University of St.Gallen

4,720: Views on Film. Critical Approaches to the Moving Picture

Subject information

ECTS-Credits: 4

Attached courses

Timetable	Language	Lecturer
4,720,1.00 Views on Film. Critical Approaches to the Moving Picture	**English**	**Loren Scott, Metelmann Jörg**

Course information

Course prerequisites

Working knowledge of English. Ability to actively participate in discussions.

Course content

Content:

This course will provide students with a thorough introduction to theory on film studies as outlined by Thomas Elsaesser in his seminal book: *Film Theory: An Introduction through the senses.*

We will consider topics ranging from the function of the frame as a device for guiding perspective and perception, to the technical, narrative and theoretical effects of mirroring devices, to the gaze and viewing positions as they relate to positions of power, on to notions of the Cartesian mind-body duality. We will consider films from the classical American cinema, such as Hitchcock's *Rear Window* and John Ford's *The Searchers*, as well as a range of modern classics like Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* and Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind*, ending with a consideration of digital cinema and animated films.

Methodology: The course will be based on five principal elements: a reader, lectures, screenings, presentations and discussions. Although the course content will be rooted in consideration of (1) the material shown and (2) the texts read (texts to be read in advance of the meeting indicated), this course's approach will primarily be an interactive one. The in-class display of visual material and any lecturing we do will be accompanied by thorough discussion. In order to additionally facilitate this, students are required to give a group presentation (the length of the presentations and the group sizes will depend upon the number of people that attend the course, but are expected to be approximately 30-40 minutes). At the beginning of the semester, students will be asigned a presentation topic in relation to the Elsaesser book that will serve as our course reader. The presentations will also be followed by a discussion. Each group will finally submit their presentation and their findings based on the discussion to us, and we will subsequently post these on StudyNet as part of the course content.

Goals: By the end of the course, students will not only be familiar with specific terminology and concepts central to aesthetics, critical theory, film and cultural studies; they will have developed a critical apparatus for understanding and for discourse on a broad range of visual and social narratives. They will have acquired the means for keener insight into contemporary visual works of art as well as into how such cultural artifacts can and should be viewed in a socio-political and ideological framework. Through the analysis of critical texts and theories on films studies and media theory, this course will offer Bachelor-students a feasible combination of theoretical impact and practice of interpretation, revolving around the central concepts Form, Content, Perception, Expectation, Creation, Objectivity-Subjectivity, Reception in the described field of cultural studies.

Course structure

A detailed program will be available on StudyNet. The course structure will be based on the following learning blocks:

- *Cinematic entry points:* frames, thresholds, mirrors
- *Cinematic sensation:* look, touch, sound
- *Embodied Cinema:* the camera as eye, the screen as mind, and the mind-body duality

- Select films to be considered: *Rear Window, The Searchers, Blade Runner, Silence of the Lambs, Eternal Sunshine*

of the Spotless Mind, Toy Story, Monsters Inc.

Note: Select film clips will be shown in class. Additional screenings/viewings will be made available outside of class time when necessary. Approximately ten meetings will include presentations.

Course literature

Thomas Elsaesser's *Film Theory: An introduction through the senses* (Taylor & Francis, 2010).

To be purchased in advance of the class.

Course additional information

Information about the Examination

Examination type

decentral - Presentation (in groups) (50%)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**
Answer language: **English**

decentral - Written examination (50%, 60 mins.)

Examination aids

Extended Closed Book

Examination aids may be used, but they must be exhaustively listed in the additional list of examination aids, which must also define whether the use of an extended pocket calculator is admissible. The following rules apply:

- A simple pocket calculator in accordance with the exhaustive list in the "Pocket calculators" fact sheet is admissible. In the additional list of examination aids it is defined whether the use of an extended pocket calculator (incapable of communication) is admissible. For the definition of the admissible pocket calculators , cf. general regulations concerning examination aids of 14 December 2010 and the "Pocket calculators" fact sheet. Any other EDP and electronic means of communication such as notebooks, PDAs and mobile telephones, etc., are inadmissible.
- A bilingual dictionary (without handwritten notes) may be used if the examination questions and/or answers are not in the candidate’s native language. Electronic dictionaries are inadmissible.
- The procurement of these examination aids (including pocket calculators) is exclusively the students’ responsibility.
- Only the examination aids listed in the additional list of examination aids are admissible.

Aids extension

Thomas Elsaesser's Film Theory: An introduction through the senses (Taylor & Francis, 2010).

Question language: **English**
Answer language: **English**

Examination content

The **presentations** are based on the course literature.

The **written exam** at the end of the seminar will be based on the literature, the discussions in class, and the films reviewed through the semester.

Exam-relevant literature

Thomas Elsaesser. *Film Theory: An introduction through the senses* (Taylor & Francis, 2010) and contents of course discussion.

Attention please:

We would like to point out to you that this fact sheet has absolute priority over other information such as StudyNet, faculty members’ personal databases, information provided in lectures, etc.

When will the fact sheets become binding?
Information about courses: from the start of the bidding process on 27 January 2011

Information about decentral examinations: after the 4th semester week on 21 March 2011
Information about central examinations: from the start of the enrolment period for the examinations on 11 April 2011

Please look at the fact sheet once more after these deadlines have expired.

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