

Introduction to Film

CMST 10100, ARTH 20000, ENGL 10800, ARTV 25300

Spring 2011

Instructor: Ivan Ross

Email: ivanross@uchicago.edu

Office: Gates-Blake 230

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:00-1:20, or by appointment

Class: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30-2:50, Cobb 307

Screening: Tuesdays, 3:30, Cobb 307

Attendance at every screening is essential. I encourage you to do close analyses and second viewings on whatever format you prefer (dvd, vhs, laserdisc, netflix streaming, etc.), but you must not consider these close analyses and second viewings to be substitutes for our Tuesday screenings.

Course Description:

This course introduces basic concepts of film analysis via examples from different national cinemas, genres, and directorial oeuvres. Along with a primary emphasis on film technique and style, we consider the cinema as an institution that comprises an industrial system of production, social and aesthetic norms and codes, and modes of reception.

Texts:

Available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore:

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, 9th Edition*
(Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2010). [referred to as BT below]

Other assigned readings are available at chalk.uchicago.edu. Give these texts equal priority.

Requirements and Grades:

Participation in class (consistent attendance, active listening, productive contribution, and demonstration of close reading): **10%** of your final grade.

In-class Quiz (Tuesday, April 12): **10%** of your final grade.

Shot analysis (2-3 pages) (Due Tuesday, April 19): **15%** of your final grade.

In-class Quiz (Tuesday, May 3): **10%** of your final grade.

Sequence analysis (3-4 pages) (Due Tuesday, May 10): **15%** of your final grade

In-class Quiz (Tuesday, May 24): **10%** of your final grade.

Film analysis (5-6 pages) (Due Tuesday, June 7): **30%** of your final grade.

Detailed instructions will accompany every assignment as it approaches.

Work Presentation:

Please double space, use 1-inch margins, use something in the neighborhood of a 12-point Times New Roman font, and proofread. I expect you to present original writing (consult the University of Chicago's statement on academic honesty at studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic). I also expect you to use proper citation throughout your writing (consult the University of Chicago Library's guide to citation at lib.uchicago.edu/e/using/instruct/citation.html).

Course Plan:

WEEK 1: Film Form / Film Industry

Tuesday, 3-29: Introductions and Expectations

in-class: *Footlight Parade* [clip] (Busby Berkeley, USA, 1933, 103 min.) (dvd)
Boogie-Doodle (Norman McLaren, Canada, 1940, 3.5 min.) (dvd)
Mothlight (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1963, 4 min.) (16mm)
Le Retour à la raison (Man Ray, France, 1923, 3 min.) (16mm)

Screening: *Precious Images* (Chuck Workman, USA, 1989, 8 min.) (format tba)

Singin' in the Rain (Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly, USA, 1952, 103 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 3-31: Film Form / Film Industry

read: BT, Chapter 1: "Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business," pp. 1-33 only
BT, Chapter 2: "The Significance of Film Form," pp. 55-77
Jane Feuer, "*Singin' in the Rain* (1952): Winking at the Audience." [Chalk]

in-class: *A Movie* (Bruce Conner, USA, 1958, 12 min.) (16mm)

WEEK 2: The Shot: Mise-en-scène and Cinematography

Tuesday, 4-5: Mise-en-scène: the profilmic, the enframed image, the dynamics of a shot

read: BT, Chapter 4: "The Shot: Mise-en-scène," pp. 117-166

Recommended: Amy Villarejo, "The Language of Film," in *Film Studies: The Basics*. [Chalk]

in-class: *L'arroseur arrosé* (Louis Lumière, France, 1897, 1 min.) (dvd)
Fog Line (Larry Gottheim, USA, 1970, 11 min.) (16mm)
Russian Ark [clip] (Alexander Sokurov, Russia, 2002, 96 min.) (dvd)
Dragnet Girl [clip] (Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1933, 99 min.) (dvd)

Screening: *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, Japan, 1950, 88 min.) (35mm)

Days of Heaven (Terrence Malick, USA, 1978, 94 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 4-7: Cinematography: depth, scale, focus, movement, duration

read: BT, Chapter 5: "The Shot: Cinematography," pp. 167-222.

Nestor Almendros, from *A Man with a Camera*. [Chalk]

Jean Epstein, "Magnification." [Chalk]

in-class: *City of God* [clip] (Fernando Meirelles & Kátia Lund, Brazil, 2002, 130 min.) (dvd)
I am Cuba [clip] (Mikhail Kalatozov, USSR/Cuba, 1964, 141 min.) (dvd)

WEEK 3: Editing I: Juxtaposing Images and Times

Tuesday, 4-12: Temporal and spacial dynamics of editing

In-class quiz Tuesday

read: BT, Chapter 6: "The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing," pp. 223-255 only

in-class: *Olympia* [clip] (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1938, 204 min.) (dvd)
The War [clip] (Ken Burns, USA, 2007, 840 min.) (format tba)

Screening: *The Lonely Villa* (D.W. Griffith, USA, 1909, 11 min.) (16mm)
The Birds (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1963, 120 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 4-14: Space and time continuity

read: David Bordwell, "Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film." [Chalk]

in-class: *Sabotage* [clip] (Alfred Hitchcock, UK, 1936, 76 min.) (format tba)
The Life of an American Fireman (Edwin Porter, USA, 1903, 6 min.) (dvd)

WEEK 4: Editing II: Alternative Juxtapositions

Tuesday, 4-19: Editing as discontinuity: rhythm and transformation

Shot Analysis Due Tuesday (in class)

read: BT, Chapter 6: "The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing," pp. 256-268 only
BT, Chapter 12: "Film Art and Film History," pp. 467-469 and 475-477 only
Sergei Eisenstein, "Methods of Montage." [Chalk]

in-class: *Fist Fight* (Robert Breer, USA, 1964, 9 min.) (16mm)
Schwechater (Peter Kubelka, Austria, 1958, 1 min.) (vhs)
Serene Velocity [clip] (Ernie Gehr, USA, 1970, 23 min.) (vhs)
Pièce Touchée [clip] (Martin Arnold, Austria, 1989, 15 min.) (vhs)
Raging Bull [clip] (Martin Scorsese, USA, 1980, 129 min.) (dvd)

Screening: *Strike* (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925, 94 min.) (dvd)
Breathless (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960, 90 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 4-21: Editing as meaning: montage

read: BT, Chapter 11: "Film Criticism: Sample Analyses," pp. 408-413 only
Richard Neupert, "*Breathless* (1960): Godard Jumps Ahead." [Chalk]

in-class: *Rocco and His Brothers* [clip] (Luchino Visconti, Italy, 1960, 170 min.) (dvd)
2 or 3 Things I Know about Her [clip] (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1966,
84 min.) (dvd)
The Battleship Potemkin [clip] (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925, 69 min.) (dvd)

WEEK 5: Sound in Film: Theory and Design

Tuesday, 4-26: Definitions of sound in film

read: BT, Chapter 7: "Sound in the Cinema," pp. 269-311
Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, "A Statement on Sound." [Chalk]

in-class: *Abraham Lincoln* [clip] (D.W. Griffith, USA, 1930, 93 min.) (dvd)
Love Me Tonight [clip] (Rouben Mamoulian, USA, 1932, 89 min.) (dvd)
Apocalypse Now [clip] (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1979, 153 min.) (dvd)

Screening: *M* (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1931, 110 min.) (35mm)
Mouchette (Robert Bresson, France, 1967, 81 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 4-28: Sound Design and Style

read: Anton Kaes, from *M*. [Chalk]
Robert Bresson, "Notes on Sound." [Chalk]

in-class: *The Sacrifice* [clip] (Andrei Tarkovsky, Sweden et al., 1986, 145 min.) (dvd)

WEEK 6: Narration and Narrative

Tuesday, 5-3: Story and Plot

In-class quiz Tuesday

read: BT, Chapter 3: "Narrative as a Formal System," pp. 78-104 only

in-class: *It Happened One Night* [clips] (Frank Capra, USA, 1934, 105 min) (dvd)
Band of Outsiders [clip] (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1964, 95 min.) (dvd)
The Cat Came Back (Cordell Barker, Canada, 1988, 7 min.) (dvd)

Screening: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, USA, 1941, 119 min.) (35mm)

Thursday, 5-5: Monstration, open and closed

read: BT, Chapter 3: "Narrative as a Formal System," pp. 104-116 only

James Naremore, "*Citizen Kane*(1941): The Magician and the Mass Media." [Chalk]

WEEK 7: Non-Narrative Film: Attractions and Abstractions

Tuesday, 5-10: The aesthetics of attraction

Sequence Analysis Due Tuesday (in class)

read: Maxim Gorky, "The Lumiere Cinematographe." [Chalk]

Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator,
and the Avant-Garde" [Chalk]

Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows Space." [Chalk]

Hollis Frampton, "The Invention without a Future." [Chalk]

in-class: Early Paper Prints (USA, 1901-1906, 35 min.) (16mm)
Un Chien Andalou [clip] (Luis Buñuel, 1929, 17 min.) (dvd)
Flaming Creatures [clip] (Jack Smith, USA, 1963, 43 min) (dvd)

Screening: *Annabelle Dances* [clips] (W.K.L. Dickson, USA, 1894-97, 5 min.) (dvd)
Four Troublesome Heads (Georges Méliès, France, 1898, 1 min.) (dvd)
The Man with the Rubber Head (Georges Méliès, France, 1901, 3 min.) (dvd)
The Lumière Bros. First Films [clips] (with commentary from Bertrand Tavernier)
(France, 1895-1897, 10 min.) (dvd)
Ballet mécanique (Fernand Léger et al., France, 1924, 16 min.) (dvd)
H2O (Ralph Steiner, USA, 1929, 13 min.) (dvd)
Study in Choreography for Camera (Maya Deren, USA, 1945, 4 min.) (dvd)
Take-Off (Gunvor Nelson, USA, 1972, 10 min.) (16mm)
Nostalgia (Hollis Frampton, USA, 1971, 36 min.) (16mm)
Half-Life 2: Anxiety (Xanatos, USA, 2008, 9 min.) (format tba)

Thursday, 5-12: Experimentation and abstraction

read: Hollis Frampton, "A Lecture." [Chalk]

Maya Deren, "Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality." [Chalk]

in-class: *A Chairy Tale* (Norman McLaren, Canada, 1957, 10 min.) (dvd)
The Black Imp (Georges Méliès, France, 1905, 4 min.) (dvd)
Morning (Ernie Gehr, USA, 1968, 5 min.) (vhs)

WEEK 8: Genre, Stars, Reception

Tuesday, 5-17: Definitions of Genre

read: BT, Chapter 4: "Film Genres," pp. 327-348

Rick Altman, "Cinema and Genre." [Chalk]

in-class: *Pillow Talk* [clip] (Michael Gordon, USA, 1959, 103 min.) (dvd)

Down with Love [clip] (Peyton Reed, USA, 2003, 101 min.) (format tba)

Genre guessing game!

Screening: *All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk, USA, 1955, 89 min.) (35mm)

Thursday, 5-19: Genre, Stars, and Audience: Difference and Repetition

read: Amy Villarejo, "The Reception of Film," in *Film Studies: The Basics*. [Chalk]

Roland Barthes, "Leaving the Movie Theater." [Chalk]

in-class: *Rock Hudson's Home Movies* [clips] (Mark Rappaport, USA, 1992, 63 min.)
(netflix)

Touch of Pink [clip] (Ian Iqbal Rashid, UK, 2004, 91 min.) (dvd)

WEEK 9: Digital Cinema I: Materiality and Mediality

Tuesday, 5-24: Materiality

In-class quiz Tuesday

read: Lev Manovich, "Digital Cinema and the History of the Moving Image." [Chalk]

André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." [Chalk]

Tom Gunning, "Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the
Impression of Reality." [Chalk]

in-class: *Winter's Bone* [clips] (Debra Granik, USA, 2010, 100 min.) (format tba)

Camera (David Cronenberg, Canada, 2000, 6 min.) (dvd)

Screening: *Festen* (Thomas Vinterberg, Denmark, 1998, 106 min.) (dvd)

Run Lola Run (Tom Tykwer, Germany, 1998, 81 min.) (dvd)

Thursday, 5-26: Mediality

read: Holly Willis, from *New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image*. [Chalk]

Alexander Galloway, from *Gaming: Essays in Algorithmic Culture*. [Chalk]

in-class: tba

WEEK 10: Digital Cinema II: Post-Cinema

Tuesday, 5-31: 'Death', 'Haunting', 'Decay'

read: John Belton, "Digital Cinema: A False Revolution." [Chalk]

Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema." [Chalk]

in-class: *Toute la mémoire du monde* (Alain Resnais, France, 1956, 21 min.) (BluRay)

Screening: *District 9* (Neill Blomkamp, USA/New Zealand/South Africa, 2009, 112 min.) (BluRay)

No class Thursday, 6-2: Reading Period

****film analysis due via email Tuesday, 6-7, 5pm***