

**University of Cyprus  
Department of English Studies**

**ENG 522: Film as Cultural Translation**

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**ECTS: 7.5**

**Office Hours: T 12.00-2.00; T 6.00-7.00; F 6.00-7.00**

**Spring 2019**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

World Cinema in its early years finds itself occupying a peculiar, *in the midst*, position as it dwells between Darkness and Light, Silence and Sound, Stillness and Motion but ultimately Science and Art. The aim of this course is to explore the enigmatic allure of this silent, strange world of moving images in order to thoughtfully reflect on the challenges early World Cinema, encounters in its attempts to translate that silent newness into a Cinematic Culture--the differential world of films, that is, in all its manifold complexity. To that end, ours will be an attempt to hear World Cinema's indecipherable self-reflexive (silent) utterings at its inception, through a close examination of (a) theoretical/critical texts reflecting the concerns of the time; (b) Cinema's efforts to sever its attachments to other art forms and assert itself as something new; (c) Individual Films; (d) Cinematic Movements; and (e) the contributions of some of the most important people involved in World Cinema's first years. For the purposes of this course, Cultural Translation is the method or interpretive lens used to read the Silent Era in World Cinema (1890's-1930) but also the way to think about films themselves, as Cultural Translations in their own right. Our approach is interdisciplinary bringing together texts from Philosophy, Film History, Theory and Criticism, Cultural Studies, Translation Theory, Film and Literature.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Acker, Ally. *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema: The First Hundred Years V.I. 1980's-1950's*. New York: Reel Women Media Publishing, 2012.

Andrew, J. Dudley. *The Major Film Theories*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976

Bazin, André. *What is Cinema? Vol.1*, trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Balasopoulos, Antonis. "Utopian and Cynical Elements': Chaplin, Cinema and Weimar Critical Theory." *Futurespaces: Space in Utopian and Science Fiction Discourse*. Ed. Ralph Pordzik, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008, pp. 327-358.

Balázs, Béla. *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*, trans. Edith Bone. Andesite Press, 2015. **(required)**

- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. **(required)**
- Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.
- Bhaba, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. NY: Routledge, 1994
- Bull, Sofia and Astrid Soderbergh Widding (Eds.). *Not So Silent: Women in Cinema Before Sound*. Stockholm: US-AB Stockholm, 2010. **(required)**
- Casetti, Francesco with Silvio Alovio and Luca Mazzei (eds.). *Early Film Theories in Italy 1896-1922*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
- Dall'Asta, Monica, Victoria Duckett, Lucia Tralli (eds.). *Researching Women in Silent Cinema: New Findings and Perspectives*. Women and Screen Cultures Series, University of Bologna, University of Melbourne and Women and Film History International, 2013. **(required)**
- Emmerich, Karen. *The Translator in Between—Roundtable: The Place of Cultural Translation in The Brooklyn Quarterly*  
<http://brooklynquarterly.org/the-translator-in-between/>
- Florin, Bo. *Transition and Transformation: Victor Sjöström in Hollywood 1923-1930*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013.
- Hansen, Miriam Hansen, “Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?” in *New German Critique*, No. 29, *The Origins of Mass Culture: The Case of Imperial Germany (1871-1918)* (Spring-Summer, 1983, pp.147-184
- Jones, G. William. *Black Cinema Treasures: Lost and Found*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997.
- Kaes, Anton and Nicholas Baer (eds.). *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016.
- Kaes, Anton, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (eds.). *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Keun, Irmgard. *The Artificial Silk Girl*, trans. Kathie von Ankum. New York: Other Press, 2002.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Maitland, Sarah. *What is Cultural Translation?* London: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Munsterberg, Hugo. *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916.

Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. **(required)**

Thompson, Kristin and David Bordwell. *Film History: An Introduction, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

**Please check the schedule for films to watch each week arranged thematically.** An additional list of films to choose from for your final papers will be given to you later on in the semester.

<https://archive.org/index.php>  
<http://www.openculture.com/>  
<http://oopen.org/content/>  
<https://wfpp.cdrs.columbia.edu/>

### ***Journals and Magazines/Film Criticism***

- Major newspapers in all languages have excellent film sections
- <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine>
- <http://brightlightsfilm.com/>
- <http://sensesofcinema.com/>
- <http://www.cineaste.com/>
- [http://www.cineaste.com/recommended\\_links](http://www.cineaste.com/recommended_links)
- <http://www.filmcomment.com/>
- <http://www.newyorker.com/>
- <http://www.cahiersducinema.com/>

## **REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Class Preparation and Participation**

I expect everyone to come to class fully prepared to discuss the material. Preparation includes reading the material, taking detailed notes, and noting down questions. As you are reading each of the assignments try to think what the main argument of the reading is and how the author arrives at such a conclusion. Engage with the author in such a way that as you read, try, to also respond in your mind, or by taking notes, to what she or he says. Excellent participation involves regular, thoughtful contributions to discussions: expressing your understanding of the material, and developing and thinking critically about your own positions. Some of the material that we will read makes for a lively class discussion; while disagreement is expected disrespect will not be tolerated.

### **Attendance**

Missing any class, coming in late to class, or leaving early will all detract from the final grade; if you do miss a class, you are still completely responsible for knowing what was covered in class that day and for finding out if there were any assignments given. Please call another student in the class to find out what you missed.

**Note:** *The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class time.* Your phones must be switched off while you are in class unless there is an extremely serious reason for you to keep them on.

### **Film Nights**

Unless otherwise specified, please consider the films required for this course as your homework and watch them at your own time. You should study them as you would study any other text you are assigned. In addition, at a time agreed upon by all (or at least by most) I will hold film screenings to which you are all welcome.

### **Assignments**

Specific instructions for this semester's assignments will be given separately.

### **Late Paper Policy**

All papers assigned for this course must be submitted on the dates, times and places indicated on your syllabus and assignments. No email submissions will be accepted unless you have checked with me in advance. Failure to meet deadlines will result in a **reduction** of your overall grade. No exceptions will be made. In cases of illness or other such unforeseeable circumstance please contact me and provide the necessary documentation.

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. It involves stealing other people's ideas and presenting them as your own. Some examples of plagiarism are: copying another's work, word for word, and presenting it as your own; "borrowing," without properly acknowledging the source, paragraphs, sentences, ideas, or even key concepts; and paraphrasing another's work and claiming it as your own. Additional information about plagiarism and citation rules will be provided during the semester. Exhibiting a lack of academic integrity in any of its varied forms will result in a failing grade.

### **Grading**

Participation/Presentations/Reflection Paper 20%

Semester-Long Response Papers 30%

Final Paper 50%

## **SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1: Jan.15-18 Some Introductory thoughts on Cultural Translation and Cinema**

#### **View:**

- Selection of short films to be viewed in class
- *The Lumiere Brothers' First Films* (USA, 1996).

#### **Reading:**

- Karen Emmerich, "The Translator In-Between"
- André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" and "The Myth of Total Cinema" in *What is Cinema? Vol.1*

- Homi Bhabha, “How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation,” in *The Location of Culture*.

**Optional Reading:**

- Paolo Cherchi Usai, “Origins and Survival” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Roberta Pearson, “Early Cinema” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Roberta Pearson, “Transition Cinema” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Douglas Gomery, “The Hollywood Studio System” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Ruth Vasey, “The World-Wide Spread of Cinema,” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- William Uricchio, “The First World War and the Crisis in Europe,” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*

**WEEK 2: Jan. 22-25 Benjamin on Translation, History and Cinema**

**Reading:**

- Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*
- Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*
- Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*

**WEEK 3: Jan. 29-Feb.1 Theoretical Issues in Silent Cinema**

- Heide Schlupmann, “An Alliance Between History and Theory” in Dall’Asta, Monica, Victoria Duckett, Lucia Tralli (eds.). *Researching Women in Silent Cinema: New Findings and Perspectives*
- Jane M. Gaines, “Wordlessness” in Dall’Asta, Monica, Victoria Duckett, Lucia Tralli (eds.). *Researching Women in Silent Cinema: New Findings and Perspectives*
- Jane M. Gaines, “Women and the Cinematification of the World” in *Not So Silent: Women in Cinema Before Sound*

**Optional Reading:**

- Béla Balázs, “In Praise of Theory”; “Ancient History”; “A New Form-Language”; “Visual Culture”; “Der Sichtbare Mensch”; “The Creative Camera”; and “The Close-Up” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*.
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**WEEK 4: Feb. 5-8 Theoretical Issues in Silent Cinema**

**Reading:**

- Miriam Hansen, “Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?” in *New German Critique*, No. 29, The Origins of Mass Culture: The Case of Imperial Germany (1871-1918) (Spring-Summer, 1983, pp.147-184)

- Christine Gledhill, “An Ephemeral History: Women and British Cinema Culture in the Silent Era” in Dall’Asta, Monica, Victoria Duckett, Lucia Tralli (eds.). *Researching Women in Silent Cinema: New Findings and Perspective*
- Monica Dall’Asta, “What It Means to be a Woman: Theorizing Feminist Film History Beyond the Essentialism/Constructionism Divide” in *Not So Silent: Women in Cinema Before Sound*

### **WEEK 5: Feb. 12-15 France, Alice Guy-Blaché, Germaine Dulac and French Impressionism**

#### **View:**

- Blaché, Alice Guy. *The Cabbage Fairy* (France, 1896).
- Blaché, Alice Guy. *La Naissance, la vie et la mort du Christ* (France, 1906).
- Blaché, Alice Guy. *Madame a des envies* (France, 1907).
- Blaché, Alice Guy. *The Consequences of Feminism* (France, 1907).
- Blaché, Alice Guy. *A Sticky Woman* (France, 1907).
- Blaché, Alice Guy. *Falling Leaves* (France, 1912).
- Dulac, Germaine. *The Smiling Madame Beudet* (France, 1923).
- Dulac, Germaine. *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (France, 1928)
- Gance, Abel. *La Roue* (France, 1923).

#### **Reading:**

- Richard Abel, “French Silent Cinema” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Alice Blaché, “Woman’s Place in Photoplay Production” in *The Moving Picture World* (1914)

### **WEEK 6: Feb. 19-22 Germany, German Expressionism and New Objectivity**

#### **View:**

- Boese, Carl and Paul Wegener. *Der Golem* (Germany, 1920).
- Lang, Fritz. *Metropolis* (Germany, 1927).
- May, Joe. *Asphalt* (Germany, 1929).
- Murnau, F.W. *Nosferatu* (Germany, 1922).
- Pabst, G.W. *The Joyless Street* (Germany, 1925).
- Rye, Stellan. *The Student of Prague* (Germany, 1913).
- Von Sternberg, Josef. *The Blue Angel* (Germany, 1930).
- Wiene, Robert. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Germany, 1920).

#### **Reading:**

- Thomas Elsaesser, “Germany: The Weimar Years,” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Béla Balázs, “The Face of Man,”; and “Changing Set-Up” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*

### **WEEK 7: Feb. 26- March 1 Soviet Cinema**

#### **View:**

- Bauer, Yevgeny. *The Dying Swan* (Russia, 1917).
- Pudovkin, Vsevolod. *Mother* (USSR, 1926).
- Eisenstein, Sergei. *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR, 1925).

- Dovzhenko, Alexander. *Earth* (USSR, 1930).

**Reading:**

- Yuri Tsivian, “Pre-Revolutionary Russia” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Natalia Nussinova, “The Soviet Union and the Russian Emigrés” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Béla Balázs, “Editing,”; “Panorama”; “Expressive Technique of the Camera” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*

**WEEK 8: March 5-8 American Silent Films**

**View:**

- Badger, Clarence G. *It* (USA, 1927).
- Browning, Tod. *The Unknown* (USA, 1927).
- Bryant, Charles and Alla Nazimova. *Salome* (USA, 1922).
- De Mille, Cecil B. *Why Change your Wife?* (USA, 1920).
- Griffith, D.W. *Intolerance* (USA, 1916).
- Micheaux, Oscar. *Within Our Gates* (USA, 1920).
- Taylor, Sam. *My Best Girl* (USA, 1927).
- Vidor, King. *Show People* (USA, 1928).
- Wolper, David L. Wolper. *Hollywood the Golden Years* (USA, 1961).
- Murnau, F.W. *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (USA, 1927).
- Von Stroheim, Erich. *Greed* (USA, 1924).

**Reading:**

- Béla Balázs, “Heroes, Beauty, Stars and the Case of Greta Garbo” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*

**WEEK 9: March 12-15 Comedies, Chaplin, Keaton**

**View:**

- Chaplin, Charlie. *The Kid* (USA, 1921).
- Chaplin, Charlie. *Modern Times* (USA, 1936).
- Chaplin, Charlie. *The Great Dictator* (USA, 1940).
- Keaton, Buster. *Sherlock Jr.* (USA, 1924).

**Reading:**

- Antonis, Balasopoulos, “‘Utopian and Cynical Elements’: Chaplin, Cinema and Weimar Critical Theory.” In Ralph, Pordzik (Ed.), *Futurespaces: Space in Utopian and Science Fiction Discourse*
- André Bazin, “Charlie Chaplin,” in *What is Cinema? Vol. I*
- Béla Balázs, “Sound”; “Dialogue”; and “Problems of the Sound Comedy,” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*
- David Robinson, “Comedy” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Kristen Anderson Wagner, “Silent Comediennes and ‘The Tragedy of Being Funny’” in Dall’Asta, Monica, Victoria Duckett, Lucia Tralli (eds.). *Researching Women in Silent Cinema: New Findings and Perspectives*

### **WEEK 10: March 19-22 Mountain films, Adventure Films**

#### **View:**

- Fanck, Arnold. *The Holy Mountain* (Germany, 1926).
- Hartford, David. *Back to God's Country* (Canada, 1918).
- Riefenstahl, Leni. *The Blue Light* (Germany, 1932).
- Flaherty, Robert. *Nanook of the North* (USA, 1922).

#### **Reading:**

- Béla Balázs, "Problems of Style in the Film" in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*

### **WEEK 11: March 26-29 City Symphony Films**

#### **View:**

- Cavalcanti, Alberto. *Nothing but Time* (France, 1929).
- Ivens, Joris. *Rain* (Netherlands, 1929).
- Ruttmann, Walter. *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (Germany, 1927)
- Sheeler, Charles. *Manhatta* (USA, 1921).
- Vertov, Dziga. *Man with a Movie Camera* (USSR, 1929)

#### **Reading:**

- Charles Musser, "Documentary," in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*

#### **Optional Reading:**

- Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle" in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*.
- Walter Benjamin, "Moscow" in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*.
- Irmgard Keun, *The Artificial Silk Girl*, trans. Kathie von Ankum. New York, Other Press, 2002.

### **WEEK 12: April 2-5 Scandinavian Silent Cinema**

#### **View:**

- Blom, August. *Atlantis* (Denmark, 1913).
- Christensen, Benjamin. *Haxan* (Denmark, 1922).
- Dryer, Carl Theodore. *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Denmark, 1928).
- Gad, Urban. *The Abyss* (Denmark, 1910).
- Gade, Svend. *Hamlet* (Denmark, 1921).
- Sjöström, Victor. *Ingeborg Holm* (Sweden, 1913).
- Sjöström, Victor. *A Man there Was* (Sweden, 1917).
- Sjöström, Victor. *The Phantom Carriage* (Sweden, 1921).
- Sjöström, Victor. *The Wind* (USA, 1928).

#### **Reading:**

- Paolo Cherchi Usai, "The Scandinavian Style," in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Selections from Bo Florin's, *Transition and Transformation: Victor Sjöström in Hollywood 1923-1930*.



### **WEEK 13: April 9-12 Animation, Special Effects**

- De Chomon, Segundo. *Les Kiriki Acrobats Japonais* (France, 1903).
- De Chomon, Segundo. *La Boite a Cigares* (France, 1907).
- Hoyt, Harry O. *The Lost World* (USA, 1925).
- Méliès, Georges. *A Trip to the Moon* (France, 1902).
- Reiniger, Lotte. *Cinderella* (Germany, 1922).
- Reiniger, Lotte. *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (Germany, 1928)

#### **Reading:**

- Donald Crafton, “Tricks and Animation,” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Béla Balázs, “Optical Tricks, Composites, Cartoons,” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*
- Martin Marks, “Music and the Silent Film” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*

### **WEEK 14: April 16-19 Avant-Garde Cinema of the Silent Era**

#### **View:**

- Machaty, Gustav. *Seduction* (Erotikon) (Czechoslovakia, 1929).
- Wu, Yonggang. *The Goddess* (China, 1934).
- Bunuel, Luis. *Un Chien Andalou* (France, 1929).
- Clair, René. *Entr’acte* (France, 1924).
- Kinugasa, Teinosuke. *A Page of Madness* (Japan, 1926).

#### **Reading:**

- Béla Balázs, “Formalism of the Avant-Garde,” in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*
- A.L. Rees, “Cinema and the Avant-Garde” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*
- Hiroshi Komatsu, “Japan: Before the Great Kanto Earthquake,” in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*