

English 432.002, History and Aesthetics of Film  
Gerald Duchovnay Spring 2013 TR 2-4:20, HL 203  
Office: Hall of Languages 326  
Office Hours: TH, 10:15-11, 12:15-1:45; T, 4:30-5:00. Other times by appointment.  
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**Course Description:** English 432 is an introduction to world film history. This semester we will look at several important aspects of film history through representative films from several countries in various decades. As we proceed, we will consider the connections between technology, business, culture, and motion picture history. In addition, we will talk about ways of looking at film from a variety of perspectives (aspects of the "aesthetics" of the course title). This course will give you a sense of some of the various collaborators involved in the filmmaking process, but no background in film studies or filmmaking is needed for this course.

Since the early twentieth century, many thousands of feature films have been made, as well as countless documentaries, shorts, and experimental and avant-garde films. I do not claim to know all of the films made. You may very well be familiar with movies that I or others in the class have not heard of or seen. Don't hesitate to make references to those movies in class. If things go according to schedule, we will have the opportunity to see more than a dozen historically and culturally significant feature films as well as clips, shorts, and some documentaries. There are thousands of titles we might see and discuss in the history of film, but we will be able to consider only a representative number of significant films.

The textbooks for this course are a short, readable history of U.S. and international cinema and *The A List*, which includes reviews of 100 important films. The history contains many more names and terms than you can reasonably expect to internalize in one semester. I will on occasion give you some study questions related to the text and films, and a list of names and terms to know that come from our readings, discussions, and viewings; this material should also serve as a solid foundation for learning about key aspects of the development of film history and for preparing for the examinations. Please keep up with the reading assignments and bring questions about the material to class. Also, familiarize yourself with the layout of the text, the timelines, glossary, bibliographies, index, and illustrations. These are valuable aids. The *A List* will complement the viewings and offer some suggestions for films for your papers.

You are welcome and encouraged to see as many films as you can on your own. In addition to our discussions, you will have an opportunity to explore aspects of film history in two short papers. Your findings for these papers will be shared with the class through either abstracts or summaries or brief oral presentations. The oral presentations are an excellent way to develop presentation skills; they also introduce us to films that we might not otherwise discuss or see. The exact nature of the two film papers will be discussed in class, but the first one may be focused on films from a specific decade (prior to the mid-term) and the second paper may be on a specific decade, a particular genre or theme, or some other aspect of film history.

### **Student learning outcomes:**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history of motion pictures related to significant U.S. and international cinema;
2. Students will demonstrate skills in visual literacy – being able to read films – in more significant ways than before this class;
3. Students will demonstrate a familiarity with ways of discussing and evaluating films as reflections of cultures and periods of history;
4. Students will participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative or character.

**Evaluations:** Grades will be determined by two examinations, two short papers, class participation, response to study questions, and brief oral presentations or abstracts on your papers. **Honors students** will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography to accompany one of the two papers that will include, minimally, three substantive reviews of the movie (350+ words) and a minimum of ten substantive scholarly/academic sources related to the film under discussion. No Wikipedia or general encyclopedias or dictionaries.



Our word plagiarism is derived from a word that means "to kidnap." Plagiarism is a form of kidnapping someone else's ideas, opinions, arguments, or research, and presenting them (it) as your own. Plagiarism "includes (but is not limited to) failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted: 1. A phrase, written or musical; 2. A graphic element; 3. A proof; 4. Specific language; 5. An idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person" or group.

Much of the confusion and unintentional dishonesty in undergraduate papers results from ignorance or carelessness with regard to attribution of sources. When you borrow from what others have said, you are obligated to acknowledge your sources. We all solicit opinions about our writing from family, friends, or colleagues. Your indebtedness to others for sharing ideas with you about your paper or for reading and commenting on it can be indicated in an acknowledgements page accompanying each formal assignment. If you go beyond conversations with friends or colleagues to other outside sources, you need to acknowledge these sources in your paper and in a Works Cited page. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see your instructor before you submit your paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and appropriate disciplinary action.

**Textbooks:** Giannetti, Louis and Scott Eyman. *Flashback: A Brief History of Film*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2010. ISBN 9780205695904  
Carr, Jay. Ed. *The A-List*. Cambridge, MA: DeCapo, 2003. ISBN 9780306810961

Highly Recommended--for quick overview of films and listings of directors and actors and other information-- Maltin, Leonard. *Movie and Video Guide*, 2013. New York: Signet, 2012; or, *Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever*, 2013. Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2012. A useful collection of interviews with filmmakers is: Duchovnay, Gerald, ed. *Film Voices*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2004, but there are other such collections of interviews with filmmakers.

**Common Decency:** All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. In addition, you are requested to turn off your cell phones before entering the classroom. ***Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. And no text messaging in class.*** I, too, will try to remember to turn off my cell phone. If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know ahead of time, put your phone on vibrator mode, and sit close to the exit so you can leave discreetly to take the call.

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services / Texas A&M University-Commerce / Gee Library, Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148

**The Writing Center.** The Writing Center is dedicated to helping writers take advantage of all opportunities for learning related to the writing process; to that end, the Center can assist writers at any stage of the writing process. In addition to your instructor, this is the place to go for additional assistance with your reading and writing projects at TAMU-Commerce. The Center can help you with your papers and digital texts for your classes. The Center is on the ground floor of the Hall of Languages (room 103), and maybe available on line or at the Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280 to check out the hours or to see if there is on-line assistance available. DON'T, though, wait until the last minute to get assistance.

**Teacher Certification:** A number of you may be seeking certification to teach. *If you plan to seek certification in English, Spanish, Bilingual, an endorsement in ESL, or in other areas at TAMU-C, you must pass the required tests.* You should contact the appropriate certification advisor in your discipline by the beginning of your junior year, if not sooner. If you plan to be certified or pursue Alternate Certification to teach in the public schools, you need to become familiar with all the details of the competencies and requirements as early as possible in your academic career. Read: ACT NOW.

**Class Schedule:** The key words here are tentative and flexibility. We meet only twice a week and will need to make very good use of all available class and lab time (viewing films or film clips). My presentations will involve some lecturing, but primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing. I hope to show one feature per week, as well as film clips. Because of logistics, availability, time constraints, the failure of technology, possible guests, and your preferences, we may make changes as we progress during the semester, especially when we get to the second half of the semester. The titles are suggestive, not definitive.

**Key Dates: First set of Orals-- Feb. 21-Feb. 28, 2013**

**Paper 1 Due - Feb. 28, 2013**

**Mid-term-- March 7, 2013**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Oral Report-- April 25-May 2, 2013**

**Paper 2 Due --April 30, 2013**

**Final Exam, Tuesday, May 7, 1:15-4:00 pm, HL 203**

### Week 1

1/15	Course Introduction: Overview Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 1	<b>ALL FILMS LISTED ARE TENTATIVE</b> <i>Precious Images</i> /movie (clip) clip – reading movies
1/17	How Do We Read Films? The Beginnings of Cinema History Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 2 <i>AL, Birth of a Nation</i>	Lumières, Méliès, Porter,

### Week 2

1/22	Comments on Early Cinema Griffith, Racism, & the Grammar of Film Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 3; <i>AL, The General</i>	Griffith Early Shorts Movies that Shook the World: <i>BON</i>
1/24	Film Comedy: Chaplin <i>et al</i> Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 4,, 57-68; <i>AL, Battleship Potemkin, Man with a Movie Camera</i>	<i>Silent Clowns</i> (clips)/comedy overview <i>Gold Rush</i> (1925) or Chaplin/Keaton

### Week 3

1/29	Early Comedy Montage/Soviet Cinema Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , 57-68 (again) <i>AL: Nosferatu, Sunrise, Metropolis, M</i>	<i>Odessa Steps</i> sequence +
1/31	German Cinema Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , 50-55, Chapter 6 <i>AL, Singin' in the Rain, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Top Hat, Frankenstein, Bride of Frankenstein</i>	<i>Nosferatu</i> or <i>Metropolis</i> or <i>Caligari</i>

### Week 4

2/5	Coming of Sound/Studio System/Stars Genre Films & Star System Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 5 <i>AL: Dance Girl Dance, Double Indemnity, Bank Dick</i>	<i>Jazz Singer</i> (clips)/Musicals (clips) Busby Berkeley (clips) Star System (doc)
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2/7	Paper Topics / Studio System Gangsters, Comedy, and Class Distinctions Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 8 AL, <i>Citizen Kane</i> , <i>Maltese Falcon</i> , <i>Casablanca</i>	<i>It Happened One Night</i> or <i>Public Enemy</i> or <i>Bringing Up Baby</i>
<u>Week 5</u>		
2/12	The 40s Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 10	Film Noir Doc
2/14	A Film Classic of the 40s Read: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 10, again AL: <i>All About Eve</i> , <i>Sunset Blvd</i> , <i>Night of the Hunter</i> <i>The Searchers</i> , <i>Jailhouse Rock</i>	<i>Casablanca</i> , <i>Maltese Falcon</i> , or <i>Citizen Kane</i>
<u>Week 6</u>		
2/19	Discussion of Film Classic The 50s: Who Says There are No Good Films? Read for Next Time AL: <i>High Noon</i> , <i>On the Waterfront</i> , <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> , <i>Rebel without a Cause</i> , <i>Touch of Evil</i>	Film from 50s--TBA
2/21	Post War Malaise: The 50s /HUAC / Blacklisting	Some <b>Oral Reports</b> + <i>The Front</i> or Doc on HUAC
<u>Week 7</u>		
2/26	Oral Presentations	Orals
2/28	Oral Presentations	Orals
<u>Week 8</u>		
3/5	Looking Back: Capturing the Ethos	
3/7	<b>Mid-Semester Examination</b>	
<u>Week 9</u>		
	Spring Break 3/12 & 3/14 Read for Next Class Meeting: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 9, 168-176 AL: <i>Open City</i> , <i>Children of Paradise</i> , <i>La Strada</i> , <i>La Dolce Vita</i>	
<u>Week 10</u>		
3/19	Italian Neo-Realism Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> : Chpt 13, 245-256 AL, <i>Breathless</i> , <i>400 Blows</i>	<i>Open City</i> or <i>Bicycle Thief</i>
3/21	French New Wave Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 12 AL, <i>Psycho</i> , <i>The Graduate</i> , <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i>	<i>400 Blows</i> or <i>Breathless</i>
<u>Week 11</u>		
3/26	Influences of International Cinema Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 12; (again) AL, <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> , <i>Easy Rider</i> , <i>The Wild Bunch</i> , 2001	TBA
3/28	The Sixties Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback</i> , Chpt 14 AL: <i>The Godfather</i> , <i>The Exorcist</i> , <i>Chinatown</i>	<i>The Graduate</i> or <i>Bonnie &amp; Clyde</i>

<u>Week 12</u> 4/2	Sixties and Seventies Read for Next Time:AL: <i>Godfather, Pt2, Nashville, Annie Hall, Killer of Sheep, Close Encounters, Star Wars</i>	<i>Days of Heaven</i>
4/4	Sixties and Seventies Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback: Chpt 14 (again)</i>	<i>Chinatown, or All the President's Men, or One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
<u>Week 13</u> 4/9	The Seventies: The Great Decade? Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback, Chpt 17</i>	
4/11	International Cinema	<i>My Brilliant Career/Chariots of Fire, or?</i>
<u>Week 14</u> 4/16	New Directions /International Cinema Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback, Chpt. 19</i> AL: <i>Ju Dou, Close Up, The Piano, Happy Together</i>	TBA
4/18	International Cinema Read for Next Time: <i>Flashback, Chpt 16</i>	<i>Run Lola Run or?</i>
<u>Week 15</u> 4/23	Cinema from the 80s On	TBA
4/25	The Eighties from Your Eyes Oral Presentations Begin	some oral presentations
<u>Week 16</u> 4/30	Oral Reports/ Abstracts Due— <b>PAPER #2 DUE--2 Copies</b> Study Questions for Final	Oral Reports
5/2	Oral Reports/course evaluations (on-line)	Oral Reports
<u>Week 17</u>	<b>Final Examination:</b> Tues, 5/7	1:15-4:00, HL 203