

Introduction to Cinema Studies I

School of Film and Media Studies

Purchase College, State University of New York

CIN1500, CRN 45289

Fall 2019, Thursdays, 2:30 PM - 6:10 PM

Center for Media, Film, and Theatre, CMFT0065

Instructor: Prof. Joel Neville Anderson

Email: joel.anderson@purchase.edu

Office: Music Building, MUS0053

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11 AM - 12 PM, 3-4 PM and by appointment

Course Description:

This class is the first part of two-semester introduction to the world history of cinema. Beginning in the nineteenth century, moving through the silent period and into studio and sound eras, this section of the course explores the diverse forms and styles (narrative, non-narrative, documentary) that comprise film's early history until 1945. The class will cover the way that cinema evolved both as an art form and a technological medium in relation to various national, economic, and social contexts.

Course Goals/Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of film history from the 1890s to mid-1940s.
2. Understand and employ vocabulary terms and concepts corresponding to film form, style, and analysis.
3. Be able to perform analyses of film sequences that describe how aspects of cinematography, editing, mise-en-scene, and sound work together to produce particular meanings and effects.

Reading and Viewing Assignments:

Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell's *Film History* (3rd or 4th edition) is required. Additional readings will be posted on Moodle as PDFs. Films/videos assigned for viewing outside class will be available on reserve at the library or via online streaming, as specified by the instructor. These outside viewings will be the subject of the Final Exam (Cinema Studies majors only). (Whatever devices you choose to use to watch films/videos outside of class, I encourage you to do so in an environment free of distractions so you may concentrate on the creators' work.) Texts and film/video offered on a weekly basis as "Recommended" sources are optional and meant for students with a particular interest in the topic, possibly for later reference as part of the Final Essay assignment.

Weekly Responses:

Each week, students are required to respond to the assigned viewing and reading material, analyzing the form and content of given cinematic works, and incorporating the historical contexts, theories, or arguments of the texts. This is not an informal film review, but an

opportunity to demonstrate the modes of analysis we are learning in the course, while offering your own thoughtful observations and questions. Each written response should address at least one film/video and at least one text assigned for that week. Post to Moodle under the appropriate weekly listing. Posts should be a minimum of 400 words in length. Students can miss one response out of the ten total due and still receive full credit. *Due by 9 AM on the day of class, beginning the second week, and due every following week until several weeks before the end of the semester to give students time to work on their Final Essay.*

Shot Breakdown and Analysis:

Students are required to put their skills of cinematic analysis to intensive use in this assignment, in which they select a film from a list of potential titles, and using extensive application of terminology learned until midway through the semester, create a detailed breakdown of each shot in a scene, as well as an overview of the scenes that compose the film. Students will all work on different films and scenes. This detail-oriented assignment will be good preparation for the cohesive cinematic analysis required in the Final Essay. *Due at the start of class midway through the semester.*

Final Essay:

Students are required to write a final essay analyzing a cinematic work and topic related to material from the class (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style citations). I will distribute a prompt listing potential films/videos and topics, along with further guidelines. Students may consult with me during office hours to choose from the suggested films/videos/topics and discuss their approach, or propose a new one. Students are encouraged to choose which works and theoretical models they engage with, but if you would like to pursue titles and topics outside the list of prompts, it must be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance. The “Recommended” readings each week will be useful in furthering students’ original research. *Due at the start of the final class meeting.*

Final Exam (Cinema Studies majors only):

Exam based primarily on the films assigned for weekly viewing outside of class. (These are noted as “Watch outside of class by following week” on the syllabus.) *Held during the final class meeting.*

Grading:

Attendance/Participation: 20% of final grade

Weekly Responses: 20%

Shot Breakdown: 15%

Shot Analysis: 15%

Final Essay: 30%

Policies and Guidelines:

- Attendance: Your attendance at each class is mandatory, and repeated absences will result in a lowered grade. Please clear any expected absences with me in advance, and provide

appropriate documentation (such as record of a medical visit). If you do miss class, please check with me or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts. Arriving to class after the start time on two occasions will be recorded as one absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes after the start time will be considered an absence.

- **Preparation and Participation:** Approximately two to three hours of screening material, in addition to one to two articles or book chapters will be assigned each week. Students are expected to review the material in detail, and come prepared to participate in discussion. Your thoughts are valuable to me and your fellow students. Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent, unless otherwise discussed.
- **Respecting Yourself and Others:** You are expected to treat others in the class with respect. This means listening to their words and choosing your own with care.
- **Classroom Technology:** Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones are not to be used once class has begun. Laptops or tablets may be used during class presentations. Please bring a notebook and pen or pencil to class.
- **Breaks:** There will be a short break during class, usually between the lecture/discussion and screening portions. Returning after the class resumes will count as a late arrival. Please only leave the class outside of this set break time in case of emergencies. It is not necessary to ask for the instructor's permission, but please return within five minutes, and do not leave more than once. Inform the instructor at the start of the semester if you require an accommodation.
- **Food and Drinks:** The Center for Media, Film, and Theatre screening room (CMFT0065) where the class is held has strict rules regarding food and drink due to the sensitivity of technology. Please only bring water into the screening room. You may eat a snack during the break, though please note there will not be time to run and purchase a snack outside the classroom building during break.
- **Email Correspondence:** Please check your university email regularly for announcements and updates to the syllabus and assignments.
- **Moodle:** Moodle will be an important resource for this class, and students should check it regularly for announcements.
- **Instructor Delay:** In rare instances, the instructor may be delayed arriving to class due to an emergency. If the instructor has not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, students must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for the instructor's arrival before leaving. In the event that the instructor will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The Purchase College academic integrity policy explicitly forbids cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another person and the representation of them as one's own original work. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definition of plagiarism and the acceptable methods of attribution. These are serious matters and you need to be aware of what is and is not permissible. See <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct/section-a-academic-integrity/index.php> and related links for more information.

Tutoring Support:

All students at Purchase College can take advantage of tutoring services in the Learning Center (LIB0009) and the Einstein Corner (NSB3044). These are free, 45-minute, peer-to-peer tutoring sessions in a variety of subjects and in writing across the disciplines. I encourage you to take advantage of this service to help you excel in this class, as well as your other courses. Please visit the Learning Center (<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/>) and Einstein Corner (<https://www.purchase.edu/academics/school-of-natural-social-sciences/academic-support/index.php>) websites for more information.

Accessibility:

The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify with disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For students who may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible: (914) 251-6035, ODR@purchase.edu (Student Services Building, 316A), www.purchase.edu/odr.

Religious Accommodations:

If you require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please speak with me as soon as possible to consider a reasonable modification.

Course Schedule:

(Note: all readings/screenings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned)

Week 1 (August 29): Course Overview and Introduction (Early Cinema's Pre-Histories)

In-class screening: *Fred Ott's Sneeze* (Edison Studios, 1894); *Demolition of a Wall* (1895, Auguste and Louis Lumière); *Baby Meal* (1895, Lumière Brothers); *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (Lumière Brothers, 1896); *Mounted Police Charge* (Edison Studios, 1896); *The Vanishing Lady* (Georges Méliès, 1896); *The Gay Shoe Clerk* (Porter, 1903); *Decasia* (Bill Morrison, 2002, excerpt).

Watch outside of class by following week: *A Trip to the Moon* (Georges Méliès, 1902); *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903); assorted Lumière Brothers shorts.

Week 2 (September 5): The Cinema of Attractions and the Roots of "Classical Hollywood"

In-class screening: *The Lonely Villa* (D.W. Griffith, 1909); *The Lonedale Operator* (D.W. Griffith, 1911); *Musketeers of Pig Alley* (Griffith, 1912); *Suspense* (Phillips Smalley & Lois Weber, 1913); *A House Divided* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1913); *Within Our Gates* (Oscar Micheaux, 1915, clip).

Read by today: Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History*, 1-21; Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde."

Watch outside of class by following week: *Making an American Citizen* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1912); *Falling Leaves* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1912); *Body and Soul* (Oscar Micheaux, 1920).

Recommended reading: Allyson Nadia Field, introduction to *Uplift Cinema: The Emergence of African American Film and the Possibility of Black Modernity*; Jennifer M. Bean, “Toward a Feminist Historiography of Early Cinema.”

*** First Weekly Response (on Moodle) due today and each following week unless noted.**

Week 3 (September 12): No class—Self-Directed Field Trip to the Museum of the Moving Image visiting “Behind the Screen” and “Don’t Forget the Pictures: Glass Slides from the Collection” exhibitions (longer 600 word Weekly Response due next week)

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 22-70.

Week 4 (September 19): German Expressionism and Weimar Cinema

In-class screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 71-104; Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (excerpt).

Watch outside of class by following week: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927).

Recommended reading: Andreas Huyssen, “The Vamp and the Machine: Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.”

Week 5 (September 26): Soviet Montage

In-class screening: *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 105-127; Sergei Eisenstein, “A Dialectical Approach to Film Form,” “Methods of Montage.”

Watch outside of class by following week: *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925).

Week 6 (October 3): Radical Documentary

In-class screening: *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 165-167; Vsevolod Pudovkin “The Plastic Material,” Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye* (excerpts).

Watch outside of class by following week: *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (Esfir Shub, 1927).

Recommended reading: Malcolm Turvey, “City Symphony and *Man with a Movie Camera*.”

*** Guidelines for Shot Breakdown and Analysis assignment distributed today.**

Week 7 (October 10): Documentary’s “Invention”

In-class screening: *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922); *Housing Problems* (Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey, 1935).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 128-151, 169-174; Fatimah Tobing Rony, “Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography: Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*.”

Watch outside of class by following week: *The Gold Rush* (Charlie Chaplin, 1925).

Recommended reading: Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film*, 33-50.

Week 8 (October 17): French Impressionism, Dada, and Surrealism

In-class screening: *Les Vampires, Episode 1: The Severed Head* (Louis Feuillade, 1915-16), *Judex, Episode 1: The Mysterious Shadow* (Feuillade, 1918), *Ballet Mécanique* (Ferdinand Léger, 1924); *Entr'acte* (René Clair, 1924); *Un Chien Andalou* (Louis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 152-165; Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto” (1918); André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism” (1924); The Surrealist Group, “Manifesto of the Surrealists Concerning *L'Age d'Or*” (1930).

Watch outside of class by following week: *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924).

Recommended reading: Malcolm Turvey, “Surrealism and *Un Chien Andalou*,” *The Filming of Modern Life*, 105-134; Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (excerpts: Ch. 6-7).

Week 9 (October 24): Writing Workshop for Final Essay

* **Shot Breakdown and Analysis assignment due today. (No Weekly Response due.)**

* **Potential films/videos and topics for Final Essay assignment distributed by today.**

Week 10 (October 31): Mise-en-scène, Performance, and Star Systems

In-class screening: *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928); *Vampyr* (Dreyer, 1930, clip); *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy, Busby Berkeley, 1933, clip).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 353, 155-158, 195-218.

Watch outside of class by following week: *Footlight Parade* (Lloyd Bacon, Busby Berkeley, 1933).

Recommended reading: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film Art: An Introduction* (excerpt: Ch. 4).

Week 11 (November 7): Sound

In-class screening: *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 177-194; René Clair, “The Art of Sound;” Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, “Statement on Sound;” Béla Balázs, “Sound.”

Watch outside of class by following week: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941).

Recommended reading: Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (excerpt); Rick Altman, “Deep-focus sound: *Citizen Kane* and the radio aesthetic”.

Week 12 (November 14): Fascism, Spectacle, and Marxist Critique

In-class screening: *Zero for Conduct* (Jean Vigo, 1933); *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936).

Read by today: Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility.”

Watch outside of class by following week: *À nous la liberté* (René Clair, 1931).

Recommended reading: Benjamin, on Chaplin and Mickey Mouse.

* **Students should have chosen topics for the Final Essay by today.**

Week 13 (November 21): Cinema and War

In-class screening: *Triumph of the Will* (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935); *Why We Fight* (Frank Capra, 1943, clip); *The Daughter of the Samurai* (Arnold Fanck, Mansaku Itami, 1937, clip).

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 219-258, 248-258; Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament.”

Watch outside of class by following week: *The Great Dictator* (Charlie Chaplin, 1940).

Recommended reading: Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Actuality, Antinomies.”

*** Last Weekly Response due today.**

Week 14 (November 28): No class—enjoy

Week 15 (December 5): Realism and Neorealism

In-class screening: *The Rules of the Game* (Jean Renoir, France, 1939)

Read by today: Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 259-276; André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” “The Myth of Total Cinema,” “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” “An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism,” “Umberto D: A Great Work,” *What is Cinema?*

Watch outside of class by following week: *Umberto D.* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952).

Recommended reading: Cesare Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema”; Robert Stam, “The Question of Realism.”

Week 16 (December 12): Final Exam (Cinema Studies majors only)

*** Final Essays due by start of class today.**

*** Exam held for Cinema Studies majors.**