

# Film and Moving Image Studies – Concordia, Montreal

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## WINTER 2026

### FMST 632/832 Topics in National Cinemas: American Cinema of the 1950's

**Instructor: Catherine Russell**  
**Thursday 1:15pm-5:15pm**

Hollywood in the 1950s was an industry in transition, even while it produced some of the strongest films of its history. With the rise of independent productions, the competition of TV, and major shifts in the social fabric, American cinema was dramatically changed during this decade. In this course we will examine the social and cultural climate of the HUAC trials and the Cold War, the civil rights movement, transformations of the urban environment, popular Freudianism, and censorship. Screenings will include examples of social problem films, revisionist Westerns, and film 'gris'; readings will include analyses of race and gender within this transitional era and a variety of historiographic approaches to the period. Students will be required to do research projects and presentations.

### FMST 635/835 Topics in Aesthetic Cultural Theory: Global Popular Film and Media

**Instructor: Masha Salazkina**  
**Monday 1:15pm-5:15pm**

This course will give an overview of some of the key topics and methodologies that form part of transnational approaches to studying film and media. We will begin with the discussion of some of the key terms used in contemporary scholarship, moving on to the analysis of various forms of border-crossing in both, representation and media practices. Emphasis will be placed on global popular media and cultural forms, and on informal modes of its production and circulation.

### FMST 660/860 Topics in Film Directors: Comparative Style Analysis - Hitchcock and Welles

**Instructor: John Locke**  
**Tuesday 1:15pm-5:15pm**

This seminar examines the work of Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock. Each week a film by Welles or Hitchcock is screened and then discussed using detailed analysis of video segments. The seminar is about the use of formal analysis to understand film style.

An additional aim of the close analysis of these films is to question familiar critical views about them. These films have been discussed so frequently in the literature that an effort needs to be made to break with the conventional views and look again at the films themselves.

The principal written work required is an essay about a particular Welles or Hitchcock film selected by the student at the beginning of the term. The student concentrates on this one film during the entire term.

## **FMST 665/865 Topics in Film and Moving Image Studies: Speculative Pragmatism**

**Instructor: Erin Manning**  
**Tuesday 8:45-12:45**

The question of interpretation looms large in encounters with cinematic practice. As students of critique, we often assume we already know how interpretation stages this encounter. But what is interpretation? What does it assume? How does it value, and evaluate?

Process philosophy, and in particular the work of Alfred North Whitehead, calls itself a "critique of pure feeling." This is a stark rejoinder to Immanuel Kant's "critique of pure reason," which is an account of how reason stages and organizes the question of value, obfuscating the very question of how reason itself has become a stand-in for value. Any close reader of Kant's work on value will, for instance, understand the implicit model of whiteness and heteropatriarchy - the question of who possesses reason is at the heart of this philosophy of aesthetic judgement.

A critique of pure feeling departs from this schema to ask what affective tonalities are carried by existence. Instead of starting from the human subject, it begins from process itself. Feeling, here, is not a subjective act - it is now how "I" feel. Feeling is the pulse, the lure, the tone *in the encounter* that makes a world. Interpretation is not how we stand apart from that world. Interpretation is the activity of an ecology of practices: it is what allows certain tendencies to stand out, to become expressive. Interpretation is *immanent* to the event of experience.

This mode of philosophy is called “speculative pragmatism.” It is **pragmatic** to the degree that it asks *how*. How is the world made, in this instance? How does it come into this singular instance of itself? This pragmatic question is *exemplary*. It cannot be generalized. As a film scholar, it relies on asking active questions: what is happening, here, now? What are the conditions that are making this possible? It requires an open, close, detailed encounter with what the work itself is doing. It practices *immanent critique*: a lived encounter with the qualities of the experience itself. And it is **speculative** to the degree that it is open to the “what else” that *also* moves through it. This “what else” is what philosophers Henri Bergson or Gilles Deleuze would call “the virtual” - that *force* that carries experience and opens it to its more-than.

In this course, we will engage closely with the question of how interpretation stages an encounter with value. This is never a neutral question. Interpretation carries inheritances - the world’s more-than is also what it brings with it to obfuscate other forms of existence. That is to say: interpretation as usually staged in the context of critique brings with it presuppositions around value. In so doing, it obfuscates general assumptions around whiteness, and neurotypicality, presuming an able-bodied subject (a man of reason) as its messenger. Our aim will be to learn together how to practice immanent critique from the angle of speculative pragmatism, and, in so doing, how to become more sensitive to the presuppositions of the discourse of value emboldened by prevalent notions of critique and interpretation.

We will work together to fashion the cinematic bibliography, focusing on works students are engaging in their MA/PhD research. Each student will be invited to bring a work that we will engage collectively.