

Welcome to
FILM 2351-001
International Film History

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Description

This class is a survey of world cinema from 1893 to the present. We will examine movies as a business, a social phenomenon, a series of technological innovations, and an art form, and we will work toward a functional explanation of how each of these aspects of the movies has changed over time. Although many people associate the movies with the American film industry, filmmakers in every historical period and all over the world have worked to both distinguish their work from that of Hollywood and to draw upon some approaches innovated by the Americans. Film screened in class will include silent epic blockbusters from Italy, riveting crime thrillers from Germany, explosive Hong Kong action movies, French New Wave sex dramas, anarchic British satires, and many other examples of exciting and innovative filmmaking from all over the world.

Instructor

Professor Kevin Heffernan teaches media culture and history in the Division of Film and Media Arts. His writings on Hollywood genre films, Asian popular cinema, exploitation films, the international horror genre, and gender and sexuality in media have appeared in many journals and anthologies. [Divine Trash](#), a documentary on the early career of John Waters on which Heffernan served as associate producer and co-screenwriter, won the Filmmakers' Trophy in Documentary at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. He is currently writing a book-length history of American moving-image pornography from 1994 to the present tentatively titled [Channels of Pleasure](#) and another book tentatively titled [From Beavis and Butt Head to Tea Party Nation: Dumb White Guy Politics and Culture in America](#).

Students who take this course will

1. Satisfy the requirement of either **University Curriculum Pillars (Creativity & Aesthetics) Level I** or **University Curriculum Pillars (Historical Contexts) Level I**
2. Recognize the origins of many storytelling techniques, genres, social backgrounds to movies and their audiences, and business models still used by filmmakers and the movie industry today

3. Be able to recount some of the major changes in world culture and politics in the twentieth and early twenty-first century through the framework of international cinema
4. Learn a chronological account of films from all over the world which both influenced and were influenced by films from Hollywood
5. Recognize the stylistic and thematics of many innovative and influential filmmakers from all over the world.
6. See some of the most exciting and influential movies from all over the world.

University Curriculum

In relation to the **University Curriculum Pillars (Creativity & Aesthetics) Level I:**

1. Students will be able to identify and/or employ methods, techniques, or languages of a particular art form, creative endeavor, innovation, or craft(s) and describe how those inform the creation, performance or analysis of creative work.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to creativity through explanation, analysis, performance, or creation

In relation to the **University Curriculum Pillars (Historical Contexts) Level I:**

1. Students will be able to identify key events, actors, and evidence involved in a defined historical period(s).
2. Students will be able to summarize the major changes that took place in a defined historical period(s).

Course Materials

The text for this class is Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, Film History: An Introduction, Third Edition. Unless otherwise noted, the page numbers refer to Film History. Supplementary readings for the class can be found on Blackboard.

Assessments and Assignments

Grading for the class is determined as follows:

MIDTERM EXAM, Thursday, January 7	30%
The midterm exam will consist of both short factual questions and identification of key terms, historical figures, events, and institutions and wider-ranging essays in which you will compare, contrast, and analyze films in their historical context.	
FINAL EXAM, Wednesday, January 13	30%
ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION	20%

Extra Credit

There isn't any. Don't ask. I have never had problems of this nature with a roster made up almost entirely of our best FILM students, but please don't try to surprise me here, okay?

Make Up Exams

Make-ups for the mid-term and final will be arranged for medical emergencies only. A verifiable letter from a doctor will be required for non-penalty make-ups. Under certain circumstances a make-up will be given for non-medical reasons. The results of such an exam will be marked down one letter grade. ***Early exams cannot be given for any reason.***

Academic Dishonesty

This course is operated in accordance with the SMU HONOR CODE, violations of which may be **punished with a failing grade** or expulsion from the university. Academic dishonesty may be defined as a student's misrepresentation of his or her academic work or of the circumstances under which the work is done. This includes plagiarism in all papers, projects, take-home exams, or any other assignment in which the student represents work as being his or her own. Academic dishonesty also includes cheating on examinations, unauthorized access to test materials, and aiding another student to cheat or participate in an act of academic dishonesty. Failure to prevent cheating by another may be considered as participation in the dishonest act. See the 2013-2014 *Undergraduate Bulletin* for further details.

Disability Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.) Students with documented learning disabilities should notify the professor before the second class meeting if special provisions are requested to accommodate the disability.

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

****COMPUTERS and cel phones must be put away during lectures and screenings unless you have a letter from DASS stating that they are necessary for your academic progress. Students texting or using laptops will be dismissed from class, and repeated instances will result in a student's being disenrolled.**

Schedule of Classes, Events and Assignments

(Page numbers refer to Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*)

Monday, January 4

LECTURE and DISCUSSION: Film and History

Early Cinema, the Shift to Narrative

SCREENING: Early Cinema shorts, Méliès, Lumière, Edison, and Griffith

Narrative and Film as an International Medium

Narrative and the Feature

READING: 2-82

Tuesday, January 5

Post World War I German Cinema

SCREENING: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligair* (1919, dir. Robert Weine)

READING: 87-104,

German Cinema of the 1920s – Social Change and Film Style

SCREENING *M* (1931, dir. Fritz Lang)

Wednesday, January 6

The Coming of Sound

DISCUSSION: Sound and *M*

LECTURE: 1930s France and the Popular Front

SCREENING: *Rules of the Game* (1939, dir. Jean Renoir)

DISCUSSION: Renoir, the Popular Front, and Poetic Realism

READING: 211-232, 322-343

Thursday, January 7

Film and the Second World War

SCREENING: *Rome, Open City* (1945, dir. Roberto Rossellini)

DISCUSSION: Neorealism, Rossellini and the Italian Spring

READING: 406-433

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Friday, January 8

The French New Wave

SCREENING: *Jules and Jim* (1962, dir. François Truffaut)

Truffaut and the French New Wave

SCREENING: *Baron Prasil* (1962, dir. Karel Zeman)

READING: 517-535

Monday, January 11

Eastern European Animation of the 1960s

READING: To be announced

SCREENING: *A Clockwork Orange* (1971, dir. Stanley Kubrick)

Tuesday, January 12

Kubrick and the 1970s

SCREENING : *La Vie est belle*, dir. Benoît Lamy
and Mweze Ngangura, 1987

African Cinema of the 1980s

SCREENING: *A Bullet in the Head* (dir. John Woo, 1990)
READING: 599-632, 602-605, 776-779

Wednesday, January 13

Hong Kong Cinema

SCREENING: *Four Lions* (dir. Christopher Morris, 2010)

British Cinema and Channel Four

Christopher Morris and Satire

FINAL EXAMINATION

READING: John Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s* (selections)

Grading Rubrics

Your grade on the midterm, and final essay exams will be based on your ability to integrate many of the issues discussed in class and the readings into an effective, coherent, well-written, and well-organized essay. The purpose of the exams and paper is to spur you to make connections between films and readings that may not have been explicitly made during class discussions. A mere reiteration of what I or the writers have said will not by itself be an effective use of the essay exam format.

Typically, the grade breakdown has the following characteristics:

A An “A” paper or exam represents effort far beyond the basic requirements of the course and is characterized by a bold and original thesis which the student supports with a range of examples from the films and readings. The “A” essay is flawlessly, even elegantly written. These essays are quite rare.

B A “B” essay demonstrates an informed familiarity with all of the films and relevant readings and deploys examples effectively to support the central thesis of the piece. The writing should be forceful and effective with many previously hidden connections between the films and readings brought to light.

C A “C” effort represents a coherent and effective reiteration of relevant material from the lectures and discussions accented by an effective use of reading where appropriate. The writing is functional and effective with minimal problems in diction, grammar and mechanics. *The great majority of undergraduate essays usually fall within this range.*

D A “D” is characterized by minimal engagement with the most important topics from lecture and some use of the most obvious material for the readings. Often, a “C” essay in terms of content is lowered to a “D” because of significant problems with effective writing. In terms of content, the “D” effort often results from a desperate last-minute effort to engage with readings and/or films that the student has not seen or read or from significant absence from class discussion.

F An “F” essay possesses none, or at least very few, of the redeeming characteristics listed above. Typically, these are even more rare than the “A’s,” but please don’t try to surprise me on this issue.