

Comm. 460

Winter 2010 Thursday 5:20 to 9:30

Instructor: Dr. Gary Byrd

Office: Classroom & Office Building 225

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Text: An Introduction To Film

Authors: Thomas and Vivian Sobchack, ISBN: 0-673-393-02X

**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of the history of film (1890's to the present) by examining aesthetic, industrial, social, and theoretical issues in a variety of national and cultural contexts. In discussions, lectures, and screenings, emphasis will be on commercial and avant-garde styles and their determinants. What is the style now called the "classical Hollywood cinema"? Why did it materialize as it did? What were the alternatives? Tests are designed to develop skills in writing about film aesthetics, history, and theory. The course satisfies General Education Goal XI, Fine Arts, as an upper division course.

**Prerequisite:**

English 110 or equivalent.

**Assignments:** There will be ten (8) short answer tests covering various sections of the text. The sum of these tests will be two-thirds of your grade. There are **no makeup** test but you may drop your lowest test. There are six writing assignments 3-5 page papers (50 points each). The objective tests will cover assignments from the textbook. Each test will be worth 50 points. If you want detailed comments on any paper submitted after the beginning of the last week of the course, please write the word "comments" on the first page and provide me with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**Class Participation:** Class participation will affect your grade if your other work falls between two grades (for example, between a "B" and a "B+"). Participation based on the readings and class discussions is encouraged. Please feel free to ask questions, and to disagree.

## COURSE GOALS

I Students will learn about film as a medium with diverse aesthetic, commercial, and cultural characteristics.

II Students will learn to recognize the aesthetic design of the Hollywood style and of its avant-garde alternatives.

III Students will understand the argument that cultural production and reception are marked by ethnicity and gender, and they will be able to analyze films in those terms.

IV Students will develop an overview of twentieth-century movements in avant-garde art and politics.

V Students will understand the argument that conventional historical narratives about film flatten out complex, irreducible pasts into a story that represents itself as whole, while inevitably remaining partial.

VI Students will develop skill in film analysis. They will learn to see films and ways of viewing them as cultural products, learn to analyze and write about them as design, learn appreciation of the formal complexity and aesthetic issues involved in composition, in relations between shots, and in movement of the camera.

## PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Students will be evaluated by performance on seven (7) out of eight tests to be taken, generally on a weekly basis and writing assignments. Each test will be worth 50 points. The normal curve will be used for grade assignments.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Please prepare for class by looking up unfamiliar terms and noting any questions you have. Let me know if you find any of the readings or class discussions unclear. Videodiscs & Videotapes with VHS numbers are on in-house loan from the 2nd floor of the library. There are also viewing rooms and viewing desks on the 2nd floor of the library. Screenings will be in class. I welcome your comments and suggestions.

### Week 1 Jan. 7

Screening:

*Hollywood, Jews, and Movies/ The American Dream*

[*Hollywood: The Pioneers* (1980, Great Britain, David Gill and Kevin Brownlow) VHS 1635

*Hollywood: In the Beginning* (1980, Great Britain, Gill and Brownlow) VHS 1635]

### Week 2 Jan. 14

Screening:

*Birth of a Nation* (1915, D.W. Griffith)

**Test Pages 419 to 444 & 3 to 43 Content needed to address the serious review of film**

### Week 3 Jan. 21

Screening:

*The Battleship Potemkin* (1925, Sergei Eisenstein)

**Review of *Birth of a Nation* Due**

**Test Pages 44 to 103**

### Week 4 Jan. 28

Screening:

*Citizen Kane* (1941, Orson Welles)

**Review of *Potemkin* Due**

View A Beautiful Mind before next class

**Test Pages 104 to 142**

### Week 5 Feb. 4

Review:

*Citizen Kane* (1941, Orson Welles)

Screening:

Analysis of *A Beautiful Mind* (2002, Ron Howard,)

**Review of *Citizen Kane* Due**

**Test Pages 143-169**

**Week 6 Feb. 11 NO CLASS Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 7 Feb. 18**

Screening:

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975, Milos Forman)

**Test Pages 170 to 202**

**Week 8 Feb. 25**

Review:

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Screening:

*Into the Wild* (Sean Penn, 2007)

**Review of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* Due**

**Test Pages 204 to 235**

**Week 9 March 4**

Review:

*Into the Wild*

Screening:

*Cast Away* (Robert Zemeckis, 2000)

**Review of *Into the Wild* Due**

**Test Pages 284 to 333**

**Week 10 March 11**

Screening:

**Review of *Cast Away* Due**

**Test Pages 336 to 373**

**Possible Substitutions**

*Apocalypse Now* (1979, Francis Ford Coppola)

*Bonnie and Clyde* (1967, Arthur Penn)

*Smooth Talk* (1985, Joyce Chopra)

*Occurance at Owl Creek Bridge* (1961, Robert Enrico)

*The Battle of Algiers* (1966, Gillo Pontecorvo)

*Natural Born Killers* (1994, Oliver Stone)

*A Clockwork Orange* (1971, Stanley Kubrick)

*Dreams* (1992, Akira Kurosawa)

*Cider House Rules* (1999, Lasse Hallstrom)

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966, Mike Nichols)

*Paths of Glory* (1957, Stanley Kubrick)

*Hearts of Darkness (The Documentary)* (1991, Eleanor Coppola)

*Cider House Rules* (1999), Lasse Hallstrom)

*The Graduate* (1967, Mike Nichols)

