

HISTORY OF CINEMA PRODUCTION

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY | SPRING QUARTER 2021

FILM 131-301 (ONLINE: SYNC) | FILM 131-310 (ONLINE: ASYNC)

WEDNESDAYS, 9:35AM

Instructor: Eric Marsh | marsh@cdm.depaul.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Fridays, 9AM - 2PM by email appointment only

COURSE DESCRIPTION – This course explores the origins, evolutions, and revolutions of cinema production from the perspective of a filmmaker. We will examine a diverse range of critical historical events and theories that have impacted the industry and the craft of filmmaking: the emergence of the studio system, the coming of sound, the auteur theory, genres, ideology, audience, as well as the emergence of other media and the rise of digital technology. Students will acquire a broad understanding of the aesthetic, economic, social, and technological forces that have shaped and continue to influence the development of cinema. In addition to weekly screenings of relevant films, students will be assigned readings on various historical, critical, and theoretical topics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES – Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify major historical shifts in the production of motion pictures.
- Analyze the historical and creative context of films and their relationship to – and role in – society.
- Recognize the importance of global perspectives throughout the history of cinema production.
- Evaluate the continuing evolution of the cinematic process throughout qualitative movements in culture, technology, economics, and audience appreciation.
- Synthesize their understanding of the course materials through written analyses of feature films, readings, and class lectures.

Required Text – All video lectures & readings will be provided by the instructor on [D2L](#).

Course Management System - All course materials will be available to you on [D2L](#).

Online Learning - Class discussions will be held every week via [ZOOM](#) during the in-class meeting time. I will post a link to the video chat every week on the D2L homepage 5-10 minutes before the scheduled start. For all students (sync & async) the discussions will be recorded and posted to D2L week-by-week.

EVALUATION

Weekly Responses (9)	36%
Paper #1	15%
Paper #2	15%
Final Research Paper	24%
Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

A = 100 – 94, A- = 93 – 90, B+ = 89 – 88, B = 87 – 83, B- = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 78, C = 77 – 73, C- = 72 – 70, D+ = 69 – 68, D = 67 – 63, D- = 62 – 60, F = 59 – 0.

Course Schedule & Outline

Week 1 3/31 Emergence of Cinema, 1895-1910

Lecture: Cinema Society and Science / Early Cinema

Screening (in-class): Edison, Lumiere, Melies / Cinema of Attractions

Week 2 4/7 Silent Era Cinema, 1910-1930

Lecture: Film as Art and Industry / The Global Spread of Film / Hollywood in the 1920s

Screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920, d. Wiene / *The Gold Rush*, 1925, d. Chaplin

Week 3 4/14 Silent Era Cinema, 1910-1930

Lecture: The Cinemas of Europe / Soviet Cinema / The Transition to Sound

Screening: *Sunrise*, 1927, d. Murnau / *The Scarlet Empress*, 1934, d. von Sternberg

Week 4 4/21 Classic Cinema, 1931-1945

Lecture: Hollywood Genres / Meeting Hollywood's Challenge / Film and World War II

Screening: *The Rules of the Game*, 1939, d. Renoir

Group Discussion: The Screwball Comedy

Week 5 4/28 Postwar Transformation, 1946-1960

Lecture: Italian Neorealism / Hollywood's Struggles

Screening: *Los Olvidados*, 1950, d. Buñuel / *Gun Crazy*, 1950 d. Lewis

Week 6 5/5 Postwar Transformation, 1946-1960

Lecture: Art Cinema of Europe and Asia / Hollywood in the 1950s

Screening: *Johnny Guitar*, 1954, d. Ray / *Yojimbo*, 1961, d. Kurosawa

Week 7 5/12 Revival of Cinema - 1961-1980

Topic: French New Wave / New Documentary

Screening: *Cleo From 5 to 7*, 1962, d. Varda / *Medium Cool*, 1969, d. Wexler

Presentations: Cinema of Liberation

Week 8 5/19 Revival of Cinema, 1961-1980

Lecture: American Film, Turmoil & Transformation / Alternative Cinema in the 60s & 70s

Screening: *The Heartbreak Kid*, 1972, d. May / *Car Wash*, 1976, d. Schultz

Presentations: European Films of 60s & 70s

Week 9 5/26 Expansion of Cinema, 1980-2000

Lecture: Hollywood Recovery / Alternative Cinema in the 80s

Screening: *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*, 1978, d. Lau / *Big Trouble in Little China*, 1986, d. Carpenter

Presentations: The Global Advance of Cinema

Week 10 6/2 Expansion of Cinema, 1980-2000

Lecture: American Independents / American Cinema: Special Effects & Beyond

Screening: *Hyenas*, 1992, d. Mambety / *The Living End*, 1992, d. Araki

Presentations: World Cinema

FINALS 6/9 21st Century Cinema, 2000-2020

Discussion: *Present.Perfect*, 2019, d. Shengze / The Present & Future of Cinema

Assignments

1. **Weekly Responses** - Weekly responses (4pts each) provide you an opportunity to integrate the readings and lectures with the *screened films* through your own reactions, observations, and analysis. This is a space for **YOU** to explore the movies we watch in greater detail, and to prove to me that you are keeping up with the course material.

In addition to your own reactions, you **must** *contextualize* the films in your analysis:

1. **Historical Context:** moods, attitudes and conditions that existed during a certain time
2. **Creative Context:** conventions, styles and practices that existed during a certain time (i.e. the “menu of options” a filmmaker had in time).

Get Personal: As production students I recognize that you may all have different pursuits and interests within the field of filmmaking, and you may also bring into your writing *anything* that you find interesting or worth analyzing/exploring, especially in the context of *your own* cinematic aspirations.

Things to do: Be specific, descriptive, and thoughtful in your writing. Back up your opinion, observations, and statements with **concrete examples** from the screened film(s). **Things Not To Do:** Excessive plot recapping, excessive opinion, vagueness, generalizations, platitudes, etc.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each response **must** include at least 2 citations from our text, weekly readings and/or lecture videos. If you do not use or quote sources, you will receive a zero.

2. 500+ word minimum. If you do not meet this requirement you will receive a zero. There is no maximum (write as much as you'd like...).

2. **Papers** - In addition to the weekly responses:

1. Paper #1: Studio System (15pts) - You will write a research paper about a studio, film, and genre from the Golden Age of Hollywood. 5-7 pages.
2. Paper #2: International Explorations (15pts) - You will write a research paper and give a presentation about an international filmmaker from the 1960s-2000. Presentation & paper due dates and topics vary but will be due Weeks 7-10. 6-8 pages.
3. Final Paper: 21st Century Cinema (24pts) - You will write a paper about cinema in the 21st century. 7+ pages.

Content and Schedule Changes – The syllabus is subject to change depending on class progress, time constraints, or material availability. This goes for the screenings as well. The overall workload, however, will not change. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly. You will be notified of any changes in the syllabus in a timely fashion.

Weekly Updates – After each class meeting I will post an update on D2L detailing the immediate class “business”: assignments, readings, screenings, etc, anything that you need to *do* before the next class meeting. You may also keep track of this on the D2L content page. If you want to keep up with the course you *must* read these updates or use the checklist method on D2L and make sure you're on track. No excuses.

Screenings - All of the assigned films are required “texts” for the course, and as such, are MANDATORY. They will fuel your reflections, our discussions, and guide us through the history of cinema. All of the films assigned will be made available to stream on D2L through Panopto.

Reading Assignments - Reading assignments are *mandatory* and will guide us through your responses and our discussions. FYI: Lectures may introduce additional material not in the readings, and the readings may explore concepts not mentioned in the lectures. All of the texts for the course will be made available on D2L as PDFs.

Grading - Grades and/or written feedback will be given for each assignment. In order to be accepted for grading, assignments must be turned in on time. Late work will receive zero points for grading. Failure to turn in even one assignment has a significant impact on your grade.

All Undergraduate Students - You may opt to change the grading basis for any or all of your courses to a PASS/D/FAIL. A grade of Pass (P) will indicate that the student's work met expectations for a grade of at least C-. Work that would merit a grade of D+ or D in the traditional grading basis would still earn a D+ or D. Work that does not merit a passing

grade will earn a Fail (F). The PASS/D/FAIL grading option may apply to any graduation requirement, including courses in the major, minor, liberal studies program or open electives.

Attendance - Attendance is mandatory. However: given the extraordinary circumstances of our current situation I understand that this may not always be possible, for a variety of reasons, which is why all of the ZOOM meetings will be recorded and posted to D2L. If you are not able to attend any of our meetings please reach out to me via email and let me know ahead of time. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstances and the instructor's discretion. NOTE: Even though we are virtual this quarter, class time is most productive when everyone arrives promptly and comes prepared to discuss that week's topics (i.e. readings, films, etc).

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 films and reading assignments. Students must keep up with the readings and films to participate in class discussion. If you come to class without having watched the films, you will be marked absent.

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.

Attitude - A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Although we are not meeting in person I expect that we will all conduct ourselves as if we were. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to, or over, others when the instructor or another student is speaking, messing around inappropriately in the video chat, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, or anything else that could be considered a distraction. It's hard enough having to do this online, don't make it harder! The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate any such issues or problems.

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 [here](#)

Academic Integrity - Plagiarism is dishonest behavior and therefore violates collegiality as well as University policy. Any cases of plagiarism will automatically receive a zero and be reported to departmental and University officials for disciplinary action. You should

familiarize yourself with behavior that constitutes plagiarism by reviewing the University's policy regarding academic dishonesty [HERE](#).

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.

Special Needs - 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.

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