C LIT 597 B: Special Topics in Cinema and Media Studies
Film and the Photographic Imaginary

Meeting Time: MW 1:30pm - 3:20pm

Location: SAV 140

SLN: 21060

Instructor: Sudhir Mahadevan

Additional Details:
This seminar introduces students to the theories, histories and creative practices that link film and photography. To what extent has the photographic imaginary influenced portraiture, reenactments, the tableau in the cinema? In what instances have the overlaps between film and photography informed visual ethnography or produced new reflections on historiography? Is the digital still image obsolete or do still images invite new reflections on duration and the phenomenological aspects of viewing pictures and watching films? What other ontologies of the moving and still image can be found in non-Western contexts?

The readings in this seminar belong to three broad areas of inquiry that significantly overlap with each other.

The first is a survey of the historical links between photography and film that take us from late 19th century chrono-photography, to the intersection of film and photojournalism in the first half of the twentieth century, to the emergence of digital photography and its relation to film. Readings for this section include Marta Braun, Rielle Navitzky, Serge Gruzinsky, Paula Amad, Teresa Castro.

The second area focuses on photographic and film theory with reflections by modernists, critical and film theorists, filmmakers (Lewis Hine, Andre Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, Sergei Eisenstein among others) as well as more contemporary writers, including historians...
The third is an introduction to issues around the ethics and politics of representation, particularly as they pertain to photographic practices in art, political reportage and ethnography (in for instance the writing of Ariella Azoulay, Christopher Pinney, Catherine Russell, Fatima Tobing-Rony).

Films include Atom Egoyan's Calendar, Chris Marker's La Jetee, Agnes Varda's La Pointe Courte, Antonioni’s L’Aventura and Blow Up, Shirley Clarke's Portrait of Jason, Abbas Kiarostami's Close-Up, Errol Morris' Standard Operating Procedure, and we will also read about the work of artists such as Jeff Wall, Bill Viola, Cindy Sherman and N. Pushpamala.

This seminar and its readings cut across disciplines and is intended to be of potential interest for students in the departments of history, literature, art history, photography as well as film studies.

Written assignments will include detailed summaries of readings, and a substantial research essay. Readings will be available online and where available, books will be on reserve in the library.

Required Texts:


Credits: 5.0

Status: Active

Last updated: August 2, 2019 -
  9:02pm

Department of Cinema & Media Studies
University of Washington
Padelford Hall B531
Box 354338
Seattle, WA 98195

Phone: (206) 543-7542
Fax: (206) 685-2017

Source URL: https://cinema.washington.edu/courses/2015/spring/c-lit/597/b