MCM260 Introduction to Cinematic Coding and Narrativity (Fall 2016)

Professor: Joan Copjec
Office: 210 MCM Building (155 George St.)
Office hours: Monday 3: 30 - 5:00 pm & by appointment
Email: Joan_Copjec@Brown.edu

Lectures:
Mondays & Wednesdays, 1 – 1:50 pm -- Smith Buonanno Hall 201

Screenings:
Mondays, 7 – 11 pm – Smith-Buonanno Hall 201
-- OR --
Tuesdays, 7 – 11 pm – Salomon Center 003

Discussion sections:
You will be asked to sign up for one session per week at the end of the 1st class.

Course Description and Objectives:
This course is designed to introduce students to the major debates in film theory; give them the technical vocabulary and conceptual tools needed to read films as films; and expose them to a diverse range of films from different historical periods, genres, and geographical areas. Students will be taught to think and speak critically and precisely about cinema through readings, class discussions and short writing assignments and will acquire a better understanding of the way cinema has helped shape modern life and to respond critically to it.

Credit Hours and Course Commitment:
Over the 13 weeks of the course, students will spend 1 hour and 40 min in class lectures each week; participate in one 50 min. discussion section per week; and attend the Monday or Tuesday evening screening of films to be discussed in class. Screening times vary according to the films shown, but no screening runs longer than 2 hours and 40 min. and most are shorter. (Lengths of individual screenings are noted on the class schedule below). Time spent on reading will depend on the individual student, of course; but every attempt has been made to distribute the readings and screening times so that on average students should expect to spend between 3 and 4 hours per week on these assignments.

Readings:
Negar Mottahedeh, #iranelection: Hashtag Solidarity and the Transformation of Online Life (Stanford Briefs, 2015) is the only book assigned for the course; it is available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore.
All other assigned readings will be made available on the course’s Canvas website at http://canvas.brown.edu.
Course Requirements and Grading:
Attendance is required at lectures, discussion sections, and screenings. Students are expected to keep up with the assigned readings and attend all classes, discussion sections, and screenings and to bring printed copies of the readings to meetings so that they can be discussed in detail.

1) There will be three short writing assignments, the 1st due on Oct 05; the 2nd on Nov 07; and the 3rd on Dec 12; each of these should be 3 – 4 paged, typed, double-spaced, font size 11 or 12. Papers will be graded on a scale of 0 – 10 points. A routinely satisfactory performance will be evaluated as 5. (NB: these are not percentages) If you receive less than a 5 on a paper, you are required to meet with your section leader to discuss your work. These papers are worth 75% of your final grade.

2) There will also be an in-class exam, focused on concepts and short answers on Nov 02; a review session will precede the exam. This exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

3) Attendance and participation in discussion sections is required. Roll will be taken each week. Three unexcused absences from section will result in an NC for the class. Two unexcused absences will adversely affect your final grade.

Academic Integrity:
Please be aware that plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration are extremely serious offenses and are more harmful to as students than to the university. The Academic Code explaining Brown’s principles, along with the consequences for violation, can be found at: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/academic_code/code.html

Accommodations, Support Services, and University Resources:
Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the semester if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak to be after class, during office hours, or by appointment. For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at (401) 863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.

Students in need of short-term academic advice or support may contact one of the deans on the Dean of the College office. That office, along with the Office of Student Life, provides an array of academic support services; please see: https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/support and https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/student-life for information. To contact the Brown Writing Center, please see: https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/support/writing.
The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion works to promote a diverse and inclusive community at Brown. If you have any concerns about these issues or would like to know about their resources, please see: https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-diversity/student-resources.
If you have concerns about sexual or gender-based discrimination, harassment, and/or violence, please contact Brown’s Title IX office; see: https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/title-ix/.

Weekly Schedule:

**Week 1**  Just looking

Introduction to the course (Sept 07)

**Week 2**  Proto- and early cinema

*Readings* (Sept 12 and 14)

Linda Williams, “Film Body: An Implantation of Perversions”
Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Guard”

*Screenings* (Sept 12 and 13)

Correction, Please or How We Got into Pictures, Noel Burch (1979) 54 min.

**Week 3**  Mise-en-scene, long take and enunciation

*Readings* (Sept 19 and 21)

Andre Bazin, “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema”
Janet Bergstrom, “Enunciation and Sexual Difference”
Christian Metz, “Story/Discourse (A Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism)”
Annette Michelson, “Toward Snow”

*Screenings* (Sept 19 and 20)

Citizen Kane, Orson Welles (1941) 119 min.
Wavelength, Michael Snow (1967) 45 min.
Week 4  Sound and point-of-view

Readings (Sept 26 and 28)

Michel Chion, “The Audiovisual Scene”
___________, “The Acousmetre”
Pascal Bonitzer, “Partial Vision: Film and the Labyrinth”

Screenings (Sept 26 and 27)

Blackmail, Alfred Hitchcock (1929) 85 min.
Kiss Me Deadly, Robert Aldrich (1955) 106 min.

Week 5  Faces and fascination

Readings (Oct 3 and 5)

Belz Balazs, “The Close Up” and “The Face of Man”
Mary Ann Doane, “The Close Up: Scale and Detail in the Cinema”
Gilles Deleuze, “The affection image Face and close-up”
Chris Marker, “A free replay (notes on Vertigo)”

Screenings (Oct 3 and 4)

Vertigo, Alfred Hitchcock, (1958) 129 min.
La Jetee, Chris Marker, (1962) 29 min.
La Puppe, Timothy Greenberg (2004) 10 min

Week 6  Just theory (or: What is an apparatus?)

No class; School holiday (Oct 10)
No screenings (Oct 10 or 11)

Readings:
Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”
Jean-Louis Baudry, “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus”

Week 7  Genre: Melodrama

Readings (Oct 17 and 19)
Christine Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation”
Thomas Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury”
Lauren Berlant, “National Brands/ National Body: Imitation of Life”

**Screenings** (Oct 17 and 18)

*Imitation of Life*, John Stahl (1939) 111min.
*Imitation of Life*, Douglas Sirk (1959) 125 min.

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**Week 8**  
**New Black Cinema**

**Readings** (Oct 24 and 26)

Paula Massood, “City Spaces and City Times: Bakhtin’s Chronotope and Recent African-American Film”
David James, “Toward a Geo-Cinematic Hermeneutics: Representations of Los Angeles in Non-Industrial Cinema – *Killer of Sheep* and *Water and Power*”

**Screenings** (Oct 24 and 25)

*Bush Mama*, Haile Gerima (1979) 97 min.

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**Week 9**  
**Review/ in class exam**

**Review** (Oct 31)
**In-class exam: short answers** (Nov 02)

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**Week 10**  
**Documentary**

**Readings** (Nov 7 and 9)

Bill Nichols, “What Types of Documentary Are There?”
Jeanne Hall, “Realism as a Style in Cinema Verite: A Critical Analysis of Primary”
Linda Williams, “The Ethics of Intervention: Denis O’Rourke’s The Good Woman of Bangkok”
Gilberto Perez, “History Lessons” (1st section of essay)

**Screenings** (Nov 7 and 8)

Primary, Robert Drew (1960)

Week 11  Elections, Crowds and the Media

**Readings** (Nov 14 and 16)

Negar Mottahedeh, #iranelection: Hashtag Solidarity and the Transformation of OnLine Life
Ervand Abrahamian, “The Crowd in the Iranian Revolution”

**Screenings** (Nov 14 and 15)

Nashville, Robert Altman (1975) 160 min.

[Thanksgiving Pause]

Week 12  Not the Cinema of Saturday Night: The Nation Off-Screen

**Readings** (Nov 28 and 30)

Noel Burch, “Nana, or the Two Kinds of Space”
Pascal Bonitzer, “Off-screen space”
Marie-Clair Ropars-Wuilleumier, “The Disembodied Voice (India Song)”
Marguerite Duras, “Notes on India Song”

**Screenings** (Nov 28 and 29)

India Song, Marguerite Duras (1981) 120 min.
Unsere Africareise, Peter Kubelka (1973) 13 min.

Week 13  Colonialism, Violence, and the Media

**Readings** (Dec 5 and 7)

Thomas Elsaesser, “The Mind Game Film”
Etienne Balibar, “Uprisings in the Banlieues”
Michael Haneke, “Violence and the Media”

**Screenings** (Dec 5 and 6)