

FTT 30101 Fall 2007
History of Film I

Prof. Christine Becker

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Office Hours: Tu-W-Th 3:30-4:30 or by appt.

This course provides you with an introduction to a half-century of world cinema history, from the medium's beginnings to 1948. The course is structured chronologically and draws on classical narrative, documentary and experimental cinema, focusing on moments in cinema's development which are particularly relevant from an historical perspective, be it aesthetic, social, technological and/or economic.

The goals of this course are to acquaint you with the events, causes and consequences of cinema history and to foster the critical thinking and writing skills necessary for assessing and advancing arguments about that history. Accordingly, a subsequent goal is for you to acquire the skills and tools you need to do historical research at a college level.

Class Meetings	Tu Th	11-12:15	DPAC Browning Cinema
Screenings	W	9:15-11	DPAC Browning Cinema

Required Texts

- Film History: An Introduction 2nd edition by Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell; available at Hammes Bookstore and many online bookstores
- Various articles available on the course's online Concourse space (oit.nd.edu/concourse)

Grading Breakdown

15% Class participation, preparation & quizzes
15% Analytical essay (due Sept. 25)
20% Midterm (Oct. 9)
10% Creative writing essay (due Oct. 16)
20% Research paper (Nov. 20)
20% Final exam (Dec. 17, 10:30am)

A Few Basics

- Attendance during class and during screenings is an essential component of this course. Therefore, each absence beyond two for the class and one for the screening will lower your participation grade by one level (A- to B+, B to B-, etc.). The automatic "excused" absences are designed to allow for illness and unforeseen circumstances, so use them wisely and plan ahead. While I take attendance when class starts, you are responsible for making sure I know you were there if you arrive late and for signing an attendance sheet at screening.
- Readings should be completed on the assigned day. Read closely and take notes; if you do not understand elements of the reading, please ask questions in class or come to my office hours with your questions.
- The following are requirements for attending screenings:
 - Arrive on time so as not to miss the opening credits or create a disturbance for others.

- Remain quiet during the screening. Don't talk or make other excessive noise.
- If you take notes on your laptop during screening, sit in the back row so you don't distract anyone.
- You are expected to watch the films carefully from beginning to end, and you will be tested specifically on them. It is recommended that you take notes on the films so as to be able to remember details about the use of style and narrative structure; these notes will be helpful for purposes of discussion and in preparing for exams, quizzes, and papers. If you are confused by anything in the films, do not hesitate to bring up your questions in class. Films are made to be talked about, so come to class prepared to discuss your experience of the films.
- Come to class prepared to discuss both assigned readings and screenings. Participation is an essential part of the course, so you should be prepared to be an active member of the class. That doesn't mean you absolutely have to speak each day, though your vocal participation certainly makes class time more fruitful for all. But you can also participate through attentive listening, coming to my office hours, and asking questions and making comments through e-mail. Any evidence which shows you are engaged in the issues of the course counts as participation.
- All of the PowerPoint slides I use during class will be available to you on the course's Concourse space, usually by the morning of each class session. Please note that the slides do not contain everything you need to know for the course. In fact, they don't even contain half of what you need to know—I only use them when I have a bunch of info that easily lends itself to bullet-pointing. So don't feel that you can nap through lectures since the PowerPoint slides will be available; they are merely there to facilitate your note-taking.
- Make-up exams are only possible for emergency medical reasons or if okayed by your college dean. If you know you will be absent on an exam day, you will most likely need to take this course during a different semester. Also, I do not offer make-ups for quizzes; I do, however, drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester.

Paper Policies

Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the designated due date to qualify for full credit. For each day that a paper is late, its grade will drop a grade level. Outside of a documented emergency, I cannot give full credit on late papers. Papers will be dated based on when I have them in my hands; therefore, you are best off handing your paper to me in person rather than dropping it in my mailbox. If you hand in a paper to my mailbox or e-mail it to me, it is your responsibility to confirm that I received it on time. "You mean you didn't get my paper? I e-mailed it to you but must have sent it to the wrong address" is not an acceptable reason for a late paper.

All work submitted for this class—papers, exams, quizzes—must be completed on your own and reflect your own ideas and efforts. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, copying, and other forms of cheating will result in academic failure. Plagiarism is any instance of offering the words or ideas of others as your own, whether those ideas are from print sources, web sources, or your peers. Check the student handbook for University policies, and review the Honor Code at www.nd.edu/~hnr/code; I will follow the policies and procedures outlined therein.

Note: There are two additional films being screened in 35mm at the DPAC Browning Cinema outside of our regular lab time that you are required to attend: *The General* on Sunday, Sept. 16 at 4pm and *Grand Illusion* on Sunday, Nov. 4 at 4pm. Keep in mind that there is a \$3 admission

charge for students. If you have an unavoidable conflict and can't attend either or both screenings, first let me know, and then watch the film(s) in the library.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Aug. 28-30) Introduction to Early Cinema

For Tues: Read the syllabus

NO SCREENING

For Thurs: Film History (FH): Ch. 1; Concourse: Gunning, "Animated Pictures"

Week 2 (Sept. 4-6) From Attraction to Narration

For Tues: FH: Ch. 2; Concourse: Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction"

SCREENING: Various Early Films

For Thurs: FH: pp37-54; Concourse: Gunning, "Weaving a Narrative"

Week 3 (Sept. 11-13) The Rise of the Feature Film

For Tues: FH: pp33-37 & Ch. 3

SCREENING: *Les Vampires*, Ep. 2: "The Ring That Kills" (Louis Feuillade, 1915, 13m)

Daddy Long Legs (Marshall Neilan, 1919, 85m)

For Thurs: Concourse: deCordova, "Emergence of the Star System in America"

*****REQUIRED EXTRA SCREENING:**

Sunday, Sept. 16, 4pm: *The General* (Buster Keaton, 1928, 75m)

Week 4 (Sept. 18-20) Animation, Slapstick Comedy and the Classical Hollywood Cinema

For Tues: FH: Ch. 7

SCREENING: *His Wooden Wedding* (Leo McCarey, 1925, 19m)

The Kid (Charles Chaplin, 1921, 50m)

For Thurs: Concourse: Don Crafton, "Pie and Chase"

Week 5 (Sept. 25-27) Germany and France in the 20s

For Tues: FH: Ch. 5

****ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE in class on Sept. 25

SCREENING: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1919, 72m)

Menilmontant (Dmitri Kirsanoff, 1926, 37m)

For Thurs: FH: Ch. 4

Week 6 (Oct. 2-4) The Soviet Union and the European Avant-Garde in the 20s

For Tues: FH: Ch. 6; Concourse: Kuleshov, "Americanitis"

SCREENING: *Ballet mécanique* (Dudley Murphy/Fernand Léger, 1924, 11m)

Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925, 77m)

For Thurs: FH: pp167-184; Concourse: Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot"

Week 7 (Oct. 9-11) Midterm & Historiography

For Tues: ****MIDTERM EXAM

SCREENING: *Sunrise* (F.W. Murnau, 1927, 95m)

For Thurs: FH: pp1-10; Concourse: Allen and Gomery, "Case Study: The Background of *Sunrise*;" Bergstrom, "Murnau, Movietone and Mussolini"

Week 8 (Oct. 16-18) Library Visit & The Transition to Sound in Europe

For Tues: Library Visit

****CREATIVE WRITING ESSAY due October 16

SCREENING: *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931, 110m)

For Thurs: FH: pp200-212

FALL BREAK: Oct. 20-28

Week 9 (Oct. 30-Nov. 1) The Transition to Sound in the U.S.

For Tues: FH: pp193-200

SCREENING: *Trouble in Paradise* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932, 82m)

For Thurs: Concourse: “The Don’ts and Be Carefuls” and “The 1930 Prod. Code”

******REQUIRED EXTRA SCREENING:**

Sunday, Nov. 4, 4pm: *Grand Illusion* (Jean Renoir, 1937, 114m)

Week 10 (Nov. 6-8) The Hollywood Studio System: Studio, Genre, Star

For Tues: FH: Ch. 10

SCREENING: *Marked Woman* (Lloyd Bacon, 1937, 99m)

For Thurs: Concourse: Klapat, “The Star as Market Strategy”

Week 11 (Nov. 13-15) Other Studio Systems: Japan and Britain

For Tues: FH: Ch. 11

SCREENING: *Sisters of the Gion* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1936, 69m)

For Thurs: Concourse: Bordwell, “Visual Style in Japanese Cinema, 1925-1945”

Week 12 (Nov. 20) Prewar and Wartime European Cinema

For Tues: FH: Ch. 13

****Research Paper Due on Nov. 20

Thanksgiving Break

Week 13 (Nov. 27-29) Wartime Narrative and Documentary

For Tues: FH: pp271-276

SCREENING: *Listen to Britain* (Humphrey Jennings and Stewart McAllister, 1942, 18m)

Memphis Belle (William Wyler, 1944, 45m)

The Battle of San Pietro (John Huston, 1945, 33m)

For Thurs: FH: pp309-316; Doherty, “Government Work”

Week 14 (Dec. 4-6) Italian Cinema During and After WWII

For Tues: FH: pp276-282, pp353-359

SCREENING: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948, 89m)

For Thurs: FH: pp359-369; Bazin, “*Bicycle Thief*”

Week 15 (Dec. 11) Leftovers, Wrap-Up, and Final Exam Review

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 17th, 10:30am