

# Representation and Resistance in Film and Television

## Week 1: Introduction

	Notes
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Film Theory is a field of inquiry               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Range of theories help us to understand film better</li> <li>○ Can show the role of film within history and culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Arnheim reduced the photographic essence of film</li> <li>● Bazin praised the ability of photographic film to show the realities</li> <li>● Nowadays, film is analysed through social and symbolic meaning</li> </ul>
How does this unit approach the (big!) concept of representation? What does screen theory have to do with this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Film/TV represents/reinforce/resist what we know about the world</li> <li>● Perpetrates and challenges stereotypes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can happen at level of content: what's the message, storytelling</li> <li>○ Can happen at level of form: style, how it's presented</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Resistance in Film               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deliberate effort that challenges narratives, question norms and challenge oppressive systems</li> <li>○ Filmmakers become agent of activism, advocates for justice, equality and amplify voices</li> <li>○ Can ignite movements, inspire dialogue and contribute to shifts in society</li> <li>○ Can also challenge traditional stylistic conventions (level of form) through filming techniques, challenge genre expectations, call attention to filming that is thought provoking and disrupts pattern of thinking</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Film Theory               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interpretative framework that is developed over time to understand how films are made and received</li> <li>○ Seeks to understand fundamental qualities and distinctive features and various effects</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Periodisation of Film Theory               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classical film theory (1915-1945)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Silent film paradigm: formalism and realism</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Modern film theory (1945-1968)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ psychoanalysis , structuralism and semiology</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Contemporary film theory (1968-now)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Film and ideology, postmodernism and cultural studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Key questions of film theory               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Questioned the nature, role, function and value of cinema</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
We are focusing on selected developments in screen theory. What is significant about	

these particular theories?	
What will we be discussing each week? A preview of the content and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Film transforms how we see reality</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Realism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Film resembles reality</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Semiotics and Structuralism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on how elements are arranged within the film</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Psychoanalysis and Apparatus Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follows the unconscious desires</li> <li>○ Apparatus can distort audience perspectives</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cinema and Ideology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promoting/subverting ideologies</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Feminist Film Theory</li> <li>● Postcolonialism and Critical Race Theory</li> <li>● Cognitive Theory and Phenomenology</li> <li>● Film and Postmodernism</li> </ul>
Why are we watching Hugo (2011) this week?	

## Week 2: Formalist Film Theory

Learning Objective	Notes
Reading	
Formalist Film Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Formal characteristics of film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mise en scene (sets, costume, props)</li> <li>■ Cinematography (lighting, colours, camera angles, movements)</li> <li>■ Editing (length of shot, transitions)</li> <li>■ Sound</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Formative (intents of filmmaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What the film does <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Alters the real world</li> <li>■ Invents alternative worlds</li> <li>■ Transforms psyche/consciousness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Hugo Munsterberg (1863-1916) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First theoretical account of cinema</li> <li>○ Professor at Harvard</li> <li>○ Assumptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cinema works similar to how our brain works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cinema provides a means of modelling psychological faculties (flashforwards/flashbacks etc)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Film as a subjective medium</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Film represents an art of subjectivity which mimics the way consciousness shapes the phenomenal world</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Film as a transformative medium           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Turns chaos into cosmos of film</li> <li>● Can show/tell a lot through film</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007)       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perceptual psychologist</li> <li>○ Member of Gestalt psychology movement</li> <li>○ <i>Film</i> (1933)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Aim of film is to represent objects by special means exclusive to film</li> <li>■ The means allow film to sharpen objects, impose style, emphasise special features and make it vivid and decorative</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Gestalt           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Art is not simply an imitation or selective duplication of reality, but a translation of observed characteristics into the forms of a given medium</li> <li>■ Principles of Gestalt Psychology               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Processing of overall rather than components</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Neoformalism       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kristin Thompson (b.1950)</li> <li>○ How art shows us familiar and formulaic objects in a way that encourages us to experience them as if they were new entities</li> <li>○ Approach focuses on formal and stylistic considerations instead of cultural/ideological/institutional issues</li> <li>○ Rejects other assumptions/methodologies of other film studies (eg. hermeneutic (interpretative) approaches)</li> <li>○ Understates role of culture in shaping film</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Russian Montage School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Montage Theory       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understanding and creating cinema through editing</li> <li>○ Principles of editing stress the combination of images to produce an idea</li> <li>○ Editing together juxtaposing sequences can express new and separate complex ideas</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Lev Kuleshov       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 'Kuleshov Effect'</li> <li>○ Context affects how viewers understand the meaning of the shot           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What comes before/after</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Experiment (1920)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interpret 3 pairs of images (actors expression) in relation to paired image</li> <li>■ Actor interpreted as hungry/sad/romantically intrigued based on the paired image</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Sergei Eisenstein       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expanded montage to international communities</li> <li>○ Films:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>