

THE BFSU INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

July-August 2018

Instr. **Dr. M. KOKONIS, Professor**

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TEACHING PROGRAM: **Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri 10:30-12:00**

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: **ENGLISH**

LEVEL **C2**

STUDENT LEVEL: **JUNIOR OR HIGHER**

TEACHING METHOD: **LECTURES IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM**

INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course focuses mainly on the basic elements that constitute the “language” and the art of cinema. Through extensive viewing of numerous clips from a wide selection of feature-length fiction films the course aims to introduce the student to the major cinematic concepts, principles and techniques that explain how movies work and how they affect us. The scope of the course is limited to the communicative, narrative and aesthetic properties of film, especially of the feature film (both commercial and arty); references to the technological and socio-historical development of film, to its relationship with other art forms and to major schools of criticism and theory will be made occasionally.

Course objectives:

By the end of the course students are expected to have acquired

- A general knowledge about film as an art form in relation to other art forms
- A general knowledge about cinematic language, that is:
- Basic film language units (frame, shot, scene, sequence) and modes of transition between them.
- A notion about the aesthetics of the image (image composition)
- Basics of film syntax (e.g. montage) and of film narrativity.
- Basics of film criticism, and
- A new, informed way in perceiving and dealing with images, a new way of looking at the world around us.

Required and Recommended reading:

- Is there a course textbook? Yes, Three basic textbooks.
- Is there a list of readings? Yes, 6-7 book titles.

Assessment methods: Continuous Assessment (2 in-class tests or take-homes), no final exam.

COURSE SYLLABUS

First Week.	Tues	2h	Introductory Lecture: All about this course What is cinema? I: The Spectrum of Art: Modes of Discourse. Formalism, Realism, Classicism. What is Cinema? II: Film Genres and the Art Film Reading: a) The Nature and History of Art (Ch. 1. <i>How to Read a Film</i> , by Monaco.) Reading: (Ch. 1. <i>Understanding Movies</i> , by Giannetti.)
	Wed	2h	What is cinema III: The visual track The audio track
	Thurs	2h	Film Language The Film Itself I: Image and Sound. Film's Basic Visual Units: the frame, the shot. (Film Excerpts on Video), Reading: "Photography," "Mise-en-scène," "Movement", "Editing", "Glossary", in <i>Understanding Movies</i> .
	Fri	2h	The Film Itself II Film's Basic Visual Units: Shot Duration, Kinds of Shot; the Scene; the Sequence. (Film Excerpts on Video), Reading: "Photography," "Mise-en-scene," "Movement", "Editing", "Glossary," in <i>Understanding Movies</i> .
Second Week.	Tues	2h	The Film Itself III Film "Punctuation": Cut, Dissolve, Fade-in/ Fade-out, Iris-in/Iris out, Swish pan, Wash. (Film excerpts on video), Reading: "Photography," "Mise-en-scene," "Movement", "Editing", "Glossary," in <i>Understanding Movies</i> .
	Wed.	2h	Screening: Orson Welles' <i>Citizen Kane</i>
	Thurs	2h	Film Analysis. Reading: Ch. 12 "Synthesis" in <i>Understanding Movies</i>
	Fri	2h	<u>Test in Class</u>
Third week	Tues	2h	Film Space: Aesthetics and Composition The Structure of Perception. Image Composition: The Two Dimensional Field. Visual Field, Aspect Ratio, Image Size, Main Forces: Orientation, Magnetism of the Frame, Attraction of Mass, Figure-Ground Relationships, Psychological Closure,

		Vectors.
		Reading: (Ch. 3, <i>How to Read a Film</i> by Monaco, Chs. 1-6 {Summary} <i>Sight, Sound, Motion</i> , by Zettl, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , by Berger, “Mise-en-scene,” “Movement” in <i>Understanding Movies</i> by Giannetti).
	Wed. 2h	The Structure of perception cont.
	Thurs. 2h	Screen Space: The Three Dimensional Field. Compositional Principles: Graphic Means of Creating Depth, Perspective, Texture, etc. Reading: (Chs. 6-10, Zettl.) (Slide Presentation and/or Video clips.)
	Fri 2h	Film Analysis: Visualization and Point of View
Fourth Week	Tues 2h	Film Narrative: Editing and Montage Editing and Theories of Montage Reading: (Chs. 11-12, Zettl.) “Editing” in <i>Understanding Movies</i>
	Wed. 2h	What do Editors do? Time, Rhythm, Motion Elements of Narrative Theory: Story and Discourse Reading and Reading out. Types of montage
	Thurs 2h	Model Film analysis of a sequence
	Fri. 2h	<u>Test in class.</u>

Reading List

Required:

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 12th E. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972-1996.

Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History and Theory of Film and Media*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977

Zettl, Herbert. *Sight, Sound, Motion: Applied Media Aesthetics*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1973.

Recommended:

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin, 1972.

Bordwell, D. and Ch. Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

Cook, Pam. *The Cinema Book*. London: British Film Institute, 1985.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. (3rd ed.). London: Longman, 1998.

Maltby, Richard. *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

Nelmes, Jill. *An Introduction to Film Studies*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Sobschack, Thomas and Vivian C. Sobschack. *An Introduction to Film*. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1987.

Course requirements: 1) unflinching attendance. 2) Two tests in class. No final exam.

Analysis of the Course Syllabus

This course is designed to be delivered entirely in an audiovisual mode. For every cinematic concept introduced in class there will be respective clips on video from a wide selection of feature films, so that students can grasp theoretical film issues. More analytically the course material per week is as follows:

First week. The objective here is to introduce students to the art of cinema focusing on various cinematic styles such as realism, formalism and classicism (within their respective periods in Film History). Also, a distinction is to be made concerning the various types of film expression, ranging from the documentary, the feature film, to the experimental or art film. Further a presentation will attempt to distinguish between the visual and the auditory tracks of the film strip, in other words, assessing the basic “ingredients” any film is made of: image, sound, special effects, written and spoken language, and CGIs. Then we will start examining film itself as “a language” focusing on film’s basic “grammatical” units: The Frame.

Second Week. Presentation of the film’s basic units will continue with what constitutes a shot, a scene and a sequence. There will be ample examples for each case. Next, we will examine all methods of transition from one basic unit to another, such as the cut, the dissolve, the wipe, the fade-in and fade out, the iris-in and iris out, the wash, the flip and the wish pan. Connected to this there will be a description of primary, secondary and tertiary modes of motion in the cinema, as well as such techniques as zooming in and out. Students will attend a screening of one of the best films ever made, Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* and an analysis of the film will ensue in which, among other things, will show most of the shots transitions in practice. This will cover the first stage of instruction in the course and students will have to take a test in class to make sure they have grasped the course material so far. (The test will be partly in the form of

questions and brief answers, and partly in essay form)

Third Week. The second stage of the course instruction is on a slightly higher level of difficulty as it deals with the theoretical concepts, at first of space and then of time in the cinema. It addresses issues of communication, image composition and aesthetics by introducing a number of aesthetic factors that are operative in the composition and appreciation of images, first in terms of the two-dimensional field (frame orientation, size constancy, and main field forces) and then in terms of the three-dimensional field (positive and negative volume, graphic means of creating depth, perspective, texture etc.). Upon completion of either the two-dimensional field or the three-dimension field there will be provided explanations of how space in the cinema is structured and how meaning derives from image composition. In essence, the aesthetics of image composition and techniques of structuring space will enable students to comprehend the notion of visualization, or how abstract concepts and ideas find material form in visual representation.

Fourth week. The final part of the course is concerned with the examination of time in the cinema and in particular, on the art of editing as the chief cinematic technique for the creation of “syntax” in the cinematic language. At first students will be introduced into theories of time and the experience of time as a fourth dimension. A video presentation will be used to explain the editor’s job in the cinema (What do editors do?) and after that, basic theories of editing or montage will be presented starting with the Russian formalists’ theories of montage (Pudovkin, Eisentein and Vertov), and how they have affected the art of editing. There will be plenty of examples of the various montage styles and their efficacies in appreciating time, rhythm and motion in the cinema. Further a brief introduction to the theory of narrative fiction will ensue, explaining elements of narrative as parts of storytelling, highlighting the process of reading and reading out to reach film interpretation. A model analysis of a film sequence will be offered to the students in order to show to them how to begin their own critical appreciation of movies. A test in class on an analysis of a film sequence will be applied to ensure that students have grasped the course material offered in the second stage. (The test will be in the form of an essay.)