



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Film Studies

Adaptation and intermediality: Case analyses (seminar)

Györgyi Vajdovich
Seminar

The course provides an introduction to the problems of intermediality through the examination of different cases of adaptation. The case studies will reveal the specific characteristics of the different media (such as literary text, drama, comics, computer games etc.), their relationship to film and the special adaptation problems they create. During the course the following theoretical problems will also be discussed: abstraction vs. concrete visual representation, homogeneous vs. complex ways of expression, different structures of narrative, construction of space and time, the adaptation of stylistic elements. Beside the basic questions of intermediality, problems of intercultural adaptations and remakes will also be discussed.

Human Rights in Contemporary Documentary Films

Beáta Margitházi
seminar

(Seminar is organized in cooperation with Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, Budapest, November of 2020)

Verzio/Version is the only festival of its kind in Hungary, organized on an annual basis since 2004. Its mission is "to promote open society, democratic values, rule-of-law, freedom of expression, political and cultural pluralism, and to expose abuse and global human rights violations through creative, quality documentaries." By raising sensibility to different forms of social injustice, personal and collective traumas, the seminar plans to discuss some selected films of the festival's actual program on the topics of mental health, archives around the world, freedom of expression, and human rights role models.

The course is based on student presentations and group discussions.

Introduction to Film Theory

László Strausz
seminar

The course is designed as a topical introduction into film theory. Instead of investigating film theory through its historical progression, we will rather focus problems that stand in the forefront of the discipline. Primarily, we will examine broad patterns in how the medium conveys meaning, elicits emotion and addresses audiences. It is concerned with the nature of the medium itself and with the conventions it has developed for what is 'cinematic.' The secondary focus of the course is to acquire skills in applying these theoretical ideas to particular film texts, testing these ideas to see how well they fit individual cases.

American cinema: an introduction

László Strausz
seminar

This seminar attempts to map the shifting institutional and cultural paradigms that have significantly impacted the development of American cinema. Throughout the course, we will critically investigate the transformation of the mainstream and alternative modes of production, distribution and exhibition during the from the silent era to the classical period, towards the post-Paramount Decree decades. The course does not attempt to give an historical overview of the history of this national cinema, but rather aims to engage with the main aesthetic, social, institutional and technological topics that shaped American cinema.

Media Studies

Ethical Challenges in Digital Journalism

Gábor Polyák
seminar

The technological developments since the end of the 20th century have not only impacted on journalistic practices, but the global, digital age effects journalism ethics. The entry of digital technology acts as one of the most significant factors changing the ethical practice of journalism today, as one example they name the journalists' dilemma of often having to decide between speed or verification and accuracy. The increase of journalistic investigations and publications online poses many other new challenges – besides the rather classical questions such as impartiality, conflict of interest, deception and betrayal – at the forefront is an ever-increasing amount of fake news that urges extensive fact checking, and dealing with hate speech in comments sections. Other ethical issues include questions arising from linking content from other sources, including content from citizen journalism and whistle blowers, handling large amounts of data as well as the products of digital visualisation (photo, video, graphics), plagiarism, and problems of privacy in the digital age.

Mediensysteme in Europa

Gábor Polyák
seminar

Das Seminar gibt einen Einblick in die Mediensystemforschung und vermittelt Informationen über Veranstalter, Organisationsformen, Angebote und Struktur öffentlicher Kommunikationsmedien in Europa. Das Seminar fokussiert auf die Vergleichung der Mediensysteme von Westeuropa und von Mittel- und Osteuropa (vor allem Ungarn, Polen, Tschechien, die Slowakei, sowie Rumänien und Bulgarien), sowie auf die Ausgestaltung und Rolle der Massenmedien in dem Transformationsprozess nach 1990. Zudem werden wir mit der Auswirkung der Europäischen Union auf die Entwicklung der europäischen Mediensysteme in der digitalen Welt. Wir werden auch die Methoden internationaler Organisationen (Reporter ohne Grenzen, Freedom House, usw.) zur Beurteilung und Vergleichung der Mediensysteme kennenlernen.

Freedom of Speech: Hungary and the international context

Mihály Szilágyi-Gál
seminar

The course addresses the phenomena of hate speech and free speech. By offering an overview of the international literature of the main related conceptual controversies, the course also addresses the Hungarian case both as example and as exception. As such we focus both on cross-national aspects of free speech and its abuses through fighting words and on some specific elements of the development of these matters in Hungary since 1990 onwards. The topics discussed in class and emphasized in the readings are the following: 1. Definition of key concepts of the freedom of communication and of its abuses: free speech, press freedom, hate speech, fighting words; 2. From party-state media control to political and economic pluralism in the Hungarian media between 1990 and 2010; 3. Further key concepts to understand the role of the state in the interplay between liberty and control: public service, internal- and external media pluralism, content neutrality; 4. Issues of exception: Holocaust denial in Europe, red star in Hungary, burning cross in the United States; 5. Does the internet make any difference? – the four global players of online communication: individual users, companies, platforms and states; 6. Restrictions of speech in the age of safe spaces.

Aesthetics

Environmental Aesthetics

Endre Szécsényi
lecture

This **series of lectures** offers an introduction to one of the most flourishing branches of contemporary aesthetic theories: environmental aesthetics. This prolific discourse emerged in the 1960s as a new theoretical attention to the beauty of nature; by now it has embraced the aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment, of human-influenced environment, of human (cultural) environment, moreover – under the name of "everyday aesthetics" – the aesthetics of our everyday activities within these environments. We will deal with these topics through the texts of some major representatives of environmental aesthetics like R. W. Hepburn, A. Carlson, A. Berleant, E. Brady, Y. Sepänmaa, A. Haapala, G. Parsons, S. Shapshay and others. The aim of this course is to give a comprehensive image of this aesthetic theory, to show its most significant methods, issues and debates, to demonstrate that it is a vivid philosophical approach to our current problems with our world and ourselves.

Philosophy of Vision

Sándor Sajó
lecture

We shall discuss the meaning and significance of vision in experience in general. We shall start with a text from Foucault, continue with Diderot's classical text, then focus on phenomenology (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Lévinas, Marion). We shall also read authors from the psychoanalytical tradition (Lacan) and art history (Didi-Huberman). Fundamental philosophical issues, closely connected to vision, shall also be discussed such as the problem of consciousness, the relation of mind and body, the relation of the I and the other.

Requirements: regular attendance (3 classes may be missed), active participation in the discussions, submission of an essay at the end of the semester.