

Course Title

The Whatness of Cinematic Urbanism

Course Description

The aim of this course is to fuel further curiosity in discovering and understanding cities through cinematic images; to use films as tools to analyze the spatial relationships between society and its surrounding urban scenery. The main idea is not mere camera movement and angles, rather it is the underlying narrative that reveals hidden elements of our cities and societies. The course will explore the very essence of cinematic urbanism through an in-depth analysis of the word 'representation'. Classes will involve reading and analyzing theoretical texts, as well as watching some snippets of Egyptian movie scenes. Participants will be able to trace the changes in how Egyptian cinema portrayed the city. They will be able to come up with an intellectual blueprint for identifying and analyzing socio-spatial narratives through film images.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- Introduce the course
- Why Cinematic Urbanism?
- What are City Films / City Symphonies?

Suggested Readings:

- *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of the Modern from Reel to Real* by Nezar Al-Sayyad
- *Cities and Cinema* by Barbara Caroline Mennel

Week 2: Egyptian Cinema and Society – Reading Raymond William Baker

- Dominant Social Themes of Egyptian Cinema
- Modern and Post-Modern Cinema of Egypt
- The Cinematic Spatial Transformation of Egyptian Society

Suggested Readings

- *Combative Cultural Politics: Film Art and Political Spaces in Egypt*, article by Raymond Baker
- *Egypt in the Shadows: Films and the Political Order*, article by Raymond Baker

Week 3: From Visuality to the Lens – The Metropolis and Mental Life

- Cities as a system of luxury prefabrication
- Mental Senses' mechanization within the metropolis
- Transitory Landscapes
- Vertov's Kino-Eye

Suggested Readings

- *The Metropolis and the Mental Life* by Georg Simmel
- *Vision and Visuality* by Hal Foster
- *America* by Jean Baudrillard

Week 4: Film as a Socio-Spatial Influence

- The Concept of the Flâneur
- Flaneuring the Modern City

Suggested Readings

- *Previewing the Cinematic City* by David Clarke
- The writings of Walter Benjamin and Charles Baudelaire

Weeks 5, 6, & 7: The Narrative, the Imagery, & the Spatial

- Narrative Space
- Real Space vs. Imagined Space
- Physicality and Meta-Physicality of Space

- The Composition and Structure of the Image
- Wittgenstein's theory of picture representation
- Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics
- Jacques Lacan's theory of representation
- Society's submission to technically manipulated images
- The concept of Stereotype – Edward Said

- Exploring *The Aleph* by Jorge Luis Borges
- Lefebvre & Soja – Space
- Spatial Trilogy
- Who is space for?

Week 8: Cine-Spatial Representation

- The City between the Façade & the Metaphysical
- Youssef Chahine's *Le Caire* & Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*
- A Cinematic Reading of Asef Bayat

Weeks 9, 10, & 11: Small Workshop

- The workshop will be semi-theoretical semi-practical where applicants will be asked to shoot several short footage and produce a short film. Each will analyze the other applicant's film according to what was learnt during the workshop