Classical Hollywood Cinema  
Fall 2011

ENG 5433.15472                                                                                       Dr. John Springer
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Office Hours:  M/W 3:30-5:30; T/Th 1:00-2:00; 3:30-5:30, and by appointment
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Course Description: This course offers students an advanced understanding of the aesthetic and industrial practices that have defined the classical Hollywood cinema.

Course objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
  • Define and analyze the aesthetic features of classical Hollywood films
  • Describe the general processes of film production, marketing, and exhibition in the Studio era
  • Relate the economic and industrial circumstances of Hollywood film production to the ideology and aesthetic structure of particular films
  • Explain the importance of film genres and the star system to the commercial and aesthetic interests of the Hollywood film industry
  • Show how censorship and industry self-regulation have shaped Hollywood films
  • Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the dialectic of commerce and art in American film
  • Present a detailed narrative of American film history that synthesizes social, cultural, and technological factors

Transformative Learning Objectives: This course addresses 3 of the university’s transformative learning goals: Discipline knowledge through enhancing students’ understanding of classical Hollywood cinema; Leadership by encouraging students to adopt a critical perspective on American film; Research and creative activity by requiring students to develop areas of research interest and produce a research paper.

Required texts:


Evaluation: The course is based on lectures, assigned readings, class discussions, and supplemental film viewings. Graduate students will complete two writing assignments, a mid-term and a final examination.

  Writing assignment one  25% of grade
  Writing assignment two  25% of grade
  Mid-term Exam  25% of grade
  Final Exam  25% of grade
For the first writing assignment, the student will select a topic from the table of contents in *American Cinema and Hollywood: Critical Approaches*. Then, using the “Bibliography” at the end of each chapter, select one book on this subject to read *in its entirety* and write an analytical review of the book (5-7 pages). On the day that they are due, each student must make sufficient copies of their review to be distributed to the other students in the class and be prepared to answer questions from the class on the book they reviewed.

Graduate students will also produce a research paper, 10-12 pages in length, not counting endnotes and/or Works Cited page. The topic of this research project should be related to the subject of the book reviewed and analyzed in the first assignment. This means graduate students should identify their research interests and actively begin planning their research projects from the start of the semester. Every graduate student should meet with me to discuss their writing projects by February 1st. See further “Guidelines for Papers” following the Course Outline.

The mid-term and final exams will consist of 50, multiple choice questions covering the lectures and assigned readings.

**Course Outline**

**August**
22: **Classical Hollywood Cinema: Theory of “Group Style:”**  
   Reading: *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, pp. 3-23

29: Reading: *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, pp. 50-84
31:

**September**
5: **Labor Day-No Class**
7: **Classical Hollywood Cinema: Critical Perspectives:**  
   Reading: *American Cinema and Hollywood* (“American Cinema and Film History”), pp. 1-11.

12: **The Hollywood Mode of Production**  
   Reading: *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, pp. 87-112
14:

21:

26: Reading: *Classical Hollywood Cinema*, pp. 113-153
28:
October
3:
5: Reading: American Cinema and Hollywood (“Early American Film”), pp. 29-45

10: Documentary film screening: American Cinema: The Studio System
12: Documentary film Screening: American Cinema: The Hollywood Style
   Reading: Classical Hollywood Cinema, pp. 157-193

17: Mid-Term Exam
19: The Consolidation of the Classical Style
   Reading: Classical Hollywood Cinema, pp. 194-236

24: Undergraduate Film Journals due
26: Reading: American Cinema and Hollywood (“History and Cinema Technology”) pp. 12-18

November
2:
7: Reading: Classical Hollywood Cinema, pp.298-308
9:

14: Reading: Classical Hollywood Cinema, pp. 311-337
16:

21:
23: Thanksgiving Break-No Class

28:

December
5:
7: Last Day of Class. Undergraduate Film Journals due.

14: Final Exam @ 5:30

Guidelines for Papers

Your first writing assignment is an analytical book review. An analytical book review is a critical analysis that aims at presenting a work so as to explain its fundamental arguments, scope of study, critical methodology, and theoretical assumptions. The goal
should be to produce an insightful and thorough discussion of the work’s main points, key ideas and central examples, and to position the work within the larger context of a more general research area such as “film and technology” or “film and history.” You are developing a knowledge base in this assignment for your longer research project.

The second paper will be a research paper related to the general research area you have selected for the analytical book review. In the assigned readings, class lectures, and films we will be studying there are hundreds of potential topics for you to research and write about. You should select a topic that has real interest for you, one that you will enjoy researching and thinking about in your paper. Topics could include individuals (stars, directors, writers, producers, composers, cameramen, etc.) specific films (production histories or critical readings), film genres (such as the horror film, the war movie, or the romantic comedy), particular studios and production companies, technological developments in American film, the marketing and exhibition of Hollywood films, labor struggle in the film industry, and censorship and self-regulation, to mention just a few possibilities.

The papers you write should be based on your own use of primary and secondary research sources, not just opinion and hearsay gathered off the Internet. Primary sources are documents that are contemporary with the film subject you are working on (such as studio records, fan magazines and trade papers, and contemporary reviews of films in newspapers), while secondary sources contain subsequent commentary, analysis, and information, often based upon primary sources. Generally primary sources are preferred because they are more authoritative and credible, but they are not always available to students and scholars, so secondary sources are frequently used. Whether you use primary or secondary research sources, you must correctly document your use of these sources in your paper (MLA Style). That means identifying the source of direct quotes and citing sources for the facts and information you present in your paper. By “sources” I mean print sources (books, journals, magazines, and newspapers). Limit your use of Internet sources to no more than one in the paper. The Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) can be used as a general reference source, but the opinions and ideas in you paper should be your own. Plagiarism will result in an automatic failure on the assignment.

Guidelines for Graduate Students

Because graduate students are preparing themselves to become scholars and educators, they are expected to demonstrate their growing knowledge and insight by taking greater initiative and achieving more significant results in all areas of course work. Graduate students should always be prepared by having read the assigned material prior to class. Additionally, it is expected that they will have made a greater effort to comprehend the essential issues and arguments of assigned readings than undergraduate students. At this level of study it is not adequate to give assigned readings a quick once over before class; you should engage with the material through critical reading, effective note-taking, and a sustained effort to master the material. In class discussions graduate students should be class leaders, responding to discussion prompts from the instructor, formulating their own
questions concerning assigned readings, and articulating their understanding of course material in effective and appropriate ways during class discussion. Since graduate-level mastery of course material is most often demonstrated through writing, graduate students are expected to be the most thorough, insightful, and effective writers in the class. This means, above all, writing clear, well-focused and amply supported essays that ground critical arguments in solid textual evidence and/or historical information. Effective graduate level writing also means developing solid research skills and being able to correctly document your use of material from outside sources.

Additional information about University policies may be found at the following url:

http://www.uco.edu/academic-affairs/files/aa-forms/faculty/StudentInfoSheet.pdf