Heroes" Jump Cut no. 2 pp 11-14

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Comolli, Jean-Luc, and Paul Narboni "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" Screen 12:1 (Spring 1971)
27-36; ~~19:2 (Summer 71) 145~~

Barthes, Roland. "Myth Today" ~~✶~~ In Mythologies 109-159.

Mulvey, Laura "Narrative Cinema and Visual Pleasure" Screen 16:3 (Autumn 75) 6-18

Bakhtin, Mikhail Rabelais and His World pp 1-24 (middle); 87 (bottom)-94 (middle); 115 (top)-116 (mid.);
275 (bottom)-277; 362 (top)-367; 473 (middle)-474.

Gardiner, Judith Kegan "Psychoanalytic Criticism and the Female Reader" Literature and Psychology
___100-107 (current issue - vol. and date to be supplied) VOL. 26, #3, December 1976

Eckert, Charles "Marked Woman: Anatomy of a Proletarian Film" Film Quarterly 17:2 (Winter 73-74)
10-24.

M...z, Christian Film Language pp 92-182

Bellour, Raymond essay on North by Northwest (awaiting translation from England).