

ENG/BC 390 --FILM HISTORY--

Fall 2016

Western Illinois University

Class meetings: Screening/Discussion/Lecture: M/W 2:00-4:00 (SI 220)

“Film as dream, film as music.

No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings,
deep down into the dark rooms of our souls.”

(Ingmar Bergman)

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Course Description and Goals:

This course is designed to cover an international history of cinema from its origin to contemporary films. Film history will be studied according to:

- a. the most significant people and inventions in relation to the development of the medium (such as George Melies, Thomas Edison, the Lumiere Brothers);
- b. the history of the film industries and their role in the making of cinema as powerful industry;
- c. the social impact that films have had on social life.

The main goal of this course is to provide students with critical and analytical tools to better understand the historical evolution of film as a medium and as a powerful economical means of communication. Ultimately, in this course students will explore films in relation to US and world cultures to enhance an appreciation of film history and its link to contemporary society.

Texts:

The primary texts for the course are the films. In addition, readings will be assigned from: *Movie History. A Survey*. Second edition, by Douglas Gomery and Clara Pafort-Overduin, New York: Routledge, 2011. This text is available at the University Bookstore. Readings are required and should be completed before each screening/discussion.

Films to be screened:

A selection of short films by the Lumiere Brothers, Edison, George Melies.
Sherlock Jr. (1924, dir. Buster Keaton. 45 m. US)
Gold Rush (1925, dir. Charlie Chaplin, 95 m. US)
The Cabinet Dr. Caligari (1920, dir. Robert Wiene. 72 m. Germany)
The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928, dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer. 114 m. France)
Man with the Movie Camera (1929, dir. Dziga Vertov. 61 m. USSR)
It Happened One Night (1934, dir. Frank Capra. 105 m. US)
The Great Dictator (1940, dir. Charles Chaplin. 125 m. US)

Mildred Pierce (1945, dir. Michael Curtiz. 109 m. US)
The Big Heat (dir. Fritz Lang, 1953. 89 m. US)
Ossessione (1943 dir. Luchino Visconti, 140 m. Italy)
La Grande Illusion (The Grand Illusion, 1937, dir. Jean Renoir, 116 m. France)
How to Marry a Millionaire (1953, dir. Jean Negulesco. US)
A Fistful of Dollars (1964, dir. Sergio Leone. 99 m. Italy/Spain/West Germany)
Star Wars (dir. George Lucas, 1977. 121 m. US)
Wings of Desire (Der Himmel uber Berlin, 1987, dir. Wim Wenders, 128 m. West Germany/France)
Persona (1966, dir. Ingmar Bergman, 83 m. Sweden)
Mad Max (1979, dir. George Miller, 88 m. Australia)
In the Mood for Love (2000, dir. Wong Kar-Wai, 98 m. Hong Kong/China)
The Band's Visit (Bikur Ha-Tizmoret, 2007, dir. Eran Kolirin, 87 m. Israel/US/France)

Film Screenings:

Some but NOT all films chosen for this course can be found at Malpass Library for reviewing and studying AFTER class screenings/discussions. These materials should be used **only** as supplements to film screenings in class. If students miss a screening and the film is not available at the library is his/her responsibility to find other ways to watch the film before the discussion (Netflix)

Class Meetings and Procedures:

Each week students are expected to come to class prepared for a discussion on the film and readings. Each student is expected to bring a series of questions (or selected passages from the textbook) in order to initiate a discussion on the reading(s) and the film(s) assigned for that week. Screenings, discussions, lectures, in class activities and quizzes are scheduled on M and W. Students whose behavior during film screenings creates a distraction to others will be asked to leave. **Consistent late arrival or early departure at film screenings and class periods DOES affect your grade.**

Participation: Since the discussion revolves around the readings, the film(s), lectures, **active participation** is based on a careful reading of both films and literary texts as well as understanding of how the two relate. In-class activities will be graded as “participation points.” **Keep in mind that the contribution you offer to discussion counts toward your participation grade.** Remember to be respectful in class, disagreements are inevitable in discussions but they should always be conducted in a civil manner

Attendance and Late Work Policies:

Regular attendance is REQUIRED. Attendance will be taken regularly in class periods. **You are allowed 4 unexcused absences (0-4 absences= 60 pts; 5-8 absences= 30 pts; 9-11 absences= 15 pts; 12-+ absences= 0 pts).** Illness, emergencies, and religious obligations that fall on days of regularly scheduled classes may be excusable upon consultation with the instructor and require documentation from a university official or other authority. Letters from parents or relatives won't be accepted. **Note: It is always up to the instructor to decide whether the documentation is acceptable.**

NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to make arrangement for any missed class and check with a classmate for missed material (or notes) given in class.

Coming to class without the required text will be considered an absence.

Problems: If you experience any difficulties or frustrations with any aspect of the course, I urge you to speak with me either during office hours or by appointment.

Agreement: By remaining in this section of ENG/BC 390, you agree to accept the policies articulated in this syllabus.

Grade Scale:

1000-934= A 933-900=A- 899-867=B+ 866-834= B 833-800= B- 799-767=C+
766-734=C 733-700=C- 699-667=D+ 666-634=D 633-600=D-
below 600 pts= F

Grading Breakdown:

Attendance (60 pts): see above attendance policy.

Participation and in class-activities (120 pts): This grade includes attention and verbal class comments as well as quizzes, short essay questions/in class-writing activities.

Two Sets of Film Diaries (320 pts): you are asked to write 8 film diaries of any of the feature films watched in class. The two sets (of 4 film diaries each) are due, respectively, on 10/03 and 11/07. Each film diary (3 full pages long, double-spaced) should include a one-paragraph plot summary and a brief discussion of the film's crucial historical and ideological issues. These diaries should reflect your familiarity with the films and the readings and open up further research and critical inquiry.

Presentation (150 pts): A group presentation in class is required. This oral presentation also includes a short self-evaluation report (2 pages, double spaced) and it must be handed in the week after the presentation is given. Each student enrolled in this class is required to participate in the group presentation and write a self-evaluation report. Students who don't actively and fully participate in the group presentation will receive a "zero" for this assignment. Also, students who will not submit the two pages self-evaluation report will be penalized of 40 points. Precise guidelines regarding this assignment will be given during the first half of the semester.

Research Paper (350 pts): the research paper should be between 10-12 pages (excluding the bibliography and annotated bibliography) and follow normal research paper standards, including formal style (page numbers and title of the paper) and annotated bibliography. The paper should consider a group of films (no more than three) arranged either by genre (type) or by maker (director, producer or studio). Here are some examples

of possible topics: the films of Charlie Chaplin; the Hollywood musicals of the 1930s; Italian neorealism; film noirs; Warner Brothers films during the period of the studio system. You should do research to familiarize yourself on the subject. One part of your paper (roughly between 40 and 60%) should present what you have found to be the most interesting and important aspects of your subject. The remainder of your paper, growing out of the first, should be your own original analysis of one film among the three you have chosen that represents the type you are dealing with. This analysis requires you to view the film multiple times. The paper should reveal a general knowledge of your subject, a mastery of the film you are working on, and an ability to apply to the film you are examining the various analytical tools learnt in previous film classes. Finally, for your research paper, students need to consult and write annotated bibliography of a minimum of 6 secondary sources (academic film journals and/or book chapters). It is important that students begin working on the research paper as soon as possible. Many useful reference materials are not in our library or cannot be found online and will have to be acquired through interlibrary loan, which can take a few days or weeks. Also, a successful research paper is the result of careful reading, thinking, writing, and revising. To ensure that enough time is given to the paper, a draft of the final paper of at least 6 pages and annotated bibliography of the 6 outside sources will be due on Monday, December 5.

NOTE: Students who submit a draft of less than 6 pages will be penalized 50 pts from their final paper grade. Students who fail to submit the draft and/or who submit a draft without the annotated bibliography or with an incomplete annotated bibliography will be penalized 80 pts.

NOTE: PLAGIARISM: Students should be aware that plagiarism or cheating of any form will not be tolerated and that academic misconduct entails severe penalties. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. As stated on the website regarding Students' Rights and Responsibilities, "plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism occurs whenever:

- one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product without acknowledgment. This includes all information gleaned from any source, including the Internet.
 - one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words without acknowledgment.
 - one uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials without acknowledgment.
 - one fails to acknowledge with a citation any close and/or extended paraphrasing of another.
 - one fails to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it is a few words, a sentence, or a paragraph.

Typical examples: Submitting, as one's own, the work of another writer or commercial writing service; knowingly buying or otherwise acquiring and submitting, as one's own work, any research paper or other writing assignment; submitting, as one's own, work in which portions were produced by someone acting as tutor or editor; collaborating with others on papers or

projects without authorization of the instructor.

In addition to oral or written work, plagiarism may also involve using, without permission and/or acknowledgment, computer programs or files, research designs, ideas and images, charts and graphs, photographs, creative works, and other types of information that belong to another.

Because expectations about academic assignments vary among disciplines and instructors, students should consult with their instructors about any special requirements related to citation.” (<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>)

In the case a student is found plagiarizing, he/she will receive an F for that assignment and an academic misconduct will be filed according to the University Policies.

Special Accommodation and Disabilities: “In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at (309) 298-2512 for additional services.”

Additional Information: to get important factual information about films (characters’ name, cast, awards), check www.imdb.com. Be careful though with the “on-line interviews” and other material you find online. Remember, plagiarism is a very serious matter. It is also essential to take notes during the screenings. Therefore it is highly recommended to buy a penlight, a ballpoint pen with an illuminated tip, to facilitate writing in the dark.

For free, one-on-one consultation with trained undergraduate and graduate tutors, visit the University Writing Center at both the Macomb and Quad Cities campus. We work with writers from any discipline, at any academic level, and at any point in the writing process. Whether you need help decoding your assignment, brainstorming a topic, developing stronger points, incorporating research properly, organizing paragraphs, or receiving any other feedback, our tutors are here to help you. Writing centers on Macomb Campus: Malpass Library, Tanner Hall, Bayliss Hall, Simpkins Hall. Contact the University Writing Center for more information, e-mail mwcenter@wiu.edu. Or, call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to always bring a copy of your assignment.

*****WIU Film Club*****

JOIN THE FILM CLUB! MEET ON TUESDAYS @ 220 SIMPKINS HALL
Every semester, the Film Club shows a selection of films (national and international) and offers thought-provoking discussions on a wide range of issues and topics! Students, especially those minoring in film, are highly encouraged to attend the screenings/meetings. Further information about the students’ organization will be given the first week of class. The FILM CLUB officers are: President, Rachel Troyer; Vice-President, Matt Juron; Secretary Katelin Deushane

Extra credits: throughout the semester, I will announce various events and films which students may earn extra credits for attending. In each case, the student must write a one-page report (single-spaced) to earn UP TO 10 points for each review, for a max. of 40 points for the whole semester.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES:

-CELL PHONE: IN THIS CLASS YOU ARE REQUIRED TO TURN OFF OR SILENCE YOUR PHONE. I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE OFF POINTS EACH TIME I SEE STUDENTS CHECKING THEIR MOBILE OR TEXTING. I ALSO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ASK TO LEAVE IF STUDENTS DO NOT RESPECT THIS POLICY (AND THAT WOULD COUNT AS AN ABSENCE).

FOOD:

-NO FOOD IS ALLOWED AT SCREENINGS/DISCUSSIONS

Schedule*

*** The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course but some changes may be necessary. Students will be informed of any changes to the assigned schedule.**

Week 1:

August 22 (M): Introduction. “The silent cinema 1895-1927.” Clips from the early films (the Lumiere Brothers, Edison, George Melies)

Reading for W: chapter 1, ‘The Invention and Innovation of Motion Pictures,’ 8-29; and 3 (Hollywood establishes the Classical Narrative Style)

August 24 (W): discussion on the readings, screening: *Sherlock Jr.* (1924, dir. Buster Keaton, 46 m. US) followed by discussion

Readings for next week (M): chapters 2 (The Triumph of Hollywood); re-read chapter 3

Week 2:

August 29 (M): discussion on the readings. Screening of *Gold Rush* (1925, dir. Charlie Chaplin, 95 m. US)

Readings for W: chapter 4 “Influential Alternatives to Hollywood: European Cinema”

August 31 (W): discussion on the reading and screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920, dir. Robert Wiene, 72 m. Germany) followed by a discussion on the reading/film

Reading for next W: re-read chapter 4

Week 3:

Sept. 5 (M). NO CLASS. LABOR DAY

Sept. 7 (W): Screening: *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928, dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer, 114 m. France)

Reading: for next M: chapter 5 (Experiments in Filmmaking: the USSR)

Week 4:

Sept.12 (M): discussion on the film and reading. **Screening:** *Man with the Movie Camera* (dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929. 61 m.)

Sept. 14 (W): discussion on the film/reading

Read for next week: read chapter 6 “The coming of sound and the studio system”

Week 5:

Sept. 19 (M): discussion on the reading. Screening: *The Great Dictator* (1940, dir. Charles Chaplin. 125 m. US)

Sept. 21 (W): discussion on the film/reading. Start screening: *It Happened One Night* (dir. Frank Capra, 1934. 105 m.)

Reading: for M and W: re-read chapter 6

Week 6:

Sept. 26 (M): cont. screening *It Happened..* followed by a discussion on the film/reading.

Sept. 28 (W): Screening: *Mildred Pierce* (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1945. 109 m.) followed by in-class activity.

Reading for next M: Chapter 7 “The First Golden Age of Hollywood Movie Making” and additional reading; reading for W: chapter 8 “European alternatives to Hollywood”

Week 7:

October 3 (M): **FILM DIARY SET N.1 DUE.** Discussion on the film/readings.

Screening: *The Big Heat* (dir. Fritz Lang, 1953. 89 m.) followed by discussion

October 5 (W): Start screening: *Ossessione* (1943 dir. Luchino Visconti, 140 m. Italy)

Reading for next week: cont. reading chapter 8

Reading for next W: chapter 9 (“television, wide-screen, and color”)

Week 8:

October 10 (M): Cont. screening followed by discussion. Begin screening *La Grande Illusion* (The Grand Illusion, 1937, dir. Jean Renoir, 116 m. France)

October 12 (W): cont. screening followed by discussion. Begin screening *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953, dir. Jean Negulesco. US)

Reading for next M: re-read chapter 9

Week 9:

October 17 (M): cont screening followed by discussion.

October 19 (W): discussion on the reading and film. Begin Screening: *A Fistful of Dollars* (Per un pugno di dollari, 1964, dir. Sergio Leone, 99 m. Italy/Spain/West Germany)

Read for next week: read chapter 10 “A Transformation of Hollywood Movie Making”

Week 10:

October 24 (M): cont. screening of Leone’s film. **PRESENTATION n. 1 (on *A Fistful of Dollars*)**

October 26 (W): Screening: *Star Wars* (dir. George Lucas, 1977. 121 m.)
Reading for next M: re-read chapter 10
Reading for next W: chapter 11 “The European Art-Cinema Alternative

Week 11:

October 31 (M): PRESENTATION N. 2 (on *Star Wars*). Begin screening of *Wings of Desire* (*Der Himmel uber Berlin*, 1987, dir. Wim Wenders, 128 m. West Germany/France)

Nov. 2 (W): cont. screening

Reading for next M: re-read chapter 11

Week 12:

Nov. 7 (M): FILM DIARY SET N. 2 DUE. Discussion on the film and reading. Begin Screening: *Persona* (1966, dir. Ingmar Bergman, 83 m. Sweden)

Nov. 9 (W): cont. screening.

Reading for next M and W: read chapters 12 “Alternative film industries”

WEEK 13:

Nov. 14 (M): PRESENTATION N. 3 (on *Persona*). Begin screening of *Mad Max* (1979, dir. George Miller, 88 m. Australia)

Nov. 16 (W): Cont. screening. **PRESENTATION N. 4 (On *Mad Max*)**

Reading for week 15: read chapter 13 “Contemporary World Cinema”

WEEK 14: Thanksgiving vacation

Week 15:

November 28 (M): screening: *In the Mood for Love* (*Fa yeung nin wa*, 2000, dir. Wong Kar-Wai, 98 m. Hong Kong/China) followed by discussion

November 30 (W): screening: *The Band's Visit* (*Bikur Ha-Tizmoret*, 2007, dir. Eran Kolirin, 87 m. Israel/US/France)

Week 16:

Dec. 5 (M): Draft final paper due in class. Discussion on the film and final considerations.

Dec. 7 (W): Conferences in my office and students evaluations

Week 17:

FINAL WEEK. FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, DEC. 12 @ 3 pm in my office