COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the evolution of theories and practices of contemporary cinema as we move into what is being characterized as the post-cinematic, the post-human and the post-alphabetic.

Cinema has steadily been moving from the two-dimensional screen to the world around us, from the theater to museum and gallery settings, to architecture and the built environment, to mobile devices, websites and game consoles. This course argues that cinema, the primary vehicle for storytelling in the 20th century, and identification, the mechanism central to the cinematic apparatus, are both being redefined in a culture increasingly suffused with media and networks. The post-cinematic, understood in its most expanded sense, demonstrates new expressions of time and space as it dismantles the temporal and spatial codes of classical Hollywood cinema, and along with them, the illusion of coherence that they produce. These post-cinematic works offer new experiences of time beyond a linear model of temporal unfolding, and they give us new experiences of space beyond its common role as backdrop to human action. In short, cinema and its traditional representations of time, space and subjectivity are being reconfigured against a backdrop of a radical rethinking both of what it means to be human in the 21st century and what it means to create cinematic images.

This rethinking of the human is perhaps best characterized by the post-human, which offers a paradigm that may – or may not! – align with the post-cinematic. Posthumanism designates a shift in which the human no longer rests at the center, but is dispersed and networked. IML 605 proposes to investigate the post-cinematic and the post-human in tandem, looking for alignments and incongruities, overlaps and displacements. Rather than proposing a strict thesis, the course instead invites participants to explore a series of trajectories, and to help configure the course as it evolves.
The goals of this course include the following:
• to define the emerging theoretical constructs of the post-cinematic and the post-human
• to map shifts away from questions of identity, subjectivity and knowledge in contemporary media theory
• to situate contemporary shifts in media art and culture within a larger historical context
• to identify, assess and theorize the key formal qualities of emerging forms
• and to identify the political and ideological implications of these shifts

READINGS / Required
(Available as an ebook through the USC library.)

Choose One:
Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, editors, *Post Cinema: Theorizing 21st Century Film*
(Available online: http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/post-cinema/)

Malte Hagener, Vinzenz Hediger and Alena Strohmaier, editors, *The State of Post-Cinema: Tracing the Moving Image in the Age of Digital Dissemination*
(Available as an ebook through the USC library)

READINGS / Recommended
Raymond Bellour, *Between-the-Images*
Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality and Media*
Franco Casetti, *The Lumiere Galaxy: 7 Key Words for the Cinema to Come*
Catherine Elwes, *Installation and the Moving Image*
Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies*
Malte Hagener, Vinzenz Hediger and Alena Strohmaier, editors, *The State of Post-Cinema: Tracing the Moving Image in the Age of Digital Dissemination*
Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*
Bruce Isaacs, *The Orientation of Future Cinema: Technology, Aesthetics, Spectacle*
Gertrud Koch, ed., *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*
Rosalind Krauss, “A Voyage on the North Sea”: *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*
Michael Lawrence and Laura McMahon, eds., *Animal Life and the Moving Image*
Eva Lenhardt and Andreas Rauscher, eds., *Films and Games: Interactions*
Agnes Petho, ed., *Film in the Post-Media Age*
Elvind Rossaak, ed., *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms*
D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*
Edward Shanken, *Art and Electronic Media*
Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel, *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film*
Jason Sperb, *Flickers of Film: Nostalgia in the Time of Digital Cinema*
Andrew Uroski, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube*
Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema*

COURSE PROJECTS
Presentation / 25% / To be scheduled
Each participant is responsible for making a presentation. The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length, and may either review and interrogate one or more of the readings, introduce a new reading or concept, or explore artworks, tools, structures, etc. Participants are welcome to experiment with the presentation style, which might include the standard seminar presentation or some hybrid featuring sound, still images, moving images, performance or interactions of some kind.

Book Review / 25% / Due Week Seven / October 5, 2017
Write a critical review of one text that you’ve chosen from the array of readings suggested for this class. Your essay should include a clear framing question and thesis statement, a logical structure of argumentation, and conclusion, as well as citations using Chicago or MLA format. Please consider writing a review for publication.

Final Project / 50% / Due Week Fifteen / November 30, 2017
One of the questions raised throughout this course centers on the changing nature of scholarship in a digital, networked culture. In response, you are invited to create a media-rich project that addresses a topic from the class. This could be a video essay, an audio project, or an essay composed in Scalar, among other options. A one-page prospectus is due Week Nine (October 19); the project will be shared in class during Week Thirteen. Alternately, you are invited to write a long-form essay between 5 and 10 pages in length.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 // August 22
From Classical Hollywood to the Post-Cinematic
Introduction to the course, and examination of some shifts in the spatial and temporal constructions in recent cinema, intensified continuity and new narrative structures.

Week 2 // August 29
Another Cinema, an Expanded Cinema
Cinema: digital, dispersed, reconfigured.
Discuss:
“The Cinema Spectator: A Special Memory,” Raymond Bellour
“Film feminism, Post-cinema, and the Affective Turn,” Dijana Jelača
“Parallel Selves,” Brian Rotman
“Expanded Cinema, Video and Virtual Environments,” Peter Weibel

Suggested:
“The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change,” Anne Friedberg
“Battle of the Images,” Raymond Bellour

Week 3 // September 5
Machines for Generating Affect / Phenomenologies of Media
Discuss:
“Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales.”
“Introduction: Theorizing Media Phenomenologically,” Tim Markham and Scott Rodgers
“McLuhan and Phenomenology,” Graham Harman
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFA7LXSnsWw

Week 4 // September 12
Spectacular Times and Spaces
Discuss:
“The Ultimate Trip: Special Effects and Kaleidoscopic Perception,” Scott Bukatman
“Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film,” David Bordwell
“Permanent Metalepsis: Pushing the Boundaries of Narrative Space,” Thomas Morsch

Week 5 // September 19

Posthumanism, Bodies and Interaction
Reimagining the nature/culture divide, non-dualistic thought and auto-poiesis.
Discuss:
Chapter One: Post-Humanism: Life Beyond the Self, The Posthuman, Rosi Braidotti
“Introduction: Posthuman Bodies,” Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston
“Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics,” Beatriz Preciado

Week 6 // September 26

Posthumanism, Live Cinema and the Spaces of Projection
Discuss:
Chapter Two: Post-Anthropocentrism: Life Beyond the Species, The Posthuman, Rosi Braidotti
“Sites of Screening: Cinema, Museum and the Art of Projection,” Giuliana Bruno
“Projections Spaces,” on Moholy-Nagy, Oliver A. I. Botar

Week 7 // October 3

Posthumanism, Virtual Reality and Immersive Storytelling
Due: Essay
Discuss:
Chapter Three: The Inhuman: Life Beyond Death, The Posthuman, Rosi Braidotti
“Towards a Post-Media Era” Félix Guattari
“Robot Love Is Queer: Afroturism and Alien Love,” Tobias C. Van Veen,
“The Power of Immersive Media,” Frank Rose

Week 8 // October 10

Posthumanism and Mobile / Locative Media and the Regime of Navigation
Discuss:
Chapter Four: Posthuman Humanities: Life Beyond Theory, The Posthuman, Rosi Braidotti
“Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles – endless cinema or private telematics,” Anne Friedberg
“Leaving a Movie Theater,” Roland Barthes
Excerpts, Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation, Nanna Verhoeff

Week 9 // October 17

Transmedia Storytelling, Worldbuilding and the Politics of Empire
Discuss:
“Searching for the Origami Unicorn: The Matrix and Transmedia Storytelling,” Henry Jenkins,
“Why Transmedia Is Catching on Now,” Part Two and Part Three, Nick DeMartino
“Incorporating Second Screens Into Cinema,” Zachary Wigon
“Seven Myths About Transmedia Storytelling Debunked,” Henry Jenkins
“Computers as Theater,” Brenda Laurel
“Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature,” Espen Aarseth
“World Building,” Ann Pendleton Jullian
See Henry Jenkins’ Transmedia syllabus for further readings:
Week 10 // October 24

Animals and Cyborgs
Discuss:
“A Cyborg Manifesto,” Donna Haraway
“A Caribbean Pre-Posthumanism,” Louis Chude-Sokei
“Cinema, Animal Studies and the Post/Non-Human,” Jennifer Lynn Peterson
“Unparalleled Catastrophe for our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations,” Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick,

Week 11 // October 31

Hypercinema and Emerging Techniques
Full-dome, photogrammetry and high-resolution photography
Discuss:
“Fantasy Echoes and the Future Anterior of Cinema and Gender,” Kristin Lené Hole

Week 12 // November 7

Neurocinematics
Discuss:
“From Fixed to Fluid: Material-Mental Images Between Neural Synchronization and Computational Mediation,” Mark B. N. Hansen
“How the Movies of Tomorrow Will Play With Your Mind,” Jennifer Ouellette

Week 13 // November 14

Due: Media-Rich Scholarly Work
Come to class prepared to share your project.
Discuss:
“Materialist Feminism for the Twentieth-First Century: The Video Essays of Ursula Biemann,” Angela Dimitrakaki

Week 14 // November 21

Thanksgiving: No Class

Week 15 // November 28

Final Project Presentations

ACCESSING THE COURSE WEBSITE
Course readings, video links and lecture notes will be available on a course website.

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your course instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html
(213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/ Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/ Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis
In case of emergency, when travel to campus is difficult, if not impossible, USC executive leadership will announce a digital way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of the Blackboard LMS (Learning Management System), teleconferencing, and other technologies. Instructors should be prepared to assign students a “Plan B” project that can be completed ‘at a distance.’ For additional information about maintaining your classes in an emergency, please access: http://cst.usc.edu/services/emergencyprep.html