

Dr. Etienne F. Augé

Etienne F. Augé is a professor of mass communication in universities and film schools in Austria, Czech Republic, Lebanon and Slovakia. Specialized in propaganda and public diplomacy, he wrote two books, *A short treaty on propaganda* (2007) and *A cultural illusion: Hollywood and propaganda* (2011). He also collaborates with slate.fr and atlantico.fr, writing articles about mass communication and propaganda.

Reel illusions: Cinema and Propaganda

Syllabus:

Cinema is an industry, a form of art but also a media. Leaders from closed and open societies have understood the power of cinema to educate the masses and spread ideologies. Reel illusions is a seminar designed to show students how cinema can be a powerful tool to create an interface with reality: the ultimate illusion.

The seminar will start with basic notions of propaganda, trying to define it and showing its difference with other concepts such as disinformation and education. Propaganda is a neutral term yet has acquired along the years a negative tone. Nevertheless, as a paradox, no organized human societies could function without propaganda. Historical examples will be used to understand how propaganda and cinema have worked together before the age of television and why it is still an important weapon today with new technologies of information and communication. The exponential amount of information one can access could make one believe that Internet users are better informed than ever. This belief leads to a common idea that propaganda is a notion of the past which died with Totalitarian regimes. On the contrary, propaganda has never been so active in our modern societies. This seminar will try and explain it to students and citizens.

Films presented:

- **Birth of a Nation (1916)**
- **Battleship Potemkin (1926)**
- **Three songs about Lenin (1934)**
- **Triumph of the Will (1935)**
- **Olympia (1938)**
- **London can take it! (1940)**
- **Why We fight (1942-1945)**
- **Soy Cuba (1964)**
- **The Green Berets (1969)**
- **The Atomic Café (1982)**
- **Moscow on the Hudson (1984)**
- **Forrest Gump (1994)**

Reading Suggestions:

- Broschke-Davis, Ursula, *Cinema: the Hidden Persuader*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996, 227p.
- Chapman, James, *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939-1945*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1998, 308p.
- Furhammar, Leif, Isaksson, Folke, *Politics and Film*, Studio Vista, London, 1971, 257p.
- Lawson, John Howard, *Film in the Battle of Ideas*, Mapes and Mainstream, Inc., New York, 1953, 126p.
- Reeves, Nicholas, *The Power of Film Propaganda : Myth or Reality ?*, Cassell, London, 1999, 262p.
- Taylor, Richard, *Film Propaganda : Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 1998 (2^{ème} édition), 266p.