

**UNC SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
SCHOOL OF FILMMAKING
Fall 2009
FIM 231: Classics of World Cinema**

Instructor: Renata Jackson (x1389) jacksonr@ncarts.edu

Office Location and Hours: BB&T Lobby, Wednesdays, 2:15p-5p, and by appointment

MEETING TIME and LOCATION

All Sections meet Thursdays, from 7-11pm, in Gold Theater

COURSE CONTENT and STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is the first of a three-term series of classes on various enduring film classics from around the globe, which will introduce you to a wide range of narrative fiction feature and experimental filmmaking styles. The goals of this course are multi-fold, not the least of which is to broaden your viewing experience beyond contemporary Hollywood product, with which you are so familiar, and thereby help you to become more well-informed filmmakers. By the end of the fall term, you will be able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with silent and sound film classics from Western Europe, Great Britain, and the former Soviet Union;
- understand these films' cultural, historical, and theoretical or aesthetic contexts;
- use a critical and analytical vocabulary through which to articulate how these films function as both artistic and social statements – that is, as works of creative filmmaking that speak to the human condition.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS and OTHER MATERIALS

- Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2003)
- Various hand-outs distributed throughout the term

The Thompson/Bordwell *Film History* book is required for class; I have not ordered copies for the Campus Store because you should still have your copy from your purchase of it last year for your American Cinema class. I will draw upon the content of the assigned readings from this text in great part for my lecture material, and therefore the readings will always be fair game for exam questions. Furthermore, I recommend it for your film book library, as it is one of the most highly-regarded survey texts on international film history currently on the market.

Students are also required to have access to an e-mail capable computer to receive notices, information and other materials from the instructor and School of Filmmaking Administration. Students may submit completed assignments electronically where applicable.

SCREENINGS

All screenings will be in-class.

COURSEWORK and STUDENT EVALUATION

In addition to attendance (refer to **ATTENDANCE POLICY** in SoF Student Handbook), there are two mandatory graded aspects to this course – a midterm and final exam – as well as one optional writing assignment of an extra-credit term-paper:

Midterm and Final (each worth 50% of your grade):

You will be tested twice during the term on the lectures, readings, and all course-related films. These will be in-class, closed-book exams, which will consist mainly of short-answer essay format. *If you are caught cheating, you will receive an F (grade of zero) for the test, and thereby fail the course.*

Optional Extra-Credit Paper:

To receive extra-credit in this course, you may choose to write a short 4- to 5-page paper (**due in my mailbox or my office or handed to me no later than class-time on the day of our final exam**) on one of the films we will have seen in class. The paper must entail a close formal and thematic analysis of three sequences from your chosen film. Greater detail regarding the parameters of this optional assignment is included on p4 of this syllabus. Handwritten papers will not be accepted, nor will late papers, unless accompanied by a medical excuse.

If you choose to do the Optional Extra-Credit Paper, I will grade it from A to F. I will assign each of these letter grades a comparable whole-number point value (A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; D = 1; F = 0) that I will then add on to your overall term average. So, for example, if you have an 87% average between your mid-term and final, and you write a “B” paper, you would get 3 extra points added on to your score and therefore receive a 90%, pushing you over from a grade of B+ to an A-. Note that doing the optional paper *may* be able to help your grade, not hurt it – ***unless you plagiarize!!!*** Be forewarned that the act of plagiarism will not be taken lightly.

INCOMPLETE GRADE REQUESTS

Refer to policy in Student Handbook.

ATTENDANCE and TARDY POLICY & SCHEDULING MAKEUP WORK

Refer to policy in Student Handbook.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the North Carolina School of the Arts policy and equal access laws, faculty are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with the Officer for Student Disabilities to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Note that accommodations will not be granted without appropriate written documentation. Students with documented disabilities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, who anticipate the need for accommodations in a class, should notify the faculty member upon entrance to the course. The faculty member will work in conjunction with the student and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to determine the needed accommodations.

SESSION TOPICS

Week 2 (09/24): German Expressionism

Screening: *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Wiene, 1919) 72 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp101-109; related hand-outs

Week 3 (10/01): Class Cancelled: Students Must Attend Guest Artist Event in Main: Screening at 7pm: *When a Man Loves a Woman*, directed by Luis Mandoki, 1994

Week 4 (10/08): Soviet Montage

Screening: *The Man with the Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929) 68 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp119-140; related hand-outs

Week 5 (10/15): Early European Avant-Garde Cinema

Screening: *Entr'acte* (Clair, 1924) 20 min.; *Un Chien Andalou* (Buñuel/Dalí, 1929) 20 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp177-179; related hand-outs

Week 6 (10/22): Mid-term Exam; An Early Sound Film from the “Master of Suspense”

Screening: *Blackmail* (Hitchcock, 1929) 86 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp207-8; related hand-outs

Week 7 (10/29): French Poetic Realism

Screening: *Grand Illusion* (Renoir, 1937) 114 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp283-296; related hand-outs

Week 8 (11/05): French Cinema Under the German Occupation

Screening: *Children of Paradise* (Carné, 1945) 189 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp296-301; related hand-outs

Week 9 (11/12): Italian Neo-Realism

Screening: *Bicycle Thieves* (De Sica, 1948) 89 min.

Reading: Thompson/Bordwell, pp276-81; 359-366; related hand-outs

Week 10 (11/19): In-Class Final Exam

Reminder: Optional Extra-credit Paper due by class-time today

(see flipside of this page for Optional Extra-credit Paper Parameters)

Fall 2009 FIM 231 Classics of World Cinema: Parameters for Optional Extra-Credit Paper
Due date/time: by 7pm, Thurs., Nov. 19th

Consider this statement by French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821-'80):

“An idea does not exist but by virtue of its form.”

As filmmakers, you pay close attention to structure or form. You know better than most that it is through a film's various formal aspects that story, ideas, meaning, and emotional tone can be conveyed. For this optional extra-credit writing assignment, you must select one of the feature films or one of the avant-garde shorts we've seen in class this term, and then discuss specifically how its cinematic structure works in just this way.

In a *minimum* of **4 to 5 pages**, you must analyze **three sequences** from your chosen film. Here's a set of guidelines to help you go about your task:

- (a) Briefly summarize *in your own words* what the overall story/action is about;
- (b) Separate story/action from theme: choose to discuss a thematic idea or issue that the film presents;
- (c) Support your claims (narrative and thematic) via your close formal analysis of the three sequences;
- (d) Contextualize each sequence (set it up for your reader: at what point in the story/action does the sequence come?), and then analyze how the sequence is shot and cut together, that is, you must consider all aspects of montage and mise-en-scène: composition, angles, camera movement or stasis, production design, lighting and tonality, editorial structure, sound design (when applicable), actor performance, treatment of space-time, etc.;
- (e) Don't just list or describe the sequences' formal aspects! Make sure that, for each of the three sequences, you also tie them in to their narrative and/or thematic effectiveness.

Obviously, this kind of shot-by-shot analysis requires that you go back and look at your chosen film again, so I have put all of them on reserve at Semans Library.

These papers must be typed, double-spaced, and proof-read!!! Don't hand in sloppy work! Don't bother with fancy folders; just staple or paper-clip your pages together before submitting them.

One final but extremely important point: **this is not a research paper. Do not go to the internet and pull information off the web about your film.** If you do, and especially if you do not attribute your sources, you will be penalized for plagiarism. This optional extra-credit paper should be an exercise in your own ability to engage in creative, analytical thinking, and go deeper into an analysis of your chosen film than class-time alone allows us.

Grading Criteria:

I will evaluate these papers on your:

- thorough attentiveness to all the details of the assignment;
- thoughtfulness and/or creativity in your approach to the assignment;
- proper use of grammar, spelling, terminology, and clarity of written expression.

Please refer back to the “Coursework and Student Evaluation” section of this syllabus for further explanation of how the Optional Extra-Credit Paper will count towards your final grade.