

**COMM 2471: INTRODUCTION TO FILM
SPRING 2014**

**Professor Jacqueline Reich
Monday/Thursday 4:00-5:15
Faculty Memorial Hall 232**

COURSE GUIDELINES

Texts:

Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: Tenth Edition* (abbreviated as B & T)

Braudy and Cohen, *Film Theory and Criticism, Seventh Edition* (abbreviated as B & C)

1) **CLASS DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:** How does one read a film? How does film history interact with film practice? This course will introduce students to the history of movies, the technology, and the aesthetics of the cinematic experience through an exploration of film as medium as it developed from its primitive to its current digital form. This course is structured to integrate the study of film history with the study of film as a medium, alternating between “classics” and recent films to examine, in effect, how the more things change the more they stay the same.

Objectives:

- To learn the basic grammar of film art and how to “read” a film
- To learn how early cinema grew out of other cultural practices, developed technically and narratively, and continue to influence film production today
- To define the conventions of Classical Hollywood Cinema and consider alternatives to those conventions
- To understand the cultural politics of films, their ideological messages, and the ways in which they reinforce and/or challenge prevailing social norms
- To gain a preliminary understanding of film theory and its importance for film studies

2) **CLASS STRUCTURE:** The course meets on Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00-5:15 pm. You are expected to conduct yourselves as responsible students and adults in this class: please arrive on time, not talk amongst yourselves, and not disrupt the class in any unruly fashion. **ALL CELLPHONES, BLACKBERRIES, IPHONES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS TIME. COMPUTERS AND IPADS ARE ALLOWED IN CLASS ONLY WITH PERMISSION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR.**

3) **ASSIGNMENTS AND MATERIALS:** The films are our primary texts and are to be viewed on your own, either through the links in the syllabus or on reserve in Walsh Library. Many of the films are available on-line from LEGAL sources such as Netflix (www.netflix.com), iTunes., and amazon.com, including Amazon Prime. You must watch them before Monday’s class. Students should complete all the readings on the day they are due, as listed in the syllabus.

NOTA BENE: In the beginning of the semester, you will be required to see clips and short films on your own via the links on the syllabus. **MAKE SURE YOU KEEP A DIGITAL COPY OF THE SYLLABUS ON YOUR COMPUTER, IN CLOUD STORAGE, OR ON A USB DRIVE.** I prefer that you watch these films on as large of a computer screen as possible, or if possible, on a television. **DO NOT WATCH THE FILMS ON YOUR IPHONES, SMART PHONES, ETC.** For more on this subject, see this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKilroiCvZ0>.

4) **BLACKBOARD:** Everything pertaining to the class – syllabus, links to films, external links – will be available on **BLACKBOARD**. Please make sure that you check it EVERY DAY for course information. You can access Blackboard itself from the my.fordham.edu portal by clicking on the Blackboard icon at the top right, or going directly to fordham.blackboard.com. For more information on CMS and to receive regular updates on related programs, please visit our website at www.fordham.edu/cms and “like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS

5) **CLASS WORK AND GRADES:** There will be two examinations in the class (a midterm and final exam). There will be **NO** make-up exams. There will be one scene-analysis paper (5-6 pages), due as indicated on the syllabus. Students are also required to do group in-class presentations and in-class responses to the reading and films, to be scheduled throughout the semester. Information on these assignments will appear on Blackboard. You should be prepared to participate actively in class discussions, since class participation is a big part of your grade. The percentage breakdowns as follows:

ATTENDANCE	10%
IN-CLASS WORK (PRESENTATIONS, RESPONSES)	20%
MIDTERM EXAM	20%
PAPER	20%
FINAL EXAMINATION	30%

6) **ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Students are expected to attend every class. If you know you will miss a class for religious reasons or required participation in a university sponsored-event please let me know in advance via email. If you are ill or there is a family emergency, please contact me via email as well. If you have more than two unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one step (e.g. from an A to an A-), regardless of your cumulative total.

7) **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful, and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For more information on what specifically constitutes violations of academic integrity and the university’s policy toward violations of academic integrity, see: <http://www.fordham.edu/undergraduateacademicintegrity>.

8) **ASSISTANCE:** I will hold office hours on Mondays from 2:30-3:30 and Tuesdays from 10:00-11:00 am and by appointment, in my office in Faculty Memorial Hall 431. The best way to reach me is via e-mail: jreich8@fordham.edu. You can also reach me via phone in my office: 718-817-0454.

9) **DISABILITY SERVICES:** If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with me immediately or you may go to the Office of Disability Services (Room 402-D McMahon Hall, x6282). Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University.

BY ENROLLING IN THIS CLASS, YOU AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDELINES AND THE SYLLABUS AS STATED ABOVE. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES AND THE SYLLABUS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR GRADE IN THE COURSE. THE PROFESSOR ALSO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE

COURSE IN ANY MANNER DURING THE SEMESTER WITH PROPER NOTICE TO THE STUDENTS.

SYLLABUS

1/13 General Introduction

Scenes from: *WALL.E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008); *Sunnyside* (Charles Chaplin, 1919); *The Blacksmith* (Buster Keaton, 1922)

EARLY CINEMA: THE PIONEERS

FILMS:

Edward Muybridge, Horse in Motion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrRUDS1xbNs>

Etienne Jules-Marey, Sports Films: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtRJHS7ynyI>

Early Thomas Edison Films:

Sandow: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWM2ixqua3Y>

The May Irwin Kiss: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q690-IexNB4>

READINGS: B & T, 458-466

1/17 Photography and Film: Muybridge, Marey, and Edison

Scenes: *Blacksmithing Scene* (Edison, 1893); *The Barber Shop* (1893); *Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze* (1894) and others

1/20 NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY HOLIDAY

Realism vs. Expressionism: The Lumière Brothers and Georges Méliès

FILMS:

La Sortie des usines Lumière/ Employees Leaving the Lumière Factory / Exiting the Factory (1895):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDnppCDhI9U>

L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat/ Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat(1895):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dgLEDdFddk>

Repas de bébé / Baby's Lunch (1895): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgGCAskh98E>

L'Arroseur Arrosé / The Sprinkler Sprinkled (1895):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugHC5BAG19Q>

A Trip to the Moon (Georges Méliès 1902) - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfdQ_ftHQs

A Trip to the Moon – restored scene: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dTVfSJojo4>

READING: Tom Gunning, “An Aesthetic of Astonishment” in B & C, 736-750

1/23 Louis and Auguste Lumière and Georges Méliès

THE SHOT AND MOVEMENT

FILM: *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, 1990)

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 5

1/27 The Shot as Individual Unit

1/30 Movement

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FILM NARRATIVE: PORTER AND GRIFFITH

FILMS:

The Life of an American Fireman (Edwin S. Porter 1903) -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4C0gJ7BnLc>

The Great Train Robbery (Edwin S. Porter 1903) -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc7wW0mEGGY>

A Corner in Wheat (Biograph 1909, 14m.) dir. D.W. Griffith:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DG1qXj1c4PM>

An Unseen Enemy (Biograph 1912, 15m) dir. D.W. Griffith:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8zylqy3zhI&feature=c4overview&list=UUkyHFX_uUP0pSCQyDzoIxA

The Musketeers of Pig Alley (Biograph 1912, 18 mins.) dir. D.W. Griffith:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG5hbpL8Njo>

READINGS: B & T, 466-469; Selections from Tom Gunning, *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film*, on Blackboard

2/3 Edwin S. Porter and the Birth of Film Storytelling

2/6 D.W. Griffith, Race and Film Narrative
Scenes from *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)

CLASSICAL FILM NARRATIVE

FILM: *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991)

READINGS: B & T: Chapter 3; Screenplay: *The Silence of the Lambs*:

<http://www.horrorlair.com/scripts/lambs2nddraft.txt>

2/10 Film Narrative

2/13 The Three-Act Structure

MISE-EN-SCÈNE, ACTING AND STARDOM

FILMS: *The Kid* (Charlie Chaplin, 1921): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAUFUv1k9Zw>

Our Hospitality (Buster Keaton, 1923): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTtmS_LZgOE

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 4; Richard Dyer, "Stars" in B & C, 480-485

2/18 -TUESDAY Mise-en-scène

2/20 Acting and Stardom

EDITING

FILM: *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei M. Eisenstein, 1925)

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 6, 476-479; Eisenstein, "The Dramaturgy of Film Form," in B & C, 24-40

2/24 Editing and Montage

2/27 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

SOUND

FILM: *M* (Fritz Lang, 1930)

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 7, and 469-472; “Statement on Sound,” in B & C, 315-317

3/3 **NO CLASS**

3/6 The Transition to Sound and Beyond

Scenes from *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland 1927); *M* (Fritz Lang 1931);

FILM GENRE

FILM: *Singing in the Rain* (Stanley Donen, 1952)

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 9, and 480-483; Thomas Schatz, “Film Genre and the Genre Film” in B & C, 564-575

3/10 Sound and the Musical

3/13 The Musical as Genre

3/17-3/21 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

THE ANTI-CLASSICAL NARRATIVE (?): ITALIAN NEOREALISM AND THE FRENCH NEW WAVE

FILM: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)

READINGS: B & T, 483-488; André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” and “The Myth of Total Cinema” in B & C, 159-166

3/24 Italian Neorealism and Post-War Cinema

3/27 The French New Wave

Scenes from *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960); *The 400 Blows* (François Truffaut, 1959)

FILM THEORY: THE AUTEUR THEORY

FILM: *North by Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959)

READINGS: Peter Wollen, “The Auteur Theory,” in B & C, 455-470

3/31 What is an Auteur?

Scenes from various Hitchcock films

4/3 Hitchcock as Auteur

PAPERS DUE

FILM THEORY: IDEOLOGY

FILM: *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994)

READINGS: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Mechanical Age of Reproduction," in B & C, 665-685; Comolli and Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," in B & C, 686-693

4/7 The Politics of Reproduction

4/10 Cinema, Politics and Ideology

FILM THEORY: GENDER AND SEXUALITY

FILM: *Gilda* (Charles Vidor, 1946)

READINGS: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in B & C, 711-722

4/14 The Classical Hollywood Paradigm: Women as Object

4/17 **NO CLASS – EASTER RECESS**

FILM THEORY: RACE AND REPRESENTATION

FILM: *Do The Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989) plus one of these Tarantino films: *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Jackie Brown* (1997), *Django Unchained* (2012)

READINGS: Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance" in B & C, 767-776

4/21 **NO CLASS- EASTER RECESS**

4/24 Race and American Cinema

WEEK 14: THE ONE FILM YOU HAVE TO SEE IN AN INTRO TO FILM CLASS

FILM: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles 1941)

READINGS: B & T, Chapter 8; 99-109

4/28 Why?

5/1 Conclusions

FINAL EXAM (TENTATIVE): MONDAY, MAY 12, AT 1:30 PM, ROOM TBA