Film History

Dr. Ethan Thompson

COMM 3302.001

Fall 2011

Class Meets: MW 2-3:15, W 7-9:30 pm, CCH 118
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Office Hours: MTWR 11-2
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Catalog Course Description:
Development of the motion picture, 1895 to the present, with an emphasis on the narrative fictional film.

Course Objectives:

After taking this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify key films and filmmakers from 1895 to the present
- Explain how these films and filmmakers illustrate major cinematic styles and movements
- Explain how the films, styles, and movements are symptomatic of technological, social, and artistic influences

Required Course Text:


Course Blog: http://tamuccfilmculture.blogspot.com

Evaluation:
- **Paper**: (About 5 - 7 pages): 15%. Historical film analysis, details to come.
- **Supplemental Screening Blog**: 15%. You will be required to watch three supplemental screenings over the course of the semester and post an approximate 500-700 word response to each relating the film to course material and including some of your personal reactions to the film. List of possible films to come. At least one must be done prior to the midterm.
- **Weekly Quizzes**: 20%. On readings and lectures.
- **Midterm Exam**: 20% (Multiple choice and Essay)
- **Final Exam**: 20% (Multiple choice and Essay)
- **Attendance & Participation**: 10%. Based on classroom attendance and participation, as well as commenting upon blog posts.

Grade Scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and under.

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**Course Policies**

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory. Two absences are acceptable, but any additional unexcused absence will cause a five-point deduction from your attendance and participation grade, and you may not make up any missed work. Excused absences require official documentation. Two “lates” (more than five minutes after class starts) equal an absence.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and further disciplinary action.

**Dropping a Class**

Events sometimes occur that make dropping a course seem necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**Classroom/Professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Additionally, students are expected to:

1. **Silence and put away cell phones.** Texting (including the reading of texts!) is not allowed in class. Your social life will survive until the break, I promise.
2. **Come to class on-time.** Do not get up and leave early.
3. **Participate in class discussions.** In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion. You will not get an “A” if you do not regularly contribute to class discussion in a productive manner.
4. **Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.**
5. **Complete readings and assignments as assigned.** All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed. Exams may not be rescheduled. Do not make travel plans that conflict with exams.
6. **Type and proofread all written work before turning it in.** Really.
7. **Seek help with writing if necessary.** The Writing Center of TAMU-CC, located in GSSC 112, provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. More information is available at the Center for Academic Student Achievement website, casa.tamucc.edu.
8. **Properly cite sources.** Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and further disciplinary action. A useful guide to citing references in APA style is located at http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm.
9. **Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students.** I expect students to participate in discussion, and I expect students to respect each other’s (hopefully well-informed) opinions. Grades and course performance are considered private information. Students are not to openly to discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
10. **Meet with the instructor during office hours.** I will not discuss individual student grades in the classroom. I will, however, be happy to discuss grades on papers, exams, course performance, etc. during office hours. I also do not allow the following topics to be openly discussed in the classroom: student opinions about other faculty, student opinions about other students, student grades in other classes.
**Notice to Students with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

*** Grade Appeal Process.*** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Course Schedule

You are expected to have done the reading by the day it is assigned.

Week 1: Wed. 8/24. Introduction: What is Film History?
Screening: *Before the Nickelodeon*, Assorted Melies and other shorts.

Week 2: Filmmaking as Global Business & Cinema of Attractions
Mon: 8/29: Ch. 1
Wed: 8/31: Ch. 2
Screening: *Intolerance* (Griffith, 1916)

Week 3: Development of Hollywood Style
Mon: HOLIDAY
Wed: 9/7: Ch. 3
Screening: *Sherlock Jr.* (Keaton, 1924) and *The Gold Rush* (Chaplin, 1925)

Week 4: 1920s: Here & Abroad
Mon: 9/12: German Expressionism, Ch. 5
Wed: 9/14: Silent Hollywood, Ch. 7
Screening: *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922)

Week 5: 1920s: Soviet Filmmaking & International Trends
Mon: 9/19: Ch. 6
Wed: 9/21: Ch. 8
Screening: *Potemkin* (Eisenstein, 1926)

Week 6: Censorship & Transition to Sound
Mon: 9/26: Ch. 9
Wed: 9/28: Ch. 10
Screening: *Blonde Venus* (von Sternberg, 1932)

Week 7: Studio and Star Systems
Mon: 10/3: Ch. 11
Wed: 10/5: Ch. 12 & 13

Screening: *Sullivan’s Travels* (Sturges, 1941)

Week 8: World War II Here and Abroad
Mon: 10/10: Ch. 15
Wed: 10/12: **MIDTERM**

Screening: *Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1941)

Week 9: Art Cinema & Auteurs
Mon: 10/17: Ch. 16
Wed: 10/19: Ch. 17

Screening: *Shadows* (Cassavettes, 1959)

Week 10: Postwar International Cinema
Mon: 10/24: Ch. 18
Wed: 10/26: Ch. 19

Screening: *Umberto D* (DeSica, 1952)

Week 11: French New Wave and Political Modernism
Mon: 10/31: Ch. 20
Wed: 11/2: Ch. 21

Screening: *Masculin/Feminin* (Godard, 1966)

Week 12: Hollywood Renaissance and Counter-Cinema
Mon: 11/7: Ch. 22
Wed: 11/9: Ch. 23

Screening: *Bonnie and Clyde* (Penn, 1967)

Mon: 11/14: Ch. 24
Wed: 11/16: Ch. 25
Screening: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981)

**Week 14: Independent Cinema**

Mon: 11/21. Ch. 28

Wed: 11/23 **PAPER DUE**

Screening: *Blood Simple* (Coen Bros., 1984)

**Week 15: Global Markets**

Mon: 11/28: Ch. 29

Wed: 11/30: Ch. 30

Screening: *The Killer* (Woo, 1989)

**Week 16: Conclusion**

Mon: 12/5

**FINAL EXAM 1:45-4:15, MON. 12/12.**