COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 210

SPECIAL TOPIC: WORLD CINEMA

UC Davis, Fall 2014

Thursday, 2:10-5:00 pm, Wellman 201

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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,” “global cinema,” “third cinema,” “third-world cinema,” and postcolonial cinema. Comparative case studies will be drawn from countries and regions from around the world: Africa, Russia, Germany, France, China, and Hong Kong. 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. Students will examine the ideas, practices, and styles of a variety of filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, R. W. Fassbinder, Jean-Luc Godard, Yasujiro Ozu, Gillo Pontecorvo, Wong Kar-wai, Jia Zhangke, Zhang Yimou, Ousmane Sembene, Claire Denis, and many others. Students will also read the theoretical and critical writings of Walter Benjamin, Dudley Andrew, Miriam Hansen, Hamid Naficy, Svetlana Boym, Anton Kaes, and so on.

Course Requirements
Each student is required to present an oral report in class (about 25 minutes), and write a research paper 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.
SYLLABUS

Week 1
10/2
Introduction. Setting the Key Terms.
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.”
Films:
- *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927)
- *City Lights* (Charlie Chaplin, USA, 1931)
- *Goddess* (Wu Yonggang, China, 1934)
- *Irma Vep* (Olivier Ossayas, France/Hong Kong, 1996)

Week 2
10/9
National Cinema, Nation-Building, Nationalism
Reading:
Films:
- *Triumph of the Will* (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935).
- *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, Algeria, 1966)

Week 3
10/16
International Film Aesthetics: Montage, Documentary Realism, Long Take, Brechtian Self-Reflexivity, Classical Hollywood Continuity Editing
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 4**  
10/23  
*Third Cinema, Third-World Cinema, Accented Cinema, Transnational Cinema, Neorealism*  
Reading:  
• Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino. “Towards a Third Cinema.”  
• Hamid Naficy. “Situating Accented Cinema.”  
• Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden. “General Introduction: What is Transnational Cinema?”  

Films:  
• *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, Argentina, 1968)  
• *Xala* (Ousmane Sembene, Senegal, 1975)  
• The influence of Neo-realism on Third-World Cinema, *The Bicycle Thief* (Vittorio De Sica, Italy, 1948)

**Week 5**  
10/30  
*Case Study: New German Cinema, Postsocialism, “Ostalgie”*  
Reading:  
• Ulrike Sieglohr. “New German Cinema.”  
• Anton Kaes. “History, Fiction, Memory: Fassbinder’s *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979).”  

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 6
11/6
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 7
11/13
Reading:
  • David Murphy. “Africans Filming Africa: Questioning Theories of an Authentic African Cinema.”
  • Wimal Dissanayake. “Issues in World Cinema.”
Films:
  • *La Chinoise* (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1969)
  • *Touki Bouki* (Djibril Diop Mambety, Senegal, 1973)
  • *Chocolat* (Claire Denis, France, 1984)

Week 8
11/20
Case Studies: Asian Cinema, Japanese Cinema, Cinema at the Periphery
Reading:
  • Anne T. Ciecko. “Theorizing Asian Cinema(s).”
  • Freda Freiberg. “Japanese Cinema.”
  • Dina Iordanova. “Rise of the Fringe: Global Cinema’s Long Tail.”
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)

11/27  Thanksgiving Day, no class
Week 9
12/4

Chinese-Language Cinema in a Global Frame; Course Review

Reading:
- Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yeh. “Mapping the Field of Chinese-Language Cinema.”

Films:
- Selected films of Zhang Yimou and Jia Zhangke
Course Reader


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


