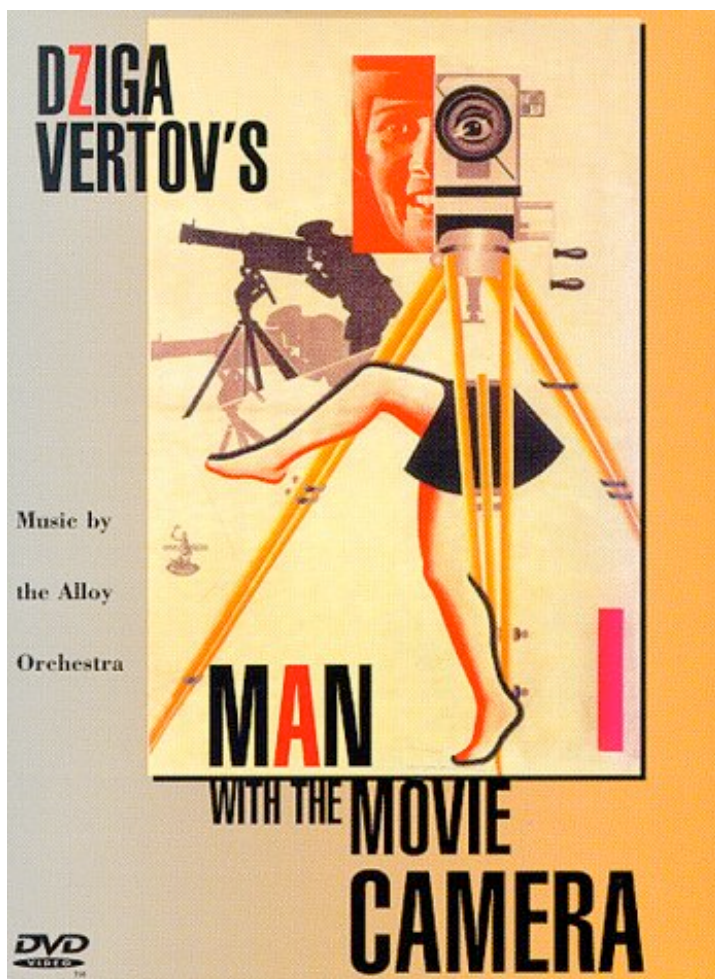


**FILM 408**  
**AVANT-GARDE/INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO**  
**CRN 10208**



**Staff**

Co-ordinator: Dr Russell Campbell, Room 311, 83 Fairlie Terrace, ph 463 6824, email russell.campbell@vuw.ac.nz. Office hours Mon 2-3, Thurs 9-10, Fri 9-10, or by appointment.

**Class times and venue**

First and second trimester. Thurs, 10-1. Film Room (205), 77 Fairlie Terrace.

**Course aims, content and objectives**

A study of experimental and non-mainstream work in film and video. Subjects will range from the surrealist cinema of Buñuel and Dali to the American avant-garde and the contemporary ultra-low-budget digital feature. Analysis will seek to interrogate the aesthetic underpinnings of alternative cinema practices and evaluate the works in the light of their challenge to the formal conventions of the commercial motion picture. On completion of the course students should have an enhanced understanding of avant-garde/independent film practices in their historical and aesthetic dimensions, and have gained detailed knowledge of particular filmmakers and filmic approaches through research for assignments.

**Timetable**

The programme on p 4 is indicative only and may be modified to accommodate student seminar topic preferences. The 2nd trimester timetable will be finalised and disseminated at a later date. It will concentrate on avant-garde/independent film of the later 20th and early 21st centuries and is likely to include figures such as Jean-Luc Godard, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Jan Svankmajer, Chantal Akerman, Barbara Hammer, Bette Gordon, Derek Jarman, Yvonne Rainer, Sally Potter, David Lynch, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Tracey Moffatt and Campbell Walker. Modifications to the timetable will be announced in class and posted on the noticeboard.

**Texts**

*Required*

FILM 408 course notes (1st trimester) available from Student Notes (\$47.73). Course notes for 2nd trimester will be available at a later date.

*Recommended*

A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video: From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice* (London: BFI, 1999)

**Workload**

The university anticipates that you should be able to devote at least 10 hours per week to a two-trimester 30-point course at Honours level. Therefore you should probably expect to spend, on average, about 7 hours per week (apart from class time) in reading, viewing films, essay writing and preparing seminars.

**Assessment**

All assessment will be internal. There is no final examination. Details of each assignment will be given in class. The three assignments are:

- a critique (2000 words) comprising exposition of and critical commentary on one of the first trimester course readings, due date Wed 19 March, 1 pm (25%).
- an essay/seminar on an avant-garde movement, aesthetic approach, or theoretical issue, due date to be agreed (40%). The essay should be 3000-4000 words in length, and is to be presented in a class seminar of 50-60 minutes. In assessing this assignment, the essay will be weighted 75% and the seminar presentation 25%.
- a seminar (50-60 minutes), due date to be agreed, on a filmmaker or group of filmmakers working in the avant-garde/independent field, accompanied by written notes (750 words minimum) (35%).

Unless otherwise agreed because of workload issues, it is expected that you will present one seminar in trimester 1 and one seminar in trimester 2.

Film Honours students should note that assessment for particular courses is provisional pending consideration of the student's coursework as a whole and external moderation.

If you wish to ask for an extension on your critique (e.g. because of pressure of work) please do so well before the due date using the supplied form. Seminar presentation dates are final once they have been agreed. If circumstances arise which may prevent you from presenting your seminar on the assigned date, please inform the course co-ordinator urgently. Essays should be submitted on the day of the seminar unless it has been agreed otherwise. Except in special circumstances (e.g. medical reasons with certificate), assignments handed in late may lose up to 10%. *No work will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date unless specific prior arrangements have been made, or after 24 October.*

Aegrotat provisions may apply if you are unable to submit your final assignment. In such a case you should contact the course co-ordinator.

The assignments are designed to help fulfil the aims of the course by stimulating students to examine theoretical and critical writing on the subject of avant-garde/independent film thoroughly, to research in depth particular aspects of alternative filmmaking, and to present their findings with lucid and compelling arguments both in written form and in seminars with audiovisual illustration.

**Group Work**

There will be no assessed group work for the course.

**Mandatory Course Requirements**

Eligibility to pass the course is dependent on a high standard of attendance (normally at least 75%) as well as completion of all assignments.

**School Facilities**

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77 Fairlie Tce; however, please note that **library materials do not leave the building**. There is a coin-operated photocopy machine on Level 3. There are some videos relevant to the course in the Film Video Library collection. Instructions on how to access these videos will be given in class. The Green Room is also available to students working in the building. You are expected to clean up after yourself, including returning to the Green Room any mugs removed from there.

**Award**

The Prize for Film Studies, arising from a fund established by the Wai-te-Ata Press, will be awarded to the best student of film history, criticism or production in FILM courses.

**Acknowledgments**

Assistance from the NZ Federation of Film Societies and the New Zealand Film Archive is gratefully acknowledged. Students are urged to join the Wellington Film Society.

**Communication**

Any additional information, or changes to the course, will be announced in class and posted on the course noticeboard in 85 Fairlie Tce.

**GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/calendar\\_intro.html](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html)

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

**PROVISIONAL 1ST TRIMESTER TIMETABLE**

**Thurs 10-1**

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FEB 28

*Introduction; Theory of the Avant-Garde*

*Progenitors: Méliès, Hepworth, Porter, Cohl, Durand, McCay, Starewicz, Keaton....*

MAR 6

*1920s Abstract Film + Dada: Eggeling, Richter, Ray, Clair, Murphy/Léger, Duchamp*

MAR 13

*Surrealism: Ray, Dulac, Dali/Buñuel....*

MAR 20

*Montage: Richter, Vertov*

**Man with a Movie Camera** (USSR, 1929)

MAR 27

*Jean Cocteau*

**Le Sang d'un poète** (France, 1931)

AP 3

*Abstract Animation, Direct Cinema: Lye, Fischinger, Fairthorne & Salt, H Smith, McLaren, Brakhage, Whitney, Belson*

AP 10

*Maya Deren*

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----- MID-TRIMESTER BREAK -----

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MAY 1

*Kenneth Anger*

MAY 8

*Stan Brakhage*

MAY 15

*Underground Film: Breer, Conner, VanDerBeek, Menken, Genet, Mekas, Baillie, Kuchar, Lynch*

MAY 22

*Andy Warhol*

MAY 29

*Formalism: Conrad, Landow, Snow, Sharits, Gehr, Frampton*

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