

film history

Course #: FMS 305 ~ 14539
Instructor: adam wadenius
Email: wadenia@crc.losrios.edu
Websites: canvas.losrios.edu
apwadenius.com

Office Hours: 12:00p - 1:00p, #A500
Semester: Fall 2019
Day & time: Tu/Th, 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is an introduction to the history of motion pictures, with an emphasis on examining how film functions as a telling historical document.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 & Screenings: 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. 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. 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, as well as the teaching page on apwadenius.com. 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. 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, 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. 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 on each of the course websites). You are required to visit the course websites 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, or apwadenius.com.
- 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 Cinema & Hollywood Narrative* ~

week #1 ~ (Aug. 27th & 29th) ~ the birth of cinema

Discussion: Intro to course | Syllabus | Questions

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

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

week #2 ~ (Sep. 3rd & 5th) ~ the 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"
Screening: *The General*, dirs. Buster Keaton & Clyde Bruckman (1927)

week #3 ~ (Sep. 10th & 12th) ~ avant-garde cinema in Europe

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 7 – *Das kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1919) and German Expressionism"
and "Ch. 10 – Sergei Eisenstein and the use of Montage"
Screening: *Stachka*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein (1924)

week #4 ~ (Sep. 17th & 19th) ~ independent race films

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

week #5 ~ (Sep. 24th & 26th) ~ the coming of sound

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 11 - Movies Learn to Speak" and "Ch. 12 - The Academy Awards"
Clips: *M*, dir. Fritz Lang (1931)
The Broadway Melody, dir. Harry Beaumont (1929)
His Girl Friday, dir. Frank Capra (1940)

** Short-answer assignment due **

week #6 ~ (Oct. 1st & 3th) ~ the Hollywood production code

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 9 - The Hays Code: Protecting the World from Indecency"
Clips: *Bringing Up Baby*, dir. Howard Hawks (1938)
The Wizard of Oz, dir. Victor Fleming (1939)
Casablanca, dir. Michael Curtiz (1942)

week #7 ~ (Oct. 8th & 10th) ~ women's cinema and counter-cinema

Reading: "Dorothy Arzner's Trousers," by Jane Gaines
Clips: *Dance, Girl, Dance*, dir. Dorothy Arzner (1940)
Screening: *La souriante Madame Beudet*, dir. Germaine Dulac (1923)

~ *Subversive Form in Postwar Cinema* ~

week #8 ~ (Oct. 15th & 17th) ~ Italian Neorealismo

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 16 - Italian Neorealism"
Screening: *Sciuscià*, dir. Vittorio De Sica (1946)

week #9 ~ (Oct. 22nd & 24th) ~ French Nouvelle Vague

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 17 - André Bazin" and "Ch. 21 - La Nouvelle Vague"
Screening: *Vivre sa vie*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1962)

week #10 ~ (Oct. 29th & 31st) ~ Third cinema movements

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

Clips: *Deuseo Diabona 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)

week #11 ~ (Nov. 5th & 7th) ~ American New Wave films

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 22 - Relaxing Restrictions" and "Ch. 23. The New Hollywood"

Clips: *Bonnie e Clyde*, dir. Arthur Penn (1967)

Easy Rider, dir. Dennis Hopper (1969)

The Graduate, dir. Mike Nichols (1967)

** *Sequence analysis assignment due* **

~ *Emerging Genres e Styles* ~

week #12 ~ (Nov. 12th & 14th) ~ Direct Cinema documentary

Reading: "Observer," by Eric Barnouw

Screening: *High School*, Frederick Wiseman (1968)

week #13 ~ (Nov. 19th & 21st) ~ Blaxploitation films

Reading: Turning Points, "Ch. 24 - The Blaxploitation Cycle"

Clips: *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, dir. Melvin Van Peebles (1971)

Foxy Brown, dir. Jack Hill (1974)

I'm Gonna Git You Sucka, dir. Keenan Ivory Wayans (1988)

week #14 ~ (Nov. 26th & 28th) ~ Hollywood blockbusters

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

Clips: *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, dir. Steven Spielberg (1982)

** *No class on Thursday the 28th for Thanksgiving recess* **

week #15 ~ (Dec. 3rd & 5th) ~ postmodernism and the indie film boom

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

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

Velvet Goldmine, dir. Todd Haynes (1998)

Night of the Living Dead, dir. George A. Romero (1968)

week #16 ~ (Dec. 10th & 12th) ~ contemporary technology and realism

Reading: "Doing Film History" by David Bordwell

Clips: *RoboCop*, dir. Paul Verhoeven (1987)

RoboCop, dir. José Padilha (2014)

week #17 ~ (Dec. 17th & 19th) ~ final class session

** *Essay assignment due* **

** *Film notebooks due for review* **