COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 210

SPECIAL TOPIC: WORLD CINEMA

UC Davis, Fall 2010
CRN: 56633

Time and location:
Wednesday 4:10-7:00 pm, 203 Wellman

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Course Description
This course examines "world cinema" as a concept, as a critical discourse, and above all as the practices of diverse cinematic traditions of the world. We will also tackle related categories of contemporary film studies such as "national cinema," "transnational cinema," "third cinema," and "third-world cinema." Comparative case studies will be drawn from countries and regions from around the world: Africa, Russia, Germany, China, Hong Kong, as well as the postcolonial Francophone world. As we look at some pivotal moments in world film history, we will also raise broad issues in current film studies such as globalization, diaspora, cinematic style, national identity, visual culture, and film industry.

Course Requirements
Each student is required to present an oral report in class (about 25 minutes), and write a research paper (minimum 12 pages) at the end of the quarter. For the in-class presentation, the student is expected to hand out useful information to fellow classmates about the subject (filmography, bibliography, brief notes about a film, a film artist, a critic, a book, a theoretical issue, etc.), and hand in a written 2-page summary to the instructor at the end of the presentation. Students should maintain steady class attendance, have the assigned materials read for each meeting, and be prepared for class discussion.

Textbook
A Course Reader to be purchased at Davis Copy Shop.

Related Event
An international conference “Space and Time in Chinese-Language Cinema” will be held at UC Davis, Nov. 5 & 6 (Friday-Saturday), 2010, in Olson 6 and 53A. It is free and open to the public. Please attend if you are interested.
SYLLABUS

Week 1
9/29
Introduction. Setting the Key Terms
Film:
  • *Irma Vep* (Olivier Ossayas, France/Hong Kong, 1996)

Week 2
10/6
Theories and Phases of World Cinema. Vernacular Modernism on a Global Scale
Reading:
  • Stephanie Dennison and Song-hwee Lim. “Situating World Cinema as a Theoretical Problem.”
  • Miriam Hansen. “Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism.”
Films:
  • *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927)
  • *City Lights* (Charlie Chaplin, USA, 1931)
  • *Goddess* (Wu Yonggang, China, 1934)

Week 3
10/13
National Cinema, Nation-Building, Nationalism
Reading:
  • Andrew Higson. “The Concept of National Cinema.”
  • Stephen Crofts. “Concepts of National Cinema.”
Films:
  • *The Birth of a Nation* (D. W. Griffith, 1915).
  • *Broken Blossoms* (D. W. Griffith, 1919).
  • *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, Algeria, 1966)

Week 4
10/20
International Film Aesthetics: Montage, Documentary Realism, Long Take, Brechtian Self-Reflexivity, Classical Hollywood Continuity Editing, and Others
Reading:
- Sergei Eisenstein. “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form.”
- David Gillespie. “Dziga Vertov and Life ‘Caught Unawares.’”

Films:
- Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Union, 1926)
- The Man with a Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, Soviet Union, 1929)
- Katzelmacher (R. W. Fassbinder, West Germany, 1969)
- Still Life (Jia Zhangke, China, 2006)

Week 5
10/27
Third Cinema, Third-World Cinema, Accented Cinema, Transnational Cinema
Reading:
- Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden. “General Introduction: What is Transnational Cinema?”

Films:
- The Hour of the Furnaces (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, Argentina, 1968)
- Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee, USA, 1989)

Week 6
11/3
Case Study: German Cinema, Postsocialism, “Ostalgie”
Reading:
- Ulrike Sieglohr. “New German Cinema.”
- Anton Kaes. “History, Fiction, Memory: Fassbinder’s The Marriage of Maria Braun (1979).”
- Jennifer M. Kapczynski. “Negotiating Nostalgia: The GDR Past in Berlin Is in Germany and Good Bye, Lenin!”

Films:
- Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (R. W. Fassbinder, West Germany, 1973)
- The Marriage of Maria Braun (R. W. Fassbinder, West Germany, 1979)
- Goodbye Lenin (Wolfgang Becker, Germany, 2002)

Week 7
11/10
Case Study: Contemporary Russian Cinema, Post-Soviet Cinema
- Svetlana Boym. “Introduction.”
• Svetlana Boym. “Chapter 6, Nostalgia and Post-Communist Memory.”
Films:
• Burnt by the Sun (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1994)
• Brother (Aleksei Balabanov, Russia, 1997)
• Thief (Pavel Chukhrai, Russia, 1997)

Week 8
11/17
Reading:
• David Murphy. “Africans Filming Africa: Questioning Theories of an Authentic African Cinema.”
• Wimal Dissanayake. “Issues in World Cinema.”
• Rosanna Maule. “The Dialectics of Transnational Identity and Female Desire in Four Films of Claire Denis.”
Films:
• Xala (Ousmane Sembene, Senegal, 1975)
• Touki Bouki (Djibril Diop Mambety, Senegal, 1973)
• Chocolat (Claire Denis, France, 1984)

Week 9
11/24
Case Study: Asian Cinema, Chinese Cinema, Hong Kong Cinema
Reading:
• Anne T. Ciecko. “Theorizing Asian Cinema(s).”
• Freda Freiberg. “Japanese Cinema.”
• Sheldon Lu. “Historical Introduction: Chinese Cinemas (1896-1996) and Transnational Film Studies”
Films:
• Tokyo Story (Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1953)
• In the Mood for Love (Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 2000)
• Rumble in the Bronx (Stanley Tong/Jackie Chan, Hong Kong, 1995)

Week 10
12/1
Chinese-Language Cinema in a Global Frame; Course Review
Reading:
• Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yeh. “Mapping the Field of Chinese-Language Cinema.”
Films:
• The World (Jia Zhangke, China, 2004)
Course Reader

Contents


• Sergei Eisenstein. “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form.” From Film Theory and Criticism, pp. 101-122.


