

GH101
Film and Popular Culture
Sec. 33 (T/TH 9:30-10:20) and Sec. 34 (T/TH 11:00-11:50)
in Simpkins 220
Screenings M 4:30- 6:30, Morgan Hall 101A

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Films provide a venue where to be entertained or escape from reality, they can give us something to think about or relate to. Since its very beginning, with the screening of the silent period, films have been a popular art form entertaining audiences worldwide. In this course, we will survey the ways films entertained and changed popular culture. Not only are films cultural products that tell us about the people who made them, but they also inform us of the cultural beliefs of the time in which they were created. They were and still are an extraordinary force that produces meanings and ideas influencing the culture of the time. In the first half of the course, we will learn how to read films and interpret them as cultural products, keeping in mind how circumstances and historical events have shaped these cultural products and how they have affected the public reception. In the second half of the semester, we will address issues related to representations, such as: what does representation have to do with culture? What is its connection with popular culture? As popular culture is about meanings and ideas that we all share, language is what we use to make sense of what we see and experience. Through films, meanings are created and exchanged and language is central to popular culture, regarded as the key to understand how people respond to social, cultural and historical phenomena. Ultimately, through the analysis of films and close reading of essays, film reviews and articles, we will become critical readers as well as observers of the popular culture of the past and the one we encounter every day. This is an intensive writing course therefore we will approach several forms of writing styles including screening reports, film reviews, short film papers and a final research paper.

A Note: Some of the films screened for this course may contain material some might find uncomfortable. Your enrollment in this course indicates your awareness of this and your willingness to approach these films in an adult, critical manner.

Text and Additional Readings:

The primary text for this course is: *Film: An Introduction*, by William H. Phillips, 4th edition (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009). **Reserve Readings:** Throughout the semester we will have reserve readings, marked on the calendar as (RR). See my emails for the links. You must bring a **printed** copy of the reserve reading to class on the day it is due to be counted present.

Assignments and grading: Paper 1 (50 pts); Paper 2 (100 pts); Paper 3 (150 pts); Annotated Bibliography (100 pts); Final Research Project (300 pts); Reading Quizzes (100 pts); In-class writing activities (100 pts); Attendance (100 pts)

Grading Scale:

966-934= A
933-900=A-
899-867=B+
866-834= B
833-800= B-
799-767=C+
766-734=C
U (unsatisfactory grade)

F (if you are not making a good faith effort, you should earn an F (failing) grade)

Deadlines: The course schedule includes the deadlines for every assignment. Deadlines are not negotiable, and late work will not be accepted. If you feel you will have a problem with a deadline be sure to speak with your instructor as far in advance as possible.

Participation and conduct: The success of this course depends not only on individual assignments, but also on the class working together. In order to create a productive and challenging class we must treat one another with respect at all times. A productive and interesting class emerges through our conflicts, disagreements, and debates, but in order to learn from one another we must always work within an ethic of care and mutual respect.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is REQUIRED. Attendance will be taken regularly in class periods *and screenings*. **You are allowed 4 unexcused absences (0-4 absences= 100 pts; 5-8 absences= 50 pts; 9-11 absences= 10 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 or not the documentation is appropriate and acceptable.*

Coming to class without the required texts and workshop drafts 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 GH101, you agree to accept the policies articulated in this syllabus.

No make-up of in-class activities

No incompletes will be given in this course

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."

University Writing Center: 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.

Additional Information:

Not all screenings will occur on Mondays, so be prepared to watch films also on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also, to get important factual information about films (characters' name, cast, awards), check www.imdb.com. 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.

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

JOIN THE FILM CLUB! MEET ON TUESDAYS @ 6:00 pm in 220 SIMPKINS

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! ALL Students are welcome 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 review (single-spaced) to earn UP TO 10 points for each review, for a max. of 40 points for the semester.

IMPORTANT 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

Tentative Schedule*

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

WEEK 1

08/22 (M): Course Introduction. **The expressiveness of film techniques.**

Reading for T: introduction and chapter 1 (Phillips, p. 1-60)

08/23 (T): Screening and discussion of early cinema. Films by Edwin Edison: **The Kiss** (1896) and **Serpentine Dances** (1895); Lumiere Brothers' **Swimming in the Sea** (1895); George Melies' **Trip to the Moon** (1902); Edwin Porter's **The Great Train Robbery** (1903).

Reading for Th: continue chapter 1

08/25 (TH): discussion on the reading and films

WEEK 2

08/29 (M): **Mise-en-scene.** Screening: *Citizen Kane* (1941, dir. Orson Welles, 119 m. US)

08/30 (T): Discussion on the film/reading (continue chapter 1 -Mise-en-scene)

Reading for TH: chapter 1 (Phillips); additional reading (RR, on Orson Welles)

09/01 (TH): Discussion on the reading

Readings for next T and Th: read chapter 2 (Cinematography, 61-112)

Terms and concepts:

Mise-en-scene; types and functions of setting; action, reaction, appearance; composition and the use of space; the shots; the angles; light and dark

WEEK 3

09/05 (M): **NO CLASS LABOR DAY**

09/06 (T): **Cinematography.** Screening: *THX 1138* (1971, dir. George Lucas, 88 m. US)

09/08 (TH): **cont. screening and** discussion on chapter 2

Reading for next TH: read chapter 3 (Editing, 113-156)

Terms and concepts:

Cinematography: film stock; lighting; the camera (distance, perspective, angles, point of view shots)

WEEK 4

09/12 (M): **CLASS/SCREENING CANCELED**

09/13 (T): **Paper n. 1 Workshop -draft due**

09/15 (TH): **Editing.** Begin screening *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929, dir. Dziga Vertov, 68 m. Soviet Union)

Reading for next TH: chapter 4 (Sound, 157-199)

Terms and Concepts:

Continuity editing vs. intellectual montage; Russian Montage and Sergei Eisenstein; eyeline match; match on action; graphic match

WEEK 5

09/19 (M): **PAPER N. 1 DUE.** Cont. screening of Vertov's film followed by discussion on editing (RR on the Soviet Montage)

09/20 (T): **Sound.** Screening: *Singin in the Rain* (1952, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 106 m. US)

09/22 (TH): cont. screening

Reading for next week: RR on *The Good Girl*, identity and social class (essay by Suzanne Leonard, "'I Hate my Job, I hate Everybody Here": Adultery, Boredom, and the "Working Girl" in Twenty-First-Century American Cinema")

Terms and concepts:

The moving camera; components of the soundtrack; sound techniques; transition from silent to sound; types and functions of sound; diegetic and non-diegetic sounds; (post)synchronous sound; sound effects; sound continuity; musicals; Al Jolson and The Jazz Singer

WEEK 6

09/26 (M): Discussion of *Singin in the Rain* (sound); begin screening: *The Good Girl* (2002, dir Miguel Arteta, 93 m. US-Germany-Netherlands)

09/27 (T): cont. screening followed by discussion on the reading and film

09/29 (TH): cont. discussion

Reading for next week: RR on identity and war (Dina Iordanova's article, "*Before the Rain* in a Balkan context")

WEEK 7

10/03 (M): Screening: *Before the Rain* (1994, dir Milcho Manchevski, 117 m. Macedonia-United Kingdom)

10/04 (T): discussion on the reading

10/06 (TH): **Paper n.2 Workshop –Draft due**

Readings for next week: RR on identity and gender (essays by Deren (on film and avant-garde; and by Julianne Pidduck, "Travels with Sally Potter's Orlando: Gender, Narrative, Movement")

WEEK 8

10/10 (M): **PAPER N. 2 DUE. Screening:** Experimental and Avant-Garde: *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943, dir. Maya Deren. 14 m.) followed by discussion. Begin screening of *Orlando* (1992, dir Sally Potter. 94 m. UK/Russia/Italy/Netherlands/France)

10/11 (T): cont. screening of *Orlando*

10/13 (TH): discussion and in-class activity

Reading for next week: RR (on representations)

WEEK 9

10/17 (M): NO SCREENING/CLASS. GO TO THE MOVIES! WATCH A FILM ON YOUR OWN (KEEP THE MOVIE STUB) AND WRITE A TWO PAGES REVIEW OF THE FILM

10/18 (T): discussion on the readings

Reading for TH:

10/20 (TH): Discussion on the readings/in-class activity

Reading for next week: RR (on identity and ethnicity, TBD)

WEEK 10

10/24 (M): Screening: *Raging Bull* (1980, dir. Martin Scorsese, 129 m. US)

10/25 (T): discuss

10/27 (TH): discussion and in-class activity.

Reading for next week: RR (on stereotypes and representation, by Richard Dyer)

WEEK 11

10/31 (M): Screening: *Do the Right Thing* (1989, dir. Spike Lee, 125 m. US)

11/01 (T): discussion on the reading

11/03 (TH): **Paper n. 3 Workshop –Draft due**

Reading for next week: RR on identity and masculinity (TBD)

WEEK 12

11/07 (M): **PAPER N. 3 DUE.** Screening: *Rebel without a cause* (1955, dir. Nicholas Ray. 110 m. US)

11/08 (T): discussion on the film and reading (on Ray's film, from film journal "Jump Cut")

11/10 (TH): Discussion, in class activity

Reading for next week: RR on genre (horror) and gender (essay “Scream,” by Kendall R. Phillips)

WEEK 13

11/14 (M): Screening: *Scream* (1996, dir. Wes Craven, 110 m. US)

11/15 (T): Discussion on the reading/film

11/17 (TH): discussion and in-class activity

Reading for after the break: RR on identity, Marx, and the postmodern age (“The Matrix, Marx and the Coppertop’s Life,” by Martin Danahay and David Rieder; “The Matrix Simulation and the Postmodern Age,” by David Weberman)

WEEK 14

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 15

11/28 (M): **Annotated bibliography due.** Screening: *The Matrix* (1999, dir. the Wachowski brothers, 136 m. US)

11/29 (T): cont. screening followed by discussion

12/01 (TH): lecture and discussion

WEEK 16

12/05 (M): no screening

12/06 (T): **Research Paper workshop –draft due**

12/08 (TH): discussion, student evaluations

WEEK 17

Final Research Paper is due DECEMBER 15 (Th) @ 8:00 am (section 33)

Final Research Paper is due DECEMBER 15 (Th) @ 10:00 (section 34)