School of the Arts and Media

ARTS3062

Aspects of Film History: Cinematic Thinking

SESSION 1, 2015

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Course Staff
Dr Lisa Trahair
Room 216, Level 2, Robert Webster
Phone: 9385-5011
Email: L.Trahair@unsw.edu.au
Consultation time: Tuesday 2pm-3pm. To see me at an alternative time contact me by email. I am not available on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Course Details
5 hours per week (1.5 hr lecture, 2 hour screening, 1.5 hr tutorial)
12 weeks
Lecture/Screening: Thursday 9.00am-12.30.00pm Webster 327
Tutorial: Webster 250, 1.00-2.30pm
6 Units of credit
Lectures and Tutorials commence in week 2

Assessment
1. Reading and Writing Exercise 1,500 words. Due Monday 13th April 4pm. 20% of final grade.
2. Individual Classroom Contributions 10% of final grade
3. Tutorial Facilitation 25% of final grade
4. Research Essay. Due Monday 15th June 4pm. 45% of final grade.

Course Texts
1. Weekly readings are available for download on Moodle
2. Texts to consider purchasing:

* In order to pass this course, you must make a serious attempt at ALL assessment tasks.

Course Description
This course introduces students to key developments in the history of film; it considers key theoretical issues in the examination of film histories, and perspectives, traditions and methods in the historiography of film. Through case studies and analysis of key texts and films, it highlights the role of film in modernity and its transformations. The course does not offer a comprehensive history but studies in key aspects of film in depth. In 2015 the course will take the turn to ‘film and philosophy’ as its point of departure and focus on the emergence of the question of cinematic thinking over the course of film history.
What you need to know

• FOR ALL SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES REGARDING APPLYING FOR EXTENSIONS, PLAGIARISM, ATTENDANCE, EXAMS AND DISCONTINUING YOUR STUDY CLICK ON THIS LINK:
  https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/

• SCHOOL OFFICE
  School of the Arts and Media
  Level 3, Robert Webster Building
  Email: empa@unsw.edu.au

• ATTENDANCE
  To pass this course you are required to attend at least 80% of lectures, screenings and tutorials. Attendance at lectures and tutorials will be recorded. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will be deemed not to have attended. Failure to meet attendance requirements will result in failure of the course.

• SUBMISSION OF WORK
  Research essays should be on the due date submitted in hard copy via the assignment drop boxes on Level 3 of the Robert Webster Building as well as uploaded to Turn-it-in on Moodle. Under no circumstances will your tutor accept work that is emailed to them.

• EXTENSIONS
  In the case of illness and misadventure you may apply to the Course Convenor for an extension of the due date. Work or family commitments, religious holidays or work due in other courses are not acceptable reasons for extension or Special Consideration requests. Evidence of significant progress in an assessment task must be demonstrated if asking for an extension due to emergency or illness close to the submission date. The extension procedure is as follows:
  • A student seeking an extension should apply through the Faculty’s online extension tool available in LMS before the due time/date for the assessment task.
  • The Course Convenor should respond to the request within two working days.
  • The Course Convenor can only approve an extension of up to five days. A student requesting an extension of more than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
  • The Course Convenor advises their decision through the online extension tool.
  • If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.
  • A student who missed an assessed activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.
  • This procedure does not apply to assessment tasks that take place during regular class hours or any task specifically identified by the Course Authority as not subject to extension requests.
  • For more information, see the FASS extension protocols on the SAM policies and guidelines webpage:
    https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/

• SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
  In the case of more serious or ongoing illness or misadventure, you will need to apply for Special Consideration. For information on Special Consideration please go to this URL:
  https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html
  Students who are prevented from attending a substantial amount of the course may be advised to apply to withdraw without penalty. This will only be approved in the most extreme and properly documented cases.

• LATE PENALTIES
  LATE WORK: PLEASE NOTE THAT NEW RULES APPLY FOR ALL COURSES IN SAM FROM 2012. If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 3% per day, including Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays will be imposed for up to 2 weeks. Your marks will be reduced by each day the essay is late. If it is not submitted within 2 weeks of the due date, it will receive 0 marks and you will be deemed to have failed.
Course Readings and Screenings

- Compulsory readings are asterisked

Week 2  Introduction: Film and Philosophy

Reading


Week 3  The Cinema of Attractions
19th March  Examples of Early Cinema

Reading


Week 4  Sergei Eisenstein, Sensuous Thinking and Intellectual Montage
26th March 十月: Ten Days that Shook the World (1928), 95 mins

Reading


Week 5  The affection-image
2nd April  Carl Theodore Dreyer *Ordet* (1955), 126 mins

Reading

* Rosenbaum, Jonathan, ‘Mise-en-scène as Miracle in Dreyer’s Ordet’.

EASTER BREAK 3rd–12th April

Week 6  The crisis of the action-image
16th April  Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window* (1954), 112 mins

Reading


Week 7  Italian neorealism
23rd April  Roberto Rossellini, *Germany Year Zero* (1948), 78 mins
Reading

Week 8  
Cinema and Modernism  
30th April  
Orson Welles, Citizen Kane (1941), 119 mins  
Reading  

Week 9  
The Spiritual Automaton  
7th May  
Lars von Trier Breaking the Waves (1996), 159 mins  
Reading  
(http://www.lacan.com/symptom14/?p=43)  

Week 10  
Film on Film (part 1)  
14th May  
Charlie Chaplin, City Lights (1931), 87 minutes; Douglas Sirk, The Magnificent Obsession (1954), 108 mins  
Reading  

Week 11  
Film on Film (part 2)  
21st May  
Lars von Trier, Dancer in the Dark (2000), 140 mins  
Reading  

Week 12  
Film and Ethics  
28th May  
Stanley Kubrick, Paths of Glory  
Reading  

Week 13  
Forms of Being  
4th June  
Terrence Malick, The Thin Red Line (1998), 170 mins  
Reading  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning outcomes assessed</th>
<th>Graduate attributes assessed</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Exercise</td>
<td>1500 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>• Identify major elements and developments in film history.</td>
<td>• An understanding of the aesthetic, technical, and cultural dimensions of film</td>
<td>4pm Monday 13th April</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The ability to recognise the different interpretive frameworks and value systems that inform understandings of film in various social and cultural discourses</td>
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<td>Individual classroom contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>• Identify major elements and developments in film history</td>
<td>• An understanding of the methods of analysis and thinking specific to the discipline of film studies</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>• Recognise and analyse a variety of film forms in their historical context</td>
<td>• The ability to link creative production with theoretical and critical knowledge</td>
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<td>• Work successfully in groups</td>
<td>• The organisational and communication skills required for effective and creative collaborative work</td>
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<td>• Demonstrate presentation skills and a high level of critical communication</td>
<td>• The skills to analyse and interpret written and audio-visual texts</td>
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<td>Collaborative tutorial facilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>• Identify major elements and developments in film history</td>
<td>• An understanding of the aesthetic, technical, and cultural dimensions of film</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>• The skills to analyse and interpret written and audio-visual texts</td>
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<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>2500 words</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>• Identify major elements and developments in film history</td>
<td>• A knowledge of the historical development of film as both a specific medium and as part of a constantly evolving media landscape</td>
<td>4 pm Monday 13th June</td>
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<td>• Utilise a variety of sources including print and visual to carry out independent research</td>
<td>• An understanding of the methods of analysis and thinking specific to the discipline of film studies</td>
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<td>• Demonstrate an ability to research, write and report clearly and effectively</td>
<td>• The ability to link creative production with theoretical and critical knowledge</td>
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<td>• The conceptual and organisational skills required to undertake self-directed learning</td>
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ASSESSMENT TASK 1
Reading Exercise: Key topics in Film Theory
Due Monday 13th April 4pm.
1500 words
20%

Your work must be submitted to both the school drop box on Level 3 of Webster Building and on
Turn it in by the due date.

Instructions
For this task students are asked to read the following texts, choose three of them and provide a 500 word
summary of each. The word limit for this exercise is strict and work that exceeds it will be heavily penalized.
   Cinema’ in The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments, ed. by Marc Furstenau, Abingdon: Routledge,
   2010.
5. Noël Carroll, ‘Prospects of Film Theory: A Personal Assessment’ in David Bordwell and Noël Carroll,
   Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

The reading exercise focuses on some of the most challenging readings in the course and aims to provide focus
in your reading. It will also help you to develop your skills in succinctly explaining the key features of an
argument. This is an important skill for essay writing. Assessment will be based primarily on your capacity to
comprehend the text. While you are invited to undertake critical evaluation, for this exercise such evaluation is
secondary to comprehension.

Comprehension: You will need to read each text at least three times. First, skim through it. Second, underline
key points. After your second reading note what you remember about the text and try to succinctly describe in a
couple of sentences its central argument. Then go back through the text carefully, locate the key ideas/concepts
and make sure you understand them. At this point, focus on the logic of the argument, noting how details
support that logic. Note how the argument is structured and identify its turning points. Pay particular attention
to the division of the work into sections and consider how each section comprises a significant component of
the argument. You may need to do more research on difficult terms in order to understand them.

Critical Evaluation: Where relevant, you might consider such questions as: Are there any gaps or oversights in
the argument? What are the ramifications of the argument? What theoretical/philosophical frameworks inform
the argument? What is it arguing against? What are the limitations or advantages of the perspective taken by the
author? How might this reading be of use in your own engagement with film? You may also respond to this last
question by briefly applying relevant concepts to your own film viewing experience.

Remember: This exercise requires you to be concise, so you must remain strictly within the word limit of 500
words. After having responded to the instructions above you will probably find that you have a lot more than
500 words for each text. Now you have to synthesise the main points while doing your best not to generalize
and not to diminish the nuance and sophistication of the text.

Assessment Criteria:
—Capacity to read carefully and understand complex theoretical scholarship
—Identification of the structure of the argument
—Identification of key ideas and concepts
—Presentation of assignment in a coherently written and grammatically and typographically correct form
—Consistent and thorough referencing of sources

* Note about referencing and formatting: A style guide will be made available on Moodle and students must
consult it in preparing their work for assessment. All work must be correctly formatted and referenced. Work
that is not so formatted and referenced will be returned to be fixed before it is marked and late penalties will
apply.
ASSESSMENT TASK 2

Individual classroom contributions
10%
Tutorials in this course will run like a reading group, where the group as a whole collectively undertakes to thrash out the complexity of thought evident in both the films watched in class and the weekly tutorial readings. Each week (except for the week you will be facilitating the tutorial) you will be required to undertake a group task coordinated by the facilitators. In most circumstances this will entail summarizing and commenting on part of the argument of the set tutorial reading. On some occasions it will also involve close formal analysis of part of the film screened that week. Your contribution will be marked on three separate occasions during the semester. Students will not know which weeks they will be assessed so it is important to come to class each week fully prepared.

Assessment criteria
— careful reading of the weekly tutorial reading
— identification of arguments and ideas presented in set readings
— critical evaluation of arguments and ideas presented in set readings
— application of ideas and concepts to specific examples

ASSESSMENT TASK 3

Group tutorial facilitation
25%
This assessment task will involve students co-ordinating the tutorial on one occasion and responding to individual classroom contributions. To prepare for this task students will meet with their group before the tutorial in order to identify how to dissect the set readings and which film sequences the class should focus on in trying to determine what is at stake in the film’s ‘thought’. It will also be the responsibility of the group to comment on shortcomings of individual contributions so that the arguments of readings are adequately identified and understood. The task will demonstrate your understanding of key issues and debates in the study of film history, engage you in the identification of key features of thinking about cinema and the philosophy of film. Because tutorials are only 90 minutes, time management will play a crucial role in successful facilitation.

Assessment Criteria
— demonstration of careful reading and listening
— demonstration of skills in independent and critical thinking
— understanding of key issues and debates in film history and cinematic thinking
— time management
— communication skills

ASSESSMENT TASK 4

Research Essay
2500 words
Due 4pm Monday 15th June
45%
Your work must be submitted to both the school drop box on Level 3 of Webster Building and on Turn it in by the due date. Students who want their work returned to them with comments must include a stamped self-addressed envelope with their submission.

The research essay is designed to evaluate both your understanding of the broader concerns of the course and your ability to focus on significant debates and issues. Essay questions will be distributed separately in Week 7. Marks will be assigned in relation to evidence of written, analytical and critical skills, the research undertaken and the formulation and coherence of the argument presented. Students who want their marked essays returned must included a stamped self-addressed envelope with submission of their work.
Bibliography


COURSE AIMS AND RATIONALE
This course will provide students with:
• understanding of key concepts and debates in film-philosophy and cinematic thinking as they have evolved historically
• knowledge of the history of film
• understanding of the significance of reflective thinking in film
• insight into how filmmakers participate in the history of ‘cinematic thinking’.

The course builds on material covered in ARTS1060 Introduction to Film and Level 2 Film Studies. It complements Film Styles and Aesthetics and other 300 level Film Studies courses.

Student learning outcomes
Students who complete the course should be able to:
• Identify major elements and developments in film history
• Recognise and analyse a variety of film forms in their historical context
• Utilise a variety of sources including print and visual to carry out independent research
• Demonstrate an ability to research, write and report clearly and effectively
• Work successfully in groups

Graduate Attributes
• A knowledge of the historical development of film as both a specific medium and as part of a constantly evolving media landscape
• An understanding of the aesthetic, technical, and cultural dimensions of film
• An understanding of the methods of analysis and thinking specific to the discipline of film studies
• Skills in scholarly research as applied to and appropriate for the field of film studies
• The ability to link creative production with theoretical and critical knowledge
• The ability to recognise the different interpretive frameworks and value systems that inform understandings of film in various social and cultural discourses
• The conceptual and organisational skills required to undertake self-directed learning
• The skills to analyse and interpret written and audio-visual texts

These attributes align with a number of the BA’s Graduate Attributes, in particular:
• The skills involved in scholarly enquiry
• The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem solving
• The ability to engage in independent and reflective learning
• Information Literacy – the skills to locate, evaluate and use relevant information
• The capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity
• An appreciation of, and respect for, diversity
• A capacity to contribute to, and work within, the international community
• The skills required for collaborative and multidisciplinary work
• An appreciation of, and a responsiveness to, change
• A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility
• The skills of effective communication

Students will be supported in developing the above attributes through:
• Course planning and documentation
• Varied assessment strategies
• Dynamic workshop exercises
• Learning and teaching strategies that include individual and group work
• Continued feedback and course evaluation

Teaching Strategies
• Film screenings provide the focus of the course and will take place each week after the lecture. Films have been selected in order to demonstrate how the recent turn to ‘film as philosophy’ is only the latest expression of the determination to understand the nature and stakes of ‘cinematic thinking’ that has existed since cinema’s invention. Films have been chosen in order to gauge cinema’s engagement of thought over the history of its development. In addition to examining films that philosophers have turned to in order to consider how film thinks, we will in the latter part of the course, view films whose themes have been developed by subsequent directors as a means of considering filmmakers as philosophers.
• Lectures are designed to provide a context for films screened. They will introduce you to key theorists of cinematic thinking, philosophers of film and film-philosophers and key concepts in the formulation of film as a mode of thought.
• Tutorials take the structure of a reading group. Tutorials are designed to ensure that students develop the capacity to think independently about the course material and come to class adequately prepared to discuss it. In addition to facilitating discussion in a designated week, students will be assessed on their participation in tutorials. For further details see Assessment Task 2.
• **Consultation** times are listed at the front of this course guide. Students are encouraged to see me either during these hours or by appointment to discuss the course in general, reading and writing exercises and essays. I am also available for more general discussion about the Film Major and Film Honours.

**Approaches to learning in the course**

The course **assists** student learning about cinema through the lecture program, set readings, the formulation of essay questions and the production of a course bibliography.

• **group learning** forms the basis of tutorial discussions where students are expected to learn from each other.
• **independent learning** is considered to have taken place when students a) undertake independent research either by examining a broader cluster of films than those listed in the course or ferreting out reference material not included in the bibliography b) develop their own point of focus in relation to the material under consideration and demonstrate its relevance to academic inquiry.

• students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials and to **take notes in both**. You are also encouraged to take notes either during or immediately after film screenings.
• students are expected to undertake **all asterisked readings** listed in the course program as a bare minimum. You are expected to undertake further reading for essays by consulting the course bibliography and through independent research.