FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

53 Wall Street, Rm. 216, 203.436.4668
http://filmstudies.yale.edu
M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
John Durham Peters

Director of Graduate Studies
Francesco Casetti

Professors Dudley Andrew, Francesco Casetti, Katerina Clark, Aaron Gerow, Brian Kane, John MacKay, Millicent Marcus, Charles Musser, Fatima Naqvi, John Durham Peters, Brigitte Peucker, Katie Trumpener, Jing Tsu, Laura Wexler

Associate Professors Marta Figlerowicz, R. John Williams

Assistant Professor Marijeta Bozovic

Senior Lecturer Marc Lapadula

Lecturers Oksana Chefranova, Thomas Allen Harris, Brian Meacham, Camille Thomasson

FIELDS OF STUDY
Film and Media Studies is an interdisciplinary field drawing on the study of the history of art, national cultures and literatures, literary theory, philosophy, anthropology, feminist and queer studies, race and representation, and other areas. To study film and media at Yale, every doctoral student must be accepted into a combined program involving another discipline. Film and Media Studies offers a combined Ph.D. with African American Studies, American Studies, Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages and Literatures, English, French, German, History of Art, Italian Studies, and Slavic Languages and Literatures. In addition to acquiring a firm grounding in the methods and core material of both film-media studies and another discipline, the candidate is advised to coordinate a plan of study involving comprehensive knowledge of one or more areas of specialization. Such areas include:

1. Historiography, including archival history, history of technology, silent film.
3. European film: British-Irish, French, German and Nordic, Italian, Slavic.
5. World film: global image exchange; cinema in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
6. Documentary as an aesthetic, cultural, and ideological practice.
7. Cinema in its relations with other arts and other media.
8. Screen cultures, screened images, post-cinema, theory and history of media.

Through course work, examinations, and the dissertation, the candidate links a film and media specialty with material and methods coming from the participating discipline. Directors of graduate studies from both programs monitor the candidate’s plans and progress.

This is a combined degree program. To be considered for admission to this program, applicants must indicate both Film and Media Studies and one of the participating departments/programs listed above.

In addition to the combined Ph.D. program, Film and Media Studies offers students in the Graduate School’s other doctoral programs the chance to obtain a Graduate Certificate in Film and Media Studies. See Film and Media Studies, under Non-Degree Granting Programs, Councils, and Research Institutes, in this bulletin.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
Every student selected for the combined program is subject to the supervision of the Film and Media Studies program and the relevant participating department. A written protocol between each department and Film and Media Studies outlines the requirements and schedule to be borne in mind as a plan of study is worked out in consultation with the director of graduate studies (DGS) of Film and Media Studies and the DGS of the participating department. In all cases, students are required to take two core seminars in Film and Media Studies (FILM 601 and FILM 603) as well as at least four additional Film and Media Studies seminars. Course requirements vary for participating departments. By October 1 of the third year, all students must have fulfilled an assignment related to foundational texts and films. Later that year, students advance to candidacy by completing qualifying examinations and a dissertation prospectus.

1. Qualifying examinations follow the regulations of the participating department with at least one member of the Film and Media Studies Executive Committee participating.
2. The dissertation prospectus is presented to a faculty committee or the entire faculty of the participating department. The prospectus is also submitted to the prospectus committee of Film and Media Studies for approval.
3. A defense of method occurs when the dissertation is nearing completion, one or two terms before submission. The purpose of this defense is to provide guidance and feedback at a critical stage, in order to assist the dissertation’s final form. At least three faculty readers meet with the student; the DGS of Film and Media Studies and the DGS of the participating department are also invited to participate. At least one examiner of the dissertation must be a member of the Film and Media Studies Executive Committee and one must be from the participating department.

The faculty in Film and Media Studies considers participation in the Teaching Fellows Program to be essential to the professional preparation of graduate students. Students normally teach in years three and four. Every student may expect to assist in two Film and Media Studies courses, one of which will very likely be Introduction to Film Studies (FILM 150) or Introduction to Media (FILM 160).

M.A. with a concentration in Public Humanities.

COURSES

The required core seminars, FILM 601 and FILM 603, are offered in alternating years.

FILM 603a / AMST 814a, Historical Methods in Film Study Charles Musser

A range of historiographic issues in film studies, including the roles of technology, exhibition, and spectatorship. Topics include intermediality and intertextuality. Consideration of a range of methodological approaches through a focus on international early cinema and American race cinema of the silent period. Particular attention to the interaction between scholars and archives.

FILM 617a / CPLT 904a / FREN 875a / SPAN 901a, Key Concepts in Psychoanalysis: Tools for the Critical Humanities Moira Fradinger

Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, ending with an exploration of the afterlife of these concepts in other disciplines, focusing on one or two concrete examples. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as the tools to assess how these concepts have been translated into the language of disciplines such as aesthetic criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, sociology, etc. Concepts to be studied include the unconscious, the ego, identification, the drive, the death drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. Depending on the interests of the group, others can be added (such as neurosis, perversion, fetishism, psychosis, anti-psychiatry, etc.). Commentators, readers, and critics of Freud and Lacan are also consulted (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafriropoulos, and others).

FILM 644a / AMST 626a / WGSS 678a, Visuality, Embodiment, Performance: Seeing with Companions Laura Wexler

This co-taught interuniversity seminar offers in-depth engagements with recent works by leading feminist theorists and artists committed to anti-racist, anti-imperialist, activist ways of seeing, knowing, thinking, and doing. Forging a participatory, collaborative, critical practice of “seeing with companions,” it responds to provocations posed by the course materials to go beyond critique, to reconceive feminist and queer epistemologies and pedagogies, and to imagine different ways of being in the world. Readings include recent works by Ariella Azoulay, Judith Butler, Saidiya Hartman, and Diana Taylor, as well as visual artworks, performances, and films by Regina José Galindo, Arthur Jafa, Simone Leigh, Doris Salcedo, and Kara Walker, among others. Permission of instructors required.

FILM 652a / ENGL 923a, Media Theory John Peters

This course provides an intensive introduction to foundational texts in media theory from the early to the later twentieth century. The course makes no effort to cover the current array of media theories. Rather, it brings current concerns to spectacularly rich historical sources. We study intellectual traditions from the United States, Canada, UK, France, and Germany in particular, though students with interests in other traditions—such as Latin America, Japan, Eastern Europe—are welcome. Authors may include Adorno, Arendt, Benjamin, Dewey, Du Bois, Heidegger, Horkheimer, Innis, Kittler, Leroi-Gourhan, Lippmann, McLuhan, Mumford, Simondon, Wiener, Raymond Williams, and others. Ongoing questions include community, democracy, power, race, gender, ideology, culture, industry, technics, cybernetics, embodiment, modernity, and space and time.

FILM 653b / AMST 653b, Studies in Documentary Film Charles Musser

This course examines key works, crucial texts, and fundamental concepts in the critical study of nonfiction cinema, exploring the participant–observer dialectic, the performative, and changing ideas of truth in documentary forms.

FILM 735a and FILM 736b / AMST 832a and AMST 833b, Documentary Film Workshop Charles Musser

This workshop in audiovisual scholarship explores ways to present research through the moving image. Students work within a Public Humanities framework to make a documentary that draws on their disciplinary fields of study. Designed to fulfill requirements for the M.A. with a concentration in Public Humanities.

FILM 752b / CPLT 933b / FREN 752b, French Cinema through the New Wave Dudley Andrew

This seminar uses a sample of twenty films (with clips from many others) to survey four decades of the tradition of French cinema crowned by the privileged moment of the New Wave. Graduate students are asked to challenge the idea of “national cinema” by reporting on some non-canonical or marginal film before midterm. Keeping the culture industry in view, we question the extent to which such a consistently robust cinema has been bound to—or remained partly independent of—a nation that from 1930 to 1970 underwent a depression, a socialist experiment, an occupation, a liberation, and the humiliations of decolonization abroad and social unrest (May ’68) at home. In addition to the midterm contribution, graduate students write a substantial term paper.
FILM 775a / RUSS 696a, Post-Stalin Literature and Film  Katerina Clark
The main developments in Russian and Soviet literature and film from Stalin’s death in 1953 to the present.

FILM 779a / ITAL 793a, Italian Film Ecologies: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow  Millicent Marcus
Landscape and the natural environment have never occupied “background” status in Italian film. Given the spectacular visual presence of its terrain — thanks to the relative proximity of mountain chains and the long seacoast — and given the pivotal importance of farming and pasturage in this traditionally agrarian economy, the synergy between the human and natural worlds has played a prominent role in Italian filmmaking since the very inception of the industry. Most recently, two developments have pushed this issue to the forefront of scholarly attention: the advent of ecocriticism, which found one of its earliest and most influential champions in Serenella Iovino, and the establishment of regional film commissions, grassroots production centers that sponsored cinematic works attuned to the specificity of “the local.” The course includes study of films that predate our current environmental consciousness, as well as recent films that foreground it in narrative terms. In the case of the older films, which have already attracted a great deal of critical commentary over time, we work to shift our interpretive frame in an “eco-friendly” direction (even when the films’ characters are hardly friends of the environment). Among the films considered are Le quattro volte, Il vento fa il suo giro, L'uomo che verrà, Gomorra, L'abero degli zoccoli, Riso amaro, Red Desert, Christ Stopped at Eboli, and Il ladro di bambini. We screen one film a week and devote our seminars to close analysis of the works in question.

FILM 826b, Technics and Technology: Dispositives, Machines, Bodies  Francesco Casetti
The seminar explores the operations that sustain visual media — operations that become fully apparent once we conceive of these media as social dispositives, as technical objects, and as complements or alternatives to bodily gestures and postures. Reexamining contributions by scholars as different as Deleuze, Agamben, Simondon, Latour, Flusser, and Mauss, this seminar engages an extensive exploration of both cultural practices (techniques) and material processes (technologies) that allow us to make an image “visible,” and consequently exchangeable, interpretable, reworkable, exhibitable, and so on. What is at stake is the mutual dependence of cultural choices and concrete arrangements of media, and ultimately the mutual determination of machines and bodies. The final section of the seminar is devoted to the work of the German filmmaker Harun Farocki, who anticipated the idea of “operational images.” The seminar matches a philosophical approach with an archaeological account of the mode of working of actual visual media, from the Phantasmagoria to the Panorama and film. Enrollment is capped; the seminar requires active participation on the part of admitted students.

FILM 831b, Media, Semiotics, Hermeneutics  Dudley Andrew
Media texts are openly characterized by their capability of displaying their own linguistic operations (reflexivity), by their aptitude in reworking previous texts for a new use (forms of rewriting), and by their capability of creating a direct — even if “mediatized” — access to the real (transparency, authenticity). These three topics on one hand may underline some of the most important — and controversial — trends in media culture, and on the other hand may highlight the way in which semiotics and hermeneutics confront each other in the field of media studies. The seminar explores these three topics with the help of some examples (films, photos, television programs, comics), as well as with references to some theoretical debates, especially discussions about enunciation (Christian Metz), adaptation (Umberto Eco, Gérard Genette), and experience (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Stanley Cavell).

FILM 833a, Semiotics  Francesco Casetti
The seminar discusses the most relevant concepts and categories elaborated by semiotics in order to provide analytical tools for “close readings” of verbal or visual texts, cultural objects, artifacts, events, and social situations. Semiotics’s foundational goal consisted in retracing how meaning emerges and circulates in connection with a variety of objects, from literary works to social rituals, from natural phenomena to artificial languages. To revamp semiotics’s main tasks, the seminar discusses three issues: the structure of semiotic objects, in particular their internal organization and their ideological connotations; the narrative strategies that semiotic objects display, with their capacity to establish a subtle parallel with a theory of human action; and the process of semiosis, and the ways in which a semiotic object becomes “meaningful” in the framework of a culture. Analytical tools are tested in class through close readings of a great variety of objects and situations, spanning from celebrities’ depictions to Genesis, from social encounters to urban design. Further examples are proposed by students. These close readings will imply the collective work of the whole class.

FILM 853a or b, Aesthetics and Hermeneutics in Film and Literature  Dudley Andrew
In 1976 the paired concepts “Ideology and Utopia” appeared in the bibliographies of both Paul Ricoeur and Fredric Jameson, two towering intellectuals with exceptionally long careers. This seminar examines the indispensable place of aesthetics and interpretation (mainly of fiction) in their approach to human history and present ethics/politics. Ricoeur had just published The Rule of Metaphor, arguing that philosophy needs novels and films as metaphors that open up the future of history and of thought. Jameson preferred allegory to open up Balzac, science fiction, detective novels, and — starting in 1976 — Hollywood and art films. Last year he published Allegory and Ideology. This seminar examines Ricoeur on metaphor and Jameson on allegory at the place where both of them labored — narrative — and in view of their mutual belief in history as the (battle)ground of “ideology and utopia.” Ricoeur’s roots in phenomenology and hermeneutics stress temporality (Temps et Récit), while Jameson’s Marxist structuralism leads him to spatialize narrative as an ideological or cognitive map. Both men gather vast philosophical traditions; both tangle openly with competing views (Deleuze, Lacan, et al.), and both write with an urgency about immediate social consequence, one from a generally Christian aspiration, the other a generally Marxist one. Sampling key moments of their vast output, we also interpret fiction and images as they would have us do, i.e., as extended metaphors or allegories. We certainly discuss Godard’s Histoire(s) du Cinéma as a contemporaneous intervention via images in ideology and utopia. Lanzmann’s Shoah must also be confronted. Reading knowledge of French is desirable but not essential. We may elect to hold a weekly screening, as a kind of cine-club running to the side of the seminar.
FILM 861a / CPLT 632a, Literature and Film of World War II: Homefront Narratives  Katie Trumpener
Taking a pan-European perspective, the course examines quotidian, civilian experiences of war during a conflict of unusual scope and duration. Considering key works of wartime and postwar fiction and film alongside diaries and memoirs, we explore the kinds of literary reflection war occasioned, how civilians experienced the relationship between history and everyday life (both during and after the war), children’s experience of war, and the ways that homefront, occupation, and concentration camp memories shaped postwar avant-garde aesthetics. Novels and autobiographical fiction by Elio Vittorini, Anna Seghers, Irène Némirovsky, Elizabeth Taylor, Georges Simenon, Jiří Weil, Jorge Semprún, Miron Bialoszewski, Christa Wolf. Films by Humphrey Jennings, Andrzej Munk, Theo Angelopoulos, Péter Forgács, István Szabó, Bill Douglas, Kevin Brownlow. Diaries and memoirs by Victor Klemperer, Anne Frank, Sarah Kofman. We also consider poetry, photography, and art.

FILM 880b / EALL 872b, Theories Popular Cult In Japan: TV  Aaron Gerow
Exploration of postwar theories of popular culture and subculture in Japan, particularly focusing on the intellectual debates over television and new media.

FILM 973a / ENGL 973a, Modernity and the Time of Literature  John Williams
This course examines transformations in temporality that occurred in the sciences and arts during the twentieth century. From the arrival of Einsteinian relativity to more contemporary proofs on quantum nonlocality, the question of time in the twentieth century threatened to overturn some of our oldest assumptions about cause and effect, duration, history, presentness, and futurity. These new temporalities were as scientifically and philosophically vexing as they were rife with spiritual and aesthetic possibility – a dynamic reflected in the literary and artistic forms that were central to these transformations. Our reading reflects this deeply cross-cultural and interdisciplinary trajectory, including histories of science and technology (Peter Galison, N. Katherine Hayles, David Kaiser), philosophies of time (Heidegger, Bruno Latour, Bernard Stiegler, McLuhan, Luhmann), critical theories of temporal form (Derrida, Adorno, Jameson, Pamela Lee, Kojin Karatani), a wide array of literary texts (William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Ursula K. Le Guin, Tom McCarthy, and others), as well as important cinematic innovations (Jodorowsky, Godard, Kubrick). What is the “time” of literature? of film? How does art transform or reinforce theories of temporal flow? How do new technologies of composition and circulation alter the temporal effects of a given work? What was the “End of History”? 