

# PONT-AVEN SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

## BFA COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRING SEMESTER 2010

Course Title: *TLÖN, UQBAR, ORBIS TERTIUS*: FILM, ART, AND IMAGINATIONS OF SPACE

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Barbara McBane

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Office Hours: by appointment with the instructor

Course Hours: Screenings: Mondays, 2-4:30 pm, PASCA classroom

Lecture/Discussion: Wednesdays, 10:30-12pm, PASCA classroom

### Course Description:

In this course we will explore a variety of chartings of psychophysical landscapes with the object of suggesting new approaches to studio practices. Course readings will traverse a range of conceptual, cultural, and geopolitical viewpoints, and a variety of media in which map-making and space-imagining have been undertaken. Audiovisual media (film, sound-art, the internet) will be an important focus, but not an exclusive one. We will draw from Western cultural critics and philosophers who have taken up questions of space and how we inhabit it (Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Edward Soja), but we will also give at least equal attention to other approaches: post-colonial, queer, feminist, and art-historical, for example. Our archive will be wide-ranging and will include Persian rugs; Asian and Australian-Aboriginal sand-drawings; soundscape notation; internet sites; and hell itself. Special attention will be given to how space has been mapped through sound, from French village bells to Janet Cardiff's sound-walks. In conjunction with the course, we will screen films featuring space and mapping, whether in relation to colonial projects or to undoing these; whether in order to anchor and orient us as cultural subjects or to disorient us, to disrupt our psycho-spatial coordinates, and to urge us to question our conditioned senses of 'direction.' Attendance at these screenings and at selected Friday-night PASCA screenings will be a requirement of the course.

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will:

- 1) learn to use basic terms and concepts of film and geography studies
- 2) begin to translate these into 2d, 3d, and 4d art practice and conceptualization.
- 3) be introduced to current discourses of space and place in film and the social sciences, especially as these relate to specific 20<sup>th</sup> century art movements.
- 4) acquire a better-contextualized understanding of the normative bases of space, place, mapping, and cultural/physical orientation, and how these are affected by race, sexuality, gender, and socio-economic positioning.
- 5) learn to write and think critically about art, film and geography.

### Course Requirements

#### Assignments for the Course:

- 1) Four short (about 2-3 pages) papers (instructions will be given in class)
- 2) One assignment for each study trip (instructions will be given in class)
- 3) One final project and project proposal (options will be discussed in class)
- 4) Attendance at all course screenings, including required Friday screenings.
- 5) Possible extra in- or out-of-class assignments (at the instructor's discretion)

### Expectations/Policies for the Course

**Students are expected to:**

- 1) Turn off cell phones and computers for class: hand-written notes only.
- 2) Complete all assigned course readings.
- 3) Course readings should be completed BEFORE the day for which they are assigned.
- 4) Actively participate in classroom discussions
- 5) Complete all course assignments and turn them in on time.

**Number of hours students are expected to work outside of class:**

You'll be expected to spend at least as much time outside as inside the classroom; so, if class meets four hours a week (including screenings), expect to spend at least another four on reading and other assignments.

**PASCA Attendance and Tardiness Policies for all classes:**

- Students are expected to arrive at class on time.
- 'Tardy' means 5 minutes late at the beginning of class and/or after designated breaks.
- 3 tardies is equivalent to one unexcused absence.
- An 'excused absence' means the student has a note signed by a doctor.
- It is the student's responsibility to know what assignments have been missed and to complete them when absent from class
- More than one absence of any kind will affect the student's grade as follows:
  - 2 unexcused absences: one letter grade drop (B to C, for example).
  - 3 unexcused absences: a second letter drop (B to D).
  - 4 unexcused absences: you fail the class.
  - More than four absences of any kind, excused or not: you fail the class.

For purposes of the French Film course, each week's screening and lecture/discussion together comprise one class; if you don't attend both, you'll be counted absent for the week.

Post-Bacs and auditors should be prepared to conform to the 'tardiness' policies of the class; if you want to sit in on a class meeting, come at the beginning and stay until the end. You'll be expected to participate along with enrolled students.

**Study Trip Component**

Students will be given an assignment in class before each study trip.

**Grading**

Based on a 100 point scale:

- Attendance, Participation and Journaling 30%
- Short Papers: 5 points each total: 20%
- Study Trip Assignments: 10 points each total: 20%
- Final Project 30%

**Course Readings/Bibliography:**

Required and recommended readings for the class are indicated (and distinguished) in the course schedule. Required readings will be distributed as handouts the week before assignments are due (in class or in students' mailboxes). Generally, all readings will be available for copying in a notebook on the table near the main PASCA entrance.

*TLÖN, UQBAR, ORBIS TERTIUS*

# FILM, ART, AND IMAGINATIONS OF SPACE

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND SCREENINGS

*NOTE: the exact content of screenings and reading assignments is subject to change*

**WEEK ONE: 1/25 – 1/29** - Brief Course Introduction

**Topic: VIRTUAL VOYAGES: CITIES, CINEMA AND SPACE & TIME TRAVEL**

*Writing Assignment #1: see handouts (in student mailboxes)*

*Required Reading by Friday:*

- Jeffrey Ruoff, “The Filmic Fourth Dimension: Cinema as Audiovisual Vehicle”
- Barbara Mennel, “The Founding Myth of Cinema, or the ‘Train Effect’”
- Michel de Certeau, “Railway Navigation and Incarceration”

**\*\*Friday Night Screening** (required): *Man With a Movie Camera*, 1929, Dziga Vertov, USSR, 68m

**WEEK TWO: 2/1 – 2/5**

**Topic: WALKING THE CITY I: GENDER AND URBAN FILM SPACE - AARIS**

**Class Screening** (Monday 2/1, 2-4:30pm): *Bob le Flambeur*, 1956, Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 95m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:** Wednesday, 2/3: 10:30am -12noon

*Writing Assignment #1 due in class*

*Required Reading:*

- Michel de Certeau, “Spatial Stories”
- Malcolm Miles, “The City”
- Genette Vincendeau, “‘Autistic Masculinity’ in Jean-Pierre Melville’s Crime Thrillers”

*Recommended Reading:*

- Stuart C. Aitken and Leo E. Zinn, “Re-Presenting the Place Pastiche” [excerpt]
- Barbara Mennel, “The City of Love: Paris”

**Friday Night Screening** (strongly recommended): *À bout de souffle/ Breathless*, 1960, Jean-Luc Godard, France, 90m

**WEEK THREE: 2/8 – 2/12**

**Topic: FILM AND SPATIAL REPRESENTATION: SPACE & PLACE; NARRATIVE SPACE; PUZZLES & LABYRINTHS**

**Class Screening:** *Rekopis Znaleziony w Saragossie/The Saragossa Manuscript*, 1964, Wojciech Has, Poland, 174m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Required Reading:*

- Jorge Luis Borges, “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius”; “The Garden of Forking Paths”
- Paul de Man, “A Modern Master”
- Ian Christie, “‘A Garden of Forking Paths: the Western Reception of Has’s *Saragossa Manuscript*”
- “Warren Buckland, “Puzzle Plots”

- M.C. Escher graphics: selections from *The World of M.C. Escher*

*Recommended Reading:*

- Allene M. Parker, "Drawing Borges: A Two-Part Invention on the Labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges and M.C. Escher"

- Thomas Elsaesser, "The Mind-Game Film"

- Iwona Grodz, "The Delicate Touch of Surrealism in *The Saragossa Manuscript*"

**\*\*\*Friday Night Screening** (required): *Céline et Julie Vont en Bateau/Celine and Julie Go Boating*, 1974, Jaques Rivette, France, 192m

**Topic: ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND: HETEROTOPIAS & UNDERGROUND SPACES; 'LOSTNESS'; FORMAL CHOICES (REAL-TIME AND STOP-MOTION ANIMATION; MORE)**

**Class Screening:** *Neko z Alenky/Alice*, 1988, Jan Svankmajer, Switzerland, 85m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Madrid/ Barcelona reading & writing assignments given in class*

*Required Reading:*

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Ch 1, 2, 5, 12; *Through The Looking-Glass*, Ch.1

- Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"

- David Sorfa, "Architorture: Jan Svankmajer and Surrealist Film"

- Henri Lefebvre, "From Absolute Space to Abstract Space" [excerpt] from *The Production of Space*, 234-250

*Recommended Reading:*

- Tom McDonough, "Calling From the Inside: Filmic Topologies of the Everyday" in *The Everyday*

- Rebecca Solnit, "Open Door" from *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*

**TRAVEL TO MADRID AND BARCELONA 2/18 – 2/24**

**WEEK FIVE: 2/22 – 2/24: NO CLASS MEETING**

**Topic: WALKING THE CITY II: ACOUSTIC SPACES & SOUNDSCAPES**

*Required Reading:*

Janet Cardiff, *The Walk Book*, excerpts from "Walking," "Transformation," "Voices," "Memory"

*Required Listening:*

Janet Cardiff walk-tracks (as assigned)

*Recommended Reading:*

Iain Chambers, "The Aural Walk"

**Friday Night Screening:** *Les Triplets de Belleville*, 2002, Sylvain Chomet, France/Can/Bel/GB, 83m

**WEEK SIX: 3/1 – 3/5**

**Topic: WALKING THE CITY, TOWN, AND COUNTRY: LISTENING AND SOUNDSCAPE DESIGN**

**Class Screening:** TBA

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Writing Assignment #2 given*

*Madrid/Barcelona Assignments due in class*

*Required Reading:*

- R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, Introduction, "The Rural Soundscape," "From Town to City," "Notation," Classification, "The Soniferous Garden," Appendix I: Sample Soundscape Notation Systems
- Henri Lefebvre, "From Absolute Space to Abstract Space" (262-278; 285-291)

*Recommended Reading:*

- Yi-Fu Tuan, "Experiential Perspective" and "Body, Personal Relations and Spatial Values" from *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*
- Alain Corbin, "Communities and Their Bells" and "The Auditory Markers of the Village" from *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth Century French Countryside*

**Friday Night Screening:** *Diva*, 1981, Jean-Jacques Beineix, France, 123m (or *8 Femmes/8 Women*, 2001, Francois Ozone, Fr/It, 111m)

**WEEK SEVEN: 3/8 – 3/12**

**Topic: AFTER THE GARDEN: EXPULSIONS, EXCLUSIONS, AND 'FALLEN SPACE':  
VERSIONS OF DANTE'S *INFERNO*:**

**Class Screening:** *SAMPLES & SHORT SEQUENCES: Apocalypse Now* (Do Long Bridge); Gustave Dore, Sandow Birk, and other illustrators of *Dante's Inferno*; *Dante's Inferno*, 2007, Sean Meredith and Sandow Birk, USA, 88m (sequences); *L'Inferno/Dante's Inferno*, 1911, Giuseppe de Liguoro, Francesco Bertolini, Adolfo Padovan, Italy, 68m (sequence); *Dung Smoke Enters the Palace (Peggy & Fred in Hell)*, 1989, Leslie Thornton, USA, 16m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Writing Assignment #2 due in class*

*Required Reading:*

- Selections from *Dante's Inferno*, adapted by Sandow Birk and Marcus Sanders
- Selections from Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, translated by Elio Zappulla
- Malcolm Miles, "Space Representation and Gender"; "Art in Urban Development"

**Friday Night Screening:**

*Naissances des Pieuvres/ Waterlilies*, 2007, Céline Sciamma, France, 85m

**WEEK EIGHT: 3/15 – 3/19**

**Topic: QUEER SPACE; 'DIS-ORIENTATIONS'; SPACES OF POST-MODERNITY**

*Assignment #3 given*

*Options for Final Project assignment given*

**Class Screening:** *Chunguang Zhaxie/Happy Together*, 1997, Wong Kar-Wai, Hong Kong, 97m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Required Reading:*

- Marc Siegel, "The Intimate Spaces of Wong Kar-Wai" from Esther Yau, ed, *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*
- Sara Ahmed, "Introduction: Find Your Way" from *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*

*Recommended Reading:*

- Michael P Brown, "Producing the Closet in Urban Space: Spatiality, Sexuality and Capitalism" from *Closet Space: Geographies of Metaphor from the Body to the Globe*
- Ira Tattelman, "Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Places" from William R. Leap, ed., *Public Sex, Gay Space*
- Barbara Mennel, "The City as Queer Playground" and "Cities and Globalization"

**Friday Night Screening:** *La Collectionneuse*, 1966, Eric Rohmer, France, 90m

**WEEK NINE: 2/22 – 2/26**

**topic: HOME AND 'UNHEIMLICH'; URBAN UNCANNINESS**

**Class Screening:** *Paperhouse*, 1988, Bernard Rose, GB, 92m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Assignment #3 due in class*

*Paris/Berlin reading & writing assignments given in class*

Sequences screened in class from: *Berlin, - Die Sinfonie der Grosstadt/Berlin, Symphony of a City*, 1927, Walter Ruttmann, Germany, 70m; *Metropolis*, 1926, Fritz Lang, Germany, 124m

*Required Reading:*

- Gaston Bachelard, "The House from Cellar to Garret; The Significance of the Hut"
- Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"
- Carsten Strathausen, "Uncanny Spaces: The City in Ruttmann and Vertov"

*Recommended Reading:*

- Wolfgang Natter, ""The City as Cinematic Space: Modernism and Place in *Berlin, Symphony of a City*"

**\*\*\*Friday Night Screening (required):** *Pépé Le Moko*, 1936, Julien Duvivier, France, 93m

**WEEK TEN: 3/27 – 4/2 TRAVEL TO PARIS AND BERLIN**

**Topic: WALKING THE CITY III: SITUATIONISM AND DÉRIVE**

*Required Reading:*

- Tom McDonough, "Situationist Space"
- Kristin Ross, "French Quotidian"
- Irit Rogoff, "Mapping" from *Terra Infirmis: Geography's Visual Culture*

**WEEK ELEVEN: 4/3 – 4/11 SEMESTER BREAK**

*Complete Paris/Berlin reading & writing assignments*

*Complete Project Proposals*

**WEEK TWELVE: 4/12 – 4/16**

**Topic: COLONIAL & POST-COLONIAL MAPPINGS AND SPACES**

**Class Screening:** *La Battaglia di Algeri/The Battle of Algiers*, 1965, Gillo Pontecorvo, Alg/It, 135m

*Final Project Proposals due in class*

**Class Meeting:**

*Paris/Berlin Writing Assignments due in class*

*Writing Assignment #4 given*

*Required Reading:*

- Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "The Imperial Imaginary" (100-120); "The Third Worldist Film (248-355) from *Unthinking Eurocentrism*
- Irit Rogoff, "Borders" from *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*

**Friday Night Screening:** *Beau Travail*, 1998, Claire Denis, France, 90m

**WEEK THIRTEEN: 4/19 – 4/23**

**Topic: MODES OF MAPPING I: PERSIAN RUGS**

**Class Screening:** *Gabbeh*, 1996, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iran/Fr, 74m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Writing Assignment #4 due in class*

*Required Reading:*

- Negar Mottahedeh, "Negative Aesthetics: Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema and 1970s Feminist Film Theory" from *Displaced Allegories: Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema*

*Required Online Reading:*

- Mino Moallem, "Nation on the Move" in *Vectors: Journal of Culture and Technology in a Dynamic Vernacular*; <http://www.vectorsjournal.org/index.php?page=7&projectId=83>

**Friday Night Screening:** *Le Moine et La Sorcière/ Sorceress*, 1987, Suzanne Schiffman, France, 97m

**WEEK FOURTEEN: 4/26 – 4/30**

**FINAL PROJECTS DUE on or before Monday, 4/26**

**Topic: MODES OF MAPPING II: ABORIGINAL SAND PAINTINGS**

**Class Screening:** *Night Cries*, 1987, Tracey Moffat, Australia, 16m; *The Tracker*, 2002, Rolf de Heer, Australia, 90m

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

*Required Reading:*

- Helen Watson and David Wade Chambers, *Singing the Land, Signing the Land: "Introduction," "Finding Patterns in the World," "Singing the Land, Signing the Land," "Texts and Their Contexts"*
- Jake Wilson, "Looking Both Ways: *The Tracker*"
- Gilles Deleuze, "Nomadic Art: Space"
- Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "On Nomadology" in *Situation*

*Recommended Reading:*

- Eric Michaels, "Western Desert Sand-Painting and Modernism"
- Ross Gibson, "The Nature of a Nation: Landscape in Australian Feature Films"

**FRIDAY NIGHT, 4/30: PONT-AVEN OPEN STUDIOS**

**WEEK FIFTEEN: 5/3 – 5/7**

**Topic: MAGICAL MAPPING: CARNAC**

*Required Reading:*

- John Michell, Part 1: “Landscape” from *The New View Over Atlantis* (11-118)

**Class Screening:**

*Final Short Assignment due (extra)*

**STUDENT FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**Class Meeting/Discussion:**

**ALL- SCHOOL STUDENT PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

*WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY: TRIP TO CARNAC*

*SATURDAY, MAY 8: LEAVE FOR PARIS*