

# 29972 - Cinema and Contemporary Visual Culture: Technology, Architecture and the City

## Syllabus Information

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**Academic Year:** 2020/21

**Subject:** 29972 - Cinema and Contemporary Visual Culture: Technology, Architecture and the City

**Faculty / School:** 110 - Escuela de Ingeniería y Arquitectura

**Degree:** 558 - Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design and Product Development Engineering

**ECTS:** 4.0

**Year:** 4

**Semester:** Second semester

**Subject Type:** Optional

**Module:** ---

## 1.General information

### 1.1.Aims of the course

Since its emergence in the last years of the 19th century, and following the path opened by the general use of photography since the middle of that century, cinema has been an inseparable companion of the evolution of modernity. Conceived as a 'mechanical eye' able to capture the vertiginous reality of the Machine Age, cinema witnessed and chronicled, among others, the development of the modern city, and technological evolution, the blossoming of communications, and profound social changes. In a way, it became the official chronicler of the history of the 20th century. Furthermore, cinematography would soon reveal itself as a particularly effective means not only to document reality, or to recreate it through realistic fiction, but also to (re)imagine it. Throughout its more than one century-old history, cinema has been a privileged medium for the visualization and transmission of ideas that would only later be implanted in our everyday life, contributing to build, with its images, our collective imagination and our very perception of reality.

At a time when the boundaries between disciplines are becoming more and more permeable, this course offers an alternative route to explore some of the subjects that we deal with in our careers, looking at a cultural expression which is deeply interwoven with the technological development of our time, on the one hand, and with the representation of our physical environment, on the other. The course 29984 - *Filmic Image and the Construction of Cinematographic Space* seeks to examine the way in which the glance is constructed within cinema on several levels, analyzing how the narrative is built in terms of framing and montage, but also how the imagery presented in them -most prominently the spaces within them are designed and built for the camera. The goal of the course is that the participants develop an analytic approach to film, both in term of its historical grounding and significance, its narrative qualities, and the ways in which the suspended realities it shows are built either to fool or to engage the eye.

### 1.2.Context and importance of this course in the degree

This is an Optional Transversal Course offered to students who are in their fourth or fifth year. It follows the spirit of other courses that try to introduce a multidisciplinary approach to the technical education imparted in the EINA, and places itself at the point of intersection of technical disciplines and the humanities. As such, it also expands on the different courses on the history of the disciplines taught at the EINA, such as History of Design, and History of Architecture.

### 1.3.Recommendations to take this course

Knowledge of English (read/written/spoken).

## 2.Learning goals

### 2.1.Competences

Basic skills:

CB3. That students show the ability to collect and interpret relevant data (usually within their area of ??study) in order to be able to make judgments that include reflections on relevant issues of a social, scientific or ethical nature.

CB4. Transmit information, ideas, problems and solutions to a specialized and non-specialized audience.

Transversal Competences:

CT3. Ability to solve problems and make decisions with initiative, creativity and critical reasoning.

CT4. Ability to communicate and transmit knowledge, abilities and skills.

CT6. Ability to work in a multidisciplinary group and in a multilingual environment.

CT7. Ability to use and express themselves in a second language.

CT10. Ability to apply information and communication technologies.

CT11. Ability to coordinate activities.

## 2.2.Learning goals

The goal of the course is, generally speaking, to help students discover the value of contemporary visual disciplines both from a cultural point of view and in relation to their application to their professional development.

Specifically, the course is fundamentally oriented to the analysis of the role that cinema has had in the construction of the perception of reality throughout the 20th century. Thus, in this context, cinema is looked upon as a tool for students to learn to also develop their own visual discourses, integrating them into their communication strategies.

Among others, the expected results are:

- That students learn the basics of the history of cinema and its role in the visual construction of contemporary times and the elaboration of modern discourse.
- Learning the mechanics of coordinating verbal and visual discourses in the development of creative processes, and also when describing and communicating the results of those. This result is framed within the fields of engineering or architecture, and applied to the context of their presentation in English.
- Learning to construct a critical discourse of the role of image and narrative both in mass media and specialized media.
- Learning to develop an analytical approach to images, that understands its compositional, plastic, and narrative values.
- Eventually learning to develop a short visual narrative visual project (video format).

## 2.3.Importance of learning goals

The design of the course *Cinema and Contemporary Visual Culture: Technology, Architecture, and the City* is intended to underline the multidisciplinary nature of the world we live in, and the importance that visual culture has both in the perception and in the shaping of the reality that surrounds us. In a world where everyone carries both a photographic and a movie camera in his cellphone at all times, pictures, and, very specially, *moving pictures* have become part of our daily life, not only as viewers but also as filmmakers. Despite their alleged built-in objectivity, neither photography nor cinematography are ever mere recordings of reality: whichever their purpose and the intentions of their author, they always carry with them specific narratives and nuances, both purposeful and unintended.

Also, the advent of the internet and social media have turned everyone into a publisher-editor; as such, communicating is becoming more and more an integral part of our work. Therefore, this course intends to provide students with an overview of the ways in which cinema and filmmakers have constructed their visual narrations, the mechanics of storytelling, and the many techniques that cinema uses to convey its message. Additionally, it intends to provide them with the tools to develop an analytical glance towards imagery and visual narratives that helps them improve their communication skills. To sum up, it aims at providing them with a deeper understanding of the role and history of visual culture within the modern world.

## 3.Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

### 3.1.Assessment tasks (description of tasks, marking system and assessment criteria)

#### 3.1.1. General description.

Throughout the course, the students will develop all or several among the following activities:

- a. Attending the theoretical classes and the film screenings (10%),
- b. Participating in debate seminars on selected texts, and developing assignments where they analyse film scenes (10%).
- c. Likewise, they must present publicly, in the second part of the course, a case study chosen together with the teacher, and according to the parameters established at the beginning of the course (20%).
- d. Finally, at the end of the course, students must submit an individual final assignment (60%). This may consist of a theoretical essay of about 3,500 words that explores one of the topics of the course. It may or may not be related to the case study covered in public presentations, and its topic will be chosen by the student with the approval of the teacher. Alternatively, they may choose to develop a free video project whose technique, subject, and length, will also have to be previously approved by the teacher.

#### 3.1.2. Final assignment. Evaluation criteria.

##### 3.1.2.1. Essays

The grading of the essays will take into consideration the aspects listed below.

##### 1. *General organization:*

- Does the essay have a clear structure?
- Does the author provide an organized table of contents?

##### 1. *Documentation:*

- Has the author used a variety of written sources on the topic to flesh out his argument?
- Are the sources relevant to the topic and the author's argument?
- Does the author include references or quotations from these sources?
- Does the author provide a complete bibliography?

1. *Discourse/ General content:*

- Is the hypothesis/are the goals of the essay clearly stated?
- Does the discourse progress in a clear and logical way? Do the different parts of the essay lead logically to the conclusion?
- Is there a set of conclusions at the end that wrap up the argumentation?
- Does the author engage critically with the sources he uses?

1. *Visual Content:*

- Are the images included in the paper relevant to the argument? Do they help follow the author's discourse?
- Has the author produced specific images or graphics? Have the images been edited in a way that fits the discourse?

1. *Overall correctness:*

- Is the layout of the paper well-organized, clear and easy to read?
- Does it feature page and section numbering?
- Are all works cited correctly both in footnotes and/or bibliography? Is everything cited consistently, using the same style throughout the paper.
- Is the writing clear and correct?

### 3.1.2.2. Video projects

Video projects should also include a short memory of at least 1,000 words providing:

1. Title, authors.
2. Technical data: Locations, Actors (if it applies), Shooting Dates, Filming Locations, Music Composer, etc.
3. Short essay explaining the ideas behind the short film, the goals, a succinct description of the content, filming techniques, et al.

The aspects that will be taken into consideration in the evaluation process will be:

1. Quality of the photography and suitability to the topic and goals of the film.
2. Editing.
3. Sound editing; correlation of sound/music and image.
4. Originality.

## 4. Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

### 4.1. Methodological overview

On the one hand, the course will feature a combination of activities where the teacher will provide them with learning materials. These will consist of: a) film screenings, lectures on the films shown in class, b) lectures on the History of film, and filming techniques, c) reading of selected texts.

On the other, students will be required to fulfill a series of assignments that require them to engage critically with the learning materials provided throughout the course. These will consist of: d) Reading presentations, e) Film scene analyses, f) seminar sessions where they will present a film of their choice following the parameters established by the course.

The purpose of these twofold activities is helping students: a) Gain the necessary knowledge on the History of cinema, both in a general sense, and of the area where the films shown in the course belong. b) Develop an analytical approach to film that helps them understand the mechanics of filmic narrative: types of shots, use of sound and music, editing, et al, and how to use them in order to tell a specific story and get a certain reaction from the viewer. This learning process will be later put to practice in their final assignment, either theoretical (written essay) or practical (short video).

### 4.2. Learning tasks

The course will feature the following learning activities (\*):

a) *Film projections and theoretical lessons*: A few films will be shown within the classes' time. These films will be preceded by introductory lectures. These projections will include both feature films and documentaries on said films, as well as film techniques.

b) *Scene analysis exercises*: After watching some of the films, the students will be asked to choose a scene that they have found of particular interest, be it on a visual or narrative level, because of the mood it creates in the viewer, or other reasons. They will have to analyze the way in which this has been achieved through cinematographic techniques, write a short essay and present it visually to the class.

c) *Film and text discussions*: Together with the films, the course will deal with theoretical texts on film, which will be made available for students to discuss in class. Discussion sessions will also be devoted to commenting on different aspects of the films shown in the course. Sessions will be led by (a) different student(s) each week.

d) *Student presentations*: Students will be required to analyze one film following the concepts developed throughout the course, and present it to the class in a special seminar session. This presentation can be used as the basis for the final paper, should the student choose to develop a written assignment as his final work.

## 4.3. Syllabus

### 4.3.1. Thematic areas

The topics that may be addressed in the course are, among others:

1. History of cinema: From technical curiosity to a documentary tool and a means of visualizing reality.
2. Cinema and the built environment: urban symphonies, historical recreations and visions of the future.
3. Cinema and modernity: The evolution of the 20th century through cinema.
4. Cinematography and technology: The representation of the man-technology relationship from the 1920s to the present day.
5. Visualization techniques: Theoretical introduction cinematography.
6. Cinema and narrative as a design tool: contemporary experiences.

### 4.3.2. Film screenings | Thematic sessions

The course will comprise at least 7 thematic sessions where films will be shown. The films for each session will be selected from the following list, where they have been organized according to a series of thematic categories. All the films have been chosen because of their specific interest regarding the topic of the session, typically related to a certain type of architecture or a particular mode of construction of space.

#### T.S.0: INTRODUCTION. Building cinematographic space.

- *One Week*. Buster Keaton (USA, 1920).
- *The Electric House*. Buster Keaton (USA, 1922).
- *Sherlock Jr.* Buster Keaton (USA, 1922).
- *Steamboat Bill Jr.* Buster Keaton (USA, 1928).
- *Safety Last!* Harold Lloyd (USA, 1923).
- *Modern Times*. Charles Chaplin (USA, 1936).

#### T.S.1: EARLY CINEMA. A World Inside.

- *Die Strasse* (The Street). Karl Grune (Germany, 1923).
- *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*. F. W. Murnau (USA, 1927).
- *Der letzte Mann* (The Last Laugh). F. W. Murnau (Germany, 1924).
- *Asphalt*. Joe May (Germany, 1929).

#### T.S.2: EARLY CINEMA. Expressionistic Space.

- *Svengali*. Archie Mayo (USA, 1931).
- *Der Golem*. Paul Wegener (Germany, 1920).
- *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari). Robert Wiene (Germany, 1920).
- *Metropolis*. Fritz Lang (Germany, 1927).
- *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauen*. F.W. Murnau (Germany, 1922).
- *Dark City*. Alex Proyas (United States / Australia, 1998).
- *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne* (Vynález zkázy). Karel Zeman (Czechoslovakia, 1958).

#### T.S.3: Building Modernity

- *À Nous La Liberté*. René Clair (France, 1931).
- *L'Inhumaine*. Marcel L'Herbier (France, 1924).
- *Mon Oncle*. Jacques Tati (France, 1958).
- *Play Time*. Jacques Tati (France, 1967).

#### T.S.4: The construction of History (I).

- *Intolerance. A Sun-Play of the Ages*. D.W. Griffith (USA, 1916).
- *Cabiria*. Giovanni Pastrone (Italy, 1914).
- *Cleopatra*. Cecil B. DeMille (USA, 1934).
- *Quo Vadis*. Mervyn LeRoy (USA, 1951).
- *The Fall of the Roman Empire*. Anthony Mann (USA, 1964).
- *Cleopatra*. Joseph L. Mankiewicz (USA, 1963).
- *Masada*. Boris Sagal (USA, 1981).
- *Life of Brian*. Terry Jones (UK, 1979).
- *Gladiator*. Ridley Scott (USA, 2000).
- *Troy*. Wolfgang Petersen (USA, 2004)
- *3 Ages*. Buster Keaton and Eward F. Kline (USA, 1923).

#### **T.S.5: The construction of History (II).**

- *Flesh + Blood*. Paul Verhoeven (USA/ The Netherlands/ Spain, 1985).
- *The Name of the Rose (Der Name Der Rose)*. Jean-Jacques Annaud (Italy/ France/ Germany, 1986).
- *The Duellists*. Ridley Scott (UK, 1977).
- *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Francis Ford Coppola (USA, 1992).
- *Orphans of the Storm*. D.W. Griffith (USA, 1922)

#### **T.S.6: The spaces of fantasy. Space and fabulation.**

- *Legend*. Ridley Scott (USA, 1985).
- *Dark Crystal*. Jim Henson and Frank Oz (UK / USA, 1982)
- *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. Terry Gilliam (USA, 1988).
- *Labyrinth*. Jim Henson (UK / USA, 1986)
- *Time Bandits*. Terry Gilliam (UK, 1981).
- *Pan's Labyrinth (El Laberinto del Fauno)*. Guillermo del Toro (Mexico/ Spain, 2006).
- *The Crimson Permanent Assurance*. Terry Gilliam (UK, 1983).
- *The Fabulous Baron Munchausen (Baron Prá?il)*. Karel Zeman (Czechoslovakia, 1961)

#### **T.S.7: Innerspace.**

- *Rear Window*. Alfred Hitchcock (USA, 1954)
- *The Shining*. Stanley Kubrick (USA, 1980)
- *Cube*. Vincenzo Natali (Canada, 1997).
- *Alien*. Ridley Scott (USA, 1979)
- *Aliens*. James Cameron (USA, 1985)
- *Moon*. Duncan Jones (UK / USA, 2009)
- *1408*. Mikael Häfström (USA, 2007).
- *The Man Next Door (El Hombre de al lado)*. Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat (Argentina, 2010).

#### **T.S.8: Outer space.**

- *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Stanley Kubrick (UK, 1968).
- *Silent Running*. Douglas Trumbull (USA, 1972).
- *The Black Hole*. Gary Nelson (USA, 1979).
- *Outland*. Peter Hyams (USA, 1981).
- *2010: The Year We Make Contact*. Peter Hyams (USA, 1984).
- *Gravity*. Alfonso Cuarón (UK/ USA, 2013).
- *Interstellar*. Christopher Nolan (UK/ USA, 2014)

#### **T.S.9: Modernity and Alienation**

- *High-Rise*. Ben Wheatley (UK, 2015).
- *A Clockwork Orange*. Stanley Kubrick (UK/USA, 1971).
- *Stereo*. David Cronenberg (Canada, 1969).
- *Gomorrah*. Matteo Garrone (Italy, 2008).
- *Gattaca*. Andrew Niccol (USA, 1997).

#### **T.S.10: Derelict Spaces: Post-modernity and the city.**

- *Stalker (???????)*. Andrei Tarkovsky (Russia, 1979).

- *Blade Runner*. Ridley Scott (USA, 1982).
- *12 Monkeys*. Terry Gilliam (USA, 1995).
- *Immortel*. Enki Bilal (France, 2004)
- *Blade Runner 2049*. Denis Villeneuve (USA, 2016)
- *Mute*. Duncan Jones (UK / Germany, 2018).

#### T.S.11: Surreal spaces.

- *The City of Lost Children (La cité des enfants perdus)*. Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro (France, 1995).
- *Taxandria* (Raoul Servais, 1994)
- *Delicatessen*. Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro (France, 1991).
- *The Devils*. Ken Russell (UK/ USA, 1971).
- *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. Terry Gilliam (USA, 2009).

#### T.S.12: Presents - Futures.

- *Peut-être*. Cédric Klapisch (France, 1999).
- *Code 46*. Michael Winterbottom (UK, 2003).
- *Inception*. Christopher Nolan (USA/ UK, 2010).
- *Idiocracy*. Mike Judge (USA, 2006).

### 4.4. Course planning and calendar

The general organization of the course will be as follows. This calendar may be subject to change depending on the number of students and the specificities of the 2020-21 academic calendar.

SESSION 01: Introduction (Lecture 0) | Movie screening 1

SESSION 02: Lecture 1 | Scene Analysis + discussion 1

SESSION 03: Reading seminar 1 | Movie screening 2

SESSION 04: Lecture 2 | Scene Analysis + discussion 2

SESSION 05: Reading seminar 2 | Movie screening 3

SESSION 06: Lecture 3 | Scene Analysis + discussion 3

SESSION 07: Reading seminar 3 | Movie screening 4

[End of first half]

SESSION 08: Lecture 4 | Presentation of Case Studies 1

SESSION 09: Movie screening 5 | Presentation of Case Studies 2

SESSION 10: Lecture 5 | Presentation of Case Studies 3

SESSION 11: Movie screening 6 | Presentation of Case Studies 4

SESSION 12: Movie screening 7 | Presentation of Case Studies 5

SESSION 13: Final assignment draft presentation 1

SESSION 14: Final assignment draft presentation 1

[Submission of final assignment + pending course assignments in the date prescribed by the EINA's calendar]

### 4.5. Bibliography and recommended resources

#### 4.5.1. Film, Modern Vision, and Material Culture

BAZIN, André: "The Myth of Total Cinema" in L. Braudy & M. Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

BENJAMIN, Walter: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in L. Braudy & M. Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [\*]

BRUNO, Giuliana: "Site-Seeing: Architecture and the Moving Image". In *Wide Angle* n° 19(4), 1997; 8-24.

CRARY, Jonathan: "Modernizing Vision" in Hal Foster (ed.): *Vision and Visuality*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1988; 29-49

EISENSTEIN, Sergei: "Montage and Architecture". In *Assemblage* n° 10, December 1989; 111-131 [\*]

KRACAUER, Sigfried: "Cult of Distraction". Translated by Thomas Y. Lavin in *New German Critique* n° 40. Winter 1987; 91-6 [\*]

SCHIVELBUSCH, Wolfgang: *The Railway Journey: the industrialization of time and space in the 19th century*, Ch. 3 and 4. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986.

VOLLET, Mathias: "Imágenes: Percepción y cine en Bergson y Deleuze". En *Eidos* n°5, 2006: 70-93

#### 4.5.2. Film, Architecture, and Technology

BARBER, Stephen: *Ciudades proyectadas. Cine y espacio urbano*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2002

BERGFELDER, Tim, HARRIS, Sue, STREET, Sarah: Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination: Set Design in 1930s European Cinema. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

FERNÁNDEZ HOYA, Gema [et al.]: Los espacios de la ficción: la arquitectura en el cine. Madrid: Iseebooks, 2008

GARCÍA ROIG, Manuel y MARTÍ ARÍS, Carlos: La arquitectura del cine: estudios sobre Dreyer, Hitchcock, Ford y Ozu. Barcelona: Fundación Caja de Arquitectos, 2008

GOROSTIZA, Jorge: La profundidad de la pantalla: arquitectura + cine. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Canarias, Demarcación de Tenerife, La Gomera y El Hierro, 2007

GOROSTIZA, Jorge y UTRERA, Claudio: Cine y Arquitectura. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Filmoteca Canaria, 1990

GUZMÁN RAMÍREZ, Alejandro [et al.]: Arquitectura y Cine: Del imaginario colectivo a la narrativa cinematográfica y su influencia en la arquitectura. Saarbrücken/Dusseldorf: Editorial Académica Española, 2012.

HERNÁNDEZ RUIZ, Javier: Escenarios de la fantasía: el legado de la arquitectura y de las artes plásticas en el cine. Zaragoza: Secretariado de Actividades Culturales de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 1990

JACOBSON, Brian R.: Studios before the system: architecture, technology, and the emergence of cinematic space. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015

LAMSTER, Mark (ed.): Architecture and Film. Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2013

MARTÍNEZ GARCIA, M<sup>a</sup> Ángeles: Laberintos narrativos: estudio sobre el espacio cinematográfico. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2011

ORTIZ VILLETÀ, Àurea (ed.): La arquitectura en el cine: construyendo una ilusión Valencia: Museu Valencià de la Il·lustració i de la Modernitat, 2008

RAMÍREZ, Juan Antonio: La arquitectura en el cine: Hollywood, la Edad de Oro. Madrid: Alianza, D.L. 1993

SOBCHACK, Vivian: Screening Space. The American Science Fiction Film (2nd Ed.), New York: Ungar, 1987. TOBE, Renée: Film, Architecture and Spatial Imagination. Routledge, 2016

TOY, Maggie: Architecture and Film. Wiley Academy, 1994 VILA, Santiago: La escenografía: cine y arquitectura. Madrid: Cátedra, 1997