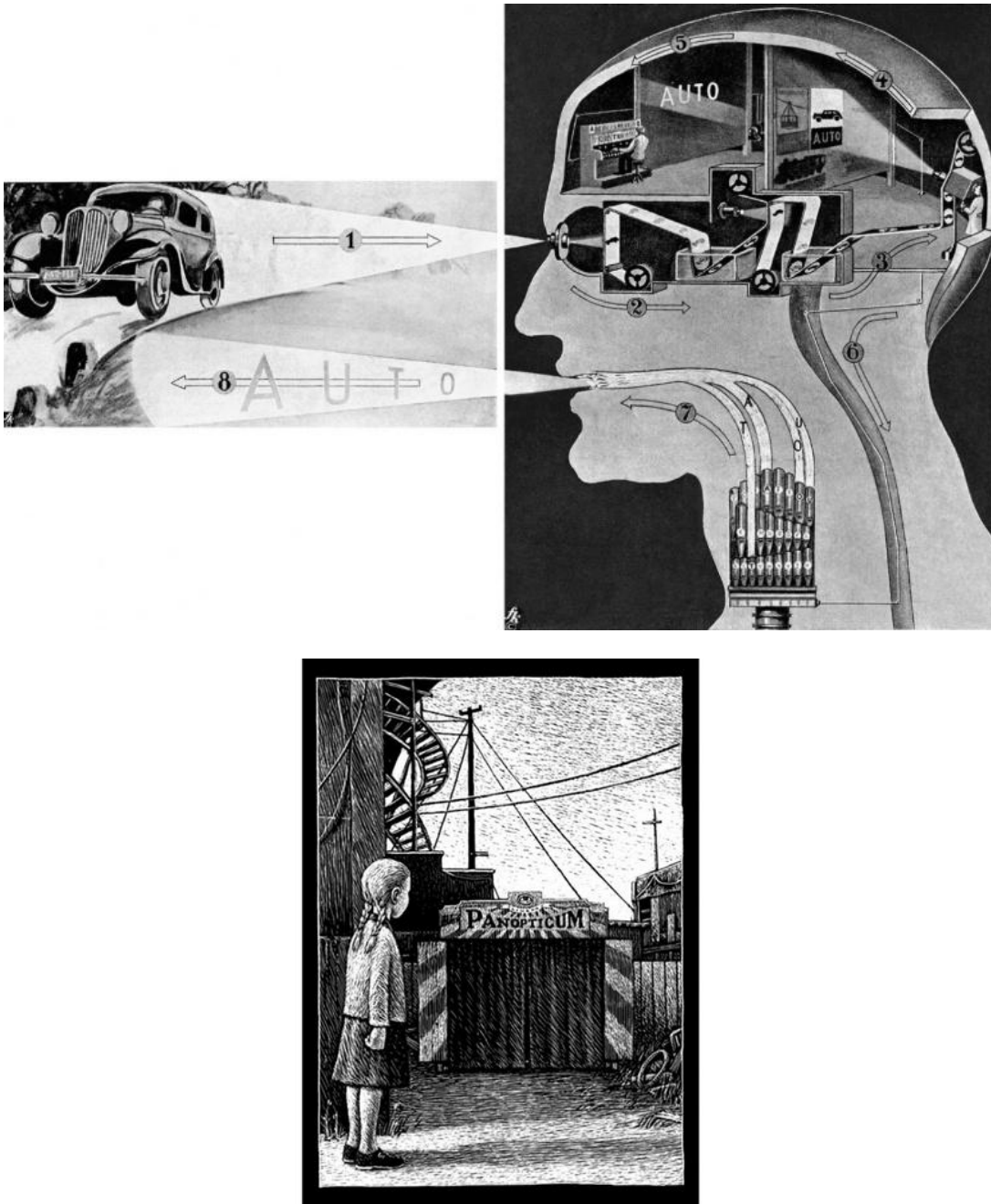


Department of English & Writing Studies
Film Studies Program

Film 3309F (001)
Dreaming Cinema - Film and Popular Culture
Fall 2026

Instructor: Prof. Janelle Blankenship



[Top Image: Fritz Kahn, 1939: Bottom Image, Thomas Ott, *Cinema Panopticum*, 2005]

Course Description:

In this course, we will contemplate the dream of cinema as it intersects with powerful forms of popular culture, like the graphic novel, comic book, video games, and television. We will engage with a wide cinematic corpus (from silent cinema and the avant-garde to Hollywood cult classics, Canadian cyberpunk and contemporary techno-horror) and investigate how filmic texts engage with popular culture, using both film theory concepts and discussion of historical and technological contexts as our main research methods. Topics include media anxiety, horrors of mechanical reproducibility, cinema as virtual reality and imaginary travel, cinema's shifting role in a larger digital age and nostalgic views of nitrate and early pioneers. Films include Scorsese's *Hugo*, *The Truman Show*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, the J-Horror film *Ring*, and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.



Film Still: Cineplex Short: *A Balloon for Ben* (2019)

Textbooks (available at the University Bookstore):

-Brian Selznick, *Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Scholastic Press/ (9780439813785 – “not exactly a novel, not quite a picture book, not really a graphic novel, or a flip book or a movie, but a combination of all these things”) – **Price: \$26.99**

Learning Outcomes:

In this course students will build awareness of the historical and theoretical relations of media, popular culture and film. By the end of this course, students will be able to engage in critical dialogue about the ways texts evolve and text and image interact, will critically engage with transmedia storytelling, and will be able to think critically about the creation and consumption of popular culture—interrogating the movies and stories we hear and see on a daily basis in the mass media. Along the way, students will be introduced to important film studies concepts such as cinephilia, fanvidding and more.

Course Requirements:

Participation (includes Brightspace discussion board contributions): 25%

Group Presentation on Graphic Novel (**due Oct. 19thth**): 20%

First Essay (**due Nov. 16th**): 25%

Final Project or Paper (**due Dec. 7th**): 30% - **DESIGNATED ASSIGNMENT**