History of Audiences

Fall 2010 Meeting Room: Axinn 103

Screening Room: SDL 110

Class Meeting: M/W 12.15-1.30

Weekly Screening: Tuesdays 7.30-10.25

Professor: Louisa Stein

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Office Hours: Tue/Thurs 2-3.30

Office: Axinn 206

Course Description

In this course, we will navigate the shifting histories of media audience as social construction and lived experience. For the first part of the semester, we will consider questions of film spectatorship from the earliest years of cinema to the coming of sound. Students will have the opportunity to research the history of early moviegoing in the Middlebury area. For the second part of the semester, we will examine the impact of digital media technologies on audience experience, interrogating theories of the active audience, fan engagement, and the Internet as authorship tool. 3 hrs. lect./3 hrs. screen.

[This syllabus is a work in progress, and is subject to change over the course of the semester. I'll upload new versions to the site and let you know via email to download the updated syllabus.]

Overview & Objectives

History of Audiences: New Media, New Audiences

In this class we will focus on two parallel moments in media audience history:

- Early movie going and exhibition–with focus on developing modes of audience interaction and audience engagement, theories of film spectatorship, and questions of movie exhibition and movie going in cultural contexts.
- Development of digital media technologies and online networks–interrogating theories of the active audience, collective intelligence, fan engagement, the restrictions of technology and interface, the web as authorship tool, and the audience turned author.

OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to

- Assess and analyze the cultural formations that framed cinema as a new medium and early movie exhibition and movie going experience
- Interrogate and engage with theories of media spectatorship
- Engage with theories and histories of new media, the impact of new media on audience engagement, the development of blogs, the impact of technology and interface on user experience
- Produce nuanced analyses of media representations of audience engagement–both of early cinema and of new media technologies
- Analyze contemporary audience engagement on the web and with various new media technologies
- Draw parallels, connections, and distinctions between the "new" media of early cinema and the "new media" of the Internet, mobile technologies, and videogames, etc.

Required Books

All required books are available at the Middlebury College Bookstore

- Fuller, Kathryn. *At the Picture Show: Small-Town Audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture*. University of Virginia Press, 2001.
- Rettberg, Jill Walker. *Blogging*. Polity, 2008.
- Ross, Sharon. *Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Academic Honesty Policy

PLAGIARIZING in any form from any source will not be tolerated, in accordance with the Middlebury College Honor Code (College Handbook, Chapter V**)**.

All papers and projects must include the Honor Code statements along with the student's name (as digital signature) in order to be graded.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course. Further disciplinary action may also be taken. If you have questions regarding what constitutes plagiarizing, or if you are unsure about how to reference material found on the Internet, please speak with me.

You must cite all your sources. Write with your own words. It is clear when a student borrows from another author; don't take this risk. If you have any concern about how to integrate sources appropriately, please email or meet with me.

Grading Breakdown

- Weekly screening prompt responses (posted to the class blog) 15%
- Virtual Notebooks at blog/journal/tumblr 15%
- Attendance* & Participation—in class and online** 15%
- 2 in class group presentation on selected topic, plus 2 page essay on each group presentation topic: 20% (10% each)
- Midway paper (5 pages) + annotated bibliography 10%
- Final (15 page) paper + in class presentation of final paper 25%

*Attendance and participation are a crucial part of this course. More than four unexcused absences will result in an F for the course. Participation must include both class discussion and participation in the online class discussions, either on twitter, the class discussion board, or at class blogs. Tweets must include hashtag #fmmc431; you can also use other hashtags, such as screening title etc.] In order to ensure full credit, please email me with your username so I know who you are and can give you full credit for your twitter activity.

Virtual Notebooks

Assignment: Virtual Notebooks [15%]

As part of this class, you will keep a virtual notebook/journal/blog which you will use to write up of the moment responses and notes for **the readings, lectures, and screenings** as well as any research you do for your group presentations.

You can choose from the following interfaces: WordPress Midd Blogs, Tumblr, and Livejournal. Please email me immediately once you've set your blog/journal up, so that I can link to it in the Virtual Notebooks RSS feed.

Do take a little time to explore each possible interface before choosing. As the semester progresses, these interfaces themselves will become part of our subject of inquiry, and your experience of the interface you choose for your virtual notebook will give you added insight.

The most formal part of the virtual notebook will be the required responses to the readings. You need to respond to each reading in this journaling space. These responses can be casual but should engage with the core ideas of each reading, or perhaps with an idea that spoke to you most significantly. Each response does not need to be very long—250 words be an appropriate minimum, but be sure to allow yourself to engage freely with the questions and concepts prompted by the readings. If part of a reading is unclear to you, here's where you can articulate questions and hypothesize possible answers. **Reading responses should be completed by midnight the night before class, so that I can read them before we meet. Reading responses must include the tag READING.**

In addition to being a repository for your notes on/responses to readings (and discussions and screenings, if you are so inspired), your blog/journal is your space to work out ideas without the pressure of making them fit the demands of a specific review or paper.

I'll be reading your responses throughout the semester, and will assess (with feedback) your virtual notebooks at three different points over the semester. I will take into account the casual, in-process nature of the evolving document. The point of this is to help you process the class lectures, discussions, presentations, screenings, and readings throughout the semester, and to work out ideas for your weekly prompt responses, midway, and final papers. It's also a space where you can explore your voice as a film critic.

Time permitting, I will include opportunity to write an initial response to screenings in the night screening. You can use these immediate screening responses as raw material to draw on for your responses to the weekly prompts at the class blog.

Please tag your posts using, at minimum, the following standard tags: READING, SCREENING, DISCUSSION, RESEARCH. Feel free to use other tags in addition, based on topic, screening title, etc.

Weekly Screening Prompt Responses (15%)

Every week, I will post a series of prompts on the main class blog based on the screening, connecting the screenings and readings. You will comment with your response. Your response does not need to (and probably shouldn't) respond to all the prompts, but rather should engage with the questions that most speak to you. Do draw on at least one reading in your answer. These responses don't need to be more than 250 words but shouldn't be longer than 500. **Prompt responses will be due by Friday at midnight each week.** At the end of the semester, I will drop the lowest grade for these prompts.

Presentations (2 Group Presentations/Short Individual Papers): 20% (10% each)

At two different points in the semester, we will break into groups based on your interest in a selected range of topics. As a group you will research and prepare a 15 minute presentation that incorporates ideas from the readings and from class discussions, including a hand out that summarizes your main findings and point. Please bring enough of these handouts for everyone in the class. You may also employ some form of multimedia display, from a visual clip to a web site tour, depending on the topic. You will also (each individually) write a two page

essay on the topic of your group presentation. [Your grade for each project will be weighted 50% for the presentation and 50% for your individual 2 page paper.]

In researching these projects, you can explore the world of scholarship and primary sources available online. I encourage you, however, to dig deep, to explore the rich resources both at Middlebury College's special collections and at the Sheldon Museum.

When you present, in addition to your hand out, you must hand in a bibliography (MLA format) with the list of your sources. You should consult and explore 5-10 different sources, depending on the nature of your project. These sources must include both primary and secondary sources. I will consider both the breadth and depth of your research.

Possible Presentation Topics

Presentations Round 1: Early Cinema à Coming of Sound

- Middlebury Pre-Cinema (Magic Lanterns/Magic Lantern shows/Transition from Theater to Cinema)
- Evolution of Moviegoing in Middlebury
- Middlebury's Town Hall Theater
- Middlebury's Movie Queen Contest
- The Construction of the Audience in Fan Magazines
- The relationship between vaudeville and early moviegoing
- Early Movie Serials and Audiences [like *The Perils of Pauline*]
- Reception and fandom of a silent/early sound movie star (Rudolph Valentino, Clark Bow, Theda Bara, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Joan Crawford, etc.)

Presentations Round 2: Digital Media

- Flickr.com as social network, archive, and aesthetic development

- Community Forums and Interaction at official network sites (you can choose one depending on the interest of your group members)
- Fantasy Baseball as networked community
- Fan vids or other forms of fan authorship
- Twitter as social network [could focus on, for example, the *Mad Men* Twitter community]
- Television Without Pity as site of community reception and authorship
- Youtube as site of community reception and authorship
- SecondLife as site of community reception, authorship, and audience
- Multiplayer Online Video Gameplay

Midway and Final Paper [35% total (10% Midway, 25% Final)]

You will propose, research, and write a 5 page midway draft to be followed by an expanded 15 page final version on a pre-approved topic (discussed with me and submitted via proposal) related to the topics covered in class. This essay must draw on three to five readings from class, from a range of weeks, and must also involve some form of primary research, be it the analysis of a web site, the reception of a film or television program, or of local Middlebury early cinema exhibition history. You may build on the topic you began research on for your group presentation, or you may write on any topic of your choosing, provided I approve the proposal. You must incorporate feedback from the midway draft into your final paper.

You may also choose to fulfill your final paper topic in a non-traditional essay form; you may, for example, create a video essay, remix, website, or a script, with an accompanying 5 page written analysis connecting your creative work to the ideas addressed in the course. I encourage you to consider this

option. If you choose this option, we will discuss an appropriate midway landmark based on the specific nature of your project.

We will meet individually during the semester to discuss possible topics and approaches, before you have submit your proposals for your final paper/project.

Formatting:

All essays must be written in 12 point font, Times New Roman, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. Reference your sources with full citation using MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting. A good guide for MLA formatting can be found here.

Week by Week Breakdown

New = Moving

WEEK 1

Screening: *Purple Rose of Cairo* MCTR 6700D

September 6:

- Introductions and overview
- Jenkins, Henry. "The Pickford Paradox."

September 8:

- Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator." *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*. Ed. Linda Williams. Rutgers University Press, 1994: 114-133. E-reserve.
- Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde." *Film and Theory: An Anthology*. Eds. Robert Stam & Toby Miller. Blackwell, 2000. 229-235. E-reserve.

WEEK 2

Screening: Selections from *Edison: The Invention of the Movies* [PN1993.5.A1 E3 2005]; *Steamboat Bill Jr.* [MCTR 7086D]

September 13th

- Fuller, Preface & Chapter 1
- Fuller [essay, not book] "Boundaries of Participation: The Problem of Spectatorship and American Film Audiences, 1905-1930." *Film and History* 20:3 (1991): 75-86.

September 15th

- Kramer, Peter. "A Slapstick Comedian at the Crossroads: Buster Keaton, the Theater, and Movies in 1916/17." *Theatre History Studies* 17 (1997): 133.
- Burian, Jarka M. "Laterna Magika as a Synthesis of Theatre and Film: Its Evolution and Problematics." *Theatre History Studies* 17 (1997): 33.

WEEK 3

Sign up in class on Monday for individual meetings with me this week

Screening: *Prix de Beauté [PN1997.P7648 A1 2006D]*

September 20th:

- Altman, Rick. "The Silence of the Silents." *Musical Quarterly* 80.4 (1996): 648.
- Fuller Chapter 2 & 3

September 22nd:

- Hastie, Amelie. "Louise Brooks: Star Witness." *Cinema Journal* 36.3 (1997): 3-24. E-reserve.

WEEK 4

Screening: *42nd Street [PN1997.F596 A1 2006 D]*

September 27th:

- Fuller, Chapter 4, 5, & 6

September 29th–no class session; I'll be away at a conference.

- Rubin, Martin. *Showstoppers: Busby Berkeley and the Tradition of Spectacle*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. Excerpt. E-reserve.

Friday October 1st: Midway/Final paper proposals due (by email, header: AUD PROPOSAL)

WEEK 5

Screening: *Singin' in the Rain* [Browsing DVDs]

October 4th:

- Fuller, Chapter 7, 8
- Round 1 Presentations 1

October 6th:

- Juddery, Mark. "Breaking the Sound Barrier." *History Today*; 60.3 (2010): 36-44.
- Round 1 Presentation 2

** October 7th, at 4:30 PM University of Chicago's Samuel Allison Distinguished Service Professor in Physics, Bruce Winstein will speak on "A Cosmologist Reflects on the Work of Michelangelo Antonioni." I encourage you to attend and to write up your thoughts on Antonioni, science, and audience address/engagement in your virtual notebooks.**

New = Digital

WEEK 6

Screening: *Xena 4.17 [PN1992.77 .X46 v.4 2004D]; Supernatural 4.18 [PN1992.77 .S847 v.4 2009D]; Supernatural 5.9*

October 11th:

- Fuller 9 & conclusion
- Ross, Intro & Chapter 1
- Round 1 Presentation 3

October 13th:

- Felschow, Laura E."'Hey, check it out, there's actually fans': (Dis)empowerment and (mis)representation of cult fandom in *Supernatural*." *Transformative Works and Cultures* 4 (2010).
- Rowlett, Kelly. "They're letting you write your thesis about that?" *Whoosh* (25).
- Round 1 Presentation 4

WEEK 7

No Screening: Fall Recess!

October 18th: No class; Fall Recess!

October 20th:

- Rettberg, Chapter 1 & 2
- Ross, Chapter 2

WEEK 8

Screening: Lawrence Lessig Wireside Chat [http://blip.tv/file/3283837] & Selected Remix Videos

October 25th: Remix Readings TBA

October 25th 6PM Magick Lantern Screening–details to follow. Please write up your thoughts on this experience in your Virtual Notebooks. This is a rare opportunity, especially in the context of this class! Since it's such an exciting event, and so relevant to our class, this screening is required for the class.

October 27th:

- Normative. "The Evolution of Remix Culture." (View video and read comments.)
- Jenkins, Henry. "In a Social Networking World, What's the Future of TV?" The Huffington Post. September 24, 2009.
- Round 2 Presentation 1

Friday October 29th: Midway Paper due by email (Header: AUD MIDWAY)

WEEK 9

Screening: DIY 24/7/ [http://www.video24-7.org/video/vidding.html] & Selected Vids

November 1st:

- Additional Vid Reading TBA
- Coppa, Francesca. "Women, Star Trek, and the Early Development of Fannish Vidding."*Transformative Works and Cultures* 1 (2008).

November 3rd

- Digital Media and Learning Workshop Transcript: "Participatory Cultures and Vidding."
- Round 2 Presentation 2

WEEK 10

Screening: *Gossip Girl* 1.1 [PN1992.77 .G6775 v.1 2008D]; 2.17 & 2.25 [PN1992.77 .G6775 v.2 2009D]

November 8th:

- Ross, Chapter 3
- Rettberg, Chapter 3

- Harnick, Chris. "CW Exec Speaks to Mobile Strategy." *Mobile Marketer*. August 20, 2009.

November 10th:

- Jessica Pressler & Chris Rovzar. "The Genius of Gossip Girl: How a Wunderkind Producer, Seven Tabloid-Ready Stars, and a Nation of Texting Tweenagers are Changing the Way We Watch Television." NYmag.com, Apr 21. 2008.
- Stein, Louisa "Playing Dress-Up: Digital Fashion and Gamic Extensions of Televisual Experience in Gossip Girl's Second Life." *Cinema Journal* 48.3 (Spring 2009): 116-122.
- Round 3 Presentation 3

WEEK 11

Screening: *FlashForward*

November 15th:

- Ross, Chapter 4 & Conclusion
- Rettberg, Chapter 4 & 5

November 17th:

- Lesage, Julia. "FlashForward: Pacing and Script." Flow 11.2 (2009).
- Leaver, Tama. "Flashforward or Flashback: Television Distribution in 2010." Flow 11.5 (2010).
- Round 4 Presentation 4

Week 12

No Screening—Thanksgiving Break

November 22nd:

- Rettberg, Chapter 6 and 7

November 24th: Thanksgiving Break

Week 13

Screening: Webisodes: *Battlestar Galactica* "The Resistance"; *Gossip Girl* "Chasing Dorota" [web resources, links tba]

November 29th:

- "NBC's *Heroes*: 'Appointment TV' To 'Engagement TV'? [Feel free to read or to click through to the audiocast or podcast at the bottom of the page.]
- Banister, Jim. "Ah, The Webisode."

December 1st:

- In place of reading, dig around & locate a fan work that you find especially compelling or unusual. Post this in your virtual journal with a brief note about why you chose it. We'll explore your choices during our —>
- Party!

Wednesday December 8th: Final Papers/Project due by email;

Videos can be submitted hardcopy to my office (Header: AUD FINAL)