

film history

Course #: FMS/RTVF 305 ~ 14794/14783
Instructor: adam wadenius
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Office Hours: 12:00p - 1:00p, #A500
Semester: Spring 2020
Day & time: M/W, 10:30a - 11:50a
Building: Main Campus Library #111

course description

This course is an introduction to the history of motion pictures, with an emphasis on examining how film functions as a telling historical document. We will explore the evolution of cinema around the world, investigating 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.

student learning outcomes

- ~ Analyze, interpret, and exercise critical judgment in the evaluation of film texts as representations of history and culture.
- ~ Identify the dominant formal systems and narrative structures of different styles, movements, and genres that evolve throughout film history.
- ~ Critically assess the technological contributions of canonic films, directors, and performers of their respective eras.
- ~ Describe the history, development, genre, and movements of the film medium and recognize the contributions of national, minority, diasporic, and subaltern filmmakers.
- ~ Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary film history through written analysis of specific films and clips screened in class.

course requirements

Class Lectures: You are responsible for attending the class lecture each session. Please email me if you know you cannot make it to section on a given day. I will forgive up to three absences during the semester, so long as you email me ahead of 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 for download and review on Canvas. 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 Support Office (DSPS).

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.

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.

assessments and grading

There are **460** total points available in the course, and your overall grade will be determined by your performance on the following assessments:

Screenings and Participation (80 pts.)	A = 460 - 413
Film Notes (80 pts.)	B = 412 - 367
Short-answer Assignment (100 pts.)	C = 366 - 321
Sequence Analysis (100 pts.)	D = 320 - 275
Film Analysis Essay (100 pts.)	F = 274 - 0

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 (I will forgive up to *two* absences if you email me ahead of time). You are required to take notes on each of the discussion clips screened in class. 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. Notes will be checked on the final session of the semester, 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.

Short Answer, Sequence Analysis, and Final Essay Assignments: There are three writing assignments this semester, each due by the time class starts on the assigned date. Late assignments will be accepted for up to one week, and will incur a 10-point penalty (except for the final paper). No late assignments will be accepted after one week. There will be no opportunity for re-writes after grading, as good writing skills are a must in this course. Please submit your work to me through Canvas (discussed in further detail in the *Assignments* section). You are required to visit the course page on Canvas to view the assignment questions and clips, as there are additional writing and formatting guidelines for you to review.

**** 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.

texts and materials

- 1) Turning Points in Film History, by Andrew J. Rausch. NY: Kensington Publishing, 2004.
- 2) Additional readings and materials can be accessed through Canvas.
- 3) 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

~ *Early Films, Classical Hollywood, the Avant-Garde* ~

week #1 ~ (Jan. 20th & 22nd) ~ the birth of cinema

Reading: Turning Points, "Foreword," "Introduction," "Chronology,"
"Ch. 1 - The Birth of film," and "Ch. 2 - Georges Méliès"

Discussion: Various early films, dirs. Muybridge, Lumière, Méliès, Porter

**** No class on Monday the 20th to observe Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday ****

week #2 ~ (Jan. 27th & 29th) ~ classical Hollywood cinema

Reading: Turning Points, “Ch. 3 - Edwin S. Porter,” “Ch. 4 - *The Birth of a Nation* (1915),”
“Ch. 5 - Edison Monopoly,” and “Ch. 6 - Hollywood Studio System”

Discussion: *The Lonedale Operator*, dir. D.W. Griffith (1911), *Easy Street*, dir. Charles Chaplin (1917),
Sherlock Jr., dir. Buster Keaton (1924)

week #3 ~ (Feb. 3rd & 5th) ~ the production code and the advent of sound

Reading: Turning Points, “Ch. 9 - The Hays Code,” “Ch. 11 - Movies Learn to Speak,”
and “Ch. 12 - The Academy Awards”

Discussion: *Bringing Up Baby*, dir. Howard Hawks (1938), *The Maltese Falcon*, dir. John Huston
(1941), *His Girl Friday*, dir. Howard Hawks (1940), *M*, by Fritz Lang (1931), *The
Broadway Melody*, dir. Harry Beaumont (1929)

week #4 ~ (Feb. 10th & 12th) ~ independent race films and women’s counter-cinema

Reading: “Oscar Micheaux’s *Body and Soul* and the Burden of Representation,” by Bowser & Spence
“The Women at the Keyhole,” by Judith Mayne

Discussion: *Body e’ Soul*, Oscar Micheaux (1925), *Dance, Girl, Dance*, dir. Dorothy Arzner (1940),
La souriante Madame Beudet, dir. Germaine Dulac (1923)

week #5 ~ (Feb. 17th & 19th) ~ Soviet Montage

Reading: Turning Points, “Ch. 10 – Sergei Eisenstein and the use of Montage”

Discussion: *Bronyenosyets Potyomkin*, dir. Eisenstein (1925), *Stachka*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein (1925)

** No class on Monday the 17th to observe President’s Day **

week #6 ~ (Feb. 24th & 26th) ~ German Expressionism

Reading: Turning Points, “Ch. 7 – *Das kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1919) and German Expressionism”
Screening: *Das kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1919)

week #7 ~ (Mar. 2nd & 4th) ~ the avant-garde in France

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)

~ *Subversive Politics in Postwar Cinema* ~

week #8 ~ (Mar. 9th & 11th) ~ Italian Neorealismo

Reading: Turning Points, “Ch. 16 - Italian Neorealism” and “Ch. 17 - André Bazin”

Screening: *Sciuscià*, dir. Vittorio De Sica (1946)

week #9 ~ (Mar. 16th & 18th) ~ Japanese kaiju eiga

Reading: “Gojira” and “*Gojira (Godzilla)*,” by Ivan Vartanian

“Japanese Cinema,” by Freda Freiberg

Screening: *Gojira*, dir. Ishirō Honda (1954)

** Short-answer assignment due **

week #10 ~ (Mar. 23rd & 25th) ~ the French Nouvelle Vague

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 21 - La Nouvelle Vague"

Screening: *Pickpocket*, dir. Robert Bresson (1959), *Vivre Sa Vie*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1962)

week #11 ~ (Mar. 30th & Apr. 1st) ~ Third Cinema in Latin America and West Africa

Reading: "Toward a Third Cinema," by Octavio Getino y Fernando Solanas

Discussion: *Deuse o Diabo na Terra do Sol*, dir. Glauber Rocha (1964), *La hora de los hornos: Parte I*, dirs. Octavio Getinas and Fernando E. Solanas (1968), *Xala*, dir. Ousmane Sembene (1975), *Borom Sarret*, dir. Ousmane Sembene (1963)

week #12 ~ (Apr. 6th & 8th) ~ no class

** *Spring break* **

week #13 ~ (Apr. 13th & 15th) ~ the red scare and American New Wave cinema

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 18 - Communist Witch Hunt," "Ch. 19 - The Emergence of TV," "Ch. 22 - Relaxing Restrictions," and "Ch. 23. The New Hollywood"

Discussion: *On the Waterfront*, dir. Elia Kazan (1954), *The Graduate*, dir. Mike Nichols (1967), *Bonnie & Clyde*, dir. Arthur Penn (1967)

** *Sequence analysis assignment due* **

~ *Emerging Genres & Styles* ~

week #14 ~ (Apr. 20th & 22nd) ~ modernism and postmodernism

Reading: "The Independent Industry" and "Independent Auteurism," by E. Deidre Pribram

Screening: *Be Kind Rewind*, dir. Michel Gondry (2008)

week #15 ~ (Apr. 27th & 29th) ~ Direct Cinema documentary

Reading: "Observer," by Eric Barnouw

Screening: *Salesman*, dirs. Albert Maysles, David Maysles (1969)

week #16 ~ (May 4th & 6th) ~ from Blaxploitation to blockbusters

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 24 - The Blaxploitation Cycle," Ch. 26 - The Modern Blockbuster," and "Ch. 27. CGI"

Discussion: *Shaft*, dir. Gordon Parks (1971), *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, dir. Melvin Van Peebles (1971), *Back to the Future*, dir. Robert Zemeckis (1985), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, dir. Steven Spielberg (1982)

week #17 ~ (May 11th & 13th) ~ new queer cinema

Reading: "There's Something Queer Here" and "Queer Theory," by Alexander Doty

Discussion: *Velvet Goldmine*, dir. Todd Haynes (1998), *Paris is Burning*, dir. Jennie Livingston (1990)

week #18 ~ (May 18th) ~ final class session

** *Essay assignment due* ** *Film notebooks due for review* **

** *Final class session meets from 10:15a to 12:15p* **