

**DC 205, “Foundations of Cinema for Non-Majors”**  
**Sections 801 (22598) & 510 (26841)**  
**Lecture + discussion**  
**Student Center Room 330 + online**  
**Tuesdays, 5 Jan.-15 Mar. 2016**  
**6:00 PM - 09:15 PM**

Charles Mueller  
Adjunct Professor  
cmuelle2@cdm.depaul.edu

This course will examine the craft, technology, and aesthetic principles of cinema production. Drawing on a wide array of historical examples, the course will examine the expressive strategies available to create moving image art forms, the importance of story and controlling ideas; storytelling with images, the basics of composition and editing, and an examination of narrative, documentary, and experimental approaches. In addition to analyzing the works of others, students will produce their own projects.

Learning goals:

This course is intended to allow students to synthesize technical knowledge and cinema aesthetics, regarding issues of story, montage strategy, and production basics, as well as scrutinize 1970s Hollywood, a significant period of American film. Upon completion, students should be able to:

1. Identify multiple ways of relating to films, in terms of influences and homage, apprehend the basics of camera coverage and editing, and critically address the choices made by film-makers, to develop a personal aesthetic of film based upon individual predilections and taste.
2. Demonstrate the basics of montage, transitions, scripting, and production design in prototypical film projects illustrating that knowledge.
3. Demonstrate in writing an ongoing understanding of how cinema story-telling techniques inform and are informed by culture, and in specific how films like, “The Godfather,” “Chinatown,” “Taxi Driver,” “Jaws,” “Star Wars,” “The Exorcist,” and “The Last Picture Show,” transformed the dialectic of cinema.
4. Show evidence of a consistent ability to explore how sound and moving picture compositions are driven by artifice, but uniquely articulate the truth of abstract concepts and human behavior.

Be advised that knowing the reading assignments and being able to discuss them in context will figure heavily in the “class participation” (15%) metric of the grade. Regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> projects, the value of craftsmanship can never be discounted but the projects will be graded according to students’ demonstrated understanding of the principles at work, rather than in judgment of aesthetic or technique.

Online Students:

The class discussion for online students will be conducted via the D2L discussion board. Online students’ comments on class topics will be delayed as much as a week before being reviewed in class, and may be reviewed only between the student and the instructor, at the instructor’s discretion. Online students will be expected to write at least three literate and pertinent sentences for full class participation credit.

Prerequisites: None.

Textbooks and Printed Resources:

“Understanding Movies,” 13th edition: Giannetti, Prentice Hall/Pearson, 2014.  
ISBN: 978-0-205-85616-9.

“Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock ‘N’ Roll Generation Saved Hollywood,”  
paperback edition: Peter Biskind, Simon & Schuster, 1998.  
ISBN: 978-0-684-85708-4.

Online resources:

<https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home/317550>: a provider of enterprise eLearning solutions and develops online Learning Management Systems (LMS) used at more than 1100 institutions in 20 different countries around the world, including DePaul.

<http://www.imdb.com>: This is the Internet Movie Database website. It is one of the world’s largest compilations of film titles, viewer reviews and movie production information.

<http://filmsite.org>: Another comprehensive website that provides detailed summaries of many films in many genres.

<http://rottentomatoes.com>: This website tracks film releases, box office grosses and other pertinent information, including professional critic reviews. It is highly recommended.

<http://www.metacritic.com/film>: Another website along the lines of Rotten Tomatoes.

<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com>: The home of one of the most popular film critics of modern times, Roger Ebert.

<http://www.commonsemmedia.org>: This website provides reviews and recommendations of films, especially for parents with young children. The critical reviews here are not geared towards an audience that seeks out journalistic and theoretical criticism.

<http://www.worldbest.com/movies.htm>: A website that provides links to the websites listed above as well as many others that review film and follow Hollywood news and information.

Grading:

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| 1st Project                        | 15%  |
| Mid Term                           | 15%  |
| 2nd Project                        | 25%  |
| Final                              | 30%  |
| Class attendance and participation | 15%  |
|                                    | 100% |

**Please note no late submissions accepted.**

**Please note no absences allowed.**

## Course Outline

### Week 1 – 5 Jan.

- Discussion: Student (Written) Introductions. Introduction to Course and Requirements.  
Review of D2L for both the online and physical class cohort.
- Screening: "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie (1976)," "Days of Heaven (1978)."
- Read: Didion, "In Hollywood," from *The White Album* (1973).

### Week 2 – 12 Jan.

#### **Assignment of 1st Project :: due 27 Jan.**

- Discussion: Discussion of texts. Define realism (Cassavetes), classicism (Malick) and formalism. Shots as the smallest unit of structural matter in a film. Genres. The development of, "Bonnie & Clyde (1968)."
- Screening: "Black Narcissus (1947)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 1, "Photography."  
Giannetti, Chapter 2, "Mise en Scène."  
Biskind, Introduction & Chapter 1, "Before the Revolution."  
Biskind, Chapter 2, "'Who Made Us Right?'"

### Week 3 – 19 Jan.

- Discussion: Define, "Mise en scène." Limitations of the frame, three dimensions in a two dimensional space. "Easy Rider," and the era.
- Screening: "Oldboy (2003)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 3, "Movement."  
Biskind, Chapter 3, "Exile on Main Street."

### Week 4 – 26 Jan.

#### **1st Project :: Due.**

- Discussion: Kinds of cinematic movement: zooms, dollies, pans, aerials (camera), choreography & POV.
- Screening: "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (1954)," "Cabaret (1972)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 4, "Editing."  
Biskind, Chapter 4, "The Moviegoer."

### Week 5 – 2 Feb.

#### **Assignment of 2nd Project: due 24 Feb.**

#### **Distribution of Mid Term Study Guide.**

- Discussion: Cuts, dissolves, irises. Time, space, continuity. "The Last Picture Show (1971)," masters, cuts, and control (Bogdanovich & Hitch).
- Screening: "Groundhog Day, " "The Wild Bunch (1969)," "Memento (2000)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 5, "Sound."  
Biskind, Chapter 5, "The Man Who Would be King."

Week 6 – 9 Feb.

**Mid Term.**

- Discussion: Sound montage, VOs, narration, Diegetic & non-diegetic sound, film scores.  
Creativity & anger: feeling the love, & the manipulation of the weak.
- Screening: "The Last Emperor (1987)," "Ran (1985)," "Psycho (1960)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 6, "Acting."  
Biskind, Chapter 6, "Like A Rolling Stone."

Week 7 – 16 Feb.

- Discussion: What is acting? Classical approach, Stanislavsky, Meisner. Non-professionals, extras, professionals (character actors), stars. Directors' approach, the "acting problem." Drugs, sex, and insecurity.
- Screening: "Capote (2005)," "Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989)," "Sophie's Choice (1982)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 7, "Drama."  
Biskind, Chapter 7, "Sympathy for the Devil."

Week 8 – 23 Feb.

**2nd Project: Due.**

- Discussion: Drama, adaptation, and culture. Scenes (theater), and shots (film), the "auteur," and audience perspective. Sets, makeup, wardrobe, and the color through-line.  
Mick Jagger, Satan, "The Exorcist," and history.
- Screening: "The Tramp (1915)," "Edward Scissorhands (1990)"
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 8, "Story," & Chapter 9, "Writing."  
Biskind, Chapter 8, "The Gospel According to St. Martin," & Chapter 10, "Citizen Cain."

Week 9 – 1 Mar.

- Discussion: Types of story telling, *mimesis* and *diegesis*, empathy, pathos, melodrama; fiction ("narrative"). Documentary and the *avant-garde*.
- Screening: "Chinatown (1974)," "Crash (2005)," "Mean Streets (1973)."
- Read: Giannetti, Chapter 10, "Ideology."  
Biskind, Chapter 12, "Coming Apart."

Week 10 – 8 Mar.

- Discussion: Ideology, explicit & implicit; culture, religion and ethnicity. Francis Coppola & Viet Nam.
- Screening: "Triumph of the Will (1935)," "A Clockwork Orange (1971)," "Apocalypse Now (1979)." & "Citizen Kane (1941)."

Week 11 – 15 Mar.

**Final.**

Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office:

**Late submissions of assignments or (online) class participation notes:**

No late submissions of any assigned work will be accepted.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

**Academic Policies:**

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

**Attitude:** A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

**Cell Phones/On Call:** If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

**Civil Discourse:** DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

**Class Discussion:** Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

**Online Course Evaluations:**

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the

student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

csd@depaul.edu.  
Lewis Center 1420  
25 East Jackson Blvd.  
Phone number: (312) 362-8002  
Fax: (312) 362-6544  
TTY: (773) 325-7296