

History of Film, Part I

From the 1890s to World War II

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Texts:

- Belton, John. *American Cinema/American Culture*. 2nd ed. NY: McGraw Hill, 2005.
- Cook, David. *A History of Narrative Film*. 4th ed. NY: Norton, 2004.
- on-line readings

Course Objectives: Film History I is designed to enable you:

- to gain a working knowledge of early film history, from the silent cinema through the 1930s
- to develop a cinematic literacy--in other words, to recognize and use the basic technical and critical vocabulary of motion pictures
- to understand how the technology of the cinema relates to film art
- to understand the place of "Hollywood" in world film culture
- to grasp the role of genre in American film history, and to recognize how some of the most popular genres express American social and cultural tensions
- to question your own role as a passive spectator, as well as increase your ability to watch films actively and critically.
- to improve your ability to write critically and analytically about film as art and social practice.

Grading:

Quizzes/short exam	20%	Essays	40%
Final Exam	20%	Work Ethic / Participation	20%

You are expected to write two out-of-class 500-word essays (about 2-3 typed pages) and participate in at least two Wikipedia revisions of classic film subjects. We will work together on how to engage other film critics and primary sources in our research and writing.

Attendance and class participation:

To be successful in this class you need to be *in* class and prepared to listen and talk intelligently and passionately, as well as be present in our learning management system. Absences will seriously hurt your grade. You may make up for absences and also obtain extra credit by writing 1-page reviews of approved out-of-class films.

General On-Line Resources for Film History Before WWII:

Nota bene: Not all web sites are created equally. Learn to evaluate them as you would more traditional print resources. The following guide from Cornell University is a good initial step in that direction: "[How to Critically Analyze Information Sources.](#)"

- [Internet Movie Database](#)
- [Movie Review Query Engine](#)
- [The Greatest Films](#) -- Tim Dirks
- [EarlyCinema.com](#)
- [Silent Film Sources](#)
- [Silent Era](#)
- [Silent Movies](#) -- Glen Pringle, Monash U., Australia
- [The Silent Film Bookshelf](#)
- [Silent Ladies and Gents--Photo Galleries of Silent Movie Stars](#)
- [Cinema History](#) -- Robert Yahnke, U. of Minnesota
- [The Hollywood Thirties](#) -- Gary Jackson
- [The Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture](#) -- U. of Exeter, UK

Course Schedule

Week One

"Introduction to Course: Reading Classical Hollywood Cinema"

Film:

- Introduction to Class: The Lumière Brothers; Georges Méliès; Thomas Edison
- [The Wizard of Oz](#) (USA, 1939; Dir. [Victor Fleming](#) and [King Vidor](#))

Readings:

- *Cook*, "Origins," pp. 1-27.
- *Belton*, "Introduction" and "The Emergence of the Cinema as An Institution," pp. 3-21.

On-Line Resources for Week One:

- [Le Voyage Dans La Lune \(A Trip To The Moon\) \(1902\)](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
 - [The Great Train Robbery \(1903\)](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
 - [Georges Méliès](#) -- Darragh O'Donoghue, *Senses of Cinema*
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Week Two

"D.W. Griffith and the Problematic Beginnings of Classical Hollywood Cinema"

Film:

- [Broken Blossoms](#) (USA, 1919; Dir. [D.W. Griffith](#))

Readings:

- Cook, "International Expansion, 1907-1918," pp. 29-50; "D. W. Griffith and the Consummation of Narrative Form," pp. 51-85.
- Belton, "Classical Hollywood Narration," pp. 22-44; "Silent Film Melodrama," pp. 131-149.

On-Line Resources for Week Two:

- [Broken Blossoms](#)- -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
 - [Broken Blossoms](#) -- Roger Ebert
 - ["Artful Racism and Artful Rape in Broken Blossoms"](#) -- Julia LeSage, *Jump Cut*
 - ["D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Cinema"](#) -- The Bill Douglas Centre
 - [Bibliography on D. W. Griffith](#) -- U. of California, Berkeley Library
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Week Three

"German Expressionist Cinema of the Twenties"

Film:

- [Metropolis](#) (Germany, 1927; Dir. [Fritz Lang](#))

Readings:

- Cook, "German Cinema of the Weimar Period, 1919-1929," pp. 87-111.

On-Line Resources for Week Three:

- [The Internet Source Book for Early German Film](#) -- Olaf Brill and Thomas Schultke -- in English and German
- [a review of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari](#) -- Damian Cannon
- [a review of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari](#) -- CGK
- ["Expressionism and Caligarisme"](#) -- Bouton Jones

- [Fritz Lang](#) -- Daniel Shaw, *Senses of Cinema*
- [Fritz Lang's Metropolis](#)
- [an essay on Metropolis](#) -- Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*
- [M](#) -- Roger Ebert
- [M](#) -- Stockholm Film Review
- ["Fascinating Rhythms"](#) (a review of *M*) -- Jonathan Rosenbaum
- [a Fritz Lang page](#)
- [Fritz Lang: Master of Darkness](#) -- British Film Institute
- [The German-Hollywood Connection](#)
- [Expressionism in painting: Munch's "The Scream"](#) and [Munch's "The Kiss"](#)
- [The Machine as Art Object: Paul Strand -- "Lathe"](#)
- [German Cinema: A Selected Bibliography of Materials in the UC, Berkeley Library](#)

Week Four

"Radical Politics, Modernist Style: Russian Silent Film"

Film:

- [Battleship Potemkin](#) (U.S.S.R., 1925; Dir. Sergei Eisenstein)
- [The Man With the Movie Camera](#) (U. S. S. R., 1929, Dziga Vertov)

Readings:

- Cook, "Soviet Silent Cinema and the Theory of Montage, 1917-1931," p. 113-168.

On-Line Resources:

- [Sergei Eisenstein](#) -- Dan Shaw, *Senses of Cinema*
- [Sergei Eisenstein](#) -- *All Movie Guide*
- [Sergei Eisenstein](#) -- *Russian Archives Online*
- [Eisenstein page](#) -- Gregg Severson, Carleton College (with essay ["Historical Narrative in The Battleship Potemkin"](#))
- [Montage](#) -- Anatoly G. Antohin, U. of Alaska, Fairbanks
- [Dziga Vertov](#) -- Jonathan Dawson, *Senses of Cinema*
- [Dziga Vertov](#) -- *All Movie Guide*
- [Alexander Dovzhenko](#) -- *All Movie Guide*
- ["Cinematic Poetry of Alexander Dovzhenko"](#) -- Olga Bobrova
- [Russian Cinema: A Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)

Week Five

"Hollywood in the Twenties"

Film:

- [City Lights](#) (USA, 1931; Dir. Charlie Chaplin)

Readings:

- Cook, "Hollywood in the Twenties," pp. 169-204.

On-Line Resources:

- [City Lights](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- ["The Talkie and the Tramp: Charlie Chaplin Stays Silent in the Machine Age"](#)
- ["Chaplin's Film Heroines"](#) -- Stephen M. Weissman
- [What Made Charlie Run?](#) -- Stephen M. Weissman
- ["Chaplin's, The Kid"](#) -- Stephen M. Weissman
- [Eisenstein on "Charlie the Kid"](#)
- [Charlie Chaplin: A Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)
- [Buster Keaton](#) -- Dan Callahan, *Senses of Cinema*
- [The General](#) -- *All Movie Guide*
- [The International Buster Keaton Society homepage](#)
- [Buster Keaton: A Selected Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)

Week Six

*"Genre, Auteurism, and the American Studio System:
Howard Hawks and Frank Capra"*

Film:

- [Scarface](#) (USA, 1932; Dir. [Howard Hawks](#))
- [It Happened One Night](#) (USA, 1934; Dir. [Frank Capra](#))

Readings:

- Cook, "The Coming of Sound and Color, 1926-1935," pp. 205-230 and "The Sound System and the American Studio System," pp. 231-288.

On-Line Resources:

- ["Crime and Gangster Films"](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- ["Howard Hawks"](#) -- David Boxwell, *Senses of Cinema*
- ["Howard Hawks"](#) -- Petri Liukkonen and Ari Pesonen
- [Chapter One of Howard Hawks: The Grey Fox of Hollywood](#) -- Todd McCarthy
- [Scarface: The Shame of a Nation](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*

- [Screwball Comedy page](#) -- Michael Mills
- [It Happened One Night](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- ["It's Fun...But It Takes Courage: Remembering Frank Capra's America"](#) -- Annalee Newitz, *Bad Subjects*
- ["The Charm of Morality: Frank Capra and his Cinema."](#) -- Lorraine Mortimer, *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*
- ["A Capra Moment"](#) -- Stanley Cavell, *Humanities*
- [Elizabeth's Frank Capra page](#) -- good poster site
- [Frank Capra page](#) -- Erik Weems
- ["Twists, Slugs and Roscoes: A Glossary of Hardboiled Slang"](#) -- William Denton

Week Seven
Mid-Term

Week Eight
Fall Break

Week Nine
*"Genre, Auteurism, and the American Studio System:
Screwball Comedy, Part I: Preston Sturges"*

Film:

- [The Lady Eve](#) (USA, 1941; [Dir. Preston Sturges](#))

Readings:

- Belton, "Classical Hollywood Cinema: Style," pp. 41-60; "The Studio System," pp. 61-82; "American Comedy," pp. 135-163

On-Line Resources:

- [Preston Sturges](#) -- Jonas Varsted Kirkegaard, *Senses of Cinema*
- ["Ants in His Pants"](#) (essay on Preston Sturges) -- Jerry Kemp, *Sight and Sound*
- [The Lady Eve and Sullivan's Travels](#) -- Gary Johnson -- review of Criterion DVDs
- [The Lady Eve and Sullivan's Travels](#) -- Matthew Kennedy -- review of Criterion DVDs
- [Preston Sturges](#) -- American Masters, PBS
- [Preston Sturges: A Screwball Centennial](#) -- Devra Maza
- [Sturges Emerges](#) -- Stu Kobak
- [Preston Sturges's Stock Company](#) -- James Harvey and others
- [The Lady Eve](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- [The Lady Eve](#) -- Roger Ebert, *The Chicago-Sun Times*

- [Preston Sturges: A Selected Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)
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Week Ten
*"Politics in The Thirties:
Representing Class"*

Film:

- [The Rules of the Game](#) (France, 1939; Dir. [Jean Renoir](#))

Readings:

- [Melodrama Films](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- [Jean Renoir](#) -- James Leahy, *Senses of Cinema*
- [The Rules of the Game](#) -- Stacey Richter, *Tucson Weekly*
- ["The Disturbing Relevance of Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu*"](#) -- Travis Else
- ["S/Z and Rules of the Game"](#) -- Julia Lesage

On-Line Resources:

- ["Film Melodrama and Sociological Propaganda"](#) - Alex Burns
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Week Eleven
*"Genres in the Thirties:
The Thriller and the Musical"*

Film:

- [The Thirty-Nine Steps](#) (Great Britain, 1935; Dir. [Alfred Hitchcock](#))
- [42nd Street](#) (USA, 1933; Dir. [Lloyd Bacon](#))

Readings:

- Cook, "Europe in the Thirties," pp. 347-391.

On-Line Resources:

- [Hitchcock--The Master of Suspense](#) -- Patricio López-Guzmán
- [an illustrated bio-essay on Hitchcock](#)
- [Alfred Hitchcock bio](#) -- from *Baseline's Encyclopedia of Film*
- [a Hitchcock page of links](#) -- *New York Times*
- [The Thirty-Nine Steps](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*

- [The Hitchcock Universe: *Thirty-Nine Steps and Then Some*](#) -- George Perry
- [Swing Time](#) -- Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*
- [Swing Time](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*

Week Twelve

"Genre, Auteurism, and the American Studio System: Screwball Comedy, Part III: Howard Hawks"

Film:

- [Bringing Up Baby](#) (USA, 1938; Dir. [Howard Hawks](#))

Readings:

- Belton, "The Star System," pp. 83-114.

On-Line Resources:

- ["Bringing Up Baby"](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- ["The Camera as Romantic Catalyst"](#) (on *Bringing Up Baby*) -- Tony Pelling, *CultureDose.net*
- ["The Glory of Cary Grant and Other Girlish Delights"](#) -- Elizabeth Abele, *Images: A Journal of Film and Popular Culture* [on *Bringing Up Baby*]
- ["Bringing Up Baby"](#) -- James Kendrick, *QNetwork.com*
- ["Mildred Pierce and His Girl Friday: Portrait of Working Women in the Pre- and Post-World War Period"](#) -- Robin Morrison, Queen's U., Canada
- ["Keeping Up With Hawks"](#) -- Lea Jacobs, *Style* (on *His Girl Friday*)
- ["What Makes a Star? -- Howard Hawks Knew Best of All"](#) -- Robin Brantley, *New York Times* (1978)
- ["The Screwball Heroine Saves the Day"](#) (*Bringing Up Baby, Romancing the Stone, etc.*) - Elizabeth Abele, *Schuylkill*
- [Home of the Screwball](#) -- Lisa Jensen, Katie Hamlin, and Dave Henning, U. of Virginia
- [The Ultimate Cary Grant Pages](#) -- Debbie Dunlap

Week Thirteen

Thanksgiving Break

Week Fourteen

"Genre, Auteurism, and the American Studio System: John Ford"

Film:

- [Stagecoach](#) (USA, 1939; Dir. [John Ford](#))

Readings:

- *Belton*, "The Making of the West," pp. 206-230.

On-Line Resources:

- ["John Ford"](#) -- Richard Franklin, *Senses of Cinema*
- [Stagecoach](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
- ["Cookie-Cutter Or Connoisseur?--Genre Theory and John Ford's Stagecoach"](#) - Katherine Lawrie, Queen's College, Canada
- [Stagecoach](#) -- David Bordwell
- [John Ford: A Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)

Week Fifteen

"Challenging the Hollywood System: Welles's Kane"

Film:

- [Citizen Kane](#) (USA, 1941; Dir. [Orson Welles](#))

Readings:

- *Cook*, "Orson Welles and the Modern Sound Film," pp. 393-420.

On-Line Resources:

- [Citizen Kane](#) -- Roger Ebert
 - [Citizen Kane](#) -- James Berardinelli
 - [Citizen Kane](#) -- Tim Dirks, *Greatest Films*
 - [Orson Welles](#) -- Jaime N. Christley, *Senses of Cinema*
 - ["Critically Appraise Citizen Kane as Cinema"](#) -- Peter J. Pullicino
 - ["Some Kind of a Man: Revisiting Citizen Kane"](#) -- Richard Armstrong, *Australian Screen Education*
 - [Wellesnet.com: The Orson Welles Web Resource](#)
 - [The Estate of Orson Welles](#)
 - [Orson Welles: The Man and His Genius](#)
 - [Orson Welles: A Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library](#)
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Week Sixteen
Final Exam Week