Honors Imaginary Cities Sec003 Fall 2013
Film and Media Arts: 0969

Instructor: Michael Johnston
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday: 9:30-11:20 and by appointment. Please email me to set up a time. Please make appointments at least 48 hours in advance.

Course Information
Tuesday/Thursday: 8:00am-9:20am
Annenberg Hall – Room 14
Credit Hours: 3.0

Course Description
This course will take you to cities around the world and examine how national cinemas have depicted and interpreted urban life during the last one hundred years. We will study screen images as well as the natural and built environments that produce them.

How have filmmakers depicted and narrativized urban environments? How do we experience and understand those environments? How has the city been rendered as a visual text? How does a city’s perpetual evolution coincide with cinema’s perpetual evolution? How might the urban movie image change as urban environments become more densely populated?

This course is grounded in concerns about the evolving nature of the urban experience and cinema’s interaction and representation of urban history, topography, architecture, and culture.

Learning Goals
You will be obliged to respond to screenings, readings, lectures and class discussions about cinema’s relationship with urban design and culture.

A semester-long research project will require students to research and interpret how urban environments shape a specific film or films. The assignment requires researching and explaining the urban context in which a film is produced. What questions must filmmakers and their crews address when setting a film or a scene in a specific location? What is the role of an urban object (public art, architecture, mass transit) in film and how might an audience determine that object’s meaning within that film? Examples: Philadelphia’s Independence Hall, Paris’ Eiffel Tower, London’s Underground. What is a character’s relationship with a city and why? What is their conflict/response to the political and cultural climate? Example: How does Woody Allen’s Uptown Manhattan differ from Jean-Michel Basquiat’s SoHo?

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. Students who leave lecture early, arrive late, text, surf the Internet or sleep in class may find that their day’s attendance is not counted. You are responsible for making up what was missed in class.
Student Athletes
Submit a list games/practice dates that conflict with class meetings at the beginning of the semester signed by your coach with their email address. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in failure of the course. Assignments are still due on dates specified even if you cannot be present.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
Students will be expected to adhere to the spirit and letter of academic honesty. Using material within your work that is not your own for the purpose of critique or parody should be credited to the original producer. Handing in an assignment produced by someone else, as your own assignment constitutes plagiarism. Any violation will result in a failing grade.

Academic cheating includes the following
1. Cheating on Exams
2. Submitting an Assignment for a class that you have submitted for another class without the instructor’s permission.
3. Submitting work of another as your own

Students caught cheating will be dismissed from the course and will receive a failure for the class.

For reference see: http://temple.edu/ih/Help/Plagiarism/

Statement of Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities
Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of Academic Freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02

Disabilities Accommodations
Any student needing particular accommodations for testing or other needs based on the impact of a disability should meet with me at the beginning of the semester. This applies to any adjustments for assignments. The instructor will work closely with the office of disability resources to help students achieve their best in class. Because of paperwork required for special accommodations for testing, please make sure you have this to me at least 2 weeks before Midterm and Final Exams. For more information contact campus Disability Resources (215-204-1280 –100 Ritter Annex) to help coordinate these efforts and for additional resource.

Grading
Assignment #1: 5%
Paper #1: 10%
Paper #2: 10%
Paper #3: 20%
Class Participation: 5%
Midterm: 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Class Schedule

Week 1 – Aug 27/29: The City, Modernity, and Early Screen Images

**Screenings**
- Eadweard Muybridge: Animals in Motion (1884)
- George Melies: A Trip to the Moon (1902)
- Charlie Chaplin: Modern Times (1936)
- Buster Keaton: The General (1926)

**Readings**
- Ben Singer: *Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism*

Week 2 – Sept 3/5: Location Filmmaking: Creating a Cinematic City

**Screenings**
- *Fight Club*: Director: David Fincher (1999)

**Readings**
- Neil Harris: *A Subversive Form* – from Before Hollywood

**DUE: Sept 3: Assignment #1**
Research 3 City Film Offices in US or abroad. You cannot use any major US markets: NY, LA, San Francisco, Philadelphia, or Chicago. Compile a list of all the movies shot in each city. Highlight the films you’ve seen.

***SEPT 9: LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE***

Week 3 – Sept 10/12: Case Study: Philadelphia

**Screenings**

**Readings**
- *Rethinking Philadelphia’s Blvd of Broken Dreams*
  http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324635904578644183508404500.html#articleTabs%3Darticle

Week 4 – Sept 17/19: Case Study: Paris

**Screenings**
- *Breathless*: Director: Jean-Luc Godard (1960)
- *Hugo*: Director: Martin Scorcese (2011)

**Readings**
- Marjorie Perloff: Deus Ex Machina Some Futurist Legacies
Week 5 – Sept 24/26: Case Study: Rome: *Sex Ruins Catholicism*

**Screenings**
*La Dolce Vita*: Director: Federico Fellini (1960)

**Readings**
Sight and Sound: *The In-Crowd*
Tullio Kezich: *Federico Fellini and the Making of La Dolce Vita*

Week 6 – Oct 1/3: Case Study: Los Angeles – Construction/Mirage

**Screenings**
*Sunset Blvd*: Director: Billy Wilder (1950)
*The Player*: Director: Robert Altman (1992)

**Reading**
Christopher Ames: *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Chap 7: Offing the Writer) – Available on tulibrary – Link to Additional Content

**DUE: Paper #1**

Week 7 – Oct 8/10: 21st Century Urban Conditions/MegaCities

**Screenings**
*Urbanized*: Director: Gary Hustwit (2011)
*How Much Does Your Building Weigh, Mr. Foster?*: Director: Carlos Carcas (2010)

**Readings**


Week 8 – Oct 15/17: The Dystopian City: The Future and Architecture

**Screenings**
*Gattaca*: Director: Andrew Niccol (1997)

**Readings**
Julie Clarke: *Human By Design*
Frank Lloyd Wright: *Young Architecture*
Bob Craft: *Only in Hollywood: Confessions of a Location Manager*

Week 9 – Oct 22/24: Race and Politics

**Screenings**
*Do the Right Thing*: Director: Spike Lee (1989)
*Trading Places*: Director: John Landis (1983)

***OCTOBER 22: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM COURSE***
Week 10 – Oct 29/31: Idealizing the City

**Screenings**
*Manhattan*: Director: Woody Allen (1979)
*Blank City*: Celine Danhier (2010)

**Readings**
David B. Clarke: *The Cinematic City*

**DUE: Paper #2**

Week 11 – Nov 5/7: Urban Poverty

**Screening**
*City of God*: Director: Fernando Meirelles (2002)

**Readings**
*City of God – 10 Years Later*: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae5aM4VYXik](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae5aM4VYXik)
*City of God, Guns and Gangs*: [https://vimeo.com/26743164](https://vimeo.com/26743164)

Week 12 – Nov 12/14: Fantasy City #1

**Screenings**
*Metropolis*: Director: Fritz Lang (1927)

**Readings**
Nezar Al Sayyad: *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of the Modern from Reel to Real*

Week 13 – Nov 19/21: Fantasy City #2

**Screening**
*Eraserhead*: David Lynch (1977)

Week 14 – Nov 26: Fantasy City #3

**Screenings**
*Blade Runner*: Director: Ridley Scott (1982)

**Readings**
James Clapp: *It Was the City Killed the Beast*

Week 15 – Dec 3: Review

**DUE Dec 5: Paper #3**

***No Class on Nov 28
***No Class on Dec 5.

Dec 9-14: FINAL EXAM