

# film history i (1895-1949)

**Course #:** FILM 105  
**Instructor:** adam wadenius  
**Email:** [adam@apwadenius.com](mailto:adam@apwadenius.com)  
**Website:** [www.apwadenius.com](http://www.apwadenius.com)

**Office Hours:** By email or appointment  
**Semester:** Fall 2018  
**Day & time:** Tuesday, 3:00p – 5:50p  
**Building:** Bldg. #100, Room #133

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## course description

This course will examine how film is a telling historical document. We will explore the evolution of cinema around the world from its origins at the turn of the century, to its development as a social force by the 1950's. Our inquiry into the first fifty years of cinema will investigate the emergence of various styles and movements, the contributions of seminal directors and performers, the effects of developing technologies, and the evolution of cinematic storytelling techniques.

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## student learning outcomes

- ~ Identify the dominant narrative structure of early films, and recognize the major directors and performers of their respective eras.
- ~ Critically assess the technological contributions of canonic films, directors, and performers throughout the period of 1895 to 1949.
- ~ Compare and contrast the different social and political cinema movements throughout the early history of film, and identify the countries and cultures they arise from.
- ~ Demonstrate an understanding of early film history through written analysis of specific films screened in class.

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## course requirements

**Class Lectures & Screenings:** You are responsible for attending the class lecture every week. Please email me if you know you cannot make it to section on a given day. There is no talking/discussion during the films, audio recordings or clips. I will dismiss you from the course if you become a disruption during the lectures. Your enrollment in this class is your responsibility. It is incumbent upon you to double-check your enrollment status periodically throughout the semester, as I do not maintain my rosters after the census has been processed. If at any time you decide that you do not wish to continue with the course, it is your responsibility to drop, as I do not take it upon myself to drop anyone from the course at any time.

I encourage you to use your personal computer, iPad, or other learning tool during class time if you are using it appropriately (viewing class slides, taking notes), however, be sure to turn off any noisemaking functions on those and any other electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, etc. Please keep the brightness levels on all LED screens at low intensity. There is no food allowed in class at any time (drinks are okay). Copies of all the lectures are available on the course website for download and review. If you require any additional accommodations such as a note taker, testing services, captions, or special chairs/desks, please speak with me personally, or provide the proper authorization letter from the Disability Resources Department.

**Readings:** It is incumbent upon you to be prepared, and you should come to class each session having read the reading assignment posted on the schedule. We will be spending as much time discussing the readings as the films, and a firm understanding of them will benefit your overall understanding/interpretation of the film texts. All readings are located on the course website.

**Discussion:** You are encouraged to be actively involved in the class discussions, as your participation is key to your success in this course. My goal is to aid in the development of your analytical/critical skills, and I expect everyone to maintain an open mind, and take a creative approach to the material. Be respectful of your fellow classmates when addressing and critiquing conflicting viewpoints.

**Short-Answer Quiz:** There will be one short-answer quiz this semester, due by the time class starts on the assigned date. The quiz will assess your comprehension of the *Origins of Cinema as an Art Form* section, and consists of three short-answer questions that will ask you to watch and analyze specific clips. Each quiz is due by the time class starts on the assigned date, and no late quizzes will be accepted. Please submit your quiz to me through the Turnitin.com application (discussed in further detail in the *Quizzes* section on the course website). All emergency situations leading to late quizzes will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There will be no opportunity for making-up a missed quiz. You are required to visit the course website to view the quiz questions and the clips, as there are additional writing and formatting guidelines for you to review.

**Film Analysis Essay:** You will be required to write one 1000-1250 word essay this semester, due by the time class starts on the assigned date. No late papers will be accepted. I do not accept physical papers, so please submit your essay to me through the Turnitin.com application (discussed in further detail in the *Essay* section on the course website). All emergency situations leading to late papers will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There will be no opportunity for re-writes after grading, as good writing skills are a must in this course. Each of the essay questions, as well as an example of an *A* paper are located on the course website. It is required that you visit the website to view the example paper, as it details additional guidelines for writing successfully in this course.

**Group Study Session:** You will complete one group study session this semester. The format of the quiz will echo the individual short answer-quizzes, and will be discussed in further detail in class.

**\*\* NOTE \*\*** *Plagiarism and other issues concerning academic integrity will not be tolerated, and are grounds for an automatic failure in the course. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with appropriate footnotes and bibliography.* Keep all copies of your quizzes and notes until you have received a final grade for this class.

**Film Notes & Participation:** Your attendance is expected at each of the film screenings, and missing or leaving the film screenings early will result in a lowered participation grade. To compliment any notes you may be taking on the lectures and discussions, you will be required to keep a separate notebook with your notes on each of the films (one page per each film). This is a good habit to practice when watching and analyzing films, as it will help you to remember important narrative and stylistic elements to be used as supportive examples in your writing. This notebook will be checked on the final session of the semester (Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>), and must be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1) as an electronic document (word, pdf, text, pages, etc.)
- 2) as a packet of individual sheets of paper, assembled and stapled together

Do not turn in any three-ring binders or spiral/binded notebooks with your notes in them, as they will not be accepted.

assessments

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Film Notes (130 pts.)	A = 507	B- = 431	D+ = 361
Screenings and Participation (140 pts.)	A- = 485	C+ = 415	D = 345
Short-answer quiz (100 pts.)	B+ = 469	C = 399	D- = 323
Group Writing Exercise (50 pts.)	B = 453	C- = 377	F = 307
Film Analysis Essay (100 pts.)			

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texts & materials

- 1. All course readings and materials are posted on the course website @ [www.apwadenius.com](http://www.apwadenius.com).
- 2. All films screened in class, as well as any excerpt screened during the lectures.

Please remember that if you have any questions about the readings, assignments, or any of the course materials that I am readily available to help answer them. I can be reached through the email address above, the course website, or by placing a note for me in my box in the department office.

schedule

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~ *The Origins of Cinema as an Art Form* ~

**week #1 ~ (Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>) ~ why do we study films?**

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Discussion: Intro to course | Syllabus | Questions  
Reading: "Doing Film History," by David Bordwell  
Turning Points, "Foreword", "Introduction," and "Chronology"  
Screening: *The Artist*, dir. Michel Hazanavicius (2011)

**week #2 ~ (Sep. 4<sup>th</sup>) ~ the birth of cinema**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 1 - The Birth of film" and "Ch. 2 - Georges Méliès"  
Screening: Various early films, dirs. Muybridge, Lumière, Méliès, Porter

**week #3 ~ (Sep. 11<sup>th</sup>) ~ the rise of features and narrative clarity**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 3 - Edwin S. Porter" and "Ch. 4 - *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)"  
Screening: *Broken Blossoms*, dir. D.W. Griffith (1919)

~ *Hollywood Narrative, Studio Filmmaking & the Independents* ~

**week #4 ~ (Sep. 18<sup>th</sup>) ~ Hollywood silent film**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 5 - Edison Monopoly" and "Ch. 6 - Hollywood Studio System"  
Screening: *The General*, dir. Buster Keaton (1927)

**week #5 ~ (Sep. 25<sup>th</sup>) ~ early independent race films**

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Reading: "Oscar Micheaux's *Body and Soul* and the Burden of Representation," by Bowser & Spence  
Screening: *Body & Soul*, Oscar Micheaux (1925)

**week #6 ~ (Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>) ~ the coming of sound and the Hays code**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 11 - Movies Learn to Speak," "Ch. 12 - The Academy Awards," and  
"Ch. 9 - The Hays Code"  
Screening: *Bringing Up Baby*, dir. Howard Hawks (1938)  
\*\* *Short-answer quiz due* \*\*

**week #7 ~ (Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>) ~ women's cinema during the golden age**

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Reading: "Dorothy Arzner's *Trousers*," by Jane Gaines  
Screening: *Dance, Girl, Dance*, dir. Dorothy Arzner (1940)

~ *Experimental Cinematic Styles* ~

**week #8 ~ (Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>) ~ French Impressionism**

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Reading: "The Avant-Gardes and European Cinema Before 1930," by Ian Christie  
Screening: *La Coquille et le clergyman*, dir. Germaine Dulac (1928)  
*Ménilmontant*, dir. Dimitri Kirsanoff (1926)

**\*\* Short-answer feedback due \*\***

**week #9 ~ (Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>) ~ German Expressionism**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 7 - German Expressionist Cinema"  
Screening: *Das kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, dir. Robert Wiene (1919)

**week #10 ~ (Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>) ~ Soviet Montage**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 10 - Sergei Eisenstein and the Use of Montage"  
Screening: *Stachka*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein (1924)

**week #11 ~ (Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>) ~ American Film Noir**

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Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 15 - The Dark Streets of Film Noir"  
Screening: *The Lady From Shanghai*, dir. Orson Welles (1949)

**week #12 ~ (Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>) ~ midterm check-ins**

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**\*\* Group writing exercise \*\***

**week #13 ~ (Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>) ~ no class**

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**\*\* Thanksgiving recess \*\***

~ *War Films & Propaganda* ~

**week #14 ~ (Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>) ~ social and wartime documentary**

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Reading: "Advocate" and "Bugler," by Eric Barnouw  
Screening: *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, dir. Pare Lorentz (1936)  
*Why We Fight*, dir. Frank Capra (1942-45)  
*Listen to Britain*, dirs. Humphrey Jennings and Stewart McAllister (1942)

**week #15 ~ (Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>) ~ final class session**

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**\*\* Essay assignment due \*\***

**\*\* Film notebooks due for review \*\***