Classics of Russian Cinema

Course Description
Once “the most important of all the arts” (Lenin, 1924), Russian cinema has transformed itself with every decade. After a brief overview of pre-revolutionary Russian film, we survey the 1920s avant-garde of Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, and Alexander Dovzhenko; the 1960s new wave, especially Andrei Tarkovsky, and including women directors Kira Muratova and Larisa Shepitko; and the current post-Soviet scene, with Alexander Sokurov, in their historical and cultural contexts. Montage, pioneered by Eisenstein and others, died under Stalin, but formal experimentation resurfaced with the Krushchev thaw in the late 1950s in the work of Kalatozov. In particular, we will explore the tensions between the formal, theoretical aspects of filmmaking and serious social, cultural, aesthetic, political, and historical issues that traditionally have marked Russian art cinema. Equally important, this course emphasizes that Russian cinema did not exist in isolation from Western films and aesthetics such as French New Wave, and demonstrates their cross-fertilization. Finally, we will watch some of the latest films as the Russian film industry adapts to new market conditions. Readings from primary sources (Eisenstein and others), film history, criticism, and theory. All films have English intertitles or subtitles. The course assumes no knowledge of Russian or film, though both are welcome.
Requirements
• One final (10-15 pages/2,500-3,750 words) paper on the director or group of films of your choice (30%). Please submit a two-page draft by midterm of the films you intend to analyze and your ideas for this paper (10%).
• By October 1st, you must pass with a grade of 70% or better a take-home test on the film terms in Film Art (429-34) (5%)
• On Wednesdays, please hand in 2 paragraphs typed analyzing some aspect of the film(s) we saw on Monday night. You may focus on one sequence and using all your new film terms, make an argument about why the sequence you chose is important to the film. You may compare a similar theme, aspect, or technique in different films. The purpose of this assignment is to integrate ideas about the meaning of the film(s) with their techniques. Sometimes I will suggest topics; I encourage you to design your own topics. Please write good paragraphs with good topic sentences. (25%)
• On Mondays, please hand in 1 paragraph typed in response to the readings. (10%)
• Final exam (20%).
• Your attendance in class is mandatory unless you are ill. Class participation includes sharing your ideas and listening carefully to your classmates.
• Films are on reserve on the 4th floor HUM. Hours are: M-R 8 am - 10 pm; F 8 am – 4:30 pm; Sun 7 – 10 pm.

Required Texts

Texts on Reserve
Texts on E-Reserve

On-Line
• School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College, London
  Internet Resources on Russian Cinema:
  http://www.ssees.ac.uk/russcin.htm
• University of Pittsburgh, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures:
  http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/
• Andrei Tarkovsky:
  http://www.arts.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/
• Alexander Sokurov:
  http://sokurov.spb.ru/island_en/flm.html
  • Internet Movie Database – excellent reference
    us.imdb.com/a2z
*Available electronically on JSTOR, through Library’s database list.
  Neuberger, Joan.

Course Schedule

1W9/8  Introduction: History and Themes; pre-Revolutionary Russian silent films
  Screening:
    *Beginnings* PN1995.75.B445 1992
    *A Fish Factory in Astrakhan* (1908, 6 min)
    *Sten’ka Razin* (1908, 6 min, Vladimir Romashkov)
    *Princess Tarakanova* (1910, 18 min, Kai Hansen and André Maître)
    *Romance with Double Bass* (1911, 10 min, Kai Hansen)

F 9/10  Evgenii Bauer (1865-1917) and Iakov Protazanov (1881-1945)
  Clips from:
    *Evgenii Bauer* PN1995.75.E946 1992
    *A Child of the Big City* (1913, 36 min, Evgenii Bauer)
    *The 1002nd Ruse* (1915, 17 min, Evgenii Bauer)
    *Daydreams* (1915, 37 min, Evgenii Bauer)
    *High Society* PN1995.75.H544 1992
    *A Life for a Life* (1916, 67 min, Evgenii Bauer)
    *The End of An Era* PN1995.75.E536 1992
The Revolutionary (1917, 35 min, Evgenii Bauer)
For Luck (To Happiness) (1917, 41 min, Evgenii Bauer)
• Silent Witnesses (1914, 65 min, Evgenii Bauer) in Class Distinctions PN1995.75.C637 1992
• The Departure of a Great Old Man (1912, 31 min, Iakov Protazanov)
• The Queen of Spades (1916, 64 min, Iakov Protazanov) in Iakov Protazanov PN1995.75.I256 1992
• Father Sergius (1917, 114 min, Iakov Protazanov) PG3366.O816 F384 1985

2M 9/13

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917: Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970)
Screening:
• Aelita (1924, 113 min, Iakov Protazanov) PG3476.T6 A355 1991

W 9/15
FEKS and Cine-Eye: and Dziga Vertov (1896-1954)

F 9/17
1925: Anniversaries of Decembrist Revolt (1825) and 1905
Screening:
• Kino Pravda (1922, 15 min, Dziga Vertov)

3M 9/20
1927: The Tenth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution

Screening:
• *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925, 74 min, Sergei Eisenstein) PN 1995.75.B388 1988

Clips:
• *October* (1928, 102 min, Sergei Eisenstein) PN1995.9.H5 O386 1980
• *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927, 90 min, Esther Shub (1894-1959) DK246.C537 1996

**W 9/22**

**Daily Life**

Screening:
• *Bed and Sofa* (1927, 73 min, Abram Room) PN1997.B433 1985

**F 9/24**

Finish screening *Bed and Sofa*
• **Leyda**, “Anniversary Year 1927,” *Kino*, 222-44.

**4M 9/27**

Dziga Vertov (1896-1954) – Documentary Film and Sound

Screening:
• *Kino glaz* (1920s, 74 min, Dziga Vertov) PN1995.9.D6 K556 1999

Clips:
• *Enthusiasm* (1931, 110 min, Dziga Vertov)
Alexander Dovzhenko (1894-1956)

•Film terminology take-home quiz due

Stalin’s Purges (1937-38): Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948)

Screening:
•*Que Viva Mexico* (1931-2, 85 min, Sergei Eisenstein) PN1997 Q928 1985
•*Alexander Nevsky* (1938, 111 min, Sergei Eisenstein) DK93.A435 2001

Popular Cinema
•*Youngblood*, “The Fate of Soviet Popular Cinema during the Stalin Revolution”

Screening:

Finish screening *Volga, Volga*

Sergei Eisenstein
•*Tsivian, Ivan the Terrible*

Screening:
•*Ivan the Terrible* (1944, 1946, 181 min, Sergei Eisenstein) PN1995.9 H5 1835 1984 and DK106.1835 2001 DVD
W 10/13  Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible*
Clips: from subsequent films by Woody Allen, Ingmar Bergman, Brian DePalma, and others who quote from Eisenstein’s film, primarily from the Odessa Steps sequence.

F 10/15  WWII: Fascism and Communism

6M 10/18  WWII – Mikhail Kalatozov (1903-73)
• *Woll*, *The Cranes Are Flying*
Screening:
• *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957, 94 min, Mikhail Kalatozov) PG2074 .C736 1992

W 10/20  Early Kalatozov
• *Woll*, *Real Images*, Ch. 6, “The Best Years of Our Lives,” 66-82
Screening:

F 10/22  The Thaw and Kalatozov
• Johnson, “Russia After the Thaw,” *Nowell-Smith*, 640-51
Finish screening *Salt for Svanetia*

7M 10/25  Screening:
• *La Dolce Vita* (1960, 180 min, Frederico Fellini) PN1997.D6353 1986
• *I am Cuba* (1964, 141 min, Mikhail Kalatozov) F1788.1234 1995

W 10/27  Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-86)
• *Woll*, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, Chapter 11, Kameradschaft (138-50)
Screening:
• *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1960, 43 min, Andrei Tarkovsky’s diploma film) PG2077.K386 2002

F 10/29  Fall Break
8M 11/1  WWII and Tarkovsky
  •Synessios, Mirror
  •Tarkovsky, “The Film Image,” Sculpting, 104-63.
  •Ian Christie, “Canons and Careers: The Director in Soviet Cinema,” Taylor and Spring
  Screening:
  •My Name is Ivan (Ivan’s Childhood) (1962, 84 min, Andrei Tarkovsky) PG3479.4.O433 M963 1991
  •Mirror (1974, 106 min, Andrei Tarkovsky)

W 11/3  WWII and Larisa Shepitko (1938-79)
  •Horton and Brashinsky, “Soviet Women in Cinema and on Film,” 99-24
  Screening:

F 11/5  Larisa Shepitko
  •Woll, Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw, Ch. 17, “To Have and to Have Not,” (209-24)
  •Attwood, “Some Interviews on Personal Questions…”: Soviet Women Talk About Their Experiences in the Film Industry,” Attwood, The Red Screen
  Finish screening Wings

9M 11/8  Censorship
  •Woll, Real Images, Ch. 16, “Forbidden Games: Introduction” (201-8)
  •Stishova, "The Mythologization of Soviet Woman: The Commissar and Other Cases," Attwood
  Screening:

W 11/10  Soviet Georgia – Sergei Paradjanov (1924-90)
  Screening:

F 11/12  •The Color of Pomegranates (1969, 78 min, Sergei Paradjanov)

10M 11/15  Kira Muratova (1934-)
  •Taubman, “The Cinema of Kira Muratova”
  •Prokhorov, "The Unknown New Wave: Soviet Cinema of the Sixties"
  •Vizitei, “From Film School to Film Studio: Women and Cinematography in the Era of Perestroika,” Attwood, The Red Screen
  •Roberts, “The Meaning of Death: Kira Muratova’s Cinema of the Absurd,” Beumers, Russia on Reels
  Screening:
• **Breathless (À bout de soufflé)** (1960, 87 min, Jean-Luc Goddard)
• **Brief Encounters** (1967, 95 min, Kira Muratova)

**W 11/17** Recent films by Muratova

**F 11/19** Recent films by Muratova

**11M 11/22** Stalin
• Anna Lawton, “The Ghost that Does Return,” *Taylor and Spring*
• Christensen, “Tengiz Abuladze’s *Repentance* and the Georgian National Cause”
• Woll and Youngblood, *Repentance*

Screening:
  *Burnt by the Sun* (1994, 134 min, Nikita Mikhailkov (1945-))
  PG2096 .B976 1995

**W 11/24** Stalin continued
• Nikita Mikhalkov, “’The Function of a National Cinema,’ (May 1998),”
  • Beumers, *Russia on Reels*
  • Beumers, *Burnt by the Sun*

Screening:
Clips:

**F 11/26** Thanksgiving Break

**12M 11/29** Alexander Sokurov (1951-)
• Mikhail Iampolski, “Representation – Mimicry – Death: The Latest Films of Alexander Sokurov,” *Beumers, Russia on Reels*

Screening:
• *The Evening Sacrifice* (1990, 18 min, Alexander Sokurov) in Glasnost Film Festival v. 11, DK287.G537 1990
• *Mother and Son* (2000, 73 min, Alexander Sokurov) PG2074.M385 2000
• *Second Circle* (1990, 90 min, Alexander Sokurov) PG3478.R24 K784 1992
• *Russian Ark* (2002, 83 min, Alexander Sokurov) IN THEATRE

**W 12/1** Yuri Mamin (1946-)
• Horton and Brashinsky, 201-7
• Natasha Zhuravkina, “Fathers for the Fatherland: The Cult of the Leader in Russian Cinema,” *Beumers, Russia on Reels*

Clips:

**F 12/3** Clips:
• *Sideburns* (1990, 110 min, Yuri Mamin)
13M 12/6 Pavel Lounguine (1949-)
• Horton and Brashinsky, 166-8
Screening:

W 12/8 Sergei Bodrov (1948-)
Clips:
• Ser (1989, 79 min, Sergei Bodrov) PG2074.S477 1992

F 12/10 Aleksei Balabanov (1959-)
Clips:
• Brother 2 (2000, Alexei Balabanov) with Sergei Bodrov, RENT LOCALLY

14M 12/13 Revisions and Reviews continued
• Ekaterina Khokhlova, “Forbidden Films of the 1930s,” Taylor and Spring
  • “Interview with Alexander Medvedkin,” Taylor and Christie, Inside the Film Factory, 165-75.
Screening:
• The Last Bolshevik (1993, 116 min, Chris Marker (1921-)) PERSONAL COPY
• Happiness (1934, 66 min, Alexander Medvedkin) PG3074 .S893 1991
• One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich (2001, 55 min, Chris Marker)

W 12/15 Return to silent film – Sergei Ovcharov (1955-) and Aleksei Balabanov
• Graham, “Metaphorical Function of the Silent Film Body in Sergei Ovcharov’s Barabaniada.”
Screening:
• Drum Roll (1993, 93 min, Sergei Ovcharov)
• Of Freaks and Men (1998, 93 min, Aleksei Balabanov)

Final Exam: Friday, December 17, 1:30-3:30 pm