Metafiction in Literature and Film
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COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This course aims to offer an overview of the narrative mode usually called metafiction — that is to say, fiction about fiction —, which has become a powerful trend of postmodern poetics but is rooted in former authors and works, by examining its most outstanding features and its most representative examples both in literature and film. This necessarily implies providing the theoretical grounds and the tools — both conceptual and terminological — for critical analysis, particularly of film; and exploring the borderland of literary and film studies by mapping different possibilities for the relations of film and literature. On completion of the course students should be familiar with the meaning, forms and purposes of literary/film metafiction, and be able to identify, understand and discuss metafictional works in literature and film.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Course work will consist of lectures (10 hours), class discussions or seminars (10 hours), oral presentations (2 hours), preparation of the presentations through on-line activities in the e-learning platform Studium (15 hours), film viewing sessions (23 hours), critical reading of texts (75 hours), and writing of a final paper (15 hours). Lectures will provide broad surveys of the theoretical contents of the course, namely, (i) the definitions, modes and trends of literary metafiction, (ii) the different routes of metafiction into film and (iii) the definitions, modes and trends of film metafiction. Seminars will illustrate these topics through the analysis and discussion of selected works and will require the regular participation of the students, which implies having read or watched the assigned works, so they will be preceded by sessions devoted to the viewing of films when necessary. Students will also prepare two oral presentations: the first one on a primary and two secondary literary sources, the second one on three films, in both cases of the students’ choice (from a list of recommended books and films). These presentations will be delivered and discussed in two tutorials with the lecturer, will be prepared through the collaborative elaboration of an on-line glossary and database in Studium, and will be the means to orient and test the approach and methodology for the final paper. This will consist in the application of the concepts and tools provided by the course to the analysis of one novel and/or one film (initially form those chosen by the student for the presentations). All course activities will be carried out in English.

CONTENTS

Lectures
i. FROM REFLEXIVITY TO LITERARY METAFICTION
   1. What: Definitions
   2. How: Modes
   3. Why: Trends

ii. METAFICTION FROM LITERATURE TO FILM
   4. Film Adaptations of Literary Metafiction
   5. (Literary) Metafiction in Film
   6. Film Metafiction

iii. METACINEMA AND FILM METAFICTION
   7. Self Definitions
   8. The Modes of Cinema
   9. Meta Trends
Seminars

1. John Barth, Lost in the Funhouse
2. Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy
3. John Fowles, The French Lieutenant’s Woman
4. Michael Winterbottom, A Cock and Bull Story
5. Marc Foster, Stranger than Fiction
6. Robert Altman, The Player
7. Orson Welles, F for Fake
8. Federico Fellini, 8 ½
9. Jean-Luc Godard, Vivre sa vie

ASSESSMENT

The students will be evaluated on a combination of oral (40%) and written activities (60%). The first group includes class participation (20%) and oral presentation (20%); the second one the on-line assignments (20%) and the final paper (40%)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

In addition to the set novels and films listed above, students will be provided with a list of recommended literary and film metafiction at the beginning of the course.

Secondary Sources