



EISENSTEIN AND DISNEY: CAPITALISM, COMMUNISM & CINEMA

Directed by Professor Dragan Kujundzic
ENG 4110 (Cross-listed with Jewish Studies)

This course will reflect upon the dialogue and friendship of the two most iconic filmmakers of Soviet Russia and the United States of the 20th Century, Sergei Eisenstein, and Walt Disney. The works to be screened will include the classics of modernist cinema, like Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* and *October*, as well as his *Ivan the Terrible*. Mutual influences will be discussed (*Ivan the Terrible* and Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) on the background of the cultural and political systems of communism and capitalism which these two authors represent (Eisenstein and the Communist Utopia, Disney and the Capitalist Utopia, Disneyland). Close readings of films, as well as selected works of literature of the period, will be conducted on topics such as: How to Read Donald Duck, Disney and the American Childhood, The Gospel According to Disney, etc. Primary background reading will be *Eisenstein on Disney* by Sergei Eisenstein and *Once Upon a Time: Walt Disney: The Sources of Inspiration for the Disney Studios* by Bruno Girveau (Editor).

Films to be screened and/or discussed, among others: *Eisenstein: The Battleship Potemkin, October, Ivan the Terrible*. Disney: *Fantasia, Bambi, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Aladdin*; and *Once Upon a Time: Walt Disney: The Sources of Inspiration for the Disney Studios*, a DVD.

"Bambi, of course, must not be ignored. Bambi is already a shift towards ecstasy—serious, eternal: the theme of Bambi is the circle of life, the repeating circle of lives.

No longer the sophisticated smile of the twentieth century towards totems. But a return to pure totemism and a reverse shift towards evolutionary prehistory.

Bambi crowns, of course, the whole study on Disney.

The greatness of Disney, as the purest example of the application of the method of art in its very purest form. "

—Sergei Eisenstein.