

**Film and the Moving Image**  
**CMST 14400 – Section 1**  
**Autumn 2019**

**Lecture:** MW 1:30–2:50 PM, Cobb Hall 311

**Screening:** T 7:30–10:30 PM, Logan Center for the Arts 201 (unless otherwise noted—see week 9)

**Instructor:** Ian Bryce Jones, Department of Cinema and Media Studies

**ijones@uchicago.edu**

**Office Hours:** MW 3:00–5:00 (please make appointment to ensure availability), Classics 314B

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course seeks to develop skills in perception, comprehension, and interpretation when dealing with film and other moving image media. It encourages the close analysis of audiovisual forms, their materials and formal attributes, and explores the range of questions and methods appropriate to the explication of a given film or moving image text. It also examines the intellectual structures basic to the systematic study and understanding of moving images. Most importantly, the course aims to foster in students the ability to translate this understanding into verbal expression, both oral and written. Texts and films are drawn from the history of narrative, experimental, animated, and documentary or non-fiction cinema. Screenings are a mandatory course component.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Students are not required to purchase any materials for this course.
- All required readings listed on this syllabus will be posted in PDF form **Canvas**, or linked to if already online

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW**

- 1) **Attendance and class participation.** Students are expected to attend all classes and screenings, and to participate in class discussion. Unexcused absences at **2 or more** class sessions *or screenings* will significantly lower your final grade; continued absences will be considered reason for failure. (15% of final grade)
- 2) **Written essay assignment.** 3–4 pages in length (around 1,000–1,300 words), in response to a prompt. (20% of final grade)
- 3) **First blog post + leading of class discussion.** This blog post should be around 1,000 words, with the aim of animating class discussion around a film, reading, or some combination thereof pertaining to the week's theme. Building off the post, students will be expected to lead class for 20 min, via a short presentation and/or discussion prompts. Students may use clips and other visual aids in both their posts and their presentations. Due whichever week of the course you have been assigned. (30% of final grade)
- 4) **Second blog post**, in lieu of a final paper. This post should be 1,600–2,100 words in length (the equivalent of a 5–6 pg written paper), and should be a written analysis of a media object viewed in class, rather than simply a class discussion guide. In addition to the written word, this blog post should also contain visual accompaniment (frame grabs, animated GIFs, an analytical video essay portion, etc). Due during exam week (exact due date TBA, depending on University grade deadline & student graduation status) (35% of final grade.)

## **COURSE POLICIES: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

- The written assignment should include proper citations, following the guidelines of either the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) or MLA reference style. Either is fine, but pick one and be consistent.
- I will allow departures from the CMS and/or MLA norms when it comes to citations in the blog posts, but students should still make a good-faith effort to cite quoted material as thoroughly as possible, within the constraints of the form.
- Papers and blog posts must conform to the University's policies on academic honesty and plagiarism. If you have any questions regarding this requirement, please visit the University's guidelines at <http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic-policies/> or see me.

## **SCREENINGS ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance at weekly screenings is **mandatory**. If you are unable to attend the screenings for this class, you *should not take it*. Attendance will be taken, and if you do not attend the screenings for this course, you will fail it. Period. The films to be viewed in this course are the primary texts of this course.

## **HARASSMENT**

The University's guidelines for sexual and gender-based harassment will be strictly enforced. For reference, please see <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/university-of-chicago-policy-on-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-miscon/>. Students should be aware that the course instructor is a Title IX mandated reporter.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the course instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact should be made **as early as possible in the quarter**. To fully comply, the instructor will need to be provided with a copy of the student's Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office). The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, you are encouraged to contact and register with Student Disability Services as soon as possible: <https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/about/contact-us/>

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES: IN-CLASS COMPUTER USE**

This course's texts will be made available only in PDF and/or online form, and I wholeheartedly understand the desire to reduce the amount of printing that must be done simply to bring in a week's readings. With this in mind, my default is to allow the use of laptops and tablets within my classroom. This use is to be reserved for note taking and reading reference only; use for social communication or personal entertainment is prohibited. Failure to adhere to this policy will negatively affect your participation grade, often without explicit warning from me—viz., students will be silently be marked down as absent if computer use visibly interferes with their participation in the course.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1 – Movement

#### **Week 1 Screening, Tuesday, October 1:**

- Workshop on optical toys, led by Amanda Shubert
- *Arrivée d'un rain à la Ciotat* (Louis and Auguste Lumière, France, 1897, 1 min)
- *Répas de bébé* (Louis and Auguste Lumière, France, 1895, 1 min)
- *Partie d'écarté* (Louis and Auguste Lumière, France, 1897, 1 min)
- *La sortie d'usine Lumière* (Louis and Auguste Lumière, France, 1895, 1 min)
- *L'arroseur arrosé* (Louis and Auguste Lumière, France, 1895, 1 min)
- *The Magic Lantern* (Georges Méliès, France, 1903, 5 min)
- *La Jetee* (Chris Marker, France, 1962, 28 min)

#### **Wednesday, October 2 Readings:**

Maxim Gorky, "Newspaper Review of the Lumière Programme;" Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)credulous Spectator"

### Week 2 – Photography

#### **Monday, October 7 Readings:**

Christian Metz, "On the Impression of Reality in the Cinema"

#### **Week 2 Screening, Tuesday, October 8:**

- *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Jean Epstein, France, 1927, 43 min)
- *What the Water Said, Nos. 1–3* (David Gatten, USA, 1997–1998, 16 min)

#### **Wednesday, October 9 Readings:**

André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"

### Week 3 – Film/Media Objects

#### **Monday, October 14 Reading:**

Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting;" Jonas Mekas, "On George Landow and Film Loops"

#### **Week 3 Screening, Tuesday, October 15:**

- *A Lecture* (Hollis Frampton, USA, 1968)
- *Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.* (Owen Land [as George Landow], USA, 1966, 6 min)
- *Lossless #2* (Rebecca Baron and Douglas Goodwin, UK, 2008, 3 min)
- *Mothlight* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1963, 4 min)

#### **Wednesday, October 16 Readings:**

Paolo Cherchi Usai, "A Reader's Report to the Publisher" and "Reply" (from *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age*)

### Week 4 – Space and Framing

#### **Monday, October 21 Readings:**

Noël Burch, "Nana, or the Two Kinds of Space" (from *Theory of Film Practice*); Stanley Cavell, "Photograph and Screen" (from *The World Viewed*)

**Week 4 Screening, Tuesday, October 22:**

- *Suspense* (Lois Weber, USA, 1915, 10 min)
- *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954, 113 min)

**Wednesday, October 23 Readings:**

Noël Carroll, “Concerning Uniqueness Claims for Cinematographic Representation” (excerpt); Ozu Yasujiro, “Film Grammar”

**Week 5 – Color****Monday, October 28 Readings:**

Scott Higgins, “Forging a New Aesthetic: From Opera to Color Consciousness” (from *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow*)

**Week 5 Screening, Tuesday, October 29**

- *Eye Music in Red Major* (Marie Menken, USA, 1961, 6 min)
- *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, USA, 2016, 111 min)

**Wednesday, October 30 Readings:**

Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation”

**DUE at the START OF CLASS: Written essay assignment**

**Week 6 – Montage****Monday, November 4 Readings:**

Lev Kuleshov, “Montage as the Foundation of Cinematography” (from *Art of the Cinema*); Sergei Eisenstein, “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram”

**Week 6 Screening, Tuesday, November 5:**

- *A Movie* (Bruce Conner, USA, 1958, 12 min)
- *Is This What You Were Born For? Pt 7: Mercy* (Abigail Child, USA, 1989, 10 min)
- *Man with the Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1929, 68 min)

**Wednesday, November 6 Readings:**

James Peterson, “Making Sense of Found Footage;” Abigail Child, “Locales Interview (with Michael Amnasan)”

**Week 7 – Sound****Monday, November 11 Readings:**

Elisabeth Weis, “Sync Tanks: The Art and Technique of Postproduction Sound;” Michael Coleman, “SoundWorks Collection: Gary Hecker – Veteran Foley Artist” (online video)

**Week 7 Screening, Tuesday, November 12:**

- *Illusions* (Julie Dash, USA, 1982, 35 min)
- *A Man Escaped* (Robert Bresson, France, 1954, 100 min)

**Wednesday, November 13 Readings:**

Michel Chion, “The Three Borders” (from *Film: A Sound Art*)

**Week 8 – Animation****Monday, November 18 Readings:**

Kristin Thompson, “Implications of the Cel Animation Technique;” Lev Manovich, “What Is Digital Cinema?” (excerpt)

**Week 8 Screening, Tuesday, November 19:**

- *Duck Amuck* (Chuck Jones, USA, 1953, 7 min)
- *Spirited Away* (Hayao Miyazaki, Japan, 2001, 125 min)

**Wednesday, November 20 Readings:**

Hannah Frank, “Traces of the World: Cel Animation and Photography”

**Week 9 – Immersion****Monday, November 25 Readings:**

André Bazin, “The Myth of Total Cinema;” Linda Singer, “Eye/Mind/Screen: Toward a Phenomenology of Cinematic Scopophilia”

**Week 9 Screening, Tuesday, November 26**

*(please note that this screening takes place in the Weston Game Lab on the first floor of Crerar, rather than our usual screening space)*

- In VR arena:
  - *The Invisible Hours* (Tequila Works, Spain, 2017)
- Additional game breakout sessions:
  - *The Unfinished Swan* (Giant Sparrow, USA, 2012)
  - *Alien: Isolation – Crew Expendable DLC* (Creative Assembly, UK, 2014)
  - *Tacoma* (The Fullbright Company, USA, 2017)

**Wednesday, November 27 Readings:**

Spyros Papaioannou, “Immersion, ‘Smooth’ Spaces and Critical Voyeurism in the Work of Punchdrunk”

**Week 10 – Narrative and Narration****Monday, December 2 Readings:**

David Bordwell, “Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures”

**Week 10 Screening:**

- *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (Bob Persichetti and Peter Ramsey, USA, 2018, 117 min)

**Wednesday, December 4 Readings:**

Kristin Thompson, “Modern Classicism” (excerpts) (from *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique*)

**Week 11 – Exam Week**

No class. Second blog post due.