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Dabney 311

Hum/F 50
Introduction to Film

This course examines film as a technology, entertainment medium, and commercial art with an emphasis on American and European contexts. Students will acquire the basic vocabulary and techniques of film analysis, with an emphasis on style and structure—that is, the formal properties of films—and develop an understanding of the historical development of film as both an art form and an industry from the 1890s to the present. The course also introduces students to some of the most important movements, with a focus on German Expressionism, Classical Hollywood, Italian Neo-Realism, and French New Wave. Students are expected to develop skills in close textual analysis and to use these skills to build coherent and persuasive written arguments.

- Oct 2 Introduction: The Birth of Film, Part I
 Lumieres
 "Exiting the Factory" (1895)
 "The Baby's Meal" (1895)
 "L'Arroseur Arrose" (1895)
 Paul
 "The Countryman and the Cinematograph" (1901)
- Oct 4 The Birth of Film, Part 2
 Edison/Dickson
 "Sandow" (1894)
 "Annabelle Serpentine Dance" (1895)
 Edison/Porter
 "The Kiss" (1896)
 Méliès
 "Un Homme de Tetes" ("Four Troublesome Heads," 1898)
 "Les Cartes Vivantes" ("Living Playing Cards," 1904)
 American Mutoscope and Biograph/Weed
 "At the Foot of the Flatiron" (1903)
 Edison/Porter
 "New York City Ghetto Fish Market" (1903)
 "Life of an American Fireman" (1903)
 "Gay Shoe Clerk" (1903)
 "Great Train Robbery" (1903)
 "The Terrible Kids" (1906)
 300-word paper due in class, Sandow and Annabelle comparison
- Oct 9 D. W. Griffith, Lois Weber, and the Development of Narrative Film
 Griffith
 "The Country Doctor" (Biograph, 1909)
 "A Corner in Wheat" (Biograph, 1909)
 "The Lonely Villa" (Biograph, 1909)
 "The Girl and Her Trust" (Biograph, 1912)
 Weber
 "Suspense" (Rex, 1913)
 600-word paper due in class, opening sequence of "The Country Doctor"

- Oct 11 Silent Film Comedy: Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton
 Chaplin
 "Kid Auto Races" (Keystone, 1914)
 "Recreation" (Keystone, 1914)
 "The Bank" (Essenay, 1915)
 "The Immigrant" (Mutual, 1917)
 Keaton
 "One Week" (Comique, 1920)
 "The Goat" (Comique, 1921)
- Oct 16 The Soviet Experiment
 Battleship Potemkin (Eisenstein, Goskino, 1925)
- Oct 18 German Expressionism
 Sunrise (Murnau, Fox, 1927)
- Oct 23 The Transition to Sound
 M (Lang, Nero-Film, 1931)
 600-word paper due in class, sound in *M*
- Oct 25 Classical Hollywood I: Stardom
 It Happened One Night (Capra, Columbia, 1934)
- Oct 30 Revision Workshop
- Nov 1 Italian Neo-Realism I
 Rome Open City (Rossellini, Excelsa, 1945)
- Nov 6 Classical Hollywood II: Genre, the Western
 My Darling Clementine (Ford, Twentieth Century-Fox, 1946)
- Nov 8 Genre, The Western
 The Seven Samurai (Kurosawa, Toho, 1956)
- Nov 12 1000 word revision/expansion due 12 pm
- Nov 13 *The Seven Samurai*
- Nov 15 Hitchcock
 North by Northwest (Hitchcock, MGM, 1959)
- Nov 20 The French New Wave I
 Breathless (Godard, Les Filmes Imperia, et. al., 1960)
- Nov 22 Thanksgiving, no class
- Nov 27 Italian Neo-Realism II
 The Battle of Algiers (Pontecorvo, Igor Film/Casbah Film, 1966)
- Nov 29 The French New Wave II
 Vagabond (Varda, Ciné Tamaris, et. al. 1985)

Dec 4	Genre, The Western <i>Unforgiven</i> (Eastwood, Warner Bros./Malpaso, 1993)
Dec 6	class rescheduled for LA Historic Theater Tour
Dec 7	50-word proposal for final paper due 5 pm
Dec 14	1500 word final paper due 12 pm

Assessment: Students will be evaluated on the basis of attendance, participation, and several papers: one 300-word paper, two 600-word papers, one 1000-word paper (a revision/expansion of one of the 600-word papers), and a 1500-word final paper on a topic of your choosing.

Grading:

Attendance/Participation	25%
300-word paper	5%
2 600-word papers	20%
1000-word revision/expansion	20%
1500-word paper	30%

Papers: For the 300- and 600-word papers, you will be asked to develop your analytic and interpretive skills by writing on a specific film sequence or sequences. These papers will be due at the beginning of the class in which the film(s) will be discussed and are designed in part as preparation for class discussion. *These three papers must be turned in on time; no late papers will be accepted.* Extensions on the 1000- and 1500-word papers must be requested in advance. Except in cases of illness or emergency late papers will not receive written comments.

I am happy to review drafts of papers in advance and to meet with students to discuss drafts in any state of preparation as well as general ideas for papers. I will hold special office hours the day before the first three papers are due. It usually makes sense to email me in advance to reserve a specific time.

Please note that you must receive a minimum grade of "C" on each of the written assignments or you will have to rewrite the paper. You need to pass every component to receive a passing grade in the course.

Because this is an introductory course, I am more interested in your ideas than in the ideas of others. Stylistic features of these films have been written about *ad nauseam*, and the length and the nature of the topics for all but the final paper are not suited to incorporating outside sources into your interpretation. **Do not consult outside sources on these films**, including books, articles, the internet, published or unpublished papers, etc. to assist you in writing your papers, with the exception of the final essay, when you may consult outside sources if you choose. Violating this policy is grounds for failing the assignment and the course, whether or not you assign proper attribution to your sources. The exception is that you may consult a source such as IMDB for information regarding character names, cast, and credits. But you are not to look at reviews, plot summary, analysis, sample essays, etc. You should always feel free to look up various film terms ("sound off," "low-angle shot," etc.) to develop the language with which to speak and write about film.

Attendance: I expect students to attend class and to show up on time. No one will pass the course who misses more than three classes. Showing up for class when you have not watched the film(s) will count as an absence.

Electronics: Past experience has taught me that it is better to ban laptops, ipads, etc. from the classroom rather than try to monitor relevant use. Research shows that hand-written notes result in better retention and a deeper understanding of material.

Films: Weeks 3-10: two or three copies of most of the films are available as DVD or Blu-Ray on three-hour reserve at Sherman-Fairchild Library. They must be returned to the front desk. Sherman-Fairchild also has personal DVD/Bluray players available for checkout. Weeks 1-2: films are available through a variety of internet sources. See accompanying Film Locations list. There is only one copy of *Vagabond* available.

Theater Tour: We will go on a theater tour of Historic Broadway in downtown Los Angeles, date t.b.d., but it will be on a Saturday starting at 10 am with lunch afterwards. For purposes of attendance the tour will count as one class.

Quizzes: I reserve the right to give quizzes if I think some students aren't watching the films, which lowers the quality of discussion and is unfair to the rest of the class. The quizzes aren't tricky; the sole purpose is to make sure the work is being done. A failing grade counts as an absence.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is the wrongful use of another person's ideas or words 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. You may discuss the topics with other class members—indeed, I encourage you to do so—but I expect every paper to represent independent work. Conviction for plagiarism by the Board of Control is grounds for failing the assignment.