

COM 320--History of the Moving Image

Dr. Kim Neuendorf

Fall 2009

Office: MU 241, 687-3994

Class: MU 107, 10:00-11:50 am, Tu & Th

Office Hrs.: Tu & Th 1:00-3:00
and by appointment

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Course Objectives

This course is primarily an historical study of the techniques of silent and sound film in their social, economic, historical, and technological contexts. Films and videos from 1895 through the present time will be examined, with a consideration of both American and international sources. The interplay of influences between film and early U.S. television will also be considered. Like COM 221 (Introduction to Film), the course will use a variety of perspectives with which to critically examine films of this period: the development of a "language" of film, the film industry and its legal environment, film as social agent, film as artistic endeavor, critical theories for analyzing film, film genres, role portrayals, and the important "players" in the making of film. COM 221 is a prerequisite for this course.

Writing Across the Curriculum

As of Fall, 2008, this course counts as a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course. Thus, word minimums for papers and other assignments need to be enforced.

As a course approved for the WAC requirement, this course meets the following criteria:

1. Require students to write between 3,000 and 5,000 words (10-20 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in writing assignments (which may include drafts).¹
2. Final versions of at least one assignment should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).²
3. Teach students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences.³ Whenever possible, planning assignments (e.g. reading logs, pre-writing strategies) and peer reviews should be included.
4. Assign writing complex enough to require substantive revision for most students. The instructor should give feedback to assist students in preparing subsequent papers or drafts of papers. This feedback should not consist entirely of mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar.
5. Provide instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation.
6. Assign writing throughout the semester.
7. Where appropriate, address the needs of students regarding library competency.
8. Assign writing in English unless the course is specifically geared to improving writing at the 300-level in another language.

¹ The word count may only include one preliminary draft for each final draft.

² Exceptions to this criterion may be granted in disciplines or courses where students do a substantial amount of writing, but the course structure and/or content does not create opportunities for an assignment of this length.

³ Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.

Additional criteria

9. In order to receive a C or better in the course, students must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.
10. Maximum enrollment for this course is 35 or 45 with a graduate assistant.

Screenings

About half the class time will be devoted to film and documentary screenings. The films and the documentaries (about the history of film and television) are PRIMARY TEXTS, not just entertainment. You will be required to think--seriously and critically--about what you are seeing. In short, an active (rather than passive) viewing is required. The exams will cover the screenings, the lectures and discussions, and the readings. Additionally, the instructor may assign up to ten out-of-class viewings as requirements.

Books and Readings

Required:

Cook, D. A. (2004). *A history of narrative film* (4th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton.

Strongly Recommended:

Membership in Netflix (or possibly Blockbuster.com)

Katz, E. (2008). *The film encyclopedia* (6th ed.). New York: Collins.

Maltin, L. (2009). *Leonard Maltin's 2010 movie guide*. New York: Signet.

NOTE: The Internet Movie Database has become a good substitute for the Maltin book, so you may choose not to buy it. But, IMDb has not yet become a useful replacement for the Katz et al. book, which at over 1,500 pages and around \$23 is the best book buy around. Check www.amazon.com for both of these books.

Recommended:

General texts on film history (not limited to U.S.):

Ellis, J. C., & Wexman, V. W. (2002). *A history of film* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Geiger, J., & Rutsky, R. L. (2005). *Film analysis: A Norton reader*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Giannetti, L., & Eyman, S. (2001). *Flashback: A brief history of film* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Gomery, D. (1991). *Movie history: A survey*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Mast, G., & Kavin, B. F. (2006). *A short history of the movies* (9th ed.). New York: Pearson/Longman.

Thompson, K. & Bordwell, D. (2003). *Film history: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Excellent books on the classical-era U.S. Hollywood Studio System:

Gabler, N. (1988). *An empire of their own: How the Jews invented Hollywood*. New York: Anchor Books.

Mordden, E. (1988). *The Hollywood studios: House style in the golden age of the movies*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Schatz, T. (1996). *The genius of the system: Hollywood filmmaking in the studio era*. New York: Henry Holt.

Handouts & Website

Handouts and other required readings will be distributed to the class as the term progresses. Most materials will also be posted on the class website: academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf (click on "Fall 2009, COM 320").

Screenings and Class Rules

1. Films may be longer than our class time. Nevertheless, you are expected to see THE ENTIRE FILM, and may be tested especially on the beginning and the end, since these are often important parts of the film. Film running times are typically listed in the course outline. Please be aware that most "lecture" days will include some clips (excerpts) from films, television programs, or documentaries about film and television that will be difficult to make up.
2. Each individual has a right to his/her own personal emotional response to a film. But remember that you are seeing these films in a classroom, not in your own home, nor in a movie theater. Therefore, students who publicly impose their inappropriate responses (whispering, open comments, cheers, boos, etc.) upon the other students in the class will be penalized through point deductions and/or being dropped/expelled from the class. However, laughter is an appropriate response to comedies, and is encouraged.
3. Please try to minimize distractions to others during screenings of films and clips. Contrary to popular belief, the rustling of food wrappers is not appropriate in a co-viewing situation. And, when the lights go down, no laptops or cell phones are to be lit up, except in the very last row of the classroom.

Grading

Grading is based on two essay exams, two research papers, and various class activities (to be announced).

The exams will be essay in form. You will be given a list of sample exam questions prior to each exam.

Both papers will require some research/library work and some viewing outside of class. The papers will be described in greater detail in a handout, but generally the picture is this: Paper 1 is an analysis of how a contemporary auteur has been informed by and influenced by earlier forms and creators of the moving image. You'll need to trace the historical "filmic roots" of your chosen subject, and cite at least one key, direct source (e.g., interview in a popular magazine, website) in your proposal. The first paper needs to be a minimum of 1200 words (approximately five pages double-spaced). Paper 2 is a more traditional research paper on some aspect of the history of the moving image. The second paper needs to be a minimum of 2000 words (approximately eight pages double-spaced). You need to hand in a short proposal for each of the papers. Both papers will require several scholarly sources and individual viewing of 2-3 films. For both papers, I strongly encourage "pre-writes"—given a couple days, I'll look over early drafts of your papers and provide feedback. You may write additional drafts of each paper as often as you wish up until the due date.

Class activities may be in-class or out-of-class, and will be announced at various points in the term. The first activity assigned will be to locate and hand in one "filmic roots" interview, for use by you and/or other class members for the first paper (worth 5%). (Note: You do not have to use the interview that you hand in for your first paper—you may use an interview from an earlier term, or an interview one of your classmates finds. A list will be handed out in class.)

Your instructor reserves the right to change assignments as may become necessary--e.g., require other small assignments (including quizzes) that may replace a portion of one of these assignments. And, you may be required to attend additional screenings at the Cleveland Cinematheque, Museum of Art, or other theaters, or to watch films at home.

Each assignment is worth the following:

Midterm	20%
Final exam	20%
Class activities	20%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit opportunities can add points to your course grade. You may not receive more than 10 percentage points total in extra credit for the course. The nature of the extra credit will be described in detail in a handout; generally, you may gain extra credit by viewing certain assigned films outside of class, and completing written analyses as specified. Such films may be found at libraries, from Netflix, or shown at the Cinematheque, the Cleveland Museum of Art, or elsewhere. More on this later. . .

Make-up Exams, Incompletes

If you must miss the exam, you should discuss the problem with Dr. N at least one class period before the exam is scheduled. In an emergency and as a last resort, you should notify School of Communication staff and/or leave a message for Dr. N (voicemail, email, note) explaining the problem. Mere notification does not automatically mean your excuse is approved, and some points will be deducted even if approval for a make-up is given.

University rules indicate that "a grade of Incomplete is given only by prior arrangement with the instructor and only when a course requirement is unfulfilled through no fault of the student." In all cases where there is a problem, talk to the instructor as soon as possible--an early good-faith effort is likely to be rewarded. After-the-fact pleas will be viewed in a much more negative light.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken near the beginning of each class period via a sign-in sheet. Three absences are allowed without penalty. Subsequent absences will result in a loss of points from the class activities portion of the grade--3% of your course total for each absence. And, you are responsible for all lecture material, film content, clips shown in class, handouts, announcements, changes in assignments, etc.--in short, for everything that happens in class. Dr. N will not be held responsible for repeating lecture material outside of class, and there will be no "makeup" viewing of materials viewed in class (films, documentaries, film clips). And, while many of the films for the class are available for rental, they may be in a somewhat different form, and you are responsible for seeing each film as shown in class.

Cheating

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. This includes plagiarism (copying from a source without careful attribution), copying from another student's assignment (all instances of identical and near-identical answers will be suspect), talking with others during an in-class exam, obtaining copies of an exam prior to the test date, etc. Please refer to the CSU student handbook for the university's official stance. If you have any questions about this subject (e.g., how to adequately attribute source in a paper), feel free to

Speak with me. Any student caught cheating will receive a grade of “zero” for that exam/assignment and risks failing the entire course.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (as of 8/25/09)

- Week 1
Aug. 25 → The mystique of the moving image
Before images moved: Stroboscopic toys
Origins: Preconditions for the “movies”
Who invented movies? (Selected “players”)
Screening: Dudley Murphy & Fernand Leger, France, *Ballet Mechanique*, 1929, 15 min.
Screening: Chris Marker, France, *La Jetee*, 1962, 28 min.
Screening: *The Movies Begin*, 1994 (various sources, 1877-1908), 85 min.
- Week 2
Sept. 1 → Griffith and the development of narrative form
Why Hollywood?/The death of the Patents Trust
Clips from: *Biography: Thomas Edison*
Clips from: *Hollywood Chronicles: In the Beginning*
Clips from: *Hollywood: In the Beginning*
Screening: George S. Fleming & Edwin S. Porter (uncredited), U.S., *The Life of an American Fireman*, 1903, 6 min.
Screening: D. W. Griffith, U.S., *Broken Blossoms*, 1919, 76 min.
- Week 3
Sept. 8 → European movements: German Expressionism, Soviet Montage (and French Impressionism)
Clips from: *American Masters: D. W. Griffith*
Clips from: various German Expressionistic films
Clips from: Fritz Lang, Germany, *Siegfried*, 1924
Screening: Kevin Brownlow, U.K., *Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite*, 1968, 51 min.
- Week 4
Sept. 15 → More on European movements
Clips from: Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Union, *[The Battleship] Potemkin*, 1925
The universal appeal of silents: Silent comedy
Screening: Charlie Chaplin, U.S., *Easy Street*, 20 min.
Screening: Robert Wiene, German, *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1919, 72 min.
Out-of-class Viewing: TBA Buster Keaton film
- Week 5
Sept. 22 → The coming of sound and color
The American Studio System (Hollywood)
Origins of editing styles and techniques
Clips from: *Hollywood Soundtrack Story*
Clips from: Early sound Hollywood films (inc. Marx Brothers)
Clips from: *The American Cinema--The Studio System*
Screening: Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Union, *Strike*, 1924, 94 min.
- Week 6
Sept. 29 → Genre development
Hollywood Studio Profiles
Europe in the Thirties

Screening: Alfred Hitchcock, U.S., *Rebecca*, 1940, 130 min.

Out-of-class Viewing: TBA Hollywood color genre film

Week 7
Oct. 6 →

Orson Welles

Wartime and Postwar Cinema

Clips from: *Triumph of the Will/The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*

Clips from: *Why We Fight*

Clips from: *Going Hollywood: The War Years*

Screening: Ernst Lubitsch, U.S., *To Be or Not To Be*, 1942, 99 min.

Out-of-class Viewing: Orson Welles, U.S., *Citizen Kane*, 1941, 119 min.

Week 8
Oct. 13 →

More on cinema and WWII

MIDTERM EXAM ON Thur., Oct. 15, in class

Week 9
Oct. 20 →

Italian Neorealism

Censorship and blacklists

Outside the system

Auteurs and the avant garde

Clips from: *The Hollywood Censorship Wars*

Clips from: *Small Steps, Big Strides*

Clips from: *Open City, Stromboli*

Screening: Pearl Bowser & Bestor Cram, U.S., *Midnight Ramble: Oscar Micheaux and the Race Movies*, 1994, 53 min.

Screening: Maya Deren, U.S., *A Study in Choreography for Camera*, 1945, 4 min.

Screening: Maya Deren, U.S., *Ritual in Transfigured Time*, 1946, 15 min.

Screening: Luis Bunuel, France, *L'Age d'Or*, 1930, 63 min.

Screening: Kenneth Anger, U.S., *Eaux D'Artifice*, 1953, 12 min.

Screening: Stan Brakhage, U.S., *Mothlight*, 1963, 4 min.

Out-of-class Viewing: Vittorio DeSica, Italy, *The Bicycle Thieves*, 1948, 93 min.

Week 10
Oct. 27 →

Hollywood in the 1950s

The mutual influence of television and film

The immediacy of television

Film's adaptations to television

Clips from: *The American Cinema: Film in the Television Age*

Clips from: *The Best of Ernie Kovacs*

Screening: Rod Serling, U.S., *Walking Distance* episode from *The Twilight Zone*, 1959, 22 min.

Week 11
Nov. 3 →

New Waves--Focus on French New Wave

Film and social engineering

Clips from: Various French New Wave films

Screening: *Tomorrow's Drivers*, U.S., 1954, 11 min.

Screening: *Lunchroom Manners*, U.S., 1960, 10 min.

Screening: TBA

Out-of-class Viewing: TBA French New Wave

Week 12
Nov. 10 →

Young German Cinema

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union

Third World Cinema

Screening: Agnes Varda, France, *Cleo from 5 to 7*, 1962, 90 min.

Week 13 Death of the American Studio System
 Nov. 17 → Development of the "New Hollywood," the Film School Generation, Indie films
 Clips from: *Orson Welles-What Went Wrong?*
 Clips from: *Hollywood Mavericks*
 Clips from: Various New German Cinema films
Screening: Volker Schlöndorff, West Germany, *The Tin Drum*, 1979, 142 min.
Out-of-class Viewing: TBA New Hollywood

Thursday, Nov. 26 Thanksgiving–No classes

Week 14 Clips from *American Cinema: The Film School Generation*
 Nov. 24 Clips from: *American Cinema: The Edge of Hollywood*

Week 15 New cinemas around the world
 Dec. 1 → Digital Cinema
 Clips from: various Bollywood, Hong Kong, African, Japanese, and other films
 Clips from: *Lumiere & Co.*
Screening: TBA
Out-of-class Viewing: TBA International film

Week 16 **Screening, Extra Credit:** TBA
 Dec. 8 → Final Exam Period, 8:30-10:30 am, Thur., Dec. 10

COM 320 Required Textbook Readings, Exams, and Papers

	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Textbook Readings</u>
Week 1		Cook Ch. 1
Week 2		Chs. 2, 3
Week 3	"FILMIC ROOTS" INTERVIEW DUE ON 9/10	Chs. 4, 5
Week 4		Chs. 6
Week 5	PAPER #1 PROPOSAL DUE ON 9/24	Chs. 7, 8
Week 6		Ch. 9
Week 7		Chs. 10, 11
Week 8	MIDTERM EXAM ON 10/15	
Week 9	PAPER #2 PROPOSAL DUE ON 10/22	
	PAPER #1 FINAL DRAFT DUE ON 10/22	
Week 10		Ch. 12
Week 11		Chs. 13, 14
Week 12		Chs. 15-19
Week 13		Ch. 20
Week 14		
Week 15	PAPER #2 FINAL DRAFT DUE ON 12/3	Ch. 21
Week 16	FINAL EXAM DUE ON 12/10 AT 8:30 AM	
	EXTRA CREDIT VIEWING ANALYSES DUE AT FINAL EXAM PERIOD	

