

FILM 279 & EAST 389
PAPER 1 GUIDELINES

QUESTIONS

Thus far we have looked at various ways of organizing the history of cinema, which imply different ways of reading films, such as Gunning's dialectic of narrative and attractions, Bordwell's emphasis on diegesis over mimesis, Hansen's vernacular modernism versus classical film form, and Deleuze's contrast between the movement-image and time-image. We have also tracked a number of ways of conceptualizing genres, especially the SF genre, which also imply different ways of reading films.

For the first paper, you thus have the option to focus either on "reading a film" or on "revisiting debates in film history or film theory." Please indicate your choice on your paper.

Option 1: Reading Film(s)

Drawing on one or two of approaches mentioned above, provide a close reading of a film (or two if you wish to be comparative).

Note: There is a reading focused on each film, which you should definitely include in your discussion. To give some examples: if you decided to consider the relation between attractions and animation in the context of *Invention for Destruction*, you would surely use Gunning, Tibbets, and Csicsery-Ronay. Or, if you considered how telecommunications become a site of tensions and contradictions in *F.P.I.*, you would draw on Hansen, Peters, and Harris. Or, if you wish to talk about how animation techniques become a site of negotiation over modernity and technology, you would turn to Bao and Csicsery-Ronay (and maybe Willems or Sobchak) in the context of *Princess Iron Fan* and/or *Invention for Destruction* and/or *A Trip to the Moon*. Or, in light of the prevalence of quest/conquest in the SF genre, the issue of multicultural whiteness raised by Torner might be extended to other films.

Option 2: Revisiting Film Histories

You have the option to stage a dialogue or to revisit a debate between two or more of these approaches mentioned above, focusing more on the course readings than on the films.

While this second question asks you to focus on readings, we nonetheless ask you to support your discussion with examples drawn from one or more of the films shown in class. The examples suggested for Option 1 could be a point of reference, with a shift in emphasis — focusing on the texts and calling on a film or films to illustrate your points.

You might, for instance, address different ways of conceptualizing genre, drawing from among Moine, Sobchak, Suvin, Sontag, Tarkovsky, Fortin et al. You might consider how the distinction between movement-image and time-image (Deleuze and Tarkovsky). Or, you might consider how the time-image invites a reconsideration of the distinction between classical film form and vernacular modernism (Bordwell and Hansen) — with the examples of *Silent Star* and/or *Solaris*.

For both options, the selection of films is restricted to those from the course. You are also expected to use the readings in the course packet. You may **not** replace them with other readings. As for usage of readings, the goal is not to cite them all, but rather to use two to four readings *effectively*.

If you have questions, please speak with one of us during office hours or make an appointment.

LENGTH:

Essays are to be no more than 1,500 words in length (not including notes or bibliography). We will tolerate only slight variation from this ideal; papers that are significantly longer (or shorter) will not be well received.

CITATION:

All papers must be typed and doubled spaced, and submitted in hard copy. You may use either MLA format or Chicago style; guidelines are available from the McGill library “how to cite” webpage: <http://www.mcgill.ca/library-assistance/how-to/citing/>

EVALUATION (Total 30 pts):

We will be looking at your paper in terms of:

Argument or thesis (5 pts)

Presentation and organization (5 pts)

Use of the film or films, or how you use evidence in support of your argument (5 pts)

Use of readings (5 pts)

Originality (5 pts)

On time (5 pts) — You will lose two points for each day the paper is late.

Taking film summaries or interpretations from the net or other sources without acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism, which is ground for failure and possibly suspension.

SUBMISSION:

Please submit a hard copy of your paper in class on Friday March 2. If for some reason you are unable to make it to class, you may email your paper to the instructor: Thomas.Lamarre@mcgill.ca.

FYI, here are the groups for each grader:

FILM 279

Allard — Hilario

Hang WU

Ho — Rallis

Chen CONG

Rawson-Dannenbaum — Wang

Julia AUCOIN

White — Zizys (+ Kronenberger)

Tom LAMARRE

EAST 389

Ahn — Lalonde

Tom LAMARRE

Mallon — Zimmerlin

Meli TAYLOR