LANGUAGE OF FILM

Instructor: Hank Gerba (they/them), hankg@stanford.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Zoom for when absent: https://stanford.zoom.us/j/93316955714?pwd=U0huMG9EUjcyYVp3dXJWPHEExOUd0Zz09

Passcode: 695639
(https://stanford.zoom.us/j/93462279733?pwd=Rdkydjd2R1hQK1Q5NDRIS1ZzU4ydz09)

CLASS SCHEDULE

In-Person Class: Friday 10:30AM-1PM, McMurtry 007

Screenings: Films are available on Box, or at the Bowes Art Library

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course familiarizes students with various elements of film language (cinematography, editing, sound, etc.) and introduces them to a range of approaches to cinematic analysis (authorship, genre, close formal reading, socio-historical considerations). Different types of films (narrative, documentary, and experimental) will be surveyed. Classical narrative cinema will be compared with alternative modes of storytelling.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Regular attendance and preparation for class. Irregular attendance will negatively affect your grade. Arrive to class each week having done the assigned readings and watched any assigned films. The class will be discussion based, so it is important that you are prepared. When possible, it is helpful for me to know if you have a planned absence. We will work together to determine whether or not, and what type, of make-up work should be done to cover absences.

2. We are still dealing with a global pandemic. Please familiarize yourself with the following guidelines for the Summer Institute: https://summer.stanford.edu/covid-policies-and-procedures (https://summer.stanford.edu/covid-policies-and-procedures). Testing will be available throughout the summer, and you are encouraged to test yourself if you feel ill. You are not obliged to tell me if you have COVID-19, but you will be isolating for up to 10 days. I am, of course, more than happy to figure out a way for you to continue your coursework during that period to the extent of your ability.

3. There are three main assignments: weekly discussion posts, a mid-quarter scene analysis, and a final paper.
   1. Weekly discussion posts: The class will be divided into two groups, A and B. Each week, one group will write a short discussion post on Canvas about that week's film (~300 words). This will be due the Tuesday before class at midnight. The
other group will then have two days to write a short response to whichever discussion post they like. Groups A and B will alternate each week, pausing for the week of the mid-quarter scene analysis and final.

2. **Mid-Quarter Scene Analysis:** The entire class will perform a shot-by-shot scene analysis of a clip from one of the films we have watched together. This is a relatively standardized practice that we will learn and practice together. **Due August 5 at midnight.**

3. **Final paper:** The final paper will consist two parts: a scene analysis and a written analysis. For this assignment you will be free to choose any film of your choice. The details of this assignment will be provided as we approach it. **Due August 20th at midnight.**

**GRADING:**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20% Class participation and preparation
- 20% Scene Analysis
- 30% Week Discussion Posts/Responses
- 30% Final Paper

**STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES:**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://oae.stanford.edu).

**Weekly Schedule:**

**Week 1 (June 24)**

**Film Form**


**Readings:** FA Ch.1 and 2

**Week 2 (July 1)**

**Genre**

**Screening:** *Shin Godzilla* (2016)

**Readings:** FA Ch. 9, Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre" (see files on Canvas)

**Week 3 (July 8)**

**Narrative**

**Screening:** *Citizen Kane* (Orson Wells, 1941)

**Readings:** FA Ch.3, FA: “Style in Citizen Kane” 313-322
Week 4 (July 15)

Mise-en-scène / Cinematography

Screening: *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989)

Readings: FA Ch.4 and 5

Week 5 (July 22)

Editing: Continuity

Screening: *The Birds* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1963)

Readings: FA Ch. 6, 216-252, Raymond Bellour, “System of a Fragment (on *The Birds*)” (see files)

Week 6 (July 29)

Editing: Discontinuity

Screening: *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)


**DUE AUGUST 5: Mid-Quarter Scene Analysis**

Week 7 (August 5)

TBA

Screening: TBA

Readings: TBA

Week 8 (August 12)

TBA

Screening: TBA

Readings: TBA

**DUE AUGUST 20: Final Papers**