

HUM 425-03 | |Thought and Image

FALL 2016

Dr. Robert C. Thomas

T/TH 2:10 –3:25 in BH 256

Office: HUM 416, Office Hour: Tuesdays 1:10 pm — 2:10 pm

email: theory@sfsu.edu

Class website: <http://thoughtandimage.org/>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION/**

One of the defining characteristics of globalization has been the increasing proliferation of the image (in various forms) throughout society. Images are everywhere: Cell phones, the World Wide Web, social networking, advertising, movies, video games, comics, pornography. They pervade our everyday lives. How do we think the growing proliferation of image in society? In this course, we will think seriously about the power (and potential) of the image in global culture. In particular, we will ask how our relation to the image changes the ways we think. We will think the historical present through the analysis of diverse forms of visual expression, including Pop Art, film, video games and digital media, together with readings in social theory and philosophy. We will study melodrama/women's pictures in order to articulate the limits of gender, race, and class (and introduce students to the concept of *mise-en-scene*, which helps ground students in the language of film). We will think "control," in contrast to modern discipline, as a paradigm for the present, explore the concept of the "post-cinematic," think simulacra/simulation as opposed to representation, and study video games in a digital era. Matsumoto Toshio's 1969 film, *Funeral Parade of Roses (Bara no Sōretsu)* will be studied in relation to its unique cultural context, including Fluxus performance art group Zero Zigen, as well as in relation to contemporary work on the post-cinematic. Throughout this work we will ask ourselves: what are the limits imposed by our present social world, and how, after elucidating these limits, can we think about going beyond them? Forms of popular culture will be used to interpret the cultural present. Cross-cultural analysis will be presented in the context of subcultures within globalization, as well as in relation to Western and non-Western cultures.

## **BOOKS (Available at the bookstore)**

- Ian Bogost – *How to do Things with Video Games*
- Mark Francis and Hal Foster – *Pop*

## **ESSAYS (Print, Read, Bring to Class)**

- Michael Camille – "[Simulacrum](#)" from (ed) Nelson and Shiff, *Critical Terms in Art History*
- Ranier Werner Fassbinder – *Anarchy of the Imagination* (selection) (Articles)
- Yuriko Furuhatu – *Cinema of Actuality* (selection) (Articles)
- John Gibbs – *Mise-en-scene: Film Style and Interpretation* (selections) (Articles)
- Todd Haynes – "[Movies are Nothing Until We Bring Emotional Life to Them](#)" (Interview)
- Todd Haynes/Douglas Lim – "[Heaven Sent](#)" (Interview with Douglas Lim)
- Todd Haynes – "Intro" & "Director's Statement" from *Three Screenplays* (Articles)
- Jane Stern/Michael Stern – "[Two Weeks In Another Town: An Interview with Douglas Sirk](#)" (link to article with images)
- Jane Stern/Michael Stern – "[Two Weeks in Another Town: An Interview with Douglas Sirk](#)" (PDF of article, no images)
- Gilles Deleuze, "[Postscript on the Societies of Control](#)" (optional)
- Jim O' Rourke – "Timeline to a Timeless Story"

- Julian Ross – “Filmed Rituals: Zero Jigen Incarnates on Screen”
- John Mercer & Martin Schingler – *Melodrama: Genre, Style, Sensibility*
- Steven Shaviro – *Post-Cinematic Affect*

## FILMS (shown in class)

- Rainer Werner Fassbinder — *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (West Germany, 1973)
- Todd Haynes – *Far From Heaven* (USA, 2002)
- Todd Haynes – *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* (USA, 1987)
- Matsumoto Toshio – *Funeral Parade of Roses (Bara no Sōretsu)* (Japan, 1969)
- Mark Neveldine / Brian Taylor – *Gamer* (USA, 2009)
- Douglas Sirk – *All That Heaven Allows* (USA, 1955)
- Peter Rosen – *Who Gets to Call It Art?* (USA, 2006)
- Richard Kelly – *Southland Tales* (USA, 2006)

## ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for completing all the assigned course work and are expected to regularly attend and participate in course discussions. Reading difficult texts is a major component of this course. If you are not prepared read and interpret difficult material, you should not take this course.

Students are expected to come to class prepared. Prepared means that you have done the assigned reading, have thought about it and have something to say in class. Always bring the assigned reading material (for each particular day) to class. Always take notes. My lectures, comments, and rants constitute an important “text” for the course.

There will be two essays (5 pages each) and a final exam required. There will be a handout on the essay assignments before each essay is due (see the schedule). These will only be handed out in-class. If you do not come to class, you will not receive the assignment. No digital copies of the assignments will be handed out or made available. For this reason, do not lose your copy of the essay assignments. *Pay attention when I go over the assignments in class.* Your essays must demonstrate *mastery of the reading material and course lectures* for the assignments (your grade will be based on this). No papers will be accepted via e-mail (no exceptions). No rewrites and no late papers. *Plagiarism in any of the course assignments, in any form, will be dealt with harshly and will be forwarded to the Dean’s Office for appropriate action.* (Please note that Wikipedia is NOT a critical source and cannot be used for college writing. The same is true of IMDB.) The final exam will consist of ten questions and test whether students have done the required readings. If you do not read the course material, you will fail the final exam.

Students are responsible for all of the course content and materials even if they are absent (absences of more than one class session can result in your final grade being substantially lowered). No incompletes will be given. Please be aware that from time to time I may need to contact you via e-mail. In order to facilitate this, you will need to make sure that your SFSU e-mail account is actively working. The system is not set-up to accommodate non-SFSU emails. It is your responsibility to make sure your SFSU email is working and accessible to you.

**Warning:** This is a difficult and challenging course. Please note that we are not watching films so that you can be “entertained” by them, but in order to critically study and analyze them. If you are not up to the challenge of learning a new language for the interpretation of film, do not take this course. While we are doing some really cool things in this course, the purpose is to challenge you. I

know from experience that showing a lot of older films can be challenging to students. It's worth remembering that this is a University course and it's supposed to be challenging. **If you do not do the course readings, you will be completely lost in this class.**

**The biggest mistake** that students make on the essay assignments is to not actually read the assignment and/or fully follow the instructions or fully answer the questions. Additionally, if your paper does not demonstrate that you've read the assigned books, you will be graded down significantly and may not receive a passing grade. Students need to include a self addressed stamped envelope if they want their final papers returned to them.

**This syllabus is part of the course materials and your road map to the class and your learning.** You are provided with a copy of the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and are expected to know the information contained within it the same way you are expected to know the information taught in the course. I reserve the right to grade you down based on your lack of knowledge of the syllabus and **any other written directions. Refer to the syllabus BEFORE asking me questions (that I have already answered in writing or in class).**

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

**No electronic devices allowed in class.** Cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc. are to be turned off in class. If you are caught text messaging in class, surfing the web, or playing video games, or engaging in any other non-course related activity, you will be required to leave the classroom. **No eating in class** (unless you bring enough to share with everyone). No electronic recording in the classroom. Enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to abide by all of the above rules and policies.

### **SEGMENT THREE WRITING REQUIREMENT**

To meet the segment III writing requirement, you will be required to write 10 pages of writing. These papers are "formal" and will be read and graded by the professor. You will be expected to argue coherently, to support your arguments with detailed examples from the works analyzed, to edit your papers for spelling, grammar punctuation and agreement, and to meet recognized standards for notes and bibliography when relevant. All of the above will be taken into account in the grading of these assignments. This course satisfies part of the General Education, Segment III requirement. Ten pages of formal critical writing, which will be graded by the professor for style and content, will be required (see below).

### **STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email: [dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu)

### **STATEMENT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT**

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact: The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe\\_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/) Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/> For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

## **STUDENT DROPS**

Students who do not attend the first class meeting will be dropped. It is the students' responsibility to drop the course after the first class session. Students who stop attending but do not drop will be given a WU grade. Please be aware that a WU grade is counted as an F for GPA purposes.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

- **Wednesday, September 14** - Last day for students to drop a class without a "W" grade.
- **Wednesday, October 19** - Last day for students to change grading option.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Identify and describe the formal features of a range of cultural forms including (but not limited to) texts, images and films.
2. Place an expressive work in its cultural context through close reading of its formal details.
3. Articulate cross-cultural differences, similarities and relationships represented by cultural works from different areas of the world.
4. Perceive and articulate – both in discussion and in writing – formal and historical relationships among written texts and other expressive forms.

## **GRADING**

Attendance 10% || First Paper: 40% || Final Paper: 40% | Final Exam: 10%

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE FALL 2016  
(Instructor Reserves the Right to Modify)

Wk 1.	AUG 25	Introduction and handout of course material
Wk 2.	AUG 30	Film – <i>Who Gets to Call It Art?</i>
	SEP 1	Read: <i>Pop</i> 11-39 Review: <i>Pop</i> 45 – 116 (“Revolt into Style” and “Consumer Culture”) You should review the material on the above pages and choose at least two works to discuss in class.
Wk. 3	SEP 6	Read: Michael Camille, “Simulacrum” (I know it’s hard, read it anyway) Review: <i>Pop</i> 118- 189 (“Colonization of the Mind,” Spectacular Time,” and “Helter Skelter”) You should review the material on the above pages and choose at least two works to discuss in class, additionally you need to read.
	SEP 8	Film – <i>Far From Heaven</i> Read: Todd Haynes – “Movies are Nothing Until We Bring Emotional Life to Them” Todd Haynes/Douglas Lim – “Heaven Sent” and Todd Haynes –“Intro” and “Director’s Statement” from <i>Three Screenplays</i>
Wk. 4.	SEP 13	Read: <i>Mise-en-Scene: Film Style and Interpretation</i> 1-26, 55-82, 83-89 or Adrian Martin, <i>Mise-en-Scene and Film Style</i> (selections) (bring all the Haynes readings to class)
	SEP 15	Continued (bring all readings to class)
Wk. 5	SEP 20	<b>First Paper Assignment Handed Out</b> Film – <i>All That Heaven Allows</i> Fassbinder – “Imitation of Life” "Two Weeks in Another Town: An Interview with Douglas Sirk"
	SEP 22	Continued (bring all readings to class)
Wk 6.	SEP 27	Discussion of Sirk continued (bring all previous readings to class) Read: Thomas Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury”
	SEP 29	Discussion of Sirk continued (bring all previous readings to class) Read: Thomas Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury”
Wk. 7.	OCT 4	Film – <i>Ali: Fear Eats the Soul</i> Read: <i>Melodrama</i> 38-77 Fassbinder/Sparrow, “I Let The Audience Feel and Think”
	OCT 6	Film – <i>Ali: Fear Eats the Soul</i> Read: <i>Melodrama</i> 38-77 Fassbinder/Sparrow, “I Let The Audience Feel and Think”
Wk. 8.	OCT 11	<b>First Paper Due</b>

		Film – <i>Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story</i> Read: Todd Haynes, “Karen Carpenter: Getting to the Bare Bones of Todd Haynes’ Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story” and “Cinematic/Sexual: An Interview with Todd Haynes” OCT 13 Guy Debord, “Separation Perfected” from <i>Society of the Spectacle</i>
Wk. 9.	OCT 18 OCT 20	TBA TBA
Wk. 10.	OCT 25 OCT 27	Read: Bogost, <i>How to Do Things With Video Games</i> 1-57, 83-88 Read: Bogost, <i>How to Do Things With Video Games</i> 125-154
Wk.11.	NOV 1  NOV 3	Read: Shaviro, “Gamer” in <i>Post-Cinematic Affect</i> Film – <i>Gamer</i> Read: Shaviro, “Gamer” in <i>Post-Cinematic Affect</i> Read: Deleuze - "Postscript on Control Societies" Film – <i>Gamer</i>
Wk 12.	NOV 8  NOV 10	Shaviro – “Introduction” and “Southland Tales” in <i>Post-Cinematic Affect</i> Film – <i>Southland Tales</i> Shaviro – “Introduction” and “Southland Tales” in <i>Post-Cinematic Affect</i> Film – <i>Southland Tales</i>
Wk 13.	NOV 15  NOV 17	Shaviro – “Introduction” and “Southland Tales” in <i>Post-Cinematic Affect</i> Film – <i>Southland Tales</i> Discussion (bring the readings to class)
Wk. 14.	NOV 22-24	<b>Thanksgiving Break — No Class</b>
Wk. 15.	NOV 29  DEC 1	<b>Final Paper Assignment Handed Out</b> Film – <i>Funeral Parade of Roses</i> Read: <i>Cinema of Actuality</i> , 53-87 Read: Jim O' Rourke – "Timeline to a Timeless Story" Read: Julian Ross – “Filmed Rituals: Zero Jigen Incrnates on Screen” Film – <i>Funeral Parade of Roses</i> Continued (bring all of the readings!)
Wk. 16.	DEC 6 DEC 8	Discussion of <i>Funeral Parade of Roses</i> continues (bring the readings!) Discussion of <i>Funeral Parade of Roses</i> continues (bring the readings!)
Wk 17.	DEC 13  DEC 15	Final Class Review  <b>Final Paper Due @ 2:10 PM</b> <b>Final Exam @ 2:15 PM</b>