

Philosophy of Film, Spring 2014

Professor: Marina Folescu

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Class time: Tue & Thu, 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm

Lab time: Wed 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Office Hours: Tue & Thu 2:00 pm to

3:00 pm or by appointment

Office: Strickland Hall 431

Course Description

This course is aptly named “philosophy *of* film”, and not “philosophy *in* film”, since we will not pick a handful of philosophical films and then discuss whatever philosophical issues happen to be relevant. Instead, we will be focusing on several philosophical issues that films raise, regarding their nature as artifacts and our specific ways of interacting with them. In this course we will present and discuss a framework for examining these issues. In particular, by adopting the methodology of analytic philosophy, we will examine whether film is an art form, discuss what is cinema, analyze the moving image (the shot, cinematic sequencing and narration, as well as the production of affect and emotions), discuss the nature of documentaries, and examine how to evaluate films.

Course Objectives

We will be studying primary texts written by major figures of western philosophy of film, who helped shape not only the development of philosophy of art and aesthetics, but also influenced some other academic disciplines, such as psychology and cognitive science. By completing this course, students will have been exposed to and have gained an understanding of some major issues regarding the nature of art and film, and the relation between artistic and visual representation. By completing the written assignments, students will have enhanced their reasoning skills, which include, among other things, an ability to closely read a difficult text, and to analyze and reconstruct the arguments advanced in such a text.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Attendance policy

Students are expected to attend all lectures and all film screenings (attendance will be taken at the film screenings). If you miss 6 or more classes, you will receive a 0 for your attendance and participation grade. If you miss 12 or more classes or if you miss 2 film screenings, you will receive an F for the course. (There are no excused or unexcused absences. But please talk to me if something major comes up that dramatically affects your attendance.)

Grade components

- Regular attendance and participation in lectures and discussions – 15%.

- Short homework assignments, summarizing the assigned reading for the week, and raising or motivating a worry to it. There will be 10 assignments in total, collectively worth 10%.
- Two take-home exams (maximum 3 pages each), on a given topic, analyzing an argument from the reading assignments. Dates: first exam on **2/27**; second exam on **4/17**. Each take-home exam is worth 25% (for a total of 50%).
- Final take-home exam, on Thursday **May 15** from 7:30 am to 9:30 am – 25%.
- Extra credit: 3%, awarded when you present one of your homework responses in class. (Please check with me beforehand, to set up a viable schedule).

All assignments are going to be turned in electronically, via Blackboard, using the SafeAssign system. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, please contact the IT Department for help. No assignment will be accepted either by e-mail or in person.

Academic honesty

Each student is expected to know the University policy on plagiarism as it is stated on <http://registrar.missouri.edu/degrees-catalogs/2012-2014a/1214-catalog-a-generalinfo.pdf>. Students caught plagiarizing on a paper, exam, or any assignment, will be reported to the Office of the Vice Provost for investigation. Proper citations are an easy way to avoid this problem. If you are unsure about how to cite in your paper, please see me.

Academic accommodations

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Recommended Books

- Noël Carroll and Jinhee Choi (Eds.). *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2006). ISBN: 1405120274 [PFMP].
- Noël Carroll. *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 9781405120258 [PMP].

Assigned Readings

- All assigned readings are mandatory. They will be posted on Blackboard and made available to you at least one week in advance. You should print the articles posted on Blackboard and bring them to class, since you are not allowed to use laptops, tablets, and smartphones during class time.

Course Topics

The following schedule of topics covers only the first three sections of this class (and may be changed if necessary). You will be given such a schedule of topics for each section of the class (approximately every two weeks). You will be notified of any changes, both in person and online, via Blackboard.

I. Film as Art

Week 1	1/21	General Introduction
	1/22	Lab: “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari” (Wiene, 1920) (running time: 71 min)
	1/23	Introduction to the Philosophy of Film What are some of the most important themes in philosophy of film?
Week 2	1/28	Silent Art Film Rudolf Arnheim, “The Artistry of Silent Film” (from <i>Film as Art</i> , on Blackboard)
	1/29	Lab: “Reservoir Dogs” (Tarantino, 1992) (running time: 99 min) .
	1/30	The Case Against Film Art Roger Scruton, “Photography and Representation” [PFMP]
Week 3	2/4	The Case For Film Art Dominic McIver Lopes, “The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency” [PFMP; link on Blackboard]
	2/5	Lab: “Hero” (Yimou Zhang, 2002) (running time: 99 min)
	2/6	Discussion of the film and Concluding remarks for this topic

II. Medium Specificity

Week 4	2/11	The Case for Medium Specificity Hugo Münsterberg, Chapter 9 of <i>THE PHOTOPLAY</i> [on Blackboard]
	2/12	Lab: “Three Colors: Blue” (Kieslowski, 1993) (running time: 98 min)
	2/13	Discussion of the film and The Case Against Medium Specificity André Bazin, “Cinematic Realism” [Blackboard]

Week 5	2/18	The Case Against Medium Specificity (ctd.) Noël Carroll, “Forget the Medium!”, pp. 1-9 in <i>Engaging the Moving Image</i> [link on Blackboard]
	2/19	Lab: “Russian Ark” (Aleksandr Sokurov, 2002) (running time: 99 min)
	2/20	Discussion of the film and Concluding remarks for this topic

III. What is Cinema?

Week 6	2/25	Noël Carroll, “Defining the Moving Image” [PFMP; on Blackboard]
	2/26	Lab: No screening
	2/27	NO CLASS: FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM
Week 7	3/4	Arthur Danto, “Moving Pictures” [PFMP; on Blackboard]
	3/5	Lab: “La Jetée” (Chris Marker, 1962) (running time: 28 min)
	3/6	Susanne K. Langer, “A Note on the Film” [PFMP; on Blackboard]
Week 8	3/11	Andrew Kania, “The Illusion of Realism in Film” [on Blackboard]
	3/12	“The 400 Blows” (Truffaut, 1959) (running time: 99 min)
	3/13	Discussion of the film and Concluding Remarks on this topic

IV. Documentary and Fiction Film

Week 9	3/18	Gregory Currie: “Visible Traces: Documentary and the Contents of Photographs” [PMPF, on Blackboard]
	3/19	Lab: “Happy People: A Year in the Taiga” (Herzog, 2010) (running time: 90 min)
	3/20	Noël Carroll: “Fiction, Non-Fiction and the Film of Presumptive Assertion: A Conceptual Analysis [PMPF, on Blackboard]

SPRING BREAK: 3/22 – 3/30

Week 10	4/1	Carl Plantinga: “What a Documentary Is, After All”
	4/2	Lab: “Exit Through the Gift Shop: A Banksy Film” (Banksy, 2010) (running time: 87 min)
	4/3	Concluding remarks on this topic

V. Must Films Have Narrators?

Week 11	4/8	The Case for Film Narrators George Wilson "Le Grand Imagier Steps Out"
	4/9	Lab: "Sunset Boulevard" (Wilder, 1950) (running time: 110min)
	4/10	David Bordwell, "Principles of Film Narration"
Week 12	4/15	The Case Against Film Narrators Andrew Kania, "Against the Ubiquity of Fictional Narrators" [on Blackboard]
	4/16	Lab: No screening.
	4/17	NO CLASS: SECOND TAKE-HOME EXAM

VI. Film and Emotion

Week 13	4/21	Colin Radford and Michael Weston: "How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?" [on Blackboard]
	4/23	Lab: "Dancer in the Dark" (Von Trier, 2000) (running time: 140 min)
	4/24	Kendall Walton: "Fearing Fictions" [on Blackboard]
Week 14	4/29	Richard Moran: "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination" [on Blackboard]
	4/30	Lab: "Chungking Express" (Wong Kar-Wai, 1994) (running time: 98 min)
	5/1	Discussion of the movie and Concluding Remarks
Week 15	5/6	NO CLASS: CONFERENCE TRAVEL
	5/7	Lab: No screening.
	5/8	NO CLASS: CONFERENCE TRAVEL

FINAL EXAMINATION: THURSDAY, May 15, FROM 7:30 AM TO 9:30 AM. Note: this is a take-home exam, just like the previous two, but the date and time of the final examination are set by the Registrar's office according to the days and times of the class meeting. Please do not ask to take the exam early; if you know now that you will have commitments that require you to leave campus prior to the time of the exam, do not enroll in this class.

GRADING SCALE:

In this course, the grading scale is based on the grade point values (GPV), as found on the Registrar's website: <http://registrar.missouri.edu/policies/plus-minus.php>

GPV	Letter	Percentage
4	A	100%
3.7	A-	92.5%
3.3	B+	82.5%
3	B	75%
2.7	B-	67.5%
2.3	C+	57.5%
2	C	50%
1.7	C-	42.5%
1.3	D+	32.5%
1	D	25%