

MCS 207 – HISTORY OF CINEMA I: 1890-1945 / Fall 2014

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Office hours: Mon/Wed 10 – 11 am, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the history of cinema as one of the most influential cultural forms of the 20th Century. We will study the aesthetic and technological developments of cinema during its first 50 years, as well as examine the social and economic factors shaping its history. Initially influenced by other art forms (theater, literature, painting) filmmaking quickly acquired its own formal system, language, and traditions. We will trace the changing styles, techniques, content, and methods of filmmaking as an art form, as popular culture, and as an industry. We will consider how cinema is bound to its social context via audience relations, economics, technology, and ideology. The limited scope of this course will cover primarily feature-length, narrative films as the dominant mode of filmmaking, although we will also look at the development of documentary and experimental filmmaking. The class will consist of lectures, screenings, and discussions.

Learning Objectives:

- Become conversant in the development and debates about international film history during its first 50 years.
- Understand cinema's connection to social and political history.
- Identify how technological, economic, social and cultural factors transformed the medium.
- Understand the cultural and structural interrelations between the film industry in the US and other film industries.
- Discuss how issues of class, race, gender, sexuality and nation have determined the perspectives of films throughout film history.
- Develop critical reading and writing skills by engaging with a variety of readings, screenings, and class discussions.

GRADING:

The grading scale is as follows: 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 88-89 B+, 83-87 B, 80-82 B-, 78-79 C+, 73-77 C, 70-72 C-, 68-69, D+, 60-67 D, 0-59 F

Graded Course Activities:

Professionalism: 15% - *includes such things as contribution to class discussions, attendance/being on-time, engagement with class activities, etc. Also includes creating two discussion questions each week – one based on the current week's reading, and one based on the previous week's film. Questions must be submitted to the appropriate D2Lforum by 6 am the day of class in order to give me enough time to read and correlate.*

Midterm Exam (In-Class): 20% - *consists of matching, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and longer essay questions. It is designed to assess your knowledge and understanding of the course readings, screenings, and discussions. You will not be permitted to use written notes or any electronic devices in the exam.*

Quizzes: 10% - *There will be several short in-class quizzes throughout the quarter. The quizzes are designed to assess your understanding of material covered in the readings and to test whether you have been watching the films. Quiz dates will not be announced in advance.*

Presentation: 15% - *In the first few weeks of class, each student will be assigned a famous director, actor, etc. from the 55-year historical period of this course. After researching your subject, you will create a mock Q&A interview with your subject, and in a ten-minute presentation you will conduct your scripted interview in front of the class (I will ask the questions, you will answer them in the 'voice' of your subject). I will provide you with a thorough description of this assignment within the first few weeks of the quarter.*

Creative Assignment: 20% - *This assignment asks students to envision a new silent film in the original style of one of the periods/movements studied in class. The form that your assignment takes will be discussed with each individual student in class. You will receive a more thorough description of your options for this paper at least three weeks in advance of its due date.*

Analytical Paper: 20% - *For this paper you will analyze a film (or compare two films) in connection with the social and historical contexts in which the film(s) were produced and released. You will receive a more thorough description of your options for this paper at least three weeks in advance of its due date.*

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND FORMAT

Lecture/Discussion Sessions: Each session begins with a discussion of the film(s) viewed the previous week, in conjunction with the study questions that were distributed and the discussion questions created by students. This will be followed by lecture material synthesizing the topic of focus for that week. Lectures presentations will integrate visual materials such as film clips and photographs, and I will pose various discussion questions to you to create a participatory learning environment. We will incorporate a 20-minute break at the approximate half-way point of the class.

In selected weeks of the quarter following this discussion, students will give short presentations on selected topics.

Screening/Lab Sessions: All films are screened online on your time, available via links on D2L.

SYLLABUS POLICY

NOTE TAKING

Taking notes during the lecture/discussion periods and the weekly screening/lab sessions is a key part of succeeding in this course. You should write down more than just the key points listed in my Powerpoint slides and also add your own thoughts, questions and observations. The same is true during screenings of clips and films - you will probably not remember everything about them later unless you take notes as you watch. While taking notes in the dark while trying to watch the screen may seem difficult at first, it is a key skill for film students to learn and gets easier with practice.

CELLPHONES

With the exception of scheduled breaks, the use of cellphones not permitted in class, including screenings. Please turn off your cell phones prior to the start of class unless you have the permission of the instructor.

PREPARATION & READING STRATEGIES

Please complete all readings assigned for a given week prior to the start of class, so that you will already have a context for understanding the course material before we discuss it. I recommend taking notes while you read, such as key ideas and concepts, as well as making a list of questions

regarding aspects of the material that are unclear to you or that you find interesting, challenging or enlightening. Note that completing the readings prior to each class is part of your professionalism grade. If it becomes clear to me during class that you haven't done the readings you will lose part of that grade.

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is required. Promptness is expected as a general rule. If you are consistently late to class your grade will be negatively affected. Attending class means arriving on time and staying until class is finished. Arriving late to class or leaving class early will negatively affect your Professionalism grade, and two such instances will count as one absence. Changes in work schedules, personal celebrations (e.g., birthdays, etc.), assignments due in other classes, car problems/transit congestion, etc. are NOT considered to be legitimate reasons for being late/missing class/missing deadlines, etc. Please allow extra time in your travel schedule to accommodate things like transit delays, traffic, etc.

If you miss a class, even due to illness, I am not able to give you the lecture notes, so please make arrangements with someone in the class to get their notes from them.

You are allowed one unexcused absence in this class, and two absences total if at least one of those is excused (e.g., you have documentation about a medical illness/emergency, legal issue/civic responsibility, or due to an official DePaul function). Further absences will result in the following actions:

2 absences Professionalism marks lowered by two letter grade (i.e., A- => B)

3 absences Professionalism marks lowered by three letter grades (i.e., A- => B-)

Students who miss more than three days of class will receive a zero on their Professionalism grade.

MAKE-UP EXAMS, TESTS, QUIZZES, ETC.

There will be NO makeup tests, exams, presentations, quizzes or other class activities. If you miss a class activity you will receive zero marks. Exceptions may be made at the instructor's discretion for legitimate and unforeseen *documented* medical reasons or extenuating circumstances such as a death in the family or official DePaul function. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor immediately and make arrangements to provide any required documentation (I.e. a doctor's note, death certificate, etc.). Exceptions cannot be made if the student does not submit such documentation within a reasonable time frame.

Note that alternative arrangements for scheduled final exams will NOT be made for anything other than unforeseen *documented* medical reasons or extenuating circumstances such as a death in the family. Travel plans such as vacations, family functions, or the need to book a less expensive travel ticket are not

legitimate excuses and will not be accommodated. If you are unable to write an exam during the scheduled time you should choose another course that better fits your schedule.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS/DEADLINE

Assignments must be handed in on time, at the start of the class in which they are due. Assignments handed in after the start of class will be considered late. Late penalties will be applied at the instructor's discretion to any assignments handed in late. *You will lose one letter grade per day late on the assignment.*

Assignments that are more than one week late will NOT be accepted and you will receive a zero.

Please allow yourself sufficient time to complete the last-minute details and to arrive in class on time: late assignments due to computer and printing problems and transportation troubles will unfortunately not be exempt from receiving a late penalty.

All papers should be typed, double-spaced throughout the entire essay, and use a consistent style (e.g., MLA, APA, etc.). Use one-inch margins and 12-point font.

All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox, unless otherwise announced in class. Assignments will be automatically run through a plagiarism detector.

ACCOMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week or two of the course – note that accommodations cannot be made retroactively once assignments, exams etc. have already been completed) and be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)

#370, Student Center, LPC, [773.325.1677](tel:773.325.1677)

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR

Please respect the contributions of others in the classroom and/or online by not using insulting/inflammatory or discriminatory rhetoric. Class space (both in person and online) is intended to be a safe space for personal reflection and growth, so it is essential that the opinions of others be treated respectfully even if you do not agree with them. Students must therefore engage in respectful and professional in-class and online conduct (which also includes the use of proper grammar when replying online - I.e. please avoid excessive use of abbreviations, emoticons, etc. – full sentences should be used.)

When the instructor or another student is addressing the class, everyone else in the room is expected to listen attentively and to refrain from engaging in conversations or any other activities that constitute distractions. Students who do not abide by this guideline will not be permitted to continue with the course.

E-MAIL

I often send e-mail announcements to the class. You need to (1) make sure your preferred email address in Campus Connect is the address you check regularly so messages do not bounce back and (2) make sure my email address will pass through your spam filter. Please be aware that to avoid DePaul's spam filters, it is recommended that you send me messages using a DePaul email account, as messages sent through Hotmail, Yahoo and other such accounts regularly get quarantined.

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday to Friday. I do my best to respond to emails on the weekend, but this time is reserved first and foremost for my family, so cannot guarantee an immediate response. If you have not heard from me within this timeframe, you should assume that your email has not reached me and resend.

ONLINE EVALUATIONS

One of your responsibilities in this course is to complete an online teaching evaluation for this class. This course will be available for you to review during the 9th and 10th week of the quarter. Close to that time, you will receive a notification to this effect via email.

As instructors, we really appreciate learning what we are doing well in the classroom and where we can continue to improve. Your feedback really makes a difference.

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files,

audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." If you are unsure of how to cite a source, please ask!

Violations of DePaul's Academic Integrity Policy will be reported to the Academic Integrity Board. Violation will result in severe penalty, up to and including failure of the assignment/exam or the entire course, at the instructor's discretion.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETE (IN) GRADES

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four-week grace period before final degree certification.

ASSISTANCE WITH WRITING

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, and avoiding plagiarism, I encourage you to consult DePaul's Center for Writing-Based Learning. The center offers both on-campus and online tutoring. See <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week 1 (Sept 15) – The Invention and Early Years of Cinema

Screening:

Edison Kinetoscope Films (USA, 1894-1896),

Lumière Films (France, 1895-1897)

A Trip to the Moon (1902, Georges Melies)

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

Rescued by Rover (1905, Cecil M. Hepworth, 1905)

Dream of a Rarebit Fiend (1906, Edwin S. Porter)

Readings: Film History Ch. 1 & 2

Week 2 (Sept 22) – National Cinemas and the Invention of Film Language

Screening: *The Cheat* (1915, Cecil B. DeMille)

Clips from: *A Corner in Wheat* (1911, D.W. Griffith); *Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1921, D.W. Griffith); *Intolerance* (1916, D.W. Griffith)

Readings: Film History Ch. 3

Week 3 (Sept 29) – Hollywood Cinema of the 1920s

Screening: *Sherlock Jr.* (1924, Buster Keaton)

Clips From: *The Kid* (1920, Charlie Chaplin), *The Gold Rush* (1925, Charlie Chaplin), *Safety Last* (1923, Fred C. Newmeyer)

Readings: Film History Ch. 7

Week 4 (Oct 6) – German Expressionism

Screening: *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919, Robert Weine)

Clips From: *Nosferatu* (1922, F.W. Murnau), *The Last Laugh* (1924, F.W. Murnau), *Metropolis* (1927, Fritz Lang)

Readings: Film History Ch. 5

Week 5 (Oct 13) – French Impressionism, Surrealism and Soviet Formalism

Screening: *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929, Dziga Vertov)

Clips From: *Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928, Germaine Dulac), *Un Chien Andalou* (1929, Luis Bunuel), *Napolean* (Abel Gance), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925, Sergei Eisenstein), *October* (1928, Sergei Eisenstein)

Readings: Film History Ch. 4 & 6

Week 6 (Oct 20) – Documentary and Experimental Films

****In-Class Midterm Exam*

Screening: *Nanook of the North* (1922, Robert J. Flaherty)

Clips from: *Chang: A Dream of the Wilderness* (1927, Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Shoedsack), *The Life and Death of 9413, a Hollywood Extra* (1928, Robert Florey, Slavko Vorkapich), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928, James Sibley Watson, Melville Weber), *Hearts of Age* (1934, Orson Welles).

Readings: Film History Ch. 8 pp. 158-170 (“Film Experiments Outside the Mainstream Industry”), Ch. 14 pp. 282-286 (“Government and Corporate Sponsored Documentaries”), pp. 290-295 (“The International Experimental Cinema”)

Week 7 (Oct 27) – The Coming of Sound

Screening: *M* (1931, Fritz Lang)

Clips from: *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Blackmail* (1929, Alfred Hitchcock)

Readings: Film History Ch. 9

Week 8 (Nov 3) – The Classical Hollywood Studio System

Screening: *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935, James Whale)

Clips from: *Frankenstein* (1931, James Whale), *Footlight Parade* (1933, Lloyd Bacon)

Readings: Film History Ch. 10

*** *Creative Assignment Due*

Week 9 (Nov 10) – British Cinema of the 1930s

Screening: *The 39 Steps* (1935, Alfred Hitchcock)

Clips from: *Things to Come* (1936, William Cameron Menzies), *Night Mail* (1936)

Readings: Film History Ch. 11 pp.219-226 (“Quota Quickies and Wartime Pressures: The British Studios”)

Week 10 (Nov 17) – Wartime and Propaganda Cinemas

Screening: *Casablanca* (1942, Michael Curtiz)

Clips from: *Triumph of the Will* (1935, Leni Reifensthal), *The Great Dictator* (1940, Charlie Chaplin), *Why We Fight* (Frank Capra, 1942-1945), *Saboteur* (1942, Alfred Hitchcock)

Readings: Film History Ch. 14 pp. 277-282 (“The Spread of Political Cinema”); pp.286-290 (“Wartime Documentaries”)

****Analytical Paper Due*