

FMST 321/3 - STUDIES IN FILM DIRECTORS 2004-2005

Mondays, De Sève screening room (LB-125)

Sec. B: 13H15 - 17H15

Sec. AA: 18H00 - 22H00

Johanne Larue

Office Hours By Appointment

Phone: 841-2301 (Monday to Friday, 9 to 5)

Brian Crane

Office Hours by Appointment

Phone: 848-2424 x4666 (message only)

Randolph Jordan

Office Hours by Appointment

Phone: 848-2424 x4666 (message only)

SCREENING LIST

JOSEF VON STERNBERG

Week 1: Sept. 13

Blue Angel (1929)

Week 2: Sept. 20

Morocco (1930), *Blonde Venus* (1932)

Week 3: Sept. 27

Scarlet Empress (1934)

Week 4: October 4

The Devil is a Woman (1935)

October 11

No class (Thanksgiving)

ANDREI TARKOVSKY

Week 5: October 18

Ivan's Childhood (1962)

Week 6: October 25

Andrei Rublev (1967-1971)

Week 7: November 1

Stalker (1979) in sec B

Solaris (1972) in sec. AA

Week 8: November 8

The Sacrifice (1986)

FEDERICO FELLINI

Week 9: November 15

Nights of Cabiria (1957) in Section AA

La Strada (1954) in Section B

Week 10: November 22

La Dolce Vita (1960) in Section AA

Nights of Cabiria (1957) in Section B

Week 11: November 29

8 ½ (1962)

Week 12: December 6

Juliet of the Spirits (1965)

Week 13: Dec. 7 (make-up)

Roma (1972)

Spirits of the Dead (multiple filmmakers, 1968)

DAVID LYNCH

Week 14: January 3	<i>Eraserhead</i> (1977) <i>Pretty as a Picture: the Art of David Lynch</i> (1997) <i>Lumière et compagnie</i> (multiple filmmakers, 1995)
Week 15: January 10	<i>Blue Velvet</i> (1986) <u>in sec. B</u> <i>Elephant Man</i> (1980) <u>in sec. AA</u>
Week 16: January 17	<i>Lost Highway</i> (1997) <u>in sec. B</u> <i>Blue Velvet</i> (1986) <u>in sec. AA</u>
Week 17: January 24	<i>The Straight Story</i> (1999) <u>in sec. B</u> <i>Mulholland Dr.</i> (2001) <u>in sec. AA</u>

JOHN CASSAVETES

Week 18: January 31	<i>Faces</i> (1968)
Week 19: Feb. 7	<i>A Woman Under the Influence</i> (1974)
Week 20: Feb. 14	<i>Opening Night</i> (1977)
Feb. 21	no classes (mid-term break)
Week 21: Feb 28	<i>Gloria</i> (1980)
Week 22: March 7	<i>Love Streams</i> (1984) <i>I'm almost not crazy</i> (1984)

JANE CAMPION

Week 23: March 14	<i>Sweetie</i> (1989) and Campion shorts
Week 24: March 21	<i>The Piano</i> (1993)
March 28	No class (Easter Monday)
Week 25: April 4	<i>Portrait of a Lady</i> (1996)
Week 26: April 11	<i>Holy Smoke</i> (1999)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note on Section B:

This section of the course will be team taught. In order to provide consistent feedback, each student will have only one instructor reading their work throughout the year. You will be told who will be reading your assignments after the final drop date has passed.

It is important to note, however, that for each assignment students may write on either director regardless of which one their "reader" teaches. For example, Brian will teach von Sternberg and Randolph will teach Tarkovsky, but for the first assignment, students assigned to Brian are free to write on Tarkovsky and vice versa. You are always free to discuss your work or the content of the class with either instructor.

READINGS

Most required readings are found in the coursepack, though some are on reserve in the Webster Library. Both coursepack and reserve readings complement the in-class lectures and discussions and all of them should be read by the assigned deadline. We will provide a reading assignment sheet with specific deadlines at the beginning of each director's cycle.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: (10%)

Attendance will be taken on a regular basis and repeated absences will lower this portion of your grade. It is necessary that you attend every class because there will be no re-screening of films and because the continuity established from week to week through screenings, discussion and analysis is crucial to both your understanding of the material and of the varying methodological approaches available for film 'auteur' study. Each class will allow for a discussion period. Because productive dialogue is so vital to the success of the course, each student will be expected to participate in class discussions. **If you miss more than 8 classes in the year you will fail the course.**

WRITTEN WORK: (90%)

There are three (3) required assignments in this course each worth 30% of your grade. Assignment sheets will be distributed for each paper and will include suggested paper topics. You should discuss your chosen topic with the instructor in person or by e-mail. Minimum length: 2000 words - Average length: 10-12 double-spaced, typed pages.

- I. a critical essay on either **von Sternberg or Tarkovsky** (due on December 6).
- II. a critical essay on either **Fellini or Lynch** (due on February 14).
- III. a critical essay on either **Cassavetes or Campion** (due on April 29 – to be submitted at Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema office, FB-319).

Papers must be typed and double-spaced and can be written in French or English. All assignments (except the last) are to be submitted in class on the day of the deadline. Penalties will be given for all essays handed in late without documented reasons (i.e. medical, bereavement, etc.) No work will be accepted after April 29, 2005 unless you request an Incomplete.

Additional Paper Requirements

- a) In each of your essays, you are expected to refer to at least two texts included in the required readings for the course and two more texts taken from your own research outside of the required readings. The best references will be those which comment, further or counter-argue the quoted or summarized texts. Try not to use these references to simply fill in the gaps of your own analyses.
- b) You are expected to carefully re-view the films as you work on this paper. You should develop an argument with detailed formal analyses of the films. Do not make this a purely theoretical or a strictly historical paper. Neither should it be entirely descriptive. You should say something meaningful about the films by offering enough details from them to support your arguments.
- c) Except when you are focussing on a single film, you may refer in your papers to films not screened in class by the director under discussion. These references, however, should not make up the bulk of your examples. In other words, films screened in class should be the focus of the paper.
- d) Suggested topics will be provided for each paper assignment. You should discuss your paper topic with your instructor.

INCOMPLETES:

"Incompletes" are not automatically given in this course. If it happens that you need to ask for an incomplete, you must first explain the circumstances to your instructor. If the incomplete is granted, you must accept the penalty associated with incompletes in all film studies courses (i.e. a full letter grade down. Thus, a B+ would become a C+). You must discuss this with your instructor no later than April 29, 2005.

PLAGIARISM:

A citation or idea taken from a secondary source must be footnoted or endnoted (this includes electronic and online sources). Failure to do so can result in severe penalties according to Concordia University policy, which may include failing the course, suspension, or expulsion. There are many style manuals to help you with proper documentation. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism please consult with your instructor.

Andrei Tarkovsky: Assigned Readings

October 25:

Cazals, Thierry. "Au-Delà du regard." *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 386:17-20.

Chion, Michel. "Le langage et le monde." *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 386:21-22.

Chion, Michel. "La maison où il pleut." *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 358:37-43.

De Baecque, Antoine. "L'homme de terre." *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 386:23-24.

Mitchell, Tony. "Tarkovsky in Italy." *Sight and Sound*. (Winter 1982/83):54-56.

Montagu, Ivor. "Man and Experience: Tarkovsky's World." *Sight and Sound* (Spring 1973):89-94.

November 1:

Christie, Ian. "Against Interpretation: An Interview with Andrei Tarkovsky." *Framework*. Vol. 14 (1981).

Marshall, Herbert. "Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror*." *Sight and Sound* (Spring 1976):92-95.

Petric, Vlada. "Tarkovsky's Dream Imagery." *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 43. No. 2. (Winter 1989/90):28-34.

Wright, Alan. "A Wrinkle in Time: The Child, Memory, and the Mirror." *Wide Angle*. Vol. 18. No. 1:47-67.

November 8:

Hoberman, Jim. "Tarkovsky Arrives." *Vulgar Modernism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991:89-100.

Karriker, Alexandra Heidi. "Patterns of Spirituality in Tarkovsky's Later Films." *Before the Wall Came Down*. Graham Petrie and Ruth Dwyer, eds. Lanham: University Press of America, 1990:183-201.

Salvestroni, Simonetta. "The Science-Fiction Films of Andrei Tarkovsky." *Science-Fiction Studies*. Vol. 14 (1987):294-305.

Truppin, Andrea. "And Then There Was Sound: The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky." *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*. Rick Altman, ed. New York: Routledge, 1992:235-248.

November 15:

Bonitzer, Pascal. "L'idée principale." *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 386:12-13.

Leach, Jim. "Hideousness and Beauty." *Before the Wall Came Down*. Graham Petrie and Ruth Dwyer, eds. Lanham: University Press of America, 1990:203-213.

Petrie, Graham and Ruth Dwyer, eds. "Discussion and Responses: Session Five: Soviet Cinema (Andrei Tarkovsky)." *Before the Wall Came Down*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1990:223-228.

Totaro, Donato. "Time and the Film Aesthetics of Andrei Tarkovsky." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*. Vol. 2. No. 1 (1992):21-30.

Totaro, Donato. (Review Essay). "The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue." By V.T. Johnson and G. Petrie. *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*. Vol. 4. No. 2 (Fall 1995):51-59.

Andrei Tarkovsky: Suggested Essay Topics

1. Identify and describe several key elements of Tarkovsky's style. Discuss their use, development or variation, and significance in at least two of the films screened in class. Your discussion should address in some way the relationship between these elements of Tarkovsky's style and a more general Hollywood style. (NB: Norms of Hollywood style should be documented from secondary sources. Cf. Bordwell, David, *et.al.* *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, especially chapters 2, 4, and 5).

2. Discuss the evolution of Tarkovsky's "camera choreography" from his early to late films. How has his camera choreography changed? Can this change be tied to theme? Is there any continuity? Support your claims with detailed examples from the films.

3. "In his last three films...Tarkovsky's philosophical concerns turn to the viability of faith in the modern world. In these films, the use of ambiguous sound plunges the audience into a never fully resolved struggle to believe in the diegesis, much as the films' characters struggle with their own ability to have faith....This persuasive quality allows sound to function...as material with which to represent the numinous realm" (Andrea Truppin, p. 235-236).

Use this quotation to discuss the use of sound in Tarkovsky's later films. How do the "ambiguous sounds" relate to the narrative and stylistic themes found in the films? How does sound relate to the question of faith? What is the function of off-screen sound?

4. In "Time and the Film Aesthetics of Andrei Tarkovsky," Donato Totaro discusses images of nature in relation to ideas about time and memory in Tarkovsky's films. Select a recurring natural motif apparent in at least three of Tarkovsky's films and develop an argument about the

importance of this motif in the context of the philosophical issues raised within these films. Be sure to include analyses of both narrative and stylistic elements in your discussion. For example, if you argue that water represents a cleansing force, then discuss how the idea of cleansing is apparent both as a narrative theme and a stylistic element in the films you choose.

5. In “Space in the Classical Film,” David Bordwell says this: “A convincing image need not show everything in the space as long as nothing we see actually contradicts what we expect” (p.59).

Select a scene from one of Tarkovsky’s films in which something is presented that contradicts what you expect. Discuss this contradiction in terms of Tarkovsky’s representation of space, and develop an argument about why this contradiction is important in understanding the narrative and stylistic elements of the film as a whole. Draw on Bordwell’s discussion of the norms of classical Hollywood cinema to support your analysis.

6. Analyze, in depth, one Tarkovsky film screened in class. Please discuss the parameters of your inquiry with your instructor before embarking on your paper.

David Lynch: Assigned Readings

January 10th:

Eco, Umberto. “Between Author and Text.” *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Stefan Collini, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992:67-88.

Nochimson, Martha. “David Lynch at a (Feminine) Glance” and “Portrait of the Director as a Surfer in the Waves of the Collective Unconscious.” *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997:1-45.

Schneider, Steven Jay. “The Essential Evil in/of *Eraserhead*.” *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. Erica Sheen + Annette Davison, eds. London: Wallflower Press, 2004:5-18.

January 17th:

Rombes, Nicholas. “Blue Velvet Underground: David Lynch’s Post-Punk Poetics.” *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. Erica Sheen + Annette Davison, eds. London: Wallflower Press, 2004:61-76.

Mitchell, Stuart. “David Lynch and the Road.” *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*. Jack Sargeant + Stephanie Watson, eds. Creation Books, 1999:241-256.

Braziel, Jana Evans. “‘In Dreams...’: Gender, Sexuality and Violence in the Cinema of David Lynch.” *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. Erica Sheen + Annette Davison, eds. London: Wallflower Press, 2004:107-118.

Jameson, Fredric. “Nostalgia for the Present.” *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991:279-296.

January 24th:

Hainge, Greg. “Weird or Loopy? Specular Spaces, Feedback and Artifice in *Lost Highway*’s Aesthetics of Sensation.” *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. Erica Sheen + Annette Davison, eds. London: Wallflower Press, 2004:136-150.

“Beyond Boundaries: David Lynch’s *Lost Highway*.” *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. Erica Sheen + Annette Davison, eds. London: Wallflower Press, 2004:151-164.

Gunning, Tom. “Doing for the Eye What the Phonograph Did for the Ear.” *The Sounds of Early Cinema*. Richard Abel + Rick Altman, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001:13-31.

January 31st:

Cardullo, Bert. “Getting Straight: On Lynch’s *The Straight Story*.” *In Search of Cinema*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004:151-163.

Higuinen, Erwan. “Poursuivre le chemin: *The Straight Story* dans l’œuvre de David Lynch.” *Cahiers du Cinéma*. No. 540. (Nov. 1999): 75-76.

David Lynch: Suggested Essay Topics

1. Identify and describe several key elements of Lynch’s style. Discuss their use, development or variation, and significance in at least two of the films screened in class. Your discussion should address in some way the relationship between these elements of Lynch’s style and a more general Hollywood style. (NB: Norms of Hollywood style should be documented from secondary sources. Cf. Bordwell, David, *et.al.* *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, especially chapters 2, 4, and 5).

2. In “Getting Straight,” Bert Cardullo praises *The Straight Story* for its “transcendent union of human redemption with the phenomenal redemption of physical reality” (Cardullo:163). Several of the assigned articles deal with the idea that the transcendence of boundaries in Lynch’s films is tied to the emphasis these films place on materiality. For example, In “Weird or Loopy?” Greg Hainge discusses Lynch’s interest in “Figural” aesthetics that isolate figures from their

context in order to heighten the artifice of their representation, suggesting that this artifice is what ultimately allows the films to break free of their own borders; in “Beyond Boundaries,” Anne Jerslev talks about Lynch’s use of close-ups on texture to create a sense of abstraction through materialization; in “In Dreams...” Jana Evans Braziel discusses Lynch’s materialist treatment of the human body as it relates to the idea of the body as a site of transgression.

Select a specific example of an emphasis on materiality in one of Lynch’s films and discuss how this materiality relates to the overall thematic and formal expression of transcendence in the film. What function does this materiality play within the film as a whole? What does this materiality tell you about the film, and how would your interpretation of the film be different if it was not present in the film at all?

3. In “Weird or Loopy?” Greg Hainge uses the metaphor of a feedback loop between microphone and speaker to describe the perfect balance in which a Lynch film holds all of its elements, each element feeding into one another resulting in the combination amounting to more than the simple sum of its parts. This is an apt metaphor: most, if not all, of Lynch’s films make creative use of sound as an integral part of their aesthetic and thematic concerns.

Select a Lynch film in which sound plays an important role on narrative and formal levels. Offer an interpretation of the film that is dependent upon attention to the role of sound as it relates to the film as a whole. What function does the narrative and/or aesthetic use of sound have for the overall film? How would your interpretation of the film be different if this use of sound was absent?

5. In “The Essential Evil in/of *Eraserhead*,” Steven Jay Schneider wants to contextualize the film within the horror genre, suggesting that in so doing “the conception...of Lynch as an eccentric *artiste* working in a cinematic vacuum may be somewhat damaged, though not his status as an innovative, immensely talented filmmaker” (Schneider:6). Many of the assigned articles discuss Lynch’s films in relation to other films, genres, or art forms. For example, Greg Hainge and Martha Nochimson discuss the director’s influence by the paintings of Francis Bacon; Nicholas Rombes and Stuart Mitchell discuss Lynch’s relationship to the cinema of the avant-garde.

Select a particular Lynch film in which you can observe a specific relationship to other films. This relationship may be apparent in the way that the Lynch film directly references other films, or the film may exhibit more subtle evidence of having been influenced by other films. Explain your reasons for believing that the chosen Lynch film is engaged with the other films you suggest, and then develop an interpretation of the film based on this engagement. Remember Umberto Eco’s thoughts on drawing interpretation directly from the text when making your arguments. Does the film really support your belief that it is referencing, or is influenced by, other films? Does reading the Lynch film through other films add anything substantial to your understanding of Lynch’s work? Or can your interpretation be substantiated within Lynch’s film alone without drawing connections between it and others? What do you think is the ultimate function of Lynch’s referencing strategies?

6. Analyze, in depth, one Lynch film screened in class. Please discuss the parameters of your inquiry with your instructor before embarking on your paper.

Jane Campion: Assigned Readings

March 21st:

Smelik, Anneke. "'The Gothic Image.'" *And the Mirror Cracked: Feminist Cinema and FilmTheory*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 139-51.

Hausknecht, Gina. "Self-Possession, Dolls, Beatlemania, Loss: Telling the Girl's Own Story." *The Girl: Construction of the Girl in Contemporary Fiction by Women*. Ed. Ruth O. Saxton. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 21-42.

Hardy, Ann. "The Last Patriarch." *Jane Campion's The Piano*. Ed. Harriet Margolis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Bruzzi, Stella. "Bodyscape." *Sight and Sound*. V. 3 N. 10 October 1993. 6-10.

March 28th:

Gentry, Ric. "Painterly Touches." *American Cinematographer*. v 78 n 1 January 1997. 50-57.

Polan, Dana. "Desiring the Director." *Jane Campion*. London: BFI, 2001. 8-21.

April 4th:

Murphy, Kathleen. "Jane Campion's Passage to India." *Film Comment*, v 36 n 1 (January-February 2000). 30-36.

Gillett, Sue. "Never a Native: Deconstructing Home and Heart in *Holy Smoke*." *Senses of Cinema*, no 5 April 2000; www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/OO/5/holv.html

Essay Topic

1. You will be creating your own topic for the final paper. It is mandatory that you discuss your ideas with your grader well in advance of the due date.

