Classical Film Theory
Fall 1998
National Chiao Tung University

Course Ref. No.: 1805
Course number: DFL 4147
Instructor: Kien Ket Lim (limk@cc.nctu.edu.tw, limk728@hotmail.com)
Office: F314-C (Tel: 3-1792 -- during the office hours only)
Office hours: Thursday, 1:00 – 2:30 PM
Class session time: Friday, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Classroom: F210

Required texts: Classical Film Theory Reader. (Photocopy)
The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat . . . By Peter Weiss. (Photocopy)


General Information
1. Class attendance is mandatory and will count as a portion of your final grade.
2. Writing assignments include, but is not limited to, the film logs. For each day the due work is late, 1/2 letter grade will be deducted (e.g., A to become A-). Due dates are indicated in the syllabus below.

Screenings
1. Regular screenings will be conducted during class sessions.
2. Major viewing materials will be put on reserve at the Study Center after each viewing. They cannot be checked out for home viewing under any circumstances.

Film Logs
1. Film logs are required on all films except for Cinema Europe.
2. Consult the instructor for the format of the film logs. Logs that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you for rewriting.
3. There are 4 different due dates for the logs.
4. Students who get an “A” for all their logs by Week 9 may reduce the workload in keeping the logs. Consult the instructor.

Examination
There will be three exams. Exam format will be announced later.
Week 1  Introduction
9/25  Class organization
Screening: *Cinema Europe*, Episode 1 (Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, UK, 1995) 60 min.

Week 2  The Silent Film Paradigm
10/2  Gerald Mast et al. eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*.
    Rudolf Arnheim, "Film and Reality" (1933), 268-77.
    Hugo Munsterberg, "The Means of the Photoplay" (1916), 355-61.
    Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures" (1934-47), 233-48.
Screening: *Sherlock, Jr.* (Buster Keaton, USA, 1924) 46 min.
Background reading: *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, 3-42, 80-81.

Week 3  German Expressionism and Its Discontents
10/9  Gerald Mast et al. eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*.
    Siegfried Kracauer, "Basic Concepts" (1960), 9-20.
    ---, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1947), 21-33.
Screening: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, Germany, 1919-20). 69 min.

Week 4  Typhoon Holiday
10/16  No class.

Week 5  French Film Theory in the '20s
    Ricciotto Canudo, "Birth of the Sixth Art" (1911), 58-66
    Jean Epstein, "Magnification" (1921), 235-41.
    Jean Epstein, "The Senses I (b)" (1921), 241-46.
    Ricciotto Canudo, "Reflections on the Seventh Art" (1931), 291-303.
    Germaine Dulac, "Aesthetics, Obstacles, Integral Cinematography" (1926), 389-97.
Screening: *La Souriaute Mme. Beudet* (Germaine Dulac, France, 1923) 40 min.
    *La Chute de la Maison d'Usher* (Jean Epstein, France, 1928) 43 min.
Background reading: *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, 95-105.

Week 6  The French Avant-Garde: Surrealism
10/30  Film logs due (weeks 2-5).
    The Surrealist Group, "Some Surrealist Advice" (1951), 51-52.
    Robert Aron, "Films of Revolt" (1929), 432-36.
André Breton, First and second Surrealist Manifestos (1924, 1929), 66-80.
Screening: Un Chien andalou (Luis Buñuel, France 1928) 17 min.
La Coquille et le clergymen (Germaine Dulac, France, 1927) 55 min.
Entr'acte (Renée Clair, France, 1924) 14 min.
Ballet mecanique (Fernand Léger & Dudley Murphy, France, 1924) 10 min.
Recommended films: L'Age d'or (Luis Bunuel, France, 1930) 63 min.
Las Hurdes [Land without Bread] (Luis Bunuel, Spain, 1932) 45 min.
Background reading: same as Week 4.

Week 7  Weimar Film Theory
11/6  **Exam 1.**
Bela Balazs, “The Close-up,” 54-56 (Starting from "The Face of Things").
---, "The Face of Man" (1945), 60-76.
Screening: La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc (Carl Theodor Dreyer, France, 1928) 112 min.
Background reading: The Oxford History of World Cinema, 102-3.

Week 8  Soviet Film Theory 1: Dziga Vertov and the Kino-Eye
"We: Variant of a Manifesto" (1922), 5-9.
"Kinoks: A Revolution" (1923), 11-21.
Screening: Chelovek s Kinoapparatom (Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1929) 66 min.
Background reading: The Oxford History of World Cinema, 92-93.

Week 9  Soviet Film Theory 2: Lev Kuleshov and V. I. Pudovkin
11/20  Gerald Mast et al. eds., Film Theory and Criticism.
    Vsevolod Pudovkin, "[On Editing]" (1926), 121-26.
V. I. Pudovkin, Film Technique and Film Acting.
"Introduction to the German Edition" (1928), 23-28.
Screening: Mat' (V. I. Pudovkin, USSR, 1926) 87 min.
Background reading: The Oxford History of World Cinema, 162-74.

Week 10  Eisenstein 1
11/27  **Film logs due** (weeks 6-9).
    Gerald Mast et al. eds., Film Theory and Criticism.
    Sergei Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form" (1929), 138-54.
    Sergei Eisenstein, Writings, 1922-34, Vol. 1 of Selected Works.
Screening: Oktjabr' (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1927) 104 min.
Recommended film: Aleksandr Nevski (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1938) 112 min.
Background reading: The Oxford History of World Cinema, 168-69.

Week 11  Eisenstein 2
12/4  Sergei Eisenstein, "On the Structure of Things" (1939).
Screening: Bronenosets Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925) 65 min.
Week 12 Critical Interval
12/11 Exam 2

Week 13 Walter Benjamin
Screening: Berlin, Die Symphonie einer Grossstadt (Walter Ruttmann, Germany, 1927) 62 min.
Excerpt from Triumph des Willens (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935) 115 min.
Background reading: The Oxford History of World Cinema, 86-95, 322-333.

Week 14 Christmas Holiday
12/25 No class.

Week 15 New Year Day
1/1 No class.

Week 16 Bazin on Neo-realism
Screening: Ladri di biciclette (Vittorio de Sica, Italy, 1948), 90 min.
Recommended films: Robert Flaherty’s Louisiana Story, Orson Welles’s Citizen Kane.

Week 17 Bazin on Theater and Cinema
1/15 Film logs due (weeks 10, 11, 13, 16).
Screening: Sade/Marat (Peter Brook, UK, 1967) 115 min.
(Complete title: The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of Marquis de Sade.)
Recommended reading: Susan Sontag, "Film and Theater," Film Theory and Criticism, Gerald Mast et al. eds. 362-74.

Week 18 The Grand Finale
1/22 Exam 3. Final film log (Week 17) due.