

History of Film III

ENG 3125 17EB

Instructor: Daniel Norford



T 5-6, R 6, TUR 2322 **Lecture/Discussion**

Screenings: M E1-E3 ROL 115

Office:

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Elearning Canvas Course Page: Course website for downloading material and uploading assignments. DVDs and Videos of most course screenings will be available through the Course Reserves at Library West.

Book and Readings: *The Way Hollywood Tells It* David Bordwell

All other readings for the class are on our class Canvas page.

Concentrating on the post-new wave and new Hollywood cinema, this course will examine the international history of film from 1970 to the present. The goal is to awaken an understanding of the historical use of film form by exploring changes that have taken place in film industries and technologies. Each week we will view a film, examine its form of expression (looking closely at editing, set design, acting styles, dialogue, and narration). We will examine digital technologies, special effects, and 3D. We will also look at aesthetics that shun conventional filmic action in favor of a more experimental approach. This will lead to our discussion of the film's place in film history, as well as social history. We will look at issues of industry and audience, considering representations of gender, race and political change. Students will learn how to see

films with a greater depth of visual understanding. Films to be screened include genres of Hollywood filmmaking, Independents, European, and Senegalese films. We will look at directors whose talent shaped the development of cinema; we will also examine the role of actors and actresses, screenwriters, designers and producers in shaping the history of film. In other words, we will look at the Social History of Film, but also the Industrial, Technical, and Formal Histories of film.

Policies and Procedures:

Polite, Active Participation: On time attendance and participation in class discussion is essential. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class, and anyone more than **15 minutes** late will be marked absent. It will then be your responsibility to tell me you were late to get some credit for attendance, though your lateness will be noted. Students should attend all class screenings. Since discussions will critically evaluate readings and films, assigned texts must be read prior to scheduled meetings. Computers are permitted for note-taking, but web surfing or any other use of computers in class, or any other such devices will be considered out of place in this course. You are expected to bring your textbook and other required materials to every class period.

Films/Lectures: Normally, a feature length film will be screened each Monday evening, with lectures, discussion and clips from films on Tuesday and Thursday. **Films as Texts:** Your primary "texts" are the films themselves. All written materials, including the required books for the course, are secondary sources. No written description of any film can be assumed accurate unless confirmed by your own eyes. Learn to think visually and be able to rely on your own active viewing of the films.

Note-taking: Most films seen in class may be rescreened at the Library reserves; good notes are crucial for your ability to critically discuss and write about what you have seen. During or immediately after each film, learn to note specific shots and sequences, perhaps by diagramming action or editing patterns or sketching a shot composition. In your papers, work from your notes to develop arguments carefully, supported by specific examples from individual films.

Criteria: Your ability to speak and write clearly and effectively, as well as the strength of your theoretical and analytical argument, will be the basis for evaluating discussion and papers. You should use film terms and critical concepts properly and develop interpretive analyses. In addition, your own independent thinking is crucial; needless to say, plagiarism (the unacknowledged copying or paraphrasing of another's work) will be penalized severely. All papers will be handed in using two formats: hard copy in class, as well as this file uploaded on Canvas. All documents sent as attachments should include your last name in their document title. Only films screened during the course may be addressed in your papers unless cleared with the professor in advance. Base your analysis and argument on specific images and sounds in these films.

Course Requirements:

A research paper of 7-8 pages, following an assigned topic. Additional assignments of group presentations w/PowerPoints. Each presentation will introduce one of the readings to the class. Bring printouts or downloaded copies of readings to class.

You must read all assigned texts for the Tuesday class and alertly watch all of the films at screenings. **Attendance will be taken at screenings.**

Grades (using a 1,000-point scale):

20% of your grade will be a mid-term exam

35% of your grade for research paper, including prospectus and final draft.

10% of your grade will be quiz grades.

20% of your grade will be for group presentations w/PowerPoint

15% of your grade will be for Thematic Analysis

Grade Average Breakdown:

A = 900--1000 points

B = 800-899 points

C = 700-799 points

D = 600-699 points

E = 599 or below

***Please note that detailed assignment sheets will be provided for each of the major assignments. We will also discuss these assignments in class. Quizzes will not be announced ahead of time. ***

Goals:

Greater understanding of contemporary cinematic styles and historical contexts.

Knowledge of how critical theories can enhance our understanding of films.

Sharpening your skills of visual analysis and narrative analysis, as well as understanding the interaction between dialogue, music, and sound.

Improved critical writing skills.

New knowledge of U.S. cultural and social history.

***Disclaimer: this class will require students to watch films that contain violent, sexually explicit, and thematically disturbing material. Any students who feel unable to meet this requirement are advised to enroll in a different course. ***

Week 1: Class Introduction/New Hollywood and Post-Wave World Cinema

M 8/24: *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972)

Homework: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 1-26

T 8/25: Scene analysis and first look at Timeline (pgs. 191-242); Students assigned to groups for PowerPoint presentations

Homework: "Operatic Style and Structure in Coppola's "Godfather Trilogy," by Marcia J. Citron (Canvas)

R 8/27: Discussion of reading—scene analysis

Week 2: The New Hollywood Anti-Hero

M 8/31: *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976)

Reading: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 27-71; “American Reveries: Altman, Lynch, Malick, Scorsese,” by John Orr (Canvas); “US Film Industry and Trade from 1950 to the Present Day,” by Mark Wheeler (Canvas)

T 9/1: Scene analysis and discussion of reading—second look at Timeline

Homework: “Hollywood Corporate Business Practice and Periodizing Contemporary Film History,” by Douglas Gomery

R 9/3: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 3: Landscape, 70 mm, Dolby

M 9/5: No Screening—Holiday—watch on Course Reserves (also available to stream on Amazon)

Homework: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 72-103, pgs. 115-138; “Independents, Packaging and Inflationary Pressure,” by Stephen Prince (Canvas)

T 9/6: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: “Enjoying the scenery’: landscape and the fetishisation of nature in *Badlands* and *Days of Heaven*,” by Ben McCann (Canvas)

R 9/8: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *first group presentation PowerPoint due*

Week 4: French Cinema, Post New Wave

M 9/12: *My Night at Maud’s* (Rohmer, 1969)

Reading: read *The French New Wave*, chapter 4, by Michel Marie (Canvas); “Rohmer—Moral Tales and the Art of Courtly Love,” by James Monaco (Canvas)

T 9/13: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: Moral Perfectionism in Eric Rohmer’s *Ma nuit chez Maud*,” by Glen W. Norton (Canvas)

R 9/15: Discussion of reading

Week 5: American Authorial Filmmaking

M 9/19: *Manhattan* (Allen, 1979)

Homework: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 139-157; “Art cinema, a Cinema of Auteurs?: Low- to Mid-budget Authorial Film-making,” by Mary P. Wood (Canvas)

T 9/20: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: “Art and Idealization: I’ll Fake Manhattan,” by Peter J. Bailey (Canvas)

R 9/22: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *Second group presentation PowerPoint due*

Week 6: French Cinema in Transition

M 9/26: *My American Uncle* (Resnais, 1980)

T 9/27: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: *Alain Resnais*, chapter 7, by Emma Wilson (Canvas); “Giscardian Desiring Machines: Alain Resnais’s *Mon oncle d’Amerique*” (Canvas)

R 9/29: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 7: New German Cinema and the Trauma of History

M 10/3: *Die bleierne Zeit/Marianne and Juliane* (von Trotta, 1981)/ *Scenes from Germany in Autumn* (Kluge et al, 1978)

Homework: “Discourses of Terrorism, Feminism, and the Family in von Trotta’s *Marianne and Juliane*,” by E. Ann Kaplan (Canvas); “Film Industry—Film Subsidy,” and “Margarethe von Trotta: German Sisters—Divided Daughters,” by Thomas Elsaesser (both on Canvas)

T 10/4: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: “Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State,” by John Tagg (Canvas); “Framing Terrorism: Beyond the Borders,” by Nora Alter (Canvas)

R 10/6: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *third group presentation PowerPoint due*

Week 8: The New Hollywood Blockbuster

M 10/10: *The Empire Strikes Back* (Kershner, 1980)

Homework: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 104-114, 158-179; “Whose Future? Star Wars, Alien, and Blade Runner,” by Peter Lev (Canvas)

T 10/11: Class Mid-Term

Homework: “The Empire Strikes Back”: Monsters from the Id” by Andrew Gordon (Canvas); “Whose Future? Star Wars, Alien, and Blade Runner, by Peter Lev (Canvas)

R 10/13: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 9: Senegalese “Committed” Cinema

M 10/17: *Xala* (Sembene, 1974)

Homework: “Senegal,” by Lieve Spaas (Canvas); “The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution: The History of the *Panafricaine des Cinéastes*”, by Manthia Diawara (Canvas)

T 10/18: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: “The Indiscreet Charm of the African Bourgeoisie? Consumerism, Fetishism, and Socialism in *Xala*, by David Murphy (Canvas)

R 10/20: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 10: Film, Burkina Faso, and the African Past

M 10/24: *Yeelen* (Cissé, 1987)

Homework: “Burkina Faso,” by Lieve Spaas (Canvas); “Music, Magic, and the Mythic: The Dynamics of Visual and Aural Discourse in Souleymane Cissé’s *Yeelen*”, by Alexander Fisher (Canvas); “On National Culture,” by Franz Fanon (Canvas)

T 10/25: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *prospectus for final research report due*

Homework: "Africans Filming Africa: Questioning Theories of an Authentic African Cinema," by David Murphy (Canvas)

R 10/27: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 11: Ethnicity and Race In U.S. Film

M 10/31: *Do the Right Thing* (1989, Lee)

Homework: *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, pgs. 180-189; Seeing "Do the Right Thing," by W. J. T. Mitchell (Canvas); The Double Truth, Ruth: *Do the Right Thing* and the Culture of Ambiguity”, by James C. McKelly (Canvas)

T 11/1: Scene analysis and discussion of reading—third look at Timeline

Homework: “The Violence of Public Art: "Do the Right Thing", by W. J. T. Mitchell (Canvas); Spike Lee, Corporate Populist”, by Jerome Christensen (Canvas)

R 11/3: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *fourth group presentation PowerPoint due*

Week 12: Machinic Games and Small-Scale Special Effects

M 11/7: *eXistenZ* (Cronenberg, 1999)

Homework: “Demystifying Deleuze: French Philosophy Meets Contemporary U.S. Cinema,” by David Martin-Jones (Canvas); “Becoming Inorganic,” by Teresa de Lauretis (Canvas)

T 11/8: Scene analysis and discussion of reading--fourth look at Timeline

Homework: “From Hardware to Fleshware: Plugging into David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*,” by Steve Keane (Canvas)

R 11/10: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *fifth group presentation PowerPoint due*

Week 13: Narratives Embrace Their Theory

M 11/14: *Memento* (Nolan, 2000)

Homework: “Narrative Comprehension Made Difficult: Film Form and Mnemonic Devices in *Memento*“, by Stefano Ghislotti (Canvas)

T 11/15: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Homework: “Victimage and Violence: *Memento* and Trauma Theory,” by Peter Thomas (Canvas)

R 11/17: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *complete first draft of final paper due*

Week 14: Globalization and Transnational Cinema

M 11/21: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson, 2001)

Homework: “The Instantaneous Worldwide Release: Coming Soon to Everyone, Everywhere,” by Robert E. Davis (Canvas); “‘Welcome to New Zealand, Home of Middle Earth’: Heterotopian Impulse, Western Anxiety and Spatial Identity in *The Lord of the Rings*,” by Alfio Leotta (Canvas)

T 11/22: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; *sixth group presentation PowerPoint due*

R 11/24: No class—Thanksgiving break

Week 15: Digital Cinema and Amateur Filmmaking

M 11/28: *Tarnation* (Caouette, 2003)

Homework: “Working at Home: *Tarnation*, Amateur Authorship, and Self-Inscription in the Digital Age,” by Laura Rascaroli (Canvas); Saving Private Reels: Archival Practices and Digital Memories (Formerly Known as Home Movies) in the Digital Age,” by Susan Aasman (Canvas)

T 11/29: Final Paper Due; Scene analysis and discussion of reading—final look at Timeline

Homework: “The Desktop Aesthetic: First-person Expressive in *Tarnation* and *Four Eyed Monsters*,” by Geoff King (Canvas)

R 12/1: Scene analysis and discussion of reading

Week 16: Post-Cinema

M 12/5: *Inland Empire* (Lynch, 2006)

Homework: “The Myth of ‘The Myth of Total Cinema’” and “*Inland Empire*,” by J. Hoberman (Canvas); “Introduction: Exploding Cinema,” by Holly Willis (Canvas)

T 12/6: Scene analysis and discussion of reading; class conclusion