
INTRO TO HISTORY OF NARRATIVE FILM I in Fall 2019 (FM2075)

Course Code	FM2075	Professor(s)	Orlene McMahon
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-L20
Class Schedule	TF: 13:45-15:05 in G-L21	Office Hours	15:15-16:15 Tuesdays
Credits	4	Email	omcmahon@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	621

Course Description

The course begins with the early development of cinematic narrative form in the work of Griffith. It looks at German and Russian contributions to the growth of cinema, and the rise of the American studio system in the silent era. The second half focuses on early sound cinema up to 1940. Among the key directors we will look at are: Griffith, Lang, Murnau, Eisenstein, Chaplin, Keaton, Lubitsch, Von Stroheim, Von Sternberg, Ford, Hawks, Capra, and Renoir.

By the end of the course students will be able to trace the development of narrative film in both Europe and America, and to think comparatively and critically about different film-texts. They will have learned basic elements of narrative film storytelling and how to analyze story, plot and structure. They will also be able to analyze how movies in America and Europe reflect, and help to shape, cultural trends. In doing so they will have become familiar with the work of some major filmmakers, and be able to critically evaluate them.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to trace the development of narrative film in both Europe and America. Students will be able to think comparatively and critically about different film-texts. Students will have learned basic elements of narrative film storytelling and how to analyze story, plot and structure. Students will also be able to analyze how movies in America and Europe reflect, and help to shape, cultural trends. In doing so they will have become familiar with the work of some major filmmakers, and be able to critically evaluate them.

Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate. (CCI LO1)

Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions.

(CCI LO2)

General Education

Course Outline

September

Week I – 2nd – 6th

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE / EARLY CINEMA

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapters 1 / Tom Gunning Article on 'Cinema of Attraction'
- Film in Focus: 1st half of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

September 8th – last day to drop/add courses online

Week II – 9th – 13th

D.W. GRIFFITH AND THE BIRTH OF CLASSICAL NARRATIVE CINEMA

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 3
- Film in Focus: 2nd half of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

Week III –16th – 20th (*Hand out Research Paper Topics - Due in 2 weeks on October 1st*)

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 4
- Excerpts: Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927)
- Film in Focus: F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1924)

Week IV –23rd – 27th

SOVIET SILENT CINEMA & THE THEORY OF MONTAGE

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 5
- Excerpts: Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926), and
Dziga Vertov's *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929)
- Film in Focus: Eisenstein's *Strike* (1925)

(Assignment of films for student oral presentations in Week VII)

Week V –30th – 4th (OCTOBER 1st: RESEARCH PAPER DUE)

HOLLYWOOD IN THE TWENTIES / COMEDY AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

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- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 2, pp. 25-33 / Chapter 6, pp. 119-135
 - Excerpts: Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) and Buster Keaton's *The General* (1927)
 - Film in Focus: Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* (1925)

October

Week VI –7th – 11th

HOLLYWOOD IN THE TWENTIES CONTINUED / THE END OF THE SILENT ERA

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 6, pp. 136-150
- Excerpts from films by Cecil B. DeMille, Ernst Lubitsch and Eric von Stroheim
- Films in Focus: F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise* / King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928)

Week VII –14th – 18th

MID-TERM EXAM: STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

October 16th, Mid-semester

October 18th, Mid-semester grades due

Week VIII – 21st – 25th

SOUND AND COLOR / THE AMERICAN STUDIO SYSTEM / GENRE CINEMA

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, pp. 179-196
- The Western: Excerpts from John Ford's westerns
- The Gangster Film: Excerpts from William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931) and Howard Hawks' *Scarface* (1932)
- The Musical: Excerpts from Fred Astaire-Ginger Roger musicals
- Film in Focus: Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939)

Week IX - 28th – (1st)

GENRE CINEMA (CONTINUED)

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 8, pp. 179-181
- The Western: Excerpts from John Ford's westerns
- The Gangster Film: Excerpts from William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931) and Howard Hawks' *Scarface* (1932)
- The Musical: Excerpts from Fred Astaire-Ginger Roger musicals
- Film in Focus: Mark Sandrich's *Top Hat* (1935)

No class on November 1st

October 30th – November 3rd, fall break (no classes)

November

Week X - 4th – 8th

DIRECTORS OF THE STUDIO ERA'S GOLDEN AGE / THE STAR SYSTEM (1930-1939)

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 8, pp. 197-222
- Excerpts from the 1930s films of Alfred Hitchcock, George Cukor, William Wyler, and Frank Capra.
- Excerpts from the film collaborations of Josef von Sternberg–Marlene Dietrich / Clarence Brown–Greta Garbo
- Film(s) in Focus: Von Sternberg's *The Scarlet Empress* (1934) / Capra's *Mister Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)

November 4th, last day to withdraw from a course / no credit option

Week XI – 11th – 15th

EUROPE IN THE THIRTIES

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 9
- Excerpts from German, Soviet, and French films from the 1930s
- Avant-Garde Impressionism, Surrealism, and Poetic Realism
- Film in Focus: Jean Renoir's *La règle du jeu* (1939)

No class on November 12th

November 11th – 12th, Armistice Break (no classes)

Week XII – 18th – 22nd

EUROPE IN THE THIRTIES (Continued)

- Reading: Narrative Film/Cook: Chapter 9
- Excerpts from German, Soviet, and French films from the 1930s
- Avant-Garde Impressionism, Surrealism, and Poetic Realism
- Film in Focus: Jean Renoir's *La règle du jeu* (1939)

Week XIII – 25th – 29th

END-OF-TERM EXAM: STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

December

Week XIV – 2nd – 6th

Revision of Course in Preparation for the Final Exam on **December 13 at 12:00**

December 6th, last day of classes

December 7th - 11th, reading days

December 12th – 18th, Final Exam

January 2nd, all grades due

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

The final grade will be based upon:

- Attendance and Class Participation: 25%
- Research Paper: 25%
- Oral Presentations: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

Other
