

University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Film Studies FILM 403 L01  
**TOPIC IN THE DIRECTOR'S CINEMA:  
CHARLES CHAPLIN**  
FALL 2017

**Wed., Sept. 13 – Fri., Dec. 8 (except Fri., Nov. 10)**  
**Lecture, Fri. 13:00 – 14:50**  
**Lab (film screening), Wed. 12:00 – 14:45**

**Instructor:** Ryan Pierson  
**Office:** SS 214  
**Office Phone:** 220-6720  
**E-Mail:** ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** <http://D2L>  
**Office Hours:** Tu/Th, 14:00 – 15:00

### **Course Description**

While Charles Chaplin has been almost universally regarded as a superlative artist of cinema, celebrations and studies of Chaplin's work are usually limited to his performance style, or to the mythical appeal of his Tramp character. So what, exactly, is *cinematic* about his films?

This course will attempt to provide some tentative answers to this question. In addition, we will examine how Chaplin's style was forged in context with other major aesthetic developments of his time—namely, D.W. Griffith's cinematic melodramas and Keystone's slapstick comedies—as well as the ways that his style adapted to feature-length films and to the coming of sound.

### **Objectives of the Course**

By the end of this course, students should have a firm grasp of the particularities of Chaplin's filmmaking style, as well as an understanding of the varied cultural meanings that circulated around his work. In addition, this course will help students develop necessary skills for academic writing.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

Our primary text for the course will be *Charlie Chaplin, Director*, by Donna Kornhaber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), noted in the schedule as **CCD**. It is available at the campus bookstore. Supplementary readings will be available on D2L.

## **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Laptops may be used only for taking notes and consulting the readings for discussion; they may not be out during screenings. (You will be given time to take notes on each short.) Handheld devices (cell phones, etc.) may not be used at any time. First offense will result in a verbal warning; further violations will affect your grade.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### *Participation (ongoing):*

10%

Because participation is a necessary component of the course, students are expected to attend lectures and screenings, as well as participate in classroom discussion. Each day of discussion, you will be marked on the following scale:

10/10: present, makes at least one substantial contribution to discussion, brings course readings

5/10: present, does not contribute to discussion *or* does not bring course readings

2/10: present, *neither* contributes to discussion *nor* brings course readings

Marks will be determined by the quality<sup>1</sup> and quantity of your participation, as well as whether or not you bring the course readings. Students who attend but do not participate can expect no more than a 5/10; students who do not regularly bring the course readings, even if they speak, can expect the same.

You are allowed up to three absences, for any reason. Absences accumulated thereafter will result in deductions from your final participation grade, one point for each missing day (e.g., if you miss one extra day and your participation average is 8/10, it will be dropped to 7/10).

### *Discussion board posts (ongoing):*

15%

Every other week, you will post on the D2L discussion board your reflection on the week's material. Your post must be at least 150 words long, speak about some aspect of the week's film, and quote the reading (or paraphrase in detail some part of it). Each post will be graded on the following scale:

Meets word count, discusses reading: 10/10

4/10 Fails to meet word count and/or discuss reading and/or is (up to 72 hours) late:

More than 72 hours late or missing: 0/10

Posts are due Friday at 9 a.m.

### *Discussion aides (ongoing):*

15%

Each week, a small group will be responsible for sparking the week's discussion. Discussion should aim at detailed analysis of the week's topic. It should consist of an

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<sup>1</sup> "Quality" here simply means "a complete subject-predicate thought that is about the course material." "Yes" or "no" responses do not count as "quality" participation. "I liked this" or "I found that confusing" do not yet count as quality participation (as they are statements about you and not the material); but they are excellent starting points for quality participation, since they imply specific points about the material that may be clarified.

illuminating clip and a passage from the reading, with commentary and provocations; if possible, it should also include 1-2 broader questions for the class to consider.

These discussion aides are not presentations, and they need not be formal. They only need to guide the class through major concepts and concerns.

*Comparative source study (due Oct. 13)*

15%

In Week 5, you will be asked to find and analyze two primary sources on Chaplin, each from a different period (as broken down in the syllabus). Compare the approaches that these sources take to their subject. How is Chaplin represented consistently, or inconsistently, across these periods? What is considered important about him? What is assumed, what is spelled out? How does this fit or not fit with the historical studies covered so far in the course?

Studies should be two pages long. Sources can be found on Lantern: <http://lantern.mediahist.org/>. Further details will be given later in the semester.

*Paper proposal (due November 8)*

15%

A short document proposing a topic and approach for your final research paper. The proposal should include a brief description of your major research questions or arguments, and roughly how you plan on executing them. It should also have a formatted bibliography.

*Final Research Paper (due Dec. 15):*

30%

An 8-10 page research essay on an approved topic of the student's choice and related to the course themes and materials. Further details will be given later in the semester.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** NO

**Submission of Assignments:** 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

For late assignments, one-third of a letter grade will be subtracted from the assignment for each 24-hour period.

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf).

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using letter grades, except as noted above for participation and discussion posting grades.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

<b>Grade Point Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Department grade scale equivalents</b>	<b>Letter grade % equivalent for calculations</b>
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>		<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>		<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	00 - 49.99%	0%

### **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. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas

end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### Academic Misconduct

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

### Research 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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333 <b>403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>

<p><b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing Support Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Services Mobile App</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faculty of Arts Reps</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Ombudsman</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Counselling Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Health Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</b></li> <li>• <b>Online resources and tips</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

## **SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS**

(all films dir. Charles Chaplin unless otherwise noted)

### **Week 1 (Sept. 13 & 15): Chaplin Style versus Classical Style**

--Read:

CCD, Introduction

--Screen:

*A Woman of Paris* (1923)

*Way Down East* (D.W. Griffith, 1920)

## **PART ONE: SHORT SUBJECTS (1914-1923)**

### **Week 2 (Sept. 20 & 22): Attractions and the Keystone style**

--Read:

CCD, Chapter 1

Donald Crafton, "Pie and Chase"

--Screen:

*Those Awful Hats* (Griffith, 1909)

*A Corner in Wheat* (Griffith, 1909)

*The Sealed Room* (Griffith, 1909)

*Twenty Minutes of Love* (1914)  
*Dough and Dynamite* (1914)

Week 3 (Sept. 27 & 29): **Chaplin's Performance: the Slapsticked Body**

--Read:

CCD, Chapter 2  
Rob King, "Charles Chaplin and the Comedy of Class"

--Screen:

*The Lonely Villa* (Griffith, 1909)  
*Help! Help!* (Mack Sennett, 1912)  
*Mabel's Busy Day* (Mabel Normand, 1914)  
*The Fireman* (1916)  
*1 A.M.* (1916)  
*The Rink* (1916)

Week 4 (Oct. 4 & 6): **Chaplin's Pathos: the Innocent Subject**

--Read:

Charles Maland, "Early Films and Rise to Stardom" (excerpts)  
Peter Brooks, "The Melodramatic Imagination"  
Jean Epstein, "Amour de Charlot"

--Screen:

*The Tramp* (1915)  
*A Dog's Life* (1918)  
*The Kid* (1921)

Week 5 (Oct. 11 & 13): **Chaplin's Popularity: The Myth of the Tramp**

Read:

Viktor Shklovsky, "Chaplin"  
Rudolf Arnheim, "Motion"  
Sergei Eisenstein, "Charlie the Kid"  
Andre Bazin, "Charlie Chaplin"

Screen:

*Shoulder Arms* (1918)  
*The Pilgrim* (1923)  
*Ballet Mecanique* (Fernand Leger, 1924)

**COMPARATIVE SOURCE STUDY DUE**

**PART TWO: FEATURES, SILENT (1923-1931)**

Week 6 (Oct. 18 & 20): **Slapstick-classical: Lloyd and Keaton**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 3



Screen:

*Safety Last!* (Hal Roach, 1923)

*Cops* (Edward F. Cline & Buster Keaton, 1922)

Week 7 (Oct. 25 & 27): **Chaplin's spaces**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 4

Andre Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema"

Screen:

*Easy Street* (1917)

*The Vagabond* (1916)

*The Gold Rush* (1925)

Week 8 (Nov. 1 & 3): **Chaplin's ambiguity**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 5

Screen:

*The Immigrant* (1917)

*The Circus* (1928)

Week 9 (Nov. 8): **The resistance to sound**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 6

Screen

*City Lights* (1931)

**PAPER PROPOSALS DUE**

### PART THREE: FEATURES, SOUND (1936-1967)

Week 10 (Nov. 15 & 17): **The Acousmatic Chaplin**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 7 (209-224 only)

Michel Chion, "The Acousmetre"

Screen:

*Modern Times* (1936)

Week 11 (Nov. 22 & 24): **Monologues**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 7 (224-233 only)

Rob King, "Retheorizing Comedic and Political Discourse"

Screen:

*The Great Dictator* (1940)

Week 12 (Nov. 29 & Dec. 1): **More voices**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 8

James Agee, "Monsieur Verdoux"

Screen:

*Monsieur Verdoux* (1947)

Week 13 (Dec. 6 & 8): **Return to Form**

Read:

CCD, Chapter 9

Screen:

*A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967)

**FINAL PAPER DUE DEC. 15**