Cinema Culture of France
Affron
The course is designed to introduce the student to some of the major issues that define the cinema culture of France, from the beginning of talking films through the New Wave. Three principal areas will be examined:
1. The place of cinema in the French critical canon. General questions of representation, narrative, spectatorship, and auteurship (among others), questions central to the study of literature, have been treated by many major critics in terms of cinema. The specific textuality of cinema, its photographic matrix, and the conditions of its reception have made it a provocative object of critical discourse, informing a wide variety of methodologies and, also, illuminated by them, with particular pertinence to semiotics and psychocriticism. Bazin, Barthes, and Metz are among the critics whose works will be discussed.
2. The corpus of French cinema. While it is impossible to treat comprehensively the subject in the duration of a single semester, the required viewing will give a good introduction to some of the most influential filmmakers and to representative styles, as well as to major currents in the history of French cinema. The extensive video collection of the department will be utilized.
3. Reading the cinematic text. Particular attention will be given to providing students with the critical and technical vocabularies necessary for the analysis of cinematic texts.