



7,706: Haniel Seminar: The Politics of Motion and E-motion in Film and Television

Subject information

ECTS-Credits: 3

Attached courses

Timetable	Language	Lecturer
7,706,1.00 Haniel Seminar: The Politics of Motion and E-motion in Film and Television	English	Williams Linda

Course information

Course prerequisites

Course content

This class is framed by the basic idea that movies move both literally and emotionally: they move in the sense of producing the illusion of movement and they also move in the sense of inviting viewers to feel powerful emotional effects in their own bodies. The “frenzy of the visible” that drove the invention of cinema emerges fundamentally out of a quest to see aspects of human life and movement that had not previously been made visible. The quest to see and the quest to feel thus go hand-in-hand. We will ask “what emotions drive the creation and reception of popular moving images and what are the politics of those emotions?” We will concentrate on two emotions which have not been sufficiently appreciated or understood in the history of moving-image culture—with the understanding that it is not always possible to separate one emotion out from another. The first e-motion is visual curiosity (often linked to lust and the erotic) as the underappreciated force behind the invention of motion pictures themselves. In a first session on Eadweard Muybridge, often considered the “inventor of motion pictures,” we will open up a discussion of both sexual and racial politics in his grand proto-cinematic opus *Animal Locomotion*.

The second e-motion, examined in our remaining three sessions, will be pathos—the quality that arouses pity or sorrow among viewers. Pathos often justifies action in the tradition of popular “blockbuster” melodrama. The pity and sympathy generated by narratives of suffering victim-heroes is the backbone of melodrama, the most fundamental mode of popular American moving pictures. Again we will examine the politics of the emotions generated by different kinds of melodrama. How is the notion of justice for the suffering innocent different than tragedy? Is melodrama necessarily an inferior mode of drama? How does the idea of justice operate in both? What is the value of replacing the over-used term “classical” cinema with melodrama? What is the role of melodrama in recent television serials, such as HBO’s *The Wire* (2002-8)?

Readings will include

Marta Braun, *Muybridge* London 2010 Chapter 6, 7, 8

Linda Williams, *Hard Core* Berkeley, 1999, Chapter II “Prehistory” pp 34-57

Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White*, Chapter I

Miriam Hansen, “The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism” in *Re-inventing Film Studies*

Screenings will include

Thom Anderson, *Eadweard Muybridge Zoopraxographer*

Henry Pollard, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* --excerpts

D.W. Griffith, *The Birth of a Nation*--excerpts

David Simon, et al *The Wire* (selected episodes)

Recommended viewing in advance of course: Seasons Three and Four of *The Wire*.

Course structure

Each class will entail a component of screening; (approximately 80 minutes); lecture followed by discussion

(90 minutes); discussion of readings 2 hours.

1) Motion and E-Motion in Proto-cinema: Sexual and Racial Politics

Lecture: "Before the Beginning and After the End: Cinema and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'"

Screen: *Eadweard Muybridge Zoopraxographer* (Thom Anderson)

Read: Marta Braun, *Muybridge* London 2010 Chapter 6, 7, 8

Linda Williams, *Hard Core* Berkeley, 1999, Chapter II "Prehistory" pp 34-57

2) Pity and Outrage in American Racial Melodrama

Lecture: "The American Racial Melodrama of Victims and Villains"

Screen: Excerpts from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Birth of a Nation*
The Green Mile

Read: Williams, *Playing the Race Card* Chapter 1 and 2

Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism"

3) Serial Melodrama on American Television: The Example of *The Wire*

Lecture: "The Genesis and Genius of *The Wire*"

Screen at least one episode of *The Wire*

Read: Chapter of *On The Wire*

4) What's So Great about *The Wire*?

Lecture: "Melo(trageo)drama"

Screen: Another episode of *The Wire*

Read: Chapter of *On The Wire*

Requirements: One short presentation on the third or fourth day on prospective paper topics; one 15-page paper

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen.

Course literature

Marta Braun, *Muybridge* London 2010 Chapter 6, 7, 8

Linda Williams, *Hard Core* Berkeley, 1999, Chapter II "Prehistory" pp 34-57

Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White*, Chapter I

Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism" in *Re-inventing Film Studies*

Texts will be made available on Studynet

Course additional information

Since 2003, the University of St. Gallen specifically deals with underrepresented topics in the Haniel seminars. It invites famous researchers and prominent young academics to exchange their knowledge and experiences with students. The Haniel Foundation finances the series of seminars.

More information:

<http://www.unisg.ch/Studium/Master/AllgemeineInformationen/MAStufeKontextstudium/HanielSeminars.aspx>

Information about the Examination

Examination type

decentral - examination paper written at home (individually) with presentation (100%)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**

Examination content

Requirements: One short presentation on the third or fourth day on prospective paper topics; one 15-page paper

Exam-relevant literature

Marta Braun, *Muybridge* London 2010 Chapter 6, 7, 8

Linda Williams, *Hard Core* Berkeley, 1999, Chapter II "Prehistory" pp 34-57

Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White*, Chapter I

Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism" in *Re-inventing Film Studies*

Text will be made available on Studynet by november, 1st.

Attention please:

We would like to point out to you that this fact sheet has absolute priority over other information such as StudyNet, faculty members' personal databases, information provided in lectures, etc.

When will the fact sheets become binding?

Information about courses: from the start of the bidding process on 25 August 2011

Information about decentral examinations: after the 4th semester week on 17 October 2011

Information about central examinations: from the start of the enrolment period for the examinations on 7 November 2011

Please look at the fact sheet once more after these deadlines have expired.