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En/F 160b
Introduction to Classical Hollywood Film: 1940 - 1955

Please note: (160a is NOT a prerequisite for 160b)

This course explores Hollywood films and filmmaking during a tumultuous period in the film industry's history, from the last days of the Depression, through the extraordinary boom of World War II, to the postwar bust and decline of the studio system. It covers some of the basic techniques and vocabulary of film analysis, as we learn to think of films as texts with distinctive formal properties. We also consider general strategies of filmmaking at a time when the ever-changing domestic and world situation made the movie-going public's tastes and needs less predictable than ever. Topics include: the star system; the emergence and evolution of particular genres (the combat film, film noir, the social problem film); the disappearance of the postwar audience; the Cold War. At the end of the course students can expect to have acquired an understanding of how a significant body of films functioned as both commercial and aesthetic artifacts and a sense of their place in American culture during the "Golden Age" of Hollywood.

March 29	Introduction Hollywood History and Techniques of Film Analysis
March 31	Depression Redux The Grapes of Wrath (1940)
April 5	Just Entertainment? Sullivan's Travels (1941) 600-word paper due
April 7	Citizen Kane (1941)
April 12	Hollywood Goes to War Bataan (1943) 600-word paper due
April 14	Casablanca (1942)
April 19	The Homefront Mrs. Miniver (1942)
April 21	Miracle of Morgan's Creek (1944)
April 26	Film Noir

	Double Indemnity (1944)
April 28	The Big Sleep (1946)
May 3	Reconversion Mildred Pierce (1945)
May 5	Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
May 9	1400-word paper due at noon
May 10	Abnormalcy Gentleman's Agreement (1947)
May 12	Pinky (1949)
May 17	A Helluva Town On the Town (1949)
May 19	Naked City (1948)
May 24	Hollywood Looks at Itself Sunset Boulevard (1950)
May 26	Singin' in the Rain (1952)
May 31	Hollywood and the Cold War On the Waterfront (1954)
June 2	In-class exam
June 6	1400-word paper due at noon

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance:

Class attendance is mandatory. You will not pass this course if you miss more than three classes. You must watch the film in advance of the class on it or you will be counted as absent even if you attend. The course will be conducted primarily as a lecture and discussion. As a courtesy to the professor and your classmates, please arrive on time.

Films:

There are mandatory weekly film screenings, time and location t.b.d. Films will also be on reserve in Millikan. **THEY MUST BE RETURNED TO THE FRONT DESK OF MILLIKAN. DO NOT TAKE THEM TO SHERMAN-FAIRCHILD OR DABNEY. DO NOT DROP THEM IN THE RETURN BIN OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY.**

Grading:

Participation: 10%

Quizzes: 10%

Papers: 60%

Final exam: 20%

Please note: You must receive a passing grade on all papers and the final to pass the course.

A WORD ABOUT PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is the wrongful use of another person's ideas by representing them as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when the general thoughts of another person and/or specific sentences and passages from another writer's work are appropriated without proper attribution in the form of a footnote or endnote. Plagiarism applies to unattributed material that is lifted from unpublished as well as published work and material from the internet. Plagiarism is an insult to everything that higher education stands for. Don't do it.