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678 History French Cinema
Graduate Seminar in French Film History: The New Wave to the (Almost) Present
Professor: Alan Williams

Please note: this course is bilingual: readings are in French and in English, and students may make oral presentations and write papers in either language. Please do not take the course unless you are comfortable with reading and understanding both languages. Also, note that the course is scheduled for three standard Rutgers periods. One of these is for a film screening (on Mondays after the class period), and the course meets on two different days so that students can attend the screenings in person, if possible. It is really better to see any film, particularly an older one, on a big screen and in a group. Nonetheless, the films will be also available online (on Box) for those whose schedules do not allow the extra time for the screening.

The course examines French film history from the *nouvelle vague* to the present, not as an end in itself, but as the necessary precondition to any serious analysis or criticism of French film(s) of the period(s). Without such a background, any such scholarly work runs the risk of being either redundant, or misguided. So while the instructor in his presentations will mainly concentrate on historical trends and influences, most students will write, and present, analytical and/or critical studies of a film or a body of films. This dual structure will help us to answer some fundamental questions about cinema and its history. What are the major influences on French cinema and its films at any given time: Economics? Big social events such as May 1968? The slow evolution of French society? Or perhaps the history of French cinema itself, which often seems to have a certain autonomy? The answer, at least in the books by Frodon and Williams, is all of the above, and an understanding of French film history and the place of any work or works within it will require a *multimodal* approach.

Students will make two relatively brief presentations, in either French or English, one on a major book about the history and aesthetics of one of the periods under consideration, and one on a film or films that will ultimately form the basis of their course paper. The paper should be 10 to 15 pages long, with an adequate but not extravagant bibliography; most papers will spend more of their time on analysis and criticism of a film or films, and less time (but not none) on secondary sources. Paper and presentation topics should be developed in close consultation with the instructor.

Required Books (If expensive or out of print, buy via www.bookfinder.com), listed in order in which we will read them:

Alan Williams, *Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking* (Harvard University Press 1992), I.S.B.N. = 978-067476268

Jean-Michel Frodon, *L'Age modern du cinéma français: de la Nouvelle Vague à nos jours* (Flammarion 1995, out of print, buy through bookfinder), I.S.B.N. = 2-08-067112-X.

Alison Smith, *French Cinema in the 1970s: The Echos of May* (Manchester University Press, 2005), I.S.B.N. = 978-0719063418.

René Prédal, *Le Jeune Cinéma français* (Nathan 2002), I.S.B.N. = 2-09-191197-6,

Tim Palmer, *Brutal Intimacy: Analyzing Contemporary French Cinema* (Wesleyan University Press 2011), I.S.B.N. = 978-0819568274

683 Topics in Theory
Freud, Lacan And Culture
Professor: Jerry Flieger
F 12:10 – 3:10 PM (Online)

Since its inception, psychoanalysis has provided an invaluable resource for the analysis of culture and society, beyond its focus on the individual psyche. In this course, we will read the foundational texts from Freud that are referenced everywhere in theory texts today, including texts in gender studies, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies (these include the *New Introductory Lectures*, *Totem and Taboo*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* [central to the Marxist Frankfurt School], *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, “Creative Writers and Daydreaming”, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, *Moses and Monotheism* and several essays on individual works, authors, and myths such as readings of Goethe, DaVinci, and Shakespeare, as well as Freud’s use of myths such as Oedipus, Electre, and Medusa). We will also look at Joseph Campbell’s notion of the ‘mono myth’ of the hero, which includes examples from many non-western cultures. The course will then offer close reading of several central Lacan texts that have served as touchstones for cultural and postcolonial theory, and theories of creativity in general (including “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious”; Seminar XIX *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, on the four discourses; “The Seminar on the Purloined Letter” and “The Logic of Time” from *Ecrits*). Finally, we will look at iconic essays from cultural theorists such as Franz Fanon, Guyatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha --all foundational thinkers for the emerging field of ‘liberation psychoanalysis’—as well as collections of essays by younger scholars (from the series *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity, and Psychoanalytic Theory*, George Hook, ed., Boston College, and selections from *Afropessimism* by Frank Wilderson) in order to assess the enduring importance of Freud-Lacanian for culture and society in the twenty-first century.

Required readings: TBA