

Fall 2022, Cinematic Modernisms
博雅 204

Instructor: Prof. Chang-Min Yu (于昌民, changmyu@ntu.edu.tw)

Class Meetings: 13:20-14:10 Monday, 15:30-17:10 Tuesday/ 14:20-16:10 Monday Screening

Office Hours: Email for appointment (You should!)

Office: NTU 3rd Graduate Dorm Room 436 (國青宿舍 436 室)

This class is an introduction to cinema and its multifarious relationship with the idea of modernity. Cinema is said to be the modern art *par excellence*. But what, if anything, does that entail? Almost every word in that sentence needs to be reexamined. Are we talking about cinema *the machinic apparatus* or cinema *the synthetic art*? If the former, how is it more modern than other technological arts? If the latter, how is it different than traditional arts? In other words, *what* is so modern about cinema? This is not to say we are sure about what the word modern means, for the fact that, as most humanities students would know by now, what is considered modern is oftentimes affectively intuitive rather than rigorously reasoned, its scope never properly delineated. In this inquiry, then, how should we unpack the contested definition of modernity and its many derivatives, such as modern, modernization, and modernism? Finally, we are also required to probe into the *kind* of relationship that is said to exist between cinema and modernity. Is their relationship temporal simultaneity, epochal reflection, or causal connection? These are the manifold questions this seminar seeks to untangle and answer.

To take this class, you should already be adept at film analysis. Without knowing what to look for in a film, it would be difficult to engage with a theoretical, and modernist, understanding of cinema. For each week, we'll spend an hour first to discuss a theoretical text before moving into how to understand a film in light of the proposed framework. For every session, each student will be assigned one or two pages from the text so they can take a *more* careful look at its argumentative construction. For each week, we'll have approximately *fifty* pages to read, plus a mandatory screening on Monday afternoon.

Course Requirements (% of Grade):

Times New Roman/Garamond/other standard fonts, 12 pts, double-spaced

30%—Class Presentations (Each 10%)

The student is expected to sign up for two weekly presentations. No slides needed. Three to four pages, written and distributed to the class before the session starts, summarizing one text that is slated for discussion that day. Prepare three unanswered questions to be discussed at the end of your presentation.

50%—Three Short Papers (Five pages; 15% each)

There are three short papers for this class. For the first paper, the student is required to pick *one sentence* out of the theoretical texts we have discussed and extrapolate its significance within the paragraph, the section, and the entire text. How does this particular sentence play a pivotal role

in the argument? Why does this theorist have to say things the way that he or she has done it? This is going to be more of a challenge than it seems, because you have to be concise and economical to make a good use of the space.

The second and third papers are to repeat the same exercise out of a list of ten selected texts NOT discussed in class. In other words, now you have to rely on yourself to figure out the intricacies of the theoretical arguments, though you are definitely welcome to see me during office hours to discuss possible issues.

The page limit is *non-negotiable*. To learn theory, one needs to be a *very careful* reader and writer.

20%—Class Participation

Scale:

93-100 – A+, 90-93 – A, 87-90 – A-, 84-87 – B+, 81-84 – B, 78-81 – B-, 75-78 – C+, 72-75 – C, 69-72 – C-

This is in general *stricter* than the scale provided by NTU. I will curve your grades accordingly at the end of the semester.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (9/5, 9/6): Many Modernities and Many Modernisms

M: Course Introduction

T: Henrich Wolfflin, “Conclusion,” *Principles of Art History* (1915)

Michael Baxandall, “Introduction,” “The Historical Objects,” *Patterns of Intention* (1985)

Invited Speaker Pao-chen Tang, Lecturer (equiv. Assistant Professor in the US system) in Film and Media at the University of Sydney.

Screening: *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936)

Week 2 (9/12, 9/13): André Bazin, the “Founding Father”

M: André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”

T: André Bazin, “Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation”

Screening: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)

Week 3 (9/19, 9/20): *La Nouvelle Vague*

M: Michel Marie, “A Technical Practice, An Aesthetic,” *The French New Wave* (2003)

(Please refer to “A Critical Concept” as well).

T: *Cahier du Cinéma* roundtable, “Hiroshima, notre amour” (1959)

Screening: *Nuit et Brouillard* (1956), *Hiroshima, mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959)

Week 4 (9/26, 9/27): Delineating Modernism

M: András Bálint Kovács, “Theorizing Modernism” *Screening Modernism* (2008)

(Please refer to “Theories of the Classical/Modern Distinction in Cinema” as well).

T: Susan Sontag and Garrett Stewart on *Persona*

Screening: *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966)

Week 5 (10/3, 10/4): Modernist Reading of the Apparatus

First Assignment Due

M: Jean-Louis Baudry, “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus” (1974)

Christian Metz, “Trucage and the Film” (1977)

T: *Cahier du Cinéma* roundtable on *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939)

Screening: *Young Mr. Lincoln* (John Ford, 1939)

Week 6 (10/11): Gilles Deleuze and Film Historiography

M: Double Ten!

T: Gilles Deleuze, excerpts from *Cinema 1* (1980), Paola Marrati, excerpts from *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze, excerpts from *Cinema 2* (1983)

Screening: *Blow-up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966)

Week 7 (10/17, 10/18): Modernist Propagation or Colonization?

M: Frederic Jameson, “Remapping Taipei,” *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics* (1996)

W: James Tweedie, “The Urban Archipelago,” *The Age of New Waves* (2014)

Screening: *Boys from Fengkuei* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1983)

Week 8 (10/24, 10/25): Colonial Modernity

M: Takeuchi Yoshimi, "What Is Modernity?" (1948), Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique" (1989)

W: Chang-Min Yu, "Corpo-reality in the Hong Kong New Wave," *Beyond Imperial Aesthetics*

Screening: *Dangerous Encounter: First Kind* (Tsui Hark, 1980)

Week 9(10/31, 11/1), Beyond Art: Cultural and Ontological Modernity

M: Stanley Cavell, excerpts from *The World Viewed* (1979),

T: Charles Taylor, "Two Modernities," Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

Screening: *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929)

Week 10 (11/7, 11/8), Cinema and Modernity: An Entanglement

Second Assignment Due

M: Tom Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions," "An Aesthetic of Astonishment"

T: Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of Senses," Siegfried Kracauer, "Mass Ornament"

Screening: *The General* (Buster Keaton, 1926)

Week 11 (11/14, 11/15), Early 20th Century: Multimedia Modernist

M: David Trotter, "D. W. Griffith," *Cinema and Modernism* (2007)

T: Julian Murphet, "Towards a Media Theory of Modern Poetics", from *Multimedia Modernism* (2009)

Screening: *After Many Years* (1908), *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), *Enoch Arden* (1911), *The Lonedale Operator* (1911)

Week 12 (11/21, 11/22), Modernist History (I)

M: Zhang Zhen, "Vernacular Modernism and Cinematic Embodiment," *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen* (2005)

T: Jacqueline Stewart, excerpts from *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (2005)

Screening: *Laborer's Love* (Zhang Shichuan, 1922), *Within Our Gates* (Oscar Micheaux, 1920)

Week 13 (11/28, 11/29), Modernist History (II)

M: Diane Wei Lewis, “Great Kanto Earthquake Documentary Films and the State,” *Power of the Real: Cinema, Gender, and Emotion in Interwar Japan* (2019)

T: David Bordwell, excerpts from *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (1988)

Screening: *Ohayo* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1959)

Week 14 (12/5, 12/6), Modernity Thesis

M: Ben Singer, “Meanings of Modernity,” *Melodrama and Modernity* (2000)

T: David Bordwell, “Feuillade, or Storytelling,” *Figures Traced in Light* (2005)

Week 15 (12/12, 12/13), Modernist Sense and Sensibility

Final Assignment Due

M: Jonathan Crary, excerpts from *Techniques of the Observer*, James Lastra, excerpts from *Sound Technology and American Cinema* (2000)

Recommended Reading(s):

Margaret Atherton, "How to Write the History of Vision" (1999)

André Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language" (1958)

Steven Neale, "Art Cinema as an Institution" (1981)

Mary Louis Pratt, "Modernity and Periphery" (2002)

Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Acinema" (1978)

Jacques Rancière, "From One Image to Another? Deleuze and the Ages of Cinema," *Film Fables* (2006)

D. N. Rodowick, "The Discourse of Political Modernism," *The Crisis of Political Modernism* (1992)

COURSE POLICIES**Laptops and Electronic Devices**

Laptops and tablets etc. are not permitted in this class, with one exception: students with a letter attesting to their need to take typed notes. These uses will be approved once the necessary written documentation has been provided. All electronic devices should be silenced and put away before class begins. Violators should come in front of the class to sing a song, karaoke-style if you wish.

Attendance and Participation

Class participation is an essential component of this course. A significant amount of class time will be spent discussing your responses to the readings. You are expected to prepare and bring each week's readings to class as indicated on the syllabus. This means annotating the readings and preparing comments and/or questions to share with the class. In assessing your participation grade, I will consider the frequency and quality of comments made during the discussion sessions.

Writing Requirement

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, and proofread (not just spell-checked). Quality of ideas obviously matters, but so do spelling, grammar, and clear, coherent expression. Papers must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the date they are due.

Late Policy

Please turn in all assignments on time. Late assignments will be accepted up to three days after the due date—on NTU COOL—but there is a penalty of half a letter grade for every 24 hour period the paper is late. No credit will be given for assignments that are four or more days late. Reasonable requests for extensions will be considered in advance of the deadline or in case of emergency only. You must turn in every assignment and take both exams in order to pass this course.

Academic Integrity

All written work submitted for this class must be your own, original work. Do not copy other students' work or reproduce the writing or ideas of other scholars without proper acknowledgment. Do not submit work you have prepared for other courses. There will be no tolerance of cheating or plagiarism: all such incidents will be submitted for review by the College of Liberal Arts. Violation of the academic integrity policy may result in an F for the course.