

Instructor: Tien-Tien Jong Zhang
tientien@uchicago.edu
Department of Cinema and Media Studies
University of Chicago
Cobb Hall 307

Course Assistant: Maria Sommers
msomm@uic.edu
Summer Session Pre-College Immersions
Mon-Fri., 9:00-11:30am & 1:00-3:00pm

Cinema, Media & Society: A Global Survey **[CMST 17200-94]**

Course Description

This course has been designed as an introduction to developing the skills in perception, command, and interpretation relevant and unique to the analysis of documentary/non-fiction film, commercial narrative cinemas, and serialized animation, through the study of moving image media forms from around the world. It will expose you to a wide range of industries, cinemas, and formats (including personal essay films, Hollywood and Bollywood features, and East Asian animation), and how to discuss these forms in relation to one another. The class encourages the close analysis of camera techniques, materials, compositing, and formal attributes, and explores a range of questions pertaining to the production, distribution, and consumption of these audiovisual forms. It also examines the intellectual structures basic to the systematic study and understanding of both film and animation studies as they relate to cultural critique. This course includes special visits and the use of resources specific to the University of Chicago campus, such as the Smart Museum of Art, Logan Center screening room and projection booth, Film Studies Center's special collections, and the Weston Games Lab.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Become familiar with scholarship on cinematic form, film style, animation, and visual analysis of images
- Understand and use the terminology of film analysis and animation
- Describe sequences from classic and contemporary film and media using close analysis
- Recognize filmmaking styles, lineages, and techniques across various eras and filmmaking contexts and incorporate these observations into analytical writing
- Develop conversational fluency relating to issues of representation, the culture industry, art and society through discussion-intensive, seminar-style learning

Assignments and Evaluations

1) Attendance and Participation (60%):

Students are expected to attend all class sessions except in cases of emergencies and illness. Participation includes completing assigned readings in advance, willing and

thoughtful participation in classroom discussions and group exercises, and focused attention during in-class activities and screenings.

We recommend that students keep a daily journal as a supplement to their note-taking after each day's class, in which they should a) record their reactions, thoughts, and questions regarding the assigned films, and b) respond to the insights and questions of their classmates. (Our goal is for this log to be a personal space for your reflections on the topics covered in class; we will not require you to show us your journal if you do not wish to do so.)

Here are some general categories students may consider while reading the primary texts/films and when noting down responses after finishing engaging with assigned materials. These categories are meant to help articulate and organize your thoughts (but students do not have to limit themselves only to these categories):

- 1) purpose and meaning
- 2) materials, style, and film form
- 3) narrative strategy and structure or composition
- 4) narrative voice
- 5) representations of identity, gender, nationality, culture, and moments in history
- 6) your questions about the text/film

2) Segment Analysis Charts (10% each, 2 total):

Work both in small groups & solo to annotate & complete a formal analysis of a segment from an assigned film.

3) Drawing in One-Point Linear Perspective (10%):

Complete a drawing of any landscape or view on campus or in Hyde Park, along with a photograph of the same landscape. Supplement with a written reflection on your results, in conversation with arguments from Bazin's "Ontology" essay.

4) Final Projects (10%):

Details will be provided in class.

Technology Policy and Classroom Protocol:

Students are expected to demonstrate active and respectful participation during classtime. With these interests in mind, recreational computer use, texting, and other electronic communications besides Canvas, and other course-assigned platforms are not allowed during class time.

Week I: Making Images Move

Day 1: Mon.

Introduction & in-class writing exercise: how would you define the terms “cinema” and “animation”? How can you tell that what you are seeing is a “film” or a “cartoon”? What other sorts of “moving images” do you encounter that you would NOT consider either “film” or “animation”?

- In-Class Reading: Maxim Gorky, “In the Kingdom of Shadows”

Screening:

Films by Lumière Brothers (1895, 1m each):

Workers Leaving the Factory

Card Party

The Baby's Meal

The Sprinkler Sprinkled

Arrival of a Train

Destruction of a Wall

The Big Swallow (James Williamson, 1901, 1m)

Electrocuting an Elephant (Edwin S. Porter & James Blair Smith, 1903, 1m)

The Magic Lantern (Georges Méliès, 1903, 5m)

Gertie the Dinosaur (Winsor McCay, 1914, 12m)

Lyman H. Howe's Famous Ride on a Runaway Train (Lyman H. Howe, 1921, 6m)

Waltz w/ Bashir (Ari Folman, 2008, 90m)

Day 2: Tues.

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

Screening:

Prints from the Film Studies Center's collection: *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962, 29m, 35mm

English version from FSC's collection); *The Best of Walt Disney's True-Life Adventures* (James Algar, 1975, 89m) –16mm print from FSC collection

Day 3: Wed.

- Read: **Christian Metz**, “On the Impression of Reality in the Cinema”
- **Chris Woodford**, “35mm Film Cameras”: <https://www.explainthatstuff.com/how-film-cameras-work.html>

Screening:

Remedial Reading Comprehension (Owen Land, 5m, 1970)

Ulysses (Agnès Varda, 1982, 22m)

“FUN!,” Vince Staples (music video dir. By Calmatic, 2018)

Take Off (Gunvar Nelson, 1972, 10m)

Gimme Shelter (Albert and David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, 1970, 91m)

Thurs. No Class (university holiday in observance of Juneteenth)

Day 4: Fri.

Reflections & Review of Concepts from Week 1 of the Course

Week II: Classic Hollywood, Modern Bollywood & Virtual RealitiesDay 5: Mon.

Editing Patterns: Continuity, Montage, and Chaos (Part I)

Watch before class:

Moviola demo: <https://vimeo.com/117756839>

Steenbeck demo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUxbfiZ_-9Y

Read:

- **Karel Reisz**, *The Technique of Film Editing*, 179-81
- Read: **Leo Brandy**, “Frame and Context,” from *The World in a Frame*
- **Stanley Cavell**, “Photograph and Screen,” from *The World Viewed*

Screening:

Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960, 109m)

Day 6: Tues.**Screening:**

Refugee (Spencer Nakasako, 2003, 60m)

- Guest Lecture: **Carson Wang**, MAPH, University of Chicago; Masters thesis: “Why Were There No Great Asian American Filmmakers in Chicago?”

Day 7: Wed.

- Selected Excerpts from **Ulka Anjaria**, *Understanding Bollywood: The Grammar of Hindi Cinema*

Screening:

Sairat (Nagraj Manjule, 2016, 174m)

Day 8: Thurs.

- Read: George Eastman Museum, “Dye Transfer Printing” (with streaming video): <https://www.eastman.org/technicolor/technology/dye-transfer-printing/>
- Murray Pomerance, “The Color of Our Eyes”
- Scott Higgins, *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow*, 22-47
- Tom Gunning, “Applying Color: Creating Fantasy of Cinema”

Screening:

La Cucaracha (Lloyd Corrigan, 1934, 20m)

Bigger Than Life (Nicholas Ray, 1956, 95m, 35mm)

- Booth Tours: **Benjamin Ruder**, Manager of Film & Technical Operations for the Film Studies Center at the University of Chicago; Founder of Enjoy the Film: A 35mm Trailer Archive Project

Day 9: Fri.

Reflections & Review of Concepts from Week 2 of the Course; Topics in New/Digital Media (Maria)

Screening:

Grand Theft Hamlet (Pinny Grylls & Sam Crane, 2024, 89m)

Week III: Scale, Spectacle, AnimationDay 10: Mon.

- **Elisabeth Weis**, “Sync Tanks: The Art and Technique of Postproduction Sound”
- **Béla Belázs**, excerpt on “Sound” from *Theory of the Film*

Day 11: Tues.

Editing Patterns: Continuity, Montage, and Chaos (part II)

Watch before class:

Mattias Stork, “Chaos Cinema” video essay

Part I: <https://vimeo.com/28016047>

Part II: <https://vimeo.com/28016704>

Tony Zhou, “Every Frame a Painting: Michael Bay—What Is Bayhem?”:

<https://youtu.be/2THVvshvq0Q>

Lindsay Ellis, “*Transformers* and Film Studies: The Whole Plate” Ep. 3 “Why Is It So Hard to Remember What Happens in *Transformers*?”: <https://youtu.be/aE-6M7IbNSI>

Read: **David Bordwell**, “Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film”

Screening:

Sink Or Swim (Su Friedrich, 1990, 48m)

Island of Flowers (Jorge Furtado, 1989, 13m)

I Remember Dancing (Nguyen Tan Hoang, 2019, 5m)

Love Is the Message, the Message Is Death (Arthur Jafa, 2017, 7m)

- **Field Trip, 1:00-3:00pm; Visit: Exhibitions at the Smart Museum of Art (workshop on visual analysis)**

Day 12: Wed.

- Read: **Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston**, “The Principles of Animation”

- Selections from **Tom Lamarre**, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*

- Selections from *The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies*

Screening:

Pica-Don (Renzo Kinoshita, 1978, 8m)

Sailor Moon (ep. 1)

Puella Magi Madoka Magica (ep. 1-4)

Interactive cinema: *I’m Your Man* (Bob Bejan, 1992, 20m)

Field Trip, 1:00-3:00pm; Visit: Weston Games Lab for a demonstration of sports videogames & media

Day 13: Fri.

Read: William Paul, “The Aesthetics of Emergence”

****Special 3D Screening in Logan 201!****

3-D Rarities Shorts program:

Kelley’s Plasticon Pictures (1922-23, 8m)

William T. Crespinel/Jacob Leventhal tests (1924-27, 6m)

John Norling/ Jacob Leventhal tests (1935, 3:25)

The Maze trailer (1953, 2:16)

They Shall Not Grow Old 3D (Peter Jackson, 2018, 99m)

Course Conclusions, Reflections & Presentation of Final Projects

Other Important Notes:

Accessibility Statement:

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, would like to seek an accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, you are encouraged to contact or register with Student Disability Services. The SDS office can be reached at 773-834-4469/TTY; 773-795-1186 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit the website at disabilities.uchicago.edu. SDS is located on-campus in Room 233 in the Administration Building, at 5801 S. Ellis Avenue.

(If I can make adjustments to better facilitate your full participation in this course, please let me know! I invite you to initiate these kinds of conversations, whether you have a Letter of Accommodations or not. Disclosure of disability status is always up to you, and that is a legally protected right. If you prefer not to disclose your status, we can still have a productive conversation about what specific adjustments might make our meetings and interactions more accessible for you!)

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

The online Student Manual of University Policies and Regulations states: “it is contrary to justice, to academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit the statements or ideas of work of others as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses

undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source (such as ChatGPT or other A.I.) is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website, search prompt and date accessed.” If you have other questions about the university’s policy on academic honesty, consult the student manual here: <http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu>.

REPRESENTATIVE SYLLABUS