



Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce

(An Autonomous College under Savitribai Phule Pune University)
Senapati Bapat Road, Pune (Maharashtra) 411 004.

M.A. ENGLISH (SEMESTER – 3) Introduction to Film Studies

This course will introduce students of Literature to the new branch of aesthetics, Film Studies. The course is designed to offer insights from and beyond literary studies to understand the formal, social/cultural aspects of moving images. Initially, we will explore the beginnings of film, as it emerges as a new entertainment form in the late 19th century. We will, then, proceed to understand how it develops into a significant narrative, public form in the 20th and 21st century. In the process, we will address questions such as What is cinema? How is it different and similar to other aesthetics and art forms? What are the various ways in which one can approach studying film? etc. The course will also teach students to read films in a formal and analytical way and thus will equip them with a collection of theoretical terms. The classes will combine a historical, theoretical and formal approach and showcase films from all over the world with a special emphasis on India. There will also be a short introduction to documentary traditions as well as a component on contemporary trends in film around the world.

Unit 1: Introduction and History (10 hours)

(Basic Concepts in Cinema Studies, Brief History of Pre-Cinema: Technology, Society, Arts and Ideas, Beginnings and Early Cinema: Centrality of the Image, Development of Narrative in Cinema, Concept of National Cinema, World Cinema in Europe pre WW2: German Expressionism, Soviet Montage)

Film – Modern Times, Rear Window, and multiple film clips from early cinema, German expressionist films and Soviet Montage.

Prescribed Texts:

1. Paolo Cherchi Usai, “Origins and Survivals” in Geoffrey Nowell Smith, ed *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. New York: Oxford University Press:1996, 6-13
2. Selections from David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson *Film Art: An Introduction, Eleventh Edition*. McGraw Hill. 2016.
3. Andrew Higson, “The Concept of National Cinema” in Catherine Flower ed. *The European Cinema Reader* London and New York: Routledge: 2002, 132-142.
4. Selections from David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson *Film History: An Introduction, Third Edition*. McGraw Hill. 2010.
5. Selections from Jill Nelmes ed. *Introduction to Film Studies*. London and New York: Routledge: 2012

Unit 2: Debates in Popular Cinema

(Debates in Popular cinema- genre and stardom, melodrama, Classical Hollywood Cinema- 1917-1960, Indian Cinema Post-Independence, Bollywood)

Films- Singing in the Rain, Mildred Pierce, Devdas

Prescribed Texts:

1. David Bordwell, "Narrative as a formal system" in Film Art and introduction
2. David Bordwell, "Film Genre" in Film Art: An Introduction
3. Thomas Schaltz, "Narrative Strategies in Classical Hollywood Cinema" in *Old Hollywood/New Hollywood: Ritual Art and Industry*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press: 1983, 45-66
4. Rick Altman, "Cinema and Genre" in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith ed *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Oxford University Press: 1996, 276-321
5. Steve Neale, "Questions of Genre" in Robert Stam and Toby Miller ed *Film and Theory: An Anthology*. Blackwell Publishers: 2000, 157-178
6. Richard Dyer, "Heavenly Bodies: Film, Stars and Society" in Robert Stam and Toby Miller ed *Film and Theory: An Anthology*. Blackwell Publishers: 2000, 603-617
7. Ben Singer, "Meanings of Melodrama", *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and its Contexts*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 37-58
8. Ira Bhaskar, Emotion, Subjectivity and the Limits of Desire: Melodrama and modernity in Bombay Cinema 1940-50
9. Ravi Vasudevan The melodramatic mode and Commercial Hindi Cinema; Notes on Film History, Narrative and performance in the 1950s, Screen Vol 30, no 3, Summer 1989

Unit 3: Debates in World Cinema

(Film Theory: Auteur, Realism, and Feminism) Instances of European cinema- Italian Neo Realism, French New Wave)

Films – Bicycle Thieves, Breathless, Zentropa, Blow up

Prescribed Texts:

1. Selections from Susan Hayward, Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts. London and New York: Routledge, 2001
2. Selections from David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson "Film History: An Introduction, Third Edition". McGraw Hill. 2010.
3. Francois Truffault, *A Certain Tendency in French Cinema*, 1954
4. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in Philip Rosen, ed *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*. New York: Columbia University Press: 1986, 198-209

Unit 4: Documentary

Introduction, Brief History of world documentaries, trends, history of documentary in India

Films- Ram ke Naam, clips from various documentary traditions from around the world

Prescribed Texts:

1. Bill Nichols, Introduction to Documentary. Indiana University Press: 2010.

Unit 5. Contemporary trends

(Reception Theory, The Cultural turn)

Kill Bill, Chungking Express