Course Description

This course is designed as an introductory survey of motion picture history. We will examine a number of key film movements, filmmakers and film industries—both mainstream and alternative. While we will consider the impact of avant-garde and documentary practice on the fiction film, we will focus primarily on the history of narrative cinema from its beginnings to the present. A special emphasis will be placed upon the development of the Hollywood narrative cinema; however, we will also focus upon a number of other national cinemas and global alternatives to Hollywood. Most importantly, the course seeks to introduce major approaches to film historical scholarship, with an eye to best explaining how the cinema has changed as an art, as an entertainment industry, and as social and technological phenomenon. Therefore, throughout the course we will explore several key approaches to film history including:

- **Formal/Aesthetic:** How do narrative conventions and visual styles emerge and change over time?
- **Social/Cultural:** What cultural functions (education, entertainment, art propaganda, etc.) does film perform within specific social contexts?
- **Industrial/Economic:** How do the economics and of production, distribution, and exhibition shape the film industry?
- **Legal/Regulatory:** How do regulatory bodies shape film content and film's legal status as a commercial product/artistic form?
- **Technological:** How do emerging technologies alter film style and the ways in which films are produced, distributed, and exhibited?

Learning Objectives

1.) A deeper knowledge of major national and international film movements and film industries of the 20th and early 21st century.
2.) An ability to conduct scholarly research using primary and secondary sources and to evaluate how scholars use these sources in constructing historical arguments.
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3.) An engagement in the practice of film history. You should come to understand film history as an active process in understanding/interpreting the past. In other words, we will not only think of history as a series of facts, but consider how a particular history is told.

Course Components:
Lectures: Lectures will expand upon and supplement reading and screening materials. Part of the weekly lectures will be devoted to class discussion. You will be evaluated on your attendance and preparedness for lectures via reading quizzes (more information below).

Screenings: Attendance at class screenings is mandatory. While I hope you find the screenings entertaining, some films might elicit other feelings: confusion, shock, boredom, or discomfort. It is normal for students to have a wide array of reactions to screenings in a film class. However, just as I will not dismiss your emotional or visceral responses to a particular film, I ask that you not dismiss a film that is not to your taste. Remember that we are not only studying films as entertainment, but also as socio-cultural artifacts and objects of study. You should always be thinking about how screenings can be put in dialogue with lectures and readings. This is a different mode of (critical) engagement with the movies than you might be used to, but it has its own satisfactions and it is, after all, what college is all about!

Readings: All readings on the syllabus are required. Readings should be completed before the class period for which they are listed. This is a reading-intensive course, and you should expect to read between 50-60 pages per week. These readings, however, are usually not theoretically dense. The readings from our textbook provide a foundation for understanding the day’s topic, and the additional readings take up forms of historical inquiry not emphasized in the textbook and encourage a more critical view of film histories.

Required Texts:
2.) Course reading packet available at Jenn’s Copies 2518 Guadalupe the 2nd week of class.
3.) Additional readings posted on Blackboard.

Grading
Reading Quizzes 15%
Supplemental Screening Reports 20%
Midterm Exam on Unit 1 10%
Midterm Exam on Units 2-3 15%
Historical Research Project 20%
Final Cumulative Exam 20%

Assignments:
1.) Reading Quizzes 15%—Weekly
You are expected not only to attend class, but also to come prepared, which means completing the assigned readings and screening the required films. There will be a weekly in class pop quiz assessing your knowledge of the readings and screenings.
2.) Two Supplemental Screening Reports 20%—Due March 7th and April 25th
Because we can only scratch the surface of film history in our screening sessions, I will hold a supplemental screening every Wednesday from 5:00-7:30pm in CMA 3.120. A list of suggested supplemental screenings is available on Blackboard for those that cannot attend. Each student will submit two supplementary screening reports of 750-1000 words (worth 10% each).

3.) Two Midterm Exams 25%—February 21st and April 18th
The first midterm exam covers all class material (lectures, readings and screenings) from the 1st unit of the course (worth 10%). The second midterm covers all class materials from the 2nd and 3rd units of the course (worth 15%). More details will be given closer to the exam dates.

4.) Historical Research Project 20%—Due Monday, May 5th
This project entails going through all the necessary steps for writing a historical research paper, up to actually writing the full paper. You will document your work and submit it as a research portfolio including: an annotated bibliography, primary document assessments, and a proposed research outline. More information will be provided on a separate assignment sheet.

5.) Final Exam 20%—During the Official Exam Period, TBD
The final exam is cumulative. The final will have a particular focus on unit 4, but material from units 1-3 will also be covered. More details will be given closer to the exam date.

*No late assignments accepted. Concessions may be granted only for documented emergencies.*

Course Policies:
Mobile Device/Laptop Policy: Mobile devices **must be turned off** during lectures and screenings. If you plan to use a laptop to take notes in lecture, please sit in the first two rows of the class. Laptops are to be used for note taking only. If you are found using your computer for other purposes, you will no longer be allowed a laptop in class.

Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. It also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Services for Students with Disabilities: UT provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students needing special accommodations must provide the instructor with a letter from the SSD.

Religious Holidays: If you miss an assignment due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. UT policy requires that you notify your instructor at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.
Undergraduate Writing Center: The UWC offers free individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills on a drop-in or appointment basis. I highly recommend visiting the UWC to aid you in writing your screening reports and historical research project.

Course Schedule:

UNIT 1: EARLY CINEMA AND THE SILENT FILM ERA

Week 1
14/01 M: Introduction to Film History: Course Overview and Objectives
- T&B: Preface p. 1-6
- Review the syllabus
- Visit textbook website for online resources: mhhe.com/thompson3e

Screening: Early Cinema Program (See Handout)

16/01 W: The Invention of Cinema and How We Study Film History
- T&B: Early Cinema and Chapter 1 p. 9-19
- BB: Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery, “Reading Film History.”

18/01 F: Early Filmmaking and Exhibition
- T&B: Chapter 1 p. 19-29

Week 2
20/01 M: Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day! No Class.

No screening

22/01 W: Early Cinema in Transition I: International Expansion & the Nickelodeon Boom
- T&B: Chapter 2 p. 30-50
- BB: “Motion Picture and National Character.” [PD, 1910].

- T&B: Chapter 3 p. 51-53, 63-73

Week 3
27/01 M: Hollywood Studio Filmmaking in the 1920s
- BB: T&B Chapter 7 p. 2-17
Screening: The Kid (Charlie Chaplin, 1921, First National, 50m) (1971 edit with new Chaplin score)

29/01 W: Hollywood and the Star System
- BB: T&B Chapter 7 p. 17-25

*Note: last day of add/drop period.*

31/01 F: Filmmaking in Weimar Germany
- T&B: Introduction to the Late Silent Era p. 77-80, Chapter 5 p. 97-110

Week 4
03/02 M: German Expressionism
- CP: Siegfried Kracauer, “Introduction: From Caligari to Hitler.”
- CP: Siegfried Kracauer, “Caligari.”

Screening: The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Robert Weine, 1921, Decla-Bioscope, 75m) and Mennilmontant (Dimitri Kirsanoff, 1926, France, 38m)

05/02 W: German Expressionism and French Impressionism
- CP: Lionel Landry, “Caligarism or the Theater’s Revenge.” [PD, 1922].

07/02 F: Photogénie: French Impressionism
- T&B: Chapter 4 p. 81-96

Week 5:
10/02 M: Soviet Cinema in the 1920s
- T&B: Chapter 6 p. 115-125
- CP: V.I. Lenin, “Conversation. I. Of all the arts…” [PD, 1925].

Screening: Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925, Goskino, 75m)

12/02 W: Make Way for the Cine-Fist!: Vertov and Eisenstein
- T&B: Chapter 6 p. 125-136
- CP: Dziga Vertov, “Fiction Film Drama and the Cine-Eye.” [PD, 1924].
- CP: Eisenstein, “Collision of Ideas.” [PD, 1929].

14/02 F: International Art Cinema in the 1920s
- BB: Excerpt of T&B Chapter 8
UNIT 2: The Transition to Sound and the Hollywood Studio System

Week 6
17/02 M: Transition to Sound I: Technological Change and Challenges
  • T&B: Chapter 9 p. 141-60

  Screening: Lonesome (Paul Fejos, 1928, Universal Pictures, 69m) and early sound shorts

19/02 W: Transition to Sound II: The Talkies Take Over
  • CP: Douglas Gomery, “The Coming of Sound.”
  • CP: Rudolf Arnheim, “Artistic Composites and the Talking Film.” [PD, 1938].

21/02 F: MIDTERM EXAM ON UNIT 1

Week 7
24/02 M: The Hollywood Studio System: Oligopoly And Self Censorship
  • T&B: Chapter 10 p. 161-182
  • BB: Motion Picture Production Code [PD, 1930] Skim

  Screening: Baby Face (Alfred, E. Green, 1933, Warner Bros, 75m)

26/02 W: The Hollywood Studio System: Self Censorship, Innovation, and Genre
  • CP: Richard Maltby, "Baby Face or How Joe Breen Made Barbara Stanwyck Atone for Causing the Wall Street Crash."

28/02 F: Animation and the Studio System
  • T&B Chapter 10 p. 183-184
  • CP: Eric Smoodin, “Introduction and Studio Strategies.”

Week 8
03/03 M: Other Studio Systems I: Japan as Case Study
  • T&B Chapter 11 p. 192-201
  • CP: Catherine Russell, “Introduction: The Auteur as Salaryman.”

  Screening: The Only Son (Yasujiro Ozu, 1936, Shochiku, 87m) and “Flunky, Work Hard!” (Mikio Naruse, 1931, Shockiku, 29m)

05/03 W: Other Studio Systems I: Japan as Case Study
  • CP: Donald Kirihara, “Reconstructing Japanese Film.”

07/03 F: Other Studio Systems II: Britain, Hitchcock, and the Quota Quickies
  • T&B: Chapter 11 p. 185-192
  • First Supplemental Screening Report Due

* Monday, March 10th - Friday March 14th Spring Break! No class.*
UNIT 3: WWII and Post War Cinemas: From Neorealism to New Waves

Week 9

17/03 M: War, Cinema and the State: Clips from “Why We Fight” and “Private Snafu”
  - BB: Excerpts of T&B Chapter 12 and Chapter 14

  Screening: Leave Her To Heaven (John Stahl, 1945, Twentieth Century Fox, 110m)

19/03 W: Gender and Genre in the Golden Age of Hollywood

21/03 F: Historical Research Project Workshop

Week 10

24/03 M: Italian Neorealism
  - T&B: Chapter 16 p. 234-250.

  Screening: Ladri di biciclette [Bicycle Thieves] (Vittorio De Sica, 1948, Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche, 93m)

26/03 W: Italian Neorealism in American
  - CP: Barbara Wilinsky, “Discourses on Art Houses in the 1950s.”

28/03 F: The Decline of the Studio System: The Paramount Decision and HUAC
  - T&B: Chapter 15 p. 206-211, 216-219

Week 11

31/03 M: The Rise of the Independents: Exploitation
  - T&B: Chapter 15 p. 219-233

  Screening: A Bucket of Blood (Roger Corman, 1959, American International Pictures, 66m)

02/04 W: Hollywood Responds: Changing Exhibition Practices & Technological Innovation
  - T&B: Chapter 15 p. 211-216
  - CP: John Belton, “The Leisured Masses.”

04/04 F: The French New Wave and Auteur Theory
  - T&B: Chapter 20 p. 253-264
Week 12
07/04 M: The French New Wave and The Left Bank
  • Kelley Conway, “A New Wave of Spectators”: Contemporary Responses to Cleo from 5 to 7.”

  Screening: Cleo de 5 à 7 [Cleo From 5 to 7] (Agnes Varda, 1962, Rome-Paris Films, 90m)

09/04 W: “The American New Wave” and the Blockbuster
  • T&B: Chapter 22 p. 290-313

11/04 F: American New Wave Shorts: Take Home Screening/Quiz:

UNIT 4: Contemporary Cinema Since the 1970s

Week 13:
14/04 M: Politically Critical Cinema of the 1960s-1970s
  • T&B: Chapter 20 p. 270-271
  • T&B: Chapter 23 p. 515-535

  Screening: Chinesisches Roulette [Chinese Roulette] (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1976, New Yorker Films, 86m)

16/04 W: New German Cinema
  • CP: Sabine Hake, “New German Cinema.”

18/04 F: MIDTERM EXAM ON UNITS 2-3

Week 14:
21/04 M: American Cinema and the Entertainment Economy (1980-present)
  • T&B: Chapter 28 p. 359-380
  • Justin Wyatt, “Marketing the Image: High Concept and the Development of Marketing.”

  Screening: Blue Velvet (David Lynch, 1986, De Laurentis Entertainment Group, 120m)

23/04 W: American Indies and Conglomeration
  • T&B: Chapter 28 p. 380-393

25/04 F: Historical Research Project Workday
  • Second Supplemental Screening Report Due
Week 15:
28/04 M: Global Film Culture and Diasporic Cinema
   • T&B: Chapter 29

   Screening: Holy Motors (Leos Carax, 2012, Les Film du Losange, 116m)

30/04 W: Digital Cinema and Media Convergence
   • T&B: Chapter 30

02/05 F: Film Fandom and Subcultures in the Digital Age
   • CP: Barbara Klinger, “Becoming Cult: The Big Lebowski, Replay Culture and Male Fans.”