

USA: CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA
Topic in National Cinema
Film Studies (FILM) 301.22 L01
Winter 2013
Tu 1800-2045 and Th 1800-1945

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Nelson
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Course Description

An examination of classical Hollywood filmmaking with a focus on films produced between 1929 and 1945, covering aspects of film style, industry, technology, and the relationship between Hollywood and American culture and history.

Course Objectives

American cinema reached the height of its economic and cultural influence during the so-called "classical era" extending from the late teens until the end of the 1950s. Within this period, the span between the transition to sound filmmaking and the end of the Second World War is recognized as Hollywood's golden age. Against a backdrop of national and global uncertainty and turmoil, industrial consolidation had reached a point where production practices had become standardized, resulting in a recognizable and reproducible style.

This course covers American films produced during Hollywood's heyday, emphasizing various aspects of the studio system and the critical approaches devised to analyze that system's products. We shall treat Hollywood classicism as both a style and a mode of production. The course is organized into three units. Students will first learn about the narrational, thematic and aesthetic qualities of classical Hollywood films, and then about contextual factors shaping their creation and reception. The final unit examines changes in both Hollywood and American society that followed the conclusion of the Second World War, and considers whether classicism in either sense persists in the post-war period.

The evaluative tasks for the course, numbering two short essays, a mid-term test, a longer essay and a final exam, will afford students the opportunity to demonstrate i) their comprehensive knowledge of the style, history and films of the studio era, and ii) their ability to productively apply various critical approaches and concepts to the analysis of classical Hollywood cinema.

In order to achieve these objectives, it is imperative that students come to class *prepared*, having completed the assigned readings or other preparatory tasks and willing to discuss pertinent issues with both the instructor and their peers in a thoughtful and respectful manner. Students are responsible for catching up on any material missed due to absence.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Mobile phones must be turned off during class. Students may use laptops or tablets during lectures and discussions for *note-taking purposes only*. No electronic devices whatsoever may be used during film screenings.

Textbooks and Readings

Richard B. Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema: Hollywood 1929-1945* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard and are designated [BB] in the schedule of readings.

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, students who are new to the academic study of cinema are strongly encouraged to visit the Yale Film Studies "Film Analysis" website (<http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>) in order to familiarize themselves with basic film terms and concepts.

Assignments and Evaluation

Detailed information about assignments, the mid-term test, and the final exam will be available on Blackboard.

- 10% 750-word narrative and stylistic analysis, due in class on Jan 31. Students will select a single scene from a studio feature and demonstrate how it evidences the narrational and stylistic features of Hollywood classicism.
- 15% Mid-term test, held in class on Feb 12. Clip identification, multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering lectures, readings and screenings from the first five weeks of class.
- 15% 750-word analysis, due in class on March 19. Students will examine the representation of either the Great Depression or World War II in a studio feature.
- 30% 2,000-word final essay, due April 16. A list of topics will be provided.
- 30% Final exam, Registrar Scheduled Exam, held during the examination period. Clip identification, multiple-choice, short-answer and essay questions covering lectures, readings and screenings from the entire semester.

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Written assignments must be composed in formal, error-free, academic English, and formatted according to either MLA or Chicago documentation and presentation standards. Your name and student number must appear on each page. Please staple all work – no paper clips or folders. Links to writing-related resources, including citation and style guides, can be found on Blackboard under "Links."

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Registrar-schedule Final Exam: Yes.

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.** For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly

where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources. Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link; <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program – 403-220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 403-220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site: <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics> or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Provisional Schedule of Readings and Screenings

A finalized schedule will be available on Blackboard before the first day of class.

Week 1	Introduction: The Golden Age of Hollywood (1/8 & 1/10)
Screening	<i>Gone with the Wind</i> (Victor Fleming, 1939; Selznick/MGM; 238 min)
Reading	Jewell, <i>The Golden Age of Cinema</i> , 1-3

UNIT ONE: NARRATION AND STYLE

Week 2 **Classical Narrative and Narration (1/15 & 1/17)**
Screening *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1934; Columbia; 105 min)
 The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941; WB; 101 min)
Suggested *Bringing Up Baby* (Howard Hawks, 1938; RKO; 102 min)
 Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1940; RKO; 119 min)
Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 151-162
 David Bordwell, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 12-41 [BB]

Week 3 **Classical Style (1/22 & 1/24)**
Screening *Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939; Wanger/UA; 96 min)
 Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942; WB; 102 min)
Suggested *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (Michael Curtiz, 1942; WB; 126 min)
 Wuthering Heights (William Wyler, 1939; UA; 103 min)
Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 162-189
 David Bordwell, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 42-59 [BB]

Week 4 **Hollywood Repeats Itself: Genre (1/29 & 1/31)**
Screening *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931; Universal; 71 min)
 Mutiny on the Bounty (Frank Lloyd, 1935; MGM; 132 min)
Suggested *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942; RKO; 73 min)
 Captain Blood (Michael Curtiz, 1935; WB; 119 min)
Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 195-197, 206-214
 Steve Neale, "Genre and Hollywood" [excerpt], *Hollywood and Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 231-242 [BB]
Evaluation Narrative and stylistic analysis essay due 1/31

Week 5 **Classicism: Alternatives and Discontents (2/5 & 2/7)**
Screening *Fatty and Mable Adrift* (Roscoe Arbuckle, 1916; Triangle; 34 min)
 42nd Street (Lloyd Bacon, 1933; WB; 89 min)
 Duck Soup (Leo McCarey, 1933; Paramount; 68 min)
Suggested *City Lights* (Charlie Chaplin, 1931; UA; 87 min)
 A Night at the Opera (Sam Wood, 1935; MGM; 96 min)
Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 224-239
 Donald Crafton, "Pie and Chase," *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, eds. Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1994), 106-119 [BB]
 Patrick Keating, "Emotional Curves and Linear Narratives," *Velvet Light Trap* 58 (Fall 2006): 4-15 [BB]

UNIT TWO: HISTORY, INDUSTRY, TECHNOLOGY
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Week 6 **The Studio System: Organizing Hollywood (2/12 & 2/14)**
Screening *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933; RKO; 100 min)
Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 50-89
 Howard T. Lewis, "Organization" [1933], rpt. in *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, ed. Steve

Neale (New York: Routledge, 2012), 147-166 [BB]

Evaluation Mid-term test, held in class on 2/12

READING WEEK 2/17 to 2/24

- Week 7 Historical Backdrop: The Great Depression and WWII (2/26 & 2/28)**
- Screening *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (Anatole Litvak, 1939; WB; 104 min)
The Grapes of Wrath (John Ford, 1940; 20th Century Fox; 129 min)
- Suggested *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933; WB; 96 min)
Ninotchka (Ernst Lubitsch, 1939; MGM; 110 min)
Our Daily Bread (King Vidor, 1934; UA; 74 min)
- Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 5-49
Robert Sklar, "The Golden Age of Turbulence and the Golden Age of Order," *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage, 1975), 175-194 [BB]
- Week 8 Commanding the Sounds of the Universe, Harnessing the Colors of the Rainbow (3/5 & 3/7)**
- Screening *Top Hat* (Mark Sandrich, 1935; RKO; 101 min)
The Wizard of Oz (Victor Fleming, 1939; MGM; 101 min)
- Suggested *Love Me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932; Paramount; 104 min)
The Adventures of Robin Hood (Michael Curtiz and William Keighly, 1938; WB; 102 min)
- Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 90-112
Scott Higgins, "Order and Plenitude: Technicolor Aesthetics in the Classical Era," *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, 296-309 [BB]
Steve Neale and Helen Hanson, "Commanding the Sounds of the Universe: Classical Hollywood Sound in the 1930s and early 40s," *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, 249-261 [BB]
- Week 9 Regulating the Silver Screen: Censorship (3/12 & 3/14)**
- Screening *Baby Face* (Alfred E. Green, 1933; WB; 75 min)
Little Caesar (Mervyn LeRoy, 1931; WB; 79 min)
She Done Him Wrong (Lowell Sherman, 1933; Paramount; 66 min)
- Suggested *Red-Headed Woman* (Jack Conway, 1932; MGM; 79 min)
Scarface (Howard Hawks, 1932; UA; 93 min)
- Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 113-150, 201-206
Richard Maltby, "'Baby Face' or How Joe Breen Made Barbara Stanwyck Atone for Causing the Wall Street Crash" [1986], rpt. in *The Studio System*, ed. Janet Staiger (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 251-278 [BB]
- Week 10 "More Stars Than There Are in Heaven": The Star System (3/19 & 3/21)**
- Screening *A Star is Born* (William A. Wellman, 1937; Selznick/UA; 111 min)
San Francisco (Woody Van Dyke, 1936; MGM; 115 min)
- Reading Jewell, *The Golden Age of Cinema*, 250-298
Tino Balio, "Selling Stars," *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (New York: Scribners, 1993), 144-175 [BB]
- Evaluation 750-word analysis due 3/19

UNIT THREE: POST-WAR HOLLYWOOD/THE PERSISTENCE OF CLASSICISM?
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Week 11	Transformations in Hollywood and Beyond (3/26 & 3/28)
Screening	<i>This is Cinerama</i> (Merian C. Cooper, 1952; Cinerama Prods. Corp.; 115 min) [excerpts] <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i> (Nicholas Ray, 1955; WB; 111 min) <i>Comanche Station</i> (Budd Boetticher, 1960; Columbia; 74 min)
Suggested	<i>The Robe</i> (Henry Koster, 1953; 20 th Century Fox; 135 min) <i>The Best Years of Our Lives</i> (William Wyler, 1946; RKO; 172 min)
Reading	Jewell, <i>The Golden Age of Cinema</i> , 299-302 Douglas Gomery, "Transformation of the Hollywood System," <i>The Oxford History of World Cinema</i> , ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 443-451 [BB] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Independents and Mavericks," <i>The Oxford History of World Cinema</i> , 451-460 [BB] John Belton, "Glorious Technicolor, Breathtaking CinemaScope, and Stereophonic Sound," <i>Hollywood in the Age of Television</i> , ed. Tino Balio (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 185-211 [BB]
Week 12	Post-War Style I: Film Noir (4/2 & 4/4)
Screening	<i>Leave Her to Heaven</i> (John M. Stahl, 1945; 20 th Century Fox; 110 min) <i>Sunset Boulevard</i> (Billy Wilder, 1950; Paramount; 110 min)
Suggested	<i>Double Indemnity</i> (Billy Wilder, 1944; Paramount; 100 min) <i>Touch of Evil</i> (Orson Welles, 1958; RKO; 112 min)
Reading	Jewell, <i>The Golden Age of Cinema</i> , 191-192 Drew Casper, <i>Post-War Hollywood 1946-1962</i> (New York: Blackwell, 2007), 349-367 [BB] David Bordwell, "The Case of Film Noir," <i>The Classical Hollywood Cinema</i> , 74-77 [BB] Paul Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir," <i>Film Comment</i> 8.1 (Spring 1972), 8-13 [BB]
Week 13	Post-War Style II: Realism(s) (4/9 & 4/11)
Screening	<i>On the Waterfront</i> (Elia Kazan, 1954; Columbia; 108 min) <i>Pillow Talk</i> (Michael Gordon, 1959; Universal; 98 min)
Suggested	<i>12 Angry Men</i> (Sidney Lumet, 1957; MGM/UA; 96 min) <i>The Bad and the Beautiful</i> (Vicente Minnelli, 1952; MGM; 118 min)
Reading	Casper, <i>Post-War Hollywood</i> , 368-393 [BB]
Week 14	Conclusion: Hooray for Hollywood! (4/16)
Screening	<i>Sullivan's Travels</i> (Preston Sturges, 1941; Paramount; 90 min)
Evaluation	Final essay due

FINAL EXAMINATION HELD DURING THE EXAM PERIOD