

TOTAL ART: RUSSIAN AND SOVIET FILM

Fall 2012 **FSEM/REST 168**
Tues/Thurs **1:20-2:35 pm** **201 Lawrence Hall**
Mon Screenings **7:00-10:00 pm** **20 Lawrence Hall**

Professor: **Marijeta Bozovic**
Office hours: **Mon/Weds 2:35-4:00 and by appt.**
 202 Lawrence Hall
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Website: <http://moodle.colgate.edu/>

Course Description:

This interdisciplinary course introduces the history and theory of Russian cinema and features a selection of the most influential Russian and Soviet films of the 20th century. Beginning with the Great Silents (Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov), the course explores avant-garde montage and Socialist realism, concluding with the post-modern sensibilities of Andrei Tarkovsky and Aleksandr Sokurov and popular new Russian films such as *Night Watch* (2004) and *Brother* (1997). Students screen one or two films each week and study them in depth. We will talk about cinema in relation to literature, performance, and visual art, and learn how film language was developed. Films are discussed in a broad cultural, social, and aesthetic context, with a focus on images as carriers of cultural value and ideological meaning. We will interrogate such issues as art, propaganda, and the power of “spectacle” in contemporary society.

As a final project, completed in parallel with a final research paper, students will have the opportunity to make their own three-minute video narrative — to make film about film. This course counts towards the Humanities area of inquiry and Russian and Eurasian Studies major/minor requirements. All films have English subtitles.

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| • Class Participation | 25% |
| • Moodle Discussion Questions | 15% |
| • First Paper (5 pages) | 10% |
| • Second Paper (8 pages, building on first paper) | 10% |
| • Third Paper (10-12 pages, building on previous papers) | 15% |
| • Brief Oral Presentation of Final Paper | 5% |
| • Three-minute Video Narrative | 10% |
| • Take-home Final Exam | 10% |

You will be expected to post one discussion question/brief response (4-8 sentences) to the readings through our moodle forum before each class. A good discussion question might propose an interpretation; address something that you found difficult; stage an intervention from a different perspective; or offer a reading of a scene. Please remember to direct your readers to the scene in the film or passage in the reading you are discussing (quote short passages, provide page or line numbers). All responses must be posted by midnight the evening before class, giving you the opportunity to read each other's postings before we meet. These assignments are intended to help all of us prepare for class discussion — I will bring up your questions frequently during class.

The third paper of the semester, the video narrative, and the oral presentation will all build on the same topic, chosen by you and in consultation with me and your peers. Together they will constitute the final project for the course, and will make up 30% of your grade. In keeping with the goals of this course — to explore a culture and to learn about different media — you will develop and present your ideas in written, oral, and visual forms. The first paper will “close read” one film of your choice; the second paper will build on the first by adding a comparative look at a second film; and the third will trace a broader theme and an original thesis across three or more works. Plenty of critical feedback on the first two papers will help sharpen your analytical skills prior to embarking on the final assignments. The take-home final exam will consist of short scene analyses, and will be waived for students with consistent and thoughtful moodle discussion questions.

Required Materials:

- all course screenings, or make arrangements with me if there’s a conflict
- David Gillespie, *Early Soviet Cinema*
- David Gillespie, *Russian Cinema*
- S.A. Smith, *The Russian Revolution*
- Tim Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*

The four books listed above are available at the Colgate Bookstore, on reserve at the library, or through Amazon. All additional materials will be posted on moodle under each week’s assignments.

Recommended References:

For an overview of what is expected from a film analysis, go through the following website: it covers all the important topics and concepts, and gives examples of good shot-by-shot breakdown and clip analysis.

- <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>

TOPICS AND READINGS:

Week 1:

* **Fri. Aug. 25** -Welcome, introduction, syllabus, assignments + advising sessions

- Mon. Aug. 27** -Scene analyses in class
- Carrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, pp. 1–49
 - *The Dying Swan* (Bauer, 1917)
- Screening:**
- Tues. Aug. 28** • Carrigan, pp. 49–82
- Thurs. Aug 30** • Selected readings on Bauer (moodle)
- Carrigan, pp. 83–107

Week 2:

- Mon. Sep. 3**
- Screening:**
- Tues. Sep. 4** • *Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein, 1925)
- Eisenstein, “A Dialectical Approach to Film Form” + readings on Eisenstein
 - Smith, *Russian Revolution*, pp. 1–39
- Thurs. Sep. 6** • Clips from *October* (Eisenstein, 1928)
- Smith, pp. 40–99

Week 3:

Mon. Sep. 10

Screening:

Tues. Sep. 11

Thurs. Sep. 13

- *Storm Over Asia* (Pudovkin, 1928)
- Edward Said, from *Orientalism*
- Selected readings on Pudovkin (moodle)
- Smith, pp. 100–124
- Selected readings from *Early Soviet Cinema*

Week 4:

Mon. Sep. 17

Screening:

Tues. Sep. 18

Weds. Sep. 19

Screening:

Thurs. Sep. 20

- *A Sixth of the World* (Vertov, 1926)
- Vertov selection from Kino Eye; corresponding section from *Early Soviet Cinema*
- **Joint Screening with Film & Media Studies in Golden, Little Hall, 7 pm**
- *Man with a Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929)
- section from *Early Soviet Cinema*

Week 5:

Mon. Sep. 24

Screening:

Tues. Sep. 25

Thurs. Sep. 27

*** Fri. Feb. 28**

- *Earth* (Dovzhenko, 1930)
- chapter on Dozhenko in *Early Soviet Cinema*
- Carrigan, pp. 108–125
- *Chapaev* (Vasilyev, 1934) — on USB stick
- Carrigan, pp. 155–171
- Smith, pp. 124–156

First paper due via email by 6pm

Week 6:

Mon. Oct. 1

Screening:

Tues. Oct. 2

Thurs. Oct. 4

- *Circus* (Alexandrov, 1936)
- John Haynes, “Urban myths: the musical comedies of Grigorii Aleksandrov”
- **Humanities Colloquium Visiting Lecture by Zhenya Bershtein, 4:10**
- *Aleksander Nevsky* (Eisenstein, 1938) — on USB stick
- Smith, pp. 157–171

Week 7:

Thurs. Oct. 11

- *The Cranes Are Flying* (Kalatozov, 1957 — on USB stick)
- Selections from Josephine Wall, *Cranes are Flying* and Prokhorov, *Springtime for Soviet Cinema*

Week 8:

Mon. Oct. 15

Screening:

Tues. Oct. 16

Thurs. Oct. 18

- *Ivan’s Childhood* (Tarkovsky, 1962)
- Selections from Tarkovsky’s *Sculpting in Time*
- *Wings* (Larisa Shepitko, 1966) — on USB stick
- Selected readings on World War II films
- Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*

Week 9:

Mon. Oct. 22

Screening:

- *Solaris* (Tarkovsky, 1972)

- Tues. Oct. 23** • Selections from Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time*
 • Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*
- Thurs. Oct. 24** • Clips from *The Mirror* (Tarkovsky, 1975)
 • Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema"

Week 10:

- Mon. Oct. 29**
Screening: • *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (Men'shov, 1979)
- Tues. Oct. 30** • Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*
- Thurs. Nov. 1** • Selected readings on late Soviet culture
 • Carrigan, pp. 126–154
- * Fri. Nov. 2** **Second paper due via email by 6pm**

Week 11:

- Mon. Nov. 5**
Screening: • *Days of the Eclipse* (Sokurov, 1988)
- Tues. Nov. 6** • Selected readings on Sokurov
- Thurs. Nov. 8** • Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*

Week 12:

- Mon. Nov. 12**
Screening: • *Little Vera* (Pichul, 1988)
- Tues. Nov. 13** • Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*
- Thurs. Nov. 15** • *Taxi Blues* (Lungin, 1990) — on USB stick, optional
 • Selected readings from *Russian Cinema*

Week 13:

- Mon. Nov. 19**
Screening: • *Brother* (Balabanov, 2000)
- Tues. Nov. 20** • *Night Watch* (Bekmambetov, 2004) — on USB stick, over break
 • Selected readings on Balabanov, Bekmambetov

Week 14:

- Mon. Nov. 26**
Screening: • *The Vanished Empire* (Shakhnazarov, 2008)
- Tues. Nov. 27** • Selected reviews
- Thurs. Nov. 29** • Selected Sergei Loznitsa shorts — on USB stick

Week 15:

- Mon. Dec. 5**
Screening: Student videos + requested film of choice!
- Tues. Dec. 6** -presentations
- Thurs. Dec. 8** -presentations
- * Fri. Dec. 9** **Third paper due via email by 6pm**

*** Thurs. Dec. 13** **Take-home final exam (unless waived) due via email by 6pm**

