

English 530.001 (22582), History of Narrative Film
Professor Gerald Duchovnay
Spring 2015, Tues 4:30-7:10, HL 203
Office: Hall of Languages 326
Office Hours: TH, 12:30-2:00, 7:20-8:20pm. Other times by appointment.
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Course Description: English 530, History of Narrative Film, will examine the development of key moments and representative films in U.S. and international film history from the last one hundred and twenty years. In the U.S. and abroad, this period has produced thousands of feature films and documentaries that entertained, educated, and created history and myths about people and cultures. If things go according to schedule, we will have the opportunity to see segments of, or complete features, of a dozen historically and culturally significant films as well as clips, shorts, and segments of some documentaries in class. You will also be asked to view some films outside of class.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an awareness of a key films and film movements in narrative film history;
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of or greater awareness of film concepts (i.e., the "grammar of film") related to films viewed, readings, and discussions;
3. Students will produce texts that demonstrate visual literacy (essays, responses, oral presentations);
4. Students will participate in a community interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative and character.

Related Course Objectives:

- To become more knowledgeable in various ways of "reading" film aesthetics;
- To become more skilled in understanding the arc of narrative film history;
- To become familiar with key aspects of film aesthetics as reflected in individual films;
- To prepare a thoughtful conference- or journal-ready study of some aspect of one or more films.

Textbook: *The Cinema Book*. 3rd Ed. Ed. Pam Cook. London: Palgrave/Macmillan & BFI, 2007. ISBN 978-1-84457-193-2. Maybe be supplemented with handouts or other assigned readings.

Other readings in Gerald Mast and Bruce Kawin, *A Short History of the Movies*, 11th edition, at the reserve desk, Gee Library, under English 530.

For brief summaries, credits, actors, directors, and reviews of particular films, you might want to start with: Imdb.com (Internet Movie database.com)

For other useful film textbooks (on reserve):

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13th edition. Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice-Hall, 2014. A very readable overview of what to consider with regard to sound, photography, editing, movement, acting, writing, ideology and the like in film studies.

Giannetti, Louis and Scott Eyman. *Flashback: A Brief History of Film*. 6th Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2010. On reserve. Breaks down film history into decades, U.S. and International. Good for an overview of the decades and film history.

Gee Library/Reserves: A number of film books related to film history and film theory can be found on my reserve lists for English 530 and English 432.

Attendance: Please try to attend all classes. Without being in class you lose the benefit of participating or listening to responses to the films. However, if you are sick, contagious, or been with others who have been and you consider yourself a carrier of disease, don't come to class. There has been enough illness going around even before our semester begins. Unless there are meaningful reasons for your absences, class absences will have a negative effect on the evaluation of classroom participation. Absences in excess of three will contribute to the lowering of your grade. After six absences you will be dropped from the class. If there are truly extraordinary circumstances, it is incumbent upon you to notify me about your situation to see if you are able to remain in the class. *It is my understanding that those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid.*

We meet only once a week, and it is unlikely that material shown in class will be re-shown at a future time. Some of the films we will be seeing are on DVD and are available from Youtube, Netflix, Hastings, or other sources (including your classmates). Some, by coincidence, may be shown on various movie channels such as Turner Classic Movies, Showtime, or Cinemax. Remember that those presented with commercials may be edited for tv, and even, occasionally, stations without commercials may edit a film for content, length, or format. Some of the films may be available at the Media Center on campus. (This is also a place to study films for your work if the films are on DVD and you do not have access to equipment.) I encourage you to view a film more than once. As you read about film history, you will discover how filmmakers such as Tarantino, Scorsese, Truffaut, Godard and countless others came to film by carefully watching films, some as many as twenty times or more.

Evaluations: Grades will be determined by periodic responses to films or readings, an extended or synthesized response to a few questions about the films and readings (shortly after midterm), either one paper (8-10 pages) suitable for conference presentation or a draft of a scholarly article (18-24 pages), an annotated bibliography accompanying the final paper (to include a minimum of ten sources, plus three substantive reviews—350 words or more), class participation, and one or two oral presentations. The presentation(s) will serve as an introduction to a film or film movement, or some key aspect of narrative cinema.

Percentages for evaluation: Final Paper: 25%; Annotated Bibliography: 15%; Responses: *20%; Mid Semester Response: 20%; Oral presentation(s): *10%; Class Participation: *10%. (*Weight of these percentages will vary depending upon the number of responses assigned, the number of oral presentations, and other factors that we will discuss as a group.)

Final Examination: Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, there will be no final examination in this course, although there might be a final response, or we may move some presentations to finals week.

Presentations and Final Paper: As I envision the presentations, each of you will do a brief commentary on one film or film movement we will be considering during the semester and lead a discussion. This may occur either before we see a film (in or out of class) or after we have seen it. The nature of the second presentation will be determined at a later date.

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.* 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. One exception: If you are using your phone or tablet to assist in the work we are doing in class, then it can remain on.

Procedure 34.05.99.R1 now prohibits the use of vapor/electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco inside and adjacent to any building owned, leased, or operated by A&M – Commerce.

Please be sure to send an email to or make an appointment with your graduate director regarding your degree program to ensure that you are on the right track. It is especially important to remember the 12-hour rule: students will lose anything over 12 hours if they have not been fully admitted into a degree program or if they change their program.

Doctoral students should contact Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom at <Donna.Dunbar-Odom@tamuc.edu>

Master's-English students should contact Dr. Susan Stewart at <Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu>

Master's-Applied Linguistics (TESOL) students should contact Dr. Lucy Pickering at <Lucy.Pickering@tamuc.edu>

Master's-Spanish students should contact Dr. Flavia Belpoliti at <Flavia.Belpoliti@tamuc.edu>

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.

Class Schedule: The key words here are tentative and flexibility. We meet only once a week and will need to make very good use of all available class time. Primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing. I hope we can see one feature or part of a feature each week, and have presentations on each one. 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.

Read--if possible--Before First Class Meeting, Cook, Chpt 1, pp. 3-48. Be ready to discuss and ask questions about terms/ideas presented. Note: The primary textbook for the course does not present material in a linear fashion. As a result, as we move through the semester and as we see films and film clips, the actual order of the readings might change and you will be provided with a

revised reading schedule. These readings will be supplemented by Mast and Cook and possibly other supplemental readings.

Week 1

1/20 Course Introduction: Overview *These Amazing Shadows* or similar doc or clip
 Read for Next Time: Cook, 3-48 (if not completed before class meets), 387-389, 410-445; Mast and Kawin, 10-67
 See for next time on youtube:
 Early Cinema: *You Tube; Lumiere Bros First Film; Méliès, Voyage to the Moon; Smashing Pumpkins, Tonight, Tonight; watch clips or entire film--Scorsese's Hugo; Edwin S. Porter, The Great Train Robbery and Porter's, Life of an American Fireman*

Week 2

1/27 Discussion: Early Cinema: The Pioneers
 Read for Next Time: Mast and Kawin, 67-99, 101-168

Week 3

2/3 Auteurs and Early Cinema
 Read for Next Time: Cook, 192-202, 207-216, 244-248;
 Mast and Kawin, 169-191, 193-218

Week 4

2/10 International Influences (Germany, Russia)

Read for Next Time: Cook, 139-166

Week 5

2/17 Technology and the Revolution of Sound
 Read for Next Time: Cook, 110-126, 333-366

Week 6

2/24 Hollywood & the Studio System and Film Genres
 Read for Next Time: Cook, 252-270, 277-297, 374-384

Week 7

3/3 Hollywood & the Studio System and Film Genres

Read for Next Time: Cook, 305-332

Week 8

3/10 The War and *Film Noir* and its Aftermath

No additional readings

Week 9--

3/17 Spring Break

Read for Next Class Meeting: Cook, 231-244, 217-224;

Mast and Kawin, 357-412, 413-422

Mid-semester Substantive Response Due 3/24

Week 10

3/24 International Cinemas/ Challenges to the U.S. Industry

Read for Next Time: Cook, 126-135, Mast and Kawin, 485-527

Week 11

3/31 Major Changes in Hollywood

Read for Next Time: Mast and Kawin, 585-631

Week 12

4/7 Major Changes in Hollywood: New Hollywood & Genres Reborn?

Read for Next Time: Cook, 83-87, 175-196, 224-228

- Week 13
4/14 Hollywood's Competition: The Overseas Market
Read for Next Time: Cook, 49-74, 168-174, 202-206
Mast and Kavin, 548-554, 384-406
- Week 14
4/21 New Audiences: International Cinema vs American Imperialism
Due Next Class: Annotated Bibliography
- Week 15
4/28 Submission of Annotated Bibliography
**Presentations?
- Week 16 5/5 Presentations + Final Papers Due
- Week 17 5/12 **Finals Week--Some of the final presentations
may occur during this class/exam time.

Jan. 15, 2015