

Cinema and Subjectivity: Sensation, Spectacle, and Self (LTMO 125J)

This lecture course will exam the ways in which the technological and institutional practices of cinema construct, hail, project, and/or assume different types of subjectivity among real and imagined film viewers. We will survey important film forms (narrative film, documentary, ethnographic film), international movements (Italian Neo-Realism, French New Wave, Iranian New Wave), and genres (primarily art film and horror) in order to develop a nuanced sense of the kinds of sensoria, senses of self, and forms of spectatorship films have fostered, impeded, ignored, or anticipated over the past century.

Instructor

Dr. Erik Bachman, ebachman@ucsc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12-1PM, Stevenson Café

Teaching Assistants

Trey Highton
Matt Landry

Lectures

TTh, 10-11:45AM, Social Sciences 1, Room 110

Sections

01A Thursdays, 6-7:10PM, Kresge Classroom 323
01B Thursdays, 7:30-8:40PM, Kresge Classroom 323

Film Screenings (Required)

Tuesdays, 6-9PM, Humanities 3, Room 206 (Humanities Lecture Hall)

Supplemental Film Series (Not Required)

Wednesdays, 7-10PM, Stevenson 150

Required Text

Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*

This text is available at the Literary Guillotine (204 Locust Street, Santa Cruz, CA).

Requirements

1. Regular attendance at lectures, required film screenings, and sections; students are also expected to keep up with the readings assigned. Roll will be taken regularly at lectures, sections, and Tuesday night film showings. Since McHenry Library does not have the facilities to serve large numbers of individual film viewers and repeated handling of the DVDs eventually wears them out, attendance at film screenings on Tuesdays is required. There are other, more substantive reasons for this requirement: the majority of the films we will study in this course were made before the video and digital era and thus were meant to be seen under theatrical conditions. A certain size of the image is

essential for a proper appreciation of the address these movies make to the body. I could go on. **More than FOUR unexcused absences** during the quarter (this includes all lectures, Tuesday night film screenings, and section meetings) **will be grounds for failing this course.**

2. Because this course asks you to reflect upon the dynamic relationships effected between films and the subjectivities of their viewers, active reading, viewing, and note-taking are essential to drafting cogent and insightful essays for this course. To that end, students will be asked to **keep a journal (a material one, not a digital one)** in which they record the questions, arguments, problems, and insights that come up in the course of viewing the course films and completing the reading assignments. Treat your journal as an opportunity to engage the course materials in a conversation and to reflect upon your writing/thinking process. **Your journal should be brought to every class and should include (at least) three questions and three observations regarding each class session's assigned readings and each week's assigned film(s).** Journals will also be used for in-class free-writes. I and the TAs will be spot-checking your journals throughout the semester. Failure to keep up with your journal will negatively impact your final grade.

3. Students will be asked to write **three separate 1,500-word essays** in response to prompts provided them. Papers should avoid recapitulating plot/incident and concentrate instead on cinematic aspects of the assigned film(s), such as the use of the camera (movement, angle shots, lenses), elements of *mise-en-scène*, recurrent images ("rhymes"), the sound track or special effects, editing, etc. In the case of this quarter's films, the use of allusion and citation—references to specific other films or to typical images and situations from various film genres—is often of especial interest. In general, you should consider how characteristic effects or especially dramatic moments are constructed by the film (that is, how they are made or made effective). **Please note that UCSC's guidelines for Academic Integrity are quite specific with regard to cheating and plagiarism, and those guidelines will be taken very seriously in this course.** For Academic Integrity policy, please see http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/undergraduate_students/.

4. **The final exam** will be comprised of (1) film identifications and short responses and (2) an analytical essay comparing and contrasting two of the course films by way of the assigned readings. This exam will be open note and open book, as it were, but the use of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) will not be permitted, so please bring hard copies of any course readings or lecture notes you would like to make use of during the exam.

Breakdown of Grade Percentages for Course Requirements

Participation/Journal	15%
Essay One	20%
Essay Two	20%
Essay Three	20%
Final Exam	25%

Trigger Warning

Please be advised that we will be watching a few films that contain depictions of sex, sexual assault, and graphic violence (in the case of *Leviathan*, this violence is not simulated). The same applies to some additional clips as well.

One Final Note on the Films

To aid you in drafting your writing assignments, preparing for section discussions, and studying for the final exam, all but one of the course films has been put on reserve in McHenry Library's Media Center. *The Cameraman* (only available on VHS in McHenry), *Vertigo* (the running time of which exceeds the two-hour loan period for reserve items), and *Arrebato* (not available at all in McHenry) have also been made available for streaming through eCommons. Details about how to stream these three movies are provided on eCommons.

Lecture, Film, Reading, and Assignment Schedule (Course readings marked * can be found on eCommons)

Week 1. Cameraman or Kino-Eye?

T 01/05 Introductions, Admin Rigmarole, and Opening Statements
In-Class Handout/Reading: Raymond Williams, selections from
Keywords (1976; revised 1983)

Movie Night: *The Cameraman* (1928; dirs. Edward Sedgwick and
Buster Keaton; USA)
AND
Man with the Movie Camera (1929; dir. Dziga Vertov;
USSR)

W 01/06 Supplemental Movie Night: *Sherlock Jr.* (1924; dir. Buster Keaton)

Th 01/07 *Dziga Vertov, selections from *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*
(1922-1953)
*Sergei Eisenstein, "On the Question of a Materialist Approach to Form"
(1925)
*Dziga Vertov, Viktor Shklovsky, and Esfir Shub, various polemics from
1926 collected in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in
Documents 1896-1939* (1988)

Week 2. Sensory Ethnography Lab

T 01/12 *Tom Gunning, "Buster Keaton: Or The Work of Comedy in the Age of
Mechanical Reproduction" (1995)
*Tom Gunning, "Crazy Machines in the Garden of Forking Paths:
Mischief Gags and the Origins of American Film Comedy" (1995)
*Donald Crafton, "Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in
Slapstick Comedy" (1995)

Movie night: *Leviathan* (2012; dirs. Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena
Paravel; USA)

W 01/13 Supplemental Movie Night: *Single Stream* (2014; dirs. Pawel Wojtasik, Toby Kim Lee, and Ernst Karel)
AND
People's Park (2012; dirs. J.P. Sniadecki and Libbie Dina Cohn; USA)

Th 01/14 *Constance Classen, "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses" (1997)
*Sarah Pink and David Howes, "The Future of Sensory Anthropology/The Anthropology of the Senses" (2010)
*David MacDougall, selections from *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (2006)

Week 3. Italian Neo-Realism (The Children Are Watching Us)

T 01/19 *François Laplantine, selections from *The Life of the Senses: Introduction to a Modal Anthropology* (2005)
*Scott MacDonald, selections from *American Ethnographical Film and Personal Documentary: The Cambridge Turn* (2013)

Movie night: *Roma città aperta* (1945; dir. Roberto Rossellini; Italy)

W 01/20 Supplemental Movie Night: *Umberto D.* (1954; dir. Vittorio De Sica; Italy)

Th 01/21 *Christopher Wagstaff, "The Place of Neorealism in Italian Cinema from 1945-1954" (1989)
*André Bazin, "Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of Liberation" (1948)
*Gilles Deleuze, selections from *Cinema 2* (1985)

DUE IN YOUR THURSDAY NIGHT SECTION: ESSAY 1

Week 4. French New Wave (The Children of Marx, Coca-Cola, and Neo-Realism)

T 01/26 *Cesare Zavattini, "Some Ideas on the Cinema" (1952)
*Roberto Rossellini, selections from *My Method* (1987)
*Marcia Landy, "Diverting Clichés: Femininity, Masculinity, Melodrama, and Neorealism in *Open City*" (2004)

Movie night: *Vivre sa vie* (1962; dir. Jean-Luc Godard; France)

W 01/27 Supplemental Movie Night: *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1961; dir. Agnès Varda; France)

Th 01/28 *Richard Neupert, selections from *A History of the French New Wave Cinema* (2002)
*Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: *La Camera-Style*" (1948)
*François Truffaut, "A Certain Tendency in French Cinema" (1954)

Week 5. Iranian New Wave (The Children of Islam and Neo-Realism)

- T 02/02** *André Bazin, "La Politique des Auteurs" (1957)
*Jean-Luc Godard, selections from *Godard on Godard* (1968)
*Geneviève Sellier, selections from *Masculine Singular: French New Wave Cinema* (2008)

Movie night: *Close-Up* (1990; dir. Abbas Kiarostami; Iran)

- W 02/03 Supplemental Movie Night:** *This Is Not a Film* (2012; dir. Jafar Panahi; Iran)

- Th 02/04** *Hamid Dabashi, selections from *Close Up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present and Future* (2001)
**"Abbas Kiarostami and Jean-Luc Nancy in Conversation" (2001)

Week 6. Cinematic Witnessing

- T 02/09** *Hamid Naficy, selections from *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 4* (2012)

Movie night: *Vertigo* (1958; dir. Alfred Hitchcock; USA)

- W 02/10 Supplemental Movie Night:** *Rear Window* (1954; dir. Alfred Hitchcock; USA)

- Th 02/11** *François Truffaut, selections from *Hitchcock* (1983)
*Alfred Hitchcock, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock* (1995)

DUE IN YOUR THURSDAY NIGHT SECTION: ESSAY 2

Week 7. Photographic Witnessing

- T 02/16** *Pascal Bonitzer, "Hitchcockian Suspense" (1992)
*Robin Wood, selections from *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (1989; rev. 2002)

Movie night: *Blowup* (1966; dir. Michelangelo Antonioni; UK)

- W 02/17 Supplemental Movie Night:** *Profondo rosso* (1975; dir. Dario Argento; Italy)

- Th 02/18** *Julio Cortázar, "Blow-Up" (1959)
*Michelangelo Antonioni, selections from *The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema* (1998)
*Susan Sontag, selections from *On Photography* (1977)

Week 8. International Horror and the Cinematic Apparatus I

- T 02/23** Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (1984)

Movie night: *Peeping Tom* (1960; dir. Michael Powell; UK)

W 02/24 Supplemental Movie Night: *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012; dir. Peter Strickland; UK)

Th 02/25 *H. Marshall Leicester, Jr., "What's a Horror Movie?" (Unpublished)
*Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975)

Week 9. International Horror and the Cinematic Apparatus II

T 03/01 *Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks" (1984)
*Teresa de Lauretis, selections from *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (1984)

Movie night: *Arrebato* (1979; dir. Iván Zulueta; Spain)

W 03/02 Supplemental Movie Night: *Videodrome* (1983; dir. David Cronenberg; Canada)

Th 03/03 *William J. Nichols and H. Rosi Song, "Back to the Future: Towards a Cultural Archive of *la Movida*" (2014)
*Jorge Marí, "*La Movida* as a Debate" (2009)

DUE IN YOUR THURSDAY NIGHT SECTION: ESSAY 3

Week 10. International Horror and the Cinematic Apparatus III

T 03/08 *Alberto Mira, "The Dark Heart of the Movida: Vampire Fantasies in Iván Zulueta's *Arrebato*" (2009)
*Brad Epps, "The Space of the Vampire: Materiality and Disappearance in the Films of Iván Zulueta" (2012)

Movie night: *Blow Out* (1981; dir. Brian De Palma; USA)

W 03/09 Supplemental Movie Night: *Resolution* (2012; dirs. Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead; USA)

Th 03/10 No readings due. We will spend the last class briefly going over *Blow Out* and preparing for the final exam.

Final Exam: Monday, March 14th, from 12-3PM in Social Sciences 1, Room 110

Basic Film Vocabulary (adapted from H. Marshall Leicester, Jr.)

Angle: The relationship of the camera to what is being filmed. **High angle** refers to the camera looking down on the filmed subject. **Low angle** means the camera is looking up at the subject. A **straight-on angle** places the camera and the subject on the same level.

Apparatus: The material means by which films are made (cameras, sound recording devices, lights, etc.).

Close-up: A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large.

Cut : 1. Joining two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, the instantaneous change from one shot to another. Cf. **Crosscutting**, which is editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action going on in different places, usually simultaneously (**parallel crosscutting**).

Diegesis: In a narrative film, the fictional world created by the film's story. That world need not behave in the same way as our non-diegetic world.

Dissolve: A transition between two shots, less abrupt than a cut, where one image gradually disappears while another image gradually appears. Sometimes called a **lap-dissolve** because of this overlapping effect.

Establishing shot: A shot with a distinct framing that shows the spatial relations among the figures, objects and setting in a scene. Also called a **master shot**. Editing and camera movement within the space set up by the establishing shot (close-ups, cuts, etc.) are called the **analysis**.

Fade: 1. (**Fade-in**) A dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears. 2. (**Fade-out**) A shot that gradually darkens as the screen goes black.

Following Shot: A shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen.

Frame: A single image on a strip of film.

Framing: The use of the edges of the film frame to select and compose what will be visible on-screen.

Mise-en-scène: All of the elements placed in front of the camera: settings, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, actors and their behavior, etc. Generally, everything that is *in* the frame.

Montage: Editing. The way in which shots are spliced together to create a continuous film. Generally, everything that happens *between* frames.

Montage sequence (or just **sequence**): A segment of film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images; the segment is often set off by the use of filmic techniques that contrast with the treatment in other segments.

Motif: A significant repeated image, idea etc. The image version is also called a **rhyme**.

180-degree rule: A classical film approach that dictates that the camera should stay on one side of the action to ensure consistent spatial relations between objects on the right and left sides of the frame.

Pan (or panoramic shot): A camera movement in which the camera turns on its axis from a stationary fixed point (e.g., on a tripod). The classic pan stays true to the line of the horizon.

Profilmic event: The pre-diegetic action, or what is really in front of the camera—e.g., actors on a sound stage or on location—as opposed to the fiction of the diegesis.

Scene: A segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space.

Shot: The basic unit of film construction, designating camera on → camera off. In the finished film, “shot” refers to one uninterrupted image (no cuts).

Tracking Shot: A camera movement in which the camera body is moving through space horizontal to the ground on a moving support, often literally on a track. Some versions and variations are the **dolly shot** (camera on a cart that is pushed along freely) and the **crane shot** (camera mounted on a crane, allowing for movement up and down as well as laterally).