Classical Film Theory

Winter 2013
CINE 410
Tuesday/Thursday
2-3:50pm
260 Condon Hall
Katharina Loew

What is cinema? What is its nature? Is cinema an art form? What distinguishes cinema from the other arts? Does the cinema inherently favor certain kinds of content and modes of expression? How can we describe cinema’s relationship to reality?

In the first half of the twentieth century, a series of highly influential writings on film emerged, which have been foundational to the study of film. This course will provide a critical survey of some of the principal authors, concepts, and films of this period, which define the contours of classical film theory. The emphasis will be on theorists writing in the context of French, Russian and German cinema between the 1910s and the 1960s, including Hugo Münsterberg, Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein, Siegfried Kracauer, Béla Balázs and André Bazin.