

## COM 493: Cleveland and Film Seminar

Spring 2001

4-5:50 pm, MU 107

Prof. Kim Neuendorf

MU 241

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Office hrs.:

2-3:30 Mon. & Wed., 1-3 Tues.

& by appt.

### COURSE OBJECTIVE:

This special seminar is designed to explore all aspects of “Cleveland and Film,” including the imaging of the city on film, the local filmmaking community (both art and commerce), the relationship of Cleveland to “Hollywood,” and local film-related institutions. The course will be a combination of class discussion, guest lectures/Q&As, screenings, and field trips.

In this course, we’ll look at the current practices and changing nature of the international film industries, using Cleveland as a microcosm or exemplar. We’ll examine such trends as the decentralization of power in film production and distribution, the rise of “indie” filmmaking and the corresponding rising importance of film festivals, the ongoing transition from film to digital technologies, and the fragmentation of the filmgoing audience.

### COURSE MATERIALS:

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, required readings will be posted on the class website. And, students will be required to visit (and read) required websites that are linked to our class site. Students are expected to check the class website on each class day for assignments and updates in the class schedule.

In order to do this, you will need to use a computer with the ability to display *pdf* files. If your machine does not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, you can download it free of charge from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

Each student will also need to be reachable via email. Make sure that Dr. N. has your email address. Due to the fluid nature of the course, there may be occasional last-minute changes in class activities.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each student will keep a journal of his/her responses to each class period, each out-of-class required viewing, and each required field trip. The journal may be hard-copy or electronic, but in either case must be ready to hand in “on demand” in its entirety at any point in the term. Each entry should be about 200 words or so, and should reflect a scholarly or critical viewpoint

on activity or discussion of the day. You should show a working knowledge of concepts and issues derived from the class. You will be given four “free” entries—i.e., days you may miss without penalty. Beyond the four, you will lose 3% for each unexcused missed entry (and you *can't* make an entry for a class you've missed!). The journal is worth up to 60 pts. (30% of your course grade).

2. Each student will be required to attend selected films or events at the 25<sup>th</sup> Cleveland International Film Festival, to be held at the Tower City Cinemas on The Avenue (downtown Cleveland) from March 15 through March 25. Plan on attending about three films that fit some general “profile,” and writing some type of “review” for each. The current plan is for Cleveland Film Society Executive Director David Wittkowsky to visit the class once before the festival and once after. On the first visit, he will explain the history of his organization and what his job entails. He will discuss the festival’s offerings and help us decide what “profiles” are feasible for our viewing and what form our “reviews” might take. On the second visit, he will delve into the process of developing each year’s festival and discuss the high and low points of this year’s event. Completion of this component of the course is worth up to 60 pts. (30% of your course grade).
3. Each student is required to complete some type of project related to the course content. Obviously, this covers a lot of ground! The form of the project may be a written paper, an in-class presentation or panel, a videotape compilation, a website, or other interesting format. It may cover any of the topics on the class Outline of Topics, or take a more “macro” approach—analyzing the interpersonal or political relationships among key “players” in the Cleveland film scene, for example. A brief proposal should be handed in on the *second* day of class. The project is worth up to 50 pts. (25% of your course grade).
4. A final component to the class is “participation,” encompassing a variety of small tasks, such as contributing items for a standard set of questions to be asked of each guest. Other tasks will be assigned. Attendance may be required on key days, and you may lose points for an unexcused absence on those days. This participation component of the class is worth up to 30 pts. (15% of your course grade).

In summary, your grade will be determined by:

|                             |           |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Journal                     | 60 pts.   | 30%       |
| Film Festival and “Reviews” | 60        | 30        |
| Project                     | 50        | 25        |
| Participation               | <u>30</u> | <u>15</u> |
|                             | 200 pts.  | 100%      |

1/17/01

Cleveland and Film Seminar

**First Draft**--Outline of Topics

- I. Imaging Cleveland--Cleveland on Film
  - UInternet Movie Database lists 39 films with locations in Cleveland
  - UOhio Film Commission
  - UGreater Cleveland Film Commission/Greater Cleveland Media Development Corp.  
(Chris Carmody)
  
- II. Cleveland's Relationship with "Hollywood"
  - UCleveland natives go Hollywood (e.g., Paul Newman, Halle Berry,  
Joe Eszterhas, Wes Craven)
  - UThe Cleveland humor connection (e.g., Drew Carey, Bob Hope)
  - UCleveland experiences as a "stepping stone" to Hollywood (e.g., Anthony & Joe  
Russo's Pieces, the Fields brothers' Script Doctor)
  
- III. Clevelanders in Love with Film
  - UCleveland Film Society and Cleveland International Film Festival  
(David Wittkowsky)
  - UCleveland Cinematheque and Institute of Art (John Ewing)
  - UCedar Lee and other "art houses" (e.g., Jonathan Forman)
  
- IV. Commercial Film Production in Cleveland
  - UProduction houses--primarily industrials and commercials (e.g., Glazen Productions)
  - UFree-lancing in Cleveland (e.g., Dave Litz)
  - UEntrepreneurial efforts & "niche" filmmaking  
(e.g., Guerrilla Productions, MDI, Shooting Star)
  - UCleveland Filmmakers (Mara Evans)
  
- V. Performing for Film
  - UPlacement of Cleveland actors in films (e.g., Ford Agency/Karen Fields)
  - UThe life of the professional actor in Cleveland (e.g., Dorothy Silver)
  
- VI. Writing for Film
  - UCleveland Screenwriters organization (Mara Evans, Frank O'Grady)
  - UHollywood writers in Cleveland (e.g., Alan B. McElroy, Les Roberts)
  
- VII. Indies in Cleveland
  - UThe art filmmaker (e.g., Robert Banks)
  - UThe Ohio Independent Film Festival (Annetta Marion & Bernadette Gillota)

**U**Digital cinema (e.g., Jason Tomaric's One, The Digital Cinema Expo)

VIII. Film Exhibition

**U**The job of a union projectionist (IATSE rep.)

**U**Classic movie houses (e.g., Playhouse Square)

**U**Ohio is #2 in drive-ins!

**U**Film promotion (e.g., Allied Communication/Kim Moss)

IX. Film Criticism and Scholarship

**U**Key educators (e.g., Keith Richards, Louis Giannetti)

**U**Film criticism in the media (e.g., Joanna Connors at the PD)