

Semester: VI	
Course : Mass Communication and Videography	
Paper Title: Film Theory	
Paper code: C3MV230631T	Credits: 4
Hours/week : 4	
Category: Core/MDC/SEC/VAC : CORE (Major)	
Theory / Practical / Composite : Theory	
No of Modules : 2	
Course Overview:	
<p>This course introduces students to major theoretical and philosophical approaches to cinema, tracing the development of film theory from classical debates on realism and formalism to post-classical and postmodern perspectives. Through the works of key theorists such as André Bazin, Sergei Eisenstein, and Christian Metz, students will examine how cinema constructs meaning, reality, and form. The course then moves into film philosophy, exploring cinema as a mode of thinking that generates philosophical reflections on time, perception, ethics, identity, and history. Emphasis is placed on questions of subjectivity, gender, spectatorship, and power, as well as the ethical and political dimensions of representing historical trauma in film.</p>	
Course Outcome:	
1. Remember key concepts, theorists, and debates in classical, post-classical, and postmodern film theory, along with foundational ideas in film philosophy concerning realism, form, ontology, and spectatorship.	
2. Understand how cinematic realism, formalism, and postmodern aesthetics intersect with philosophical questions of time, perception, identity, and meaning in film.	
3. Apply film-theoretical and philosophical frameworks—including realism, semiotics, feminist theory, and ethical criticism—to the close analysis of selected films.	
4. Analyze films as sites of philosophical inquiry by examining how cinematic form, narrative, and visual strategies construct subjectivity, gendered gazes, power relations, and historical meaning.	
5. Evaluate competing theoretical and philosophical approaches to cinema, assessing their strengths and limitations in interpreting ethics, politics, realism, and representations of historical trauma.	
6. Create original, theoretically informed analyses or critical essays that synthesize film theory and film philosophy to address contemporary cinematic and cultural concerns.	
Prerequisites: Basic knowledge about any prior course	
SYLLABUS	

UNIT/Module	CONTENT	HOURS or NUMBER OF CLASSES	CO Mapping	COGNITIVE LEVEL
I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classical Film Theory: Andre Bazin, Sergei Eisenstein, Christian Metz ● Realism in Cinema Introduction to cinematic realism and formalism. Historical development of realist and formalist traditions in global cinema. ● Post-classical film theory ● Postmodernism and cinema: issues and debates 	2	CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	K1,K2,K3,K4.K5,K6
II.	<p>Introduction to Film Philosophy Understanding the intersection of cinema and philosophy, examining how films not only illustrate but also generate philosophical ideas about time, ethics, identity, and perception. Through key thinkers and selected films, the philosophical enquiries around cinema will be discussed.</p>	2	CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	K1,K2,K3,K4.K5,K6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding film philosophy: cinema as a form of thinking. Discussion on the ontology and epistemology of film. ● Subjectivity, Gender, and the Gaze Feminist interventions in film philosophy; spectatorship and power. ● Ethics, Politics, and Historical Representation Film as an ethical and political medium; discussion on the representation of historical trauma. 			
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Text Books

Suggested readings

- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation* (S. F. Glaser, Trans.). University of Michigan Press.
- Bazin, A. (1967). *What is cinema?* (H. Gray, Trans.). University of California Press.
- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2016). *Film art: An introduction*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Braudy, L., & Cohen, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Film theory and criticism: Introductory readings* (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*. Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.
- Carroll, N. (2008). *The philosophy of motion pictures*. Blackwell.
- Cavell, S. (1979). *The world viewed: Reflections on the ontology of film*. Harvard University Press.
- Colman, F. (Ed.). (2009). *Film, theory and philosophy: The key thinkers*. Routledge.
- Deleuze, G. (1986). *Cinema 1: The movement-image* (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1989). *Cinema 2: The time-image* (H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Eisenstein, S. (1949). *Film form: Essays in film theory* (J. Leyda, Ed. & Trans.). Harcourt.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Duke University Press.
- Marks, L. U. (2000). *The skin of the film: Intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses*. Duke University Press.
- Metz, C. (1974). *Film language: A semiotics of the cinema* (M. Taylor, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.
- Mulhall, S. (2008). *On film*. Routledge.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6–18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- Rancière, J. (2004). *The politics of aesthetics* (G. Rockhill, Trans.). Continuum.
- Read, R., & Goodenough, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Film as philosophy: Essays in cinema after Wittgenstein and Cavell*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vaughan, H. (2009). *Where film meets philosophy*. Columbia University Press.
- Wartenberg, T. (2007). *Thinking on screen: Film as philosophy*. Routledge.
- Woods, T. (2008). *Beginning postmodernism* (2nd ed.). Manchester University Press.

Web Resources

1. <https://monoskop.org/Monoskop>
2. <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/>
3. <https://archive.org/>
4. <https://www.sensesofcinema.com/>

Evaluation

CIA: 25 + 5 MARKS

END-SEMESTER: 70 marks

Paper Structure for Theory Semester Exam Module:

Module 1

One long question out of two options using OR– 1x15 = 15 marks

Two short questions, where each question will have another option using OR – 2x10 = 20 marks

Module 2

One long question out of two options – 1x15 = 15 marks

Two short questions out of four options – 2x10 = 20 marks

Course outcomes (COs) and Cognitive Level Mapping

COs	CO Description	Cognitive levels
CO1	Remember key concepts, theorists, and debates in classical, post-classical, and postmodern film theory, along with foundational ideas in film philosophy concerning realism, form, ontology, and spectatorship.	K1
CO2	Understand how cinematic realism, formalism, and postmodern aesthetics intersect with philosophical questions of time, perception, identity, and meaning in film.	K2
CO3	Apply film-theoretical and philosophical frameworks—including realism, semiotics, feminist theory, and ethical criticism—to the close analysis of selected films.	K3
CO4	Analyze films as sites of philosophical inquiry by examining how cinematic form, narrative, and visual strategies construct subjectivity, gendered gazes, power relations, and historical meaning.	K4
CO5	Evaluate competing theoretical and philosophical approaches to cinema, assessing their strengths and limitations in interpreting ethics, politics, realism, and representations of historical trauma.	K5
CO6	Create original, theoretically informed analyses or critical essays that synthesize film theory and film philosophy to address contemporary cinematic and cultural concerns.	K6