Jan. 31  From the Pole to the Equator 1986, Edited by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Luci (Italy)

This is true cinema. The original footage was filmed by wealthy, Italian, big game hunter and world traveler, Luca Comerio between the years 1895 and 1918. The edited film that we see here presents an awesome record of humanity and hegemony. If one film could summarize the power of the medium, this is it.

Feb. 7  The Impossible Voyage  George Melies

This is the magic of the magician. George Melies was a well known magician in Paris at the dawn of cinema’s invention and attended the Lumiere Brother’s first public screening of moving pictures in December of 1895. Melies went on to make an extraordinary body of films over the next fifteen years that contributed the first special effects, elaborate sets and costumes and most importantly, images and ideas based in the fantastic realm of the unreal where the laws of gravity and logic do not apply. The Impossible Voyage is a prime example of Melies contribution to cinema as a visual art form.

Feb. 14  Intolerance 1916, D.W. Griffith

D.W. Griffith is the filmmaker who gave us the feature length film and the cross cutting, shot/reverse shot style of editing that is the accepted form of narrative film to this day. In this, his second feature, Griffith experiments with parallel editing to the extreme by cutting between four narratives in the two hours it was made in 1916. His work is the story of the birth of the modern world traveler, Luca Comerio between the years 1895 and 1918. The edited film that we see here presents an awesome record of humanity and hegemony. If one film could summarize the power of the medium, this is it.

Feb. 21  “CINEMATIC CITIES!”

Berlin Symphony of a Great City 1927, Dir. Walter Ruttmann (Germany), 62 min.

As a contribution to Colgate’s Center For Ethics and World Societies (CEWS) theme for this year “Cities, Citizenship, and Modernity”, we will be screening Walter Ruttmann’s classic, experimental documentary of life in Berlin. This film contradicts the German Expressionist, studio bound artificial sets and lighting with a look at this modern city in a sweep of constantly moving images shot by Karl Freund and a team of camera operators over a single day’s time.

Manhattan 1921, Dir. Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler (USA), 9 min.

This is a very early experimental film by the noted photographer Paul Strand and painter/photographer Charles Sheeler. The film is a portrait of the city as an architectural environment. The unusual camera angles suggest the anxiety of the city dwellers dwarfed by the massive buildings. The images are reinforced by superimposed text by Walt Whitman.

Feb. 28  October: Ten Days That Shook the World 1928, Eisenstein (Soviet Union), 35 min.

Commissioned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917, October is not only an attempt to re-present history but serves as the most complex example of Eisenstein’s revolutionary editing experiments. Eisenstein’s theory of montage cutting is based on Hegel’s principle of the dialectic. Here we have shots colliding as synthesis to transform political theory into film form.

March 7  “CINEMATIC CITIES II”

The Man With A Movie Camera 1929, Dziga Vertov

Vertov, one of the founders of the Kino Eye documentary movement in Russia, made this film as an “experiment without intertitles, script, actors, or sets: a work aimed ‘to create a truly international film language, absolute writing in film, and the complete separation of cinema from theater and literature’”. This is an extraordinary visual and audio experience, with both the images and notes for the music coming from this most passionate film artist. One of the jewels of not only Soviet cinema, but of all cinema history.

March 21  L’Age d’or 1931  Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali

This is a surrealistic classic, the first feature by Luis Bunuel and his collaborator, painter, Salvador Dali. The two Spanish artists, working in Paris, had made the notorious short film “L’Enfant Chiffre” a few years earlier. Now following up is a twisted trip through the vortex of what seems to be madness. Nothing is sacred. The church, art, sex, politics and culture in general are shredded in the ridicule. Bishops tortured and hung out to dry, cows in the formal dining room seems to be madness. Nothing is sacred. The church, art, sex, politics and culture in general are shredded in the ridicule.

March 28  Chain

Jem Cohen will introduce the film and take questions after the screening — Jem Cohen’s extraordinary feature here is no exception. Presumably if you’ve seen “Presumably” it might be nice to know what the future holds. A melancholy photo collage of chain stores, malls, and conglomerated concrete spaces affirms as a single, anonymous ambience, a desolate spiritual limbo that could be anywhere. Anywhere and Everywhere, in fact. The end credits reveal the film was shot across 11 States, France, Germany, Poland, Australia, and Canada. Chain is a movie in establishing shots. Except that these shots serve the opposite purpose: obscuring and disenchanting — dis-establishing, if you will.

April 4  Vertigo  Alfred Hitchcock, 1958, 120 min.

James Stewart plays a cop who is despondent from repeated attacks of vertigo and Kim Novak plays a woman who is destroyed by the misogynistic man in her life. Find out what suspense is; Hitchcock is the master. This is a text book case study of issues of feminism and theory and issues of identity. Bring a reading of Jacques Lacan to this class.

April 11  Visiting Filmmaker Charles Workman 35 mm

Academy Award winning director/editor Charles Workman has made a career out of making compilation films for the Hollywood film industry in the form of trailers announcing upcoming films and as historical overviews of various aspects of film history. He also has made several experimental films, including a collaboration on a Hill film in 2001, which we will screen tonight. Workman is deeply immersed in American film on many levels, as a historian of sorts, as a craftsman in the industry and as a filmmaker. Charles Workman will be here in person to talk about House on a Hill and his other work.

April 18  Late Modern American Avant-Garde

WaveLength, 1966, Michael Snow (Canada), 45 min.

WAVELENGTH was shot in one week in December, 1966, preceded by a year of notes, thoughts, merriments. It was edited and first print seen in May, 1967. I wanted to make a summation of my nervous system, religious inklings, and aesthetic ideas. I was thinking of, planning for a time monument in which the beauty and sadness of equivalence would be celebrated, thinking of trying to make a definitive statement of pure film space and time, a balancing of “illusion” and “fact”, all about seeing. The space starts at the camera’s (spectator’s) eye, is in the air, is then on the screen, then is within the screen (the film). The film is a continuous zoom which takes 45 minutes to go from its widest field to its smallest and final field. It was shot with a fixed camera -from one end of an 80 foot loft, shooting the other end, a row of windows and the street. The room (and the zoom) are interrupted by four human events including a death. The occasion on these occasions is sound, music, and speech, occurring simultaneously with an electronic sound, a sine-wave... It is a total glissando while the film is a crescendo and a dispersed spectrum which attempts to utilize the gifts of both prophecy and memory which only film and music have to offer. M.S.

Riddle of Lumen 1972, Stan Brakhage (USA), 17 min.

The classic riddle was meant to be heard of course. Its answers are contained in its questions; and on the smallest piece of itself this possibility depends upon SOUND. The classic riddle was meant to be heard of course. Its answers are contained in its questions; and on the smallest piece of itself this possibility depends upon SOUND. “utterly, “ like they say... the pun is pivot. Therefore, my questions; and on the smallest piece of itself this possibility depends upon SOUND.

May 2  STROSZEK 1977, Weronrer Herzog (Germany)

A lyrical, melancholy, bitterly funny tale of three oddly assorted Berlin misfits who follow the American Dream to Wisconsin and find a bleak Eldorado of TV football, CB radio, truckstops and mobile homes. Fantastically strangely shot, probing the mysteries of life as only Herzog can do.

May 9  ARTS STUDENT VIDEOS

A selection of video art works made by students enrolled in ARTS 221, 322 and independent video production courses in the Department of Art and Art History, during the Spring semester.