

Graduate Seminars
Spring 2024, The Program in Comparative Literature

16:195:522

Film and Theory

Thursday 3:50-6:50pm AB4150

Instructor: Meheli Sen

This course provides an introduction to film theory and criticism from the Second World War to the present, and exposes students to international film movements. The course helps students develop the vocabulary and analytical skills essential for teaching and research within cinema studies. We will focus on a variety of theoretical concerns, including the interrogation of realism, auteurism, genre, third cinema, and transnational movements, and postcolonial, queer, and feminist approaches. Each week students will view two or three films, which will be discussed in class together with the required readings. This course is required for completion of the Graduate Certificate in Cinema Studies. No experience in film studies is required. Films by: Rossellini, Hitchcock, Sirk, Kiarostami, Gutiérrez, Solanas and Getino, Sembene, Ceylan, Ming-Liang, among others.

16:195:515/560:657

War and Experience. Twentieth-Century Narratives

Tuesday 2-5 pm AB5050

Instructor: Paola Gambarota

The clash between institutional representations of war (e.g., by government, public media, school) and the lived experiences of war produces the need to make sense of those experiences and to integrate them into public discourse. How was fighting and dying in war legitimized in the twentieth century and what did war mean to those who fought it? This seminar explores the ways in which the arts have been used to frame and understand the modern experience of war. Drawing on classic theories (e.g., Virilio, Benjamin, Joan Scott, Hayden White, Fussel, Leed, Barthes, Jameson), we will analyze how cultural and formal paradigms interact with lived historical events in memoirs (e.g. D'Annunzio; Jünger), fictional narratives (e.g. Lewis, Remarque, Malaparte), poems (Futurism; Hermeticism, Neo-Avantgarde), postcards, photographs, and films (e.g., Rossellini, Boulting, Patierno). Our discussion will concentrate on the relation between experience and representation and the question of the medium: how did different genres and media affect the articulation of the war experience? No knowledge of Italian required.

16:195:608/217:532

Advanced Topics in Comp Lit: Cold War Chinese Literature and Film

Thursday 10:20am-1:20pm AB4052

Instructor: Xiaojue Wang

The year 1949 witnessed the ideological and territorial division of China into various entities—the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas, which conditioned China's key position in the emergent global Cold War. Crossing 1949, the Cold War geopolitical constellation began to form in East Asia, which shaped the topography of global, multifaceted Chinese cultures. How to define Cold War modernity and cosmopolitanism in the global Sinophone regions in Asia, North America, and beyond? How did the Cold War propel new ways of expression, concealment, and negotiation along and across the Iron Curtain? This course considers key texts of literature, film, and arts during the cultural Cold War in the Sinophone world. Key issues examined include poetics and politics, migration and diaspora, containment and conspiracy, borders and border-crossing, betrayal and the captive mind, Cold War cosmopolitanism, socialist internationalism, and decolonization, the psychological warfare and domesticity, war narratives and the cultural Cold War. Great importance is placed on class discussion and on creating a dialogue of interpretations of the texts being studied.