

UCEAP Center Program Courses - Fall 2017  
PCC 135. **Faces of the City, Faces of French Cinema**  
Prof. Iris Brey

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**Office Hours**  
by appointment

**Lecture**

Wednesday 11:30am-1:00pm  
Thursday 1:30-3:00pm  
(unless otherwise indicated)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines French films from the birth of cinema in 1895 to the more recent creations celebrated at the Cannes Festival in 2014. We will be studying selected avant-garde and popular films and we will explore how film narratives can reflect historical and social conditions in France during a given time. The following periods will be discussed: Early cinema (the Lumière brothers, Alice Guy, Méliès); the Golden Age of French classical cinema (Renoir), the “New Wave” (Varda, Godard), the “Cinéma du Look” (Besson), “Heritage Cinema” (Claire Denis) and the challenges of Globalization (Sciamma).

The course will also cover several film genres, from the birth of the *fantastique* to the influence of the *film noir* on New Wave cinema. We will explore the cross-cultural interactions between French cinema and foreign films and how French cinema as an art form has had a deep impact on international cinema.

Films and readings will be supplemented by site visits. Most of the films chosen for this class were shot in Paris and reveal the city’s different faces, going from the romanticized version in Agnès Varda’s film or Claire Denis’ grittier version. One of the class visit will consist of going back to the streets where *Cleo from 5 to 7* was shot in 1962 and analyze how the city was filmed then and how the 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> arrondissement have evolved since. We will also go to a Cinémathèque exhibition and we will have a director come discuss his work with the class. **5.0 credits.** Suggested subject areas for this course: *Film/Gender Studies/History*

**Goals and Learning Outcomes**

In this course, students will watch, discuss and analyze a dozen of the French films that have shaped the history of French cinema, and we will see how these films still influence international filmmakers today.

We will study the history of French cinema from its origin to the present day through the lens of history, and we will discuss the representation of gender and ethnicity in these films.

We will gain an understanding of the methodology of formal film analysis, recognizing shots and understanding how the editing has an impact on the meaning as the film form is always key to understand the underlying meaning of a film.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Course Reader ([CR] hereafter)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Class Participation (15%)** is required both in the classroom and on site visits. Students are expected to arrive on time, to come prepared, and to remain until the end of class. As per the UCEAP Paris Attendance Policy, lateness and absences will adversely affect course participation grades.

**Participation and reading assignments are critical.** For the purposes of this class, participation means having watched the assigned film and having read all assigned readings, coming to class on time, staying for the entire class period, and actively taking part in discussions and other in-class exercises and activities. A large part of this portion of your grade is simply **paying attention**; in order to pay attention, you must be present!

### **Grade Breakdown:**

**Participation (15%)**

**Quizzes (15%):** weekly quizzes will be given (on the readings or the films)

**Midterm Exam (15%):** in-class exam on material from the first half of the term

**Final Exam (20%):** in-class exam on material from the second half of the term

**Short paper 1 (15%):** A 3 to 5 page film analysis of *Cleo from 5 to 7*

**Short paper 2 (20%):** A 3 to 5 page film analysis of *J'ai pas sommeil*

### **A Note on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious offense and could result in your dismissal from the program. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to EAP for disciplinary action. If you borrow words or an idea from any source, whether it be a book, journal, magazine, the Internet, or a lecture, you need to indicate where the information came from. Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* identifies three different acts that are considered plagiarism: "(1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases [of other texts] into your own words" (Hacker 261). (By both citing the source of this definition of plagiarism and by "enclosing borrowed language in quotation marks," this syllabus has avoided charges of plagiarism.) If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please ask me.

### **A Note on Electronic Devices**

As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow students, please do not use cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, or other electronic devices during class, even to check the time. Make sure phones are turned off. Use of these devices will lower your participation grade. No recording (audio or visual) of class sessions will be permitted.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE** (Subject to change at instructor's discretion)

### WEEK 1 Introduction

Sept 13: Lumière Brothers, Georges Méliès, Alice Guy

Sept 14: Louis Feuillade, *Les Vampires*, 1915- screening clips in class

Readings: James Monaco, *How to Read Film*, « Syntax », Oxford, 2009, p.191-249

Article: Louise Shea, *From Louis Feuillade to Johnny To*, French Forum, 2009, p.121-135

### WEEK 2

Sept 20: Jean Renoir, **La règle du jeu**, 1939

Sept 21: + Readings: Todd McGowan, *Intro + Chap 2*, Psychoanalytic Film Theory and The Rules of the Game, Bloomsbury, 2015, p.1-14, 91-152

### WEEK 3

Sept 27: Georges Franju, **Les yeux sans visage**, 1960

Sept 28: Readings: Adam Lowenstein, *Films Without a Face : Shock Horror in the Cinema of George Franju*, Cinema Journal, 1998, p.37-57

### WEEK 4

Oct 4: Jean-Luc Godard, **A bout de Souffle**, 1960

Oct 5: Agnès Varda, **Cleo de 5 à 7**, 1962

### WEEK 5

Oct 11: Readings: Jefferson Klein, *The French New Wave*, European Cinema, p.157-176. Geneviève Sellier, *Masculine Singular*, Duke UP, 2008, Chap. 1

Oct 12: Readings: Hilary Neroni, *Intro + Chap 2*, Feminist Film Theory and Cléo from 5 to 7, Bloomsbury, 2015, p.1-15, p.85-150

### WEEK 6

Oct 18: First Class Visit, *In Varda's steps*.

**PAPER 1 DUE (at the beginning of class)**

Oct 19: Review for Midterm

### WEEK 7

Oct 25: **Midterm Exam**

Oct 26: No film. Social and historical context of Mai 68 with clips in class from *Mai 68* by Olivier Assays, *The Dreamers* by Bertolucci. Readings: Richard Porton, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Radical*, Cineaste, 2013

FALL BREAK (October 28 – November 5)

### WEEK 8

Nov 7: Leos Carax, **Les Amants du Pont Neuf**, 1991

Nov 8: Readings Sue Harris, *Cinema du Look*, European Cinema, p.219-233

### WEEK 9

Nov 15: Maurice Pialat, **A nos Amours**, 1983

Nov 16: Marja Warehime, *Maurice Pialat*, Manchester, 2006, p.95-131

### WEEK 10

Nov 22: Claire Denis, **J'ai pas sommeil**, 1994

Nov 23: Readings: Martine Beugnet, *Claire Denis*, Manchester, 2004, p.83-103

### WEEK 11

Nov 29: Cinémathèque visit

**PAPER 2 DUE (at the beginning of class)**

Nov 30: Céline Sciamma, **Bande de filles**, 2014

### WEEK 12

Dec 6: Céline Sciamma, masterclass

Dec 7: Readings to be announced

### WEEK 13

**Monday, Dec 11, 11:30am-1:00pm (exceptional course meeting):**

**Final Exam**

Dec 14:

Conclusion: French Cinema today. Clips from films by Justine Triet, Alain Guiraudie, Julia Ducournau, Jacques Audiard.