

History of World Cinema (CMA 2400) **Fall 2020**

Professor Jennifer Fay
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Zoom Office Hours by appointment.

Class meetings:

See course schedule below for sessions that are in-person, via Zoom, and a-synchronous lectures. After our first week and with some exceptions: Tuesdays will be a-synchronous and Thursdays will be in-person class discussion. All Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on Brightspace.

T/R 9:35- 10:50 a.m. Buttrick 101

Course Description

Cinema has always been a global phenomenon, even at the moment of its invention. As a narrative and entertainment medium, it has been subject to the demands of the international economy, political spheres of influence, and the forces of globalization. Writers, directors, and actors have often been well-versed in international film culture, and have, in turn, inspired the artistic production in their own film industries and in other countries. In fifteen weeks, this course covers over a century of global film history as it unfolds in several different countries at various moments in time. We will consider not only those instances in which science and industry open up new possibilities for the medium while foreclosing others (particularly in the growth of the Hollywood studio system and commercial narrative cinema in the United States), but also how the exigencies of war, poverty, colonialism, and liberation (to name a few) have impinged on production, or served as the production's foundation. In addition to how filmic texts are produced and disseminated, we will also attend to shifting exhibition practices, particularly in cases where the exhibition site radically alters the meaning of the text. Though this course is far from exhaustive, the goal is to teach students how to think about cinema in general, and individual films, in particular, in a historical framework and to understand that all history, including film history, is a narrative subject to revision. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I hope that in discovering or rediscovering films from several countries, you embrace a wider model for your own film spectatorship and global citizenship, leaving this class committed to seeking out films from diverse national, political, and historical situations.

Objectives:

1. Gain understanding of world cinema including major developments and current directions.
2. Gain understanding of Film History as a discipline.
3. Develop an intellectual framework for researching film history and historiography.
4. Expand critical thinking skills while developing oral and written proficiency.
5. Demonstrate understanding of material through weekly responses, class discussion, papers, and exams.

Required Texts:

There is no textbook for this class. All readings are posted on Brightspace. Please read all texts for the day on which they appear on the syllabus. Print out each reading and bring it to class.

Film Screenings:

Film screenings in the time of covid-19 will be remote. Many of the films are difficult and I ask that you watch them without distraction in full screen mode. This means without multi-tasking. Films are available for streaming either through the VU library's Kanopy subscription or on Brightspace. Our last film is on Netflix.

Discussion Posts: You are required to post responses to the readings and films on Brightspace *at least eight times* over the course of the semester. Posting must be *submitted no later than mid-night on either*

Monday or Wednesday nights before we meet in relation to the material assigned for the next day's class session. Your posts should both offer a summary of main points (of the readings and film) and raise questions that will, in turn, inform our discussion. You are also expected to read each other's posts before class. There will be 4 "ALL Post" days. Everyone is expected to respond on Brightspace on these days, which count toward your 8 minimum required posts.

Participation: Active participation is key to a fulfilling and fruitful classroom experience. For this reason, 20% of your grade is based on class discussion. Get in the habit of synthesizing the materials for each meeting, whether it be the readings or the films. When reading, focus on the main argument, while also paying attention to the context in which the author is writing. You should also take notes on the films. Be sure to bring up in class in any questions that you have. Writing on Brightspace before class is an excellent way to prepare to speak in class. If you are shy, you should consider posting on Brightspace more often. Good participation means that your contributions to class discussion are informed by the reading and the film. It means that you are present in class and not sleeping or distracted by electronic devices.

Attendance: You are expected to attend classes and I will take attendance. A student who misses more than two classes may expect a penalty of .1 for every subsequent absence on the final grade. A student who misses six or more classes may fail based on attendance alone. Excused absences are limited to illness, family emergency, Vanderbilt travel (for athletes), and religious holidays. Please notify me of absences, excused or otherwise, via email. You are responsible for any missed material. Please avoid scheduling conflicts.

Notes for class: Every student should take notes in class. In the era of covid-19, however, we must plan for the possibilities of students becoming seriously ill or needing to be quarantined. I will assign two official note-takers for each in-person class. These notes, which will be typed, will reflect the range of discussion and examples, and will be posted on Brightspace no more than 24 hours after class for all students to make use of. Every student will have assigned days for note-taking. I will also post my Powerpoint presentations.

Civility: The University is committed to your learning experience and to creating an environment that is most conducive to that goal while also keeping everyone healthy and safe. The classroom is a welcome space for all and one where we come to in order to grow. I will do my part and I ask that you too be mindful and respectful to others. I will respond to disruptive and disrespectful behavior by removing the student from the classroom. A grade penalty may also be imposed. ***All students are required to wear masks at all times, and to refrain from eating and drinking.***

Plagiarism and other instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. For more information

regarding the Vanderbilt Honor System, please refer to
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html.

Students with Disabilities: We are committed to accommodating students who have special instructional needs. If you need course accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me and the EAD (2-4705) as soon as possible.

Grade Distribution:

Research paper:	20%
Take-home Mid-term Exam	20%

Final Exam	15%
8 Brightspace posts	20%
Class Discussion	20%
Note-taking	5%

In order to pass this class, students must submit the paper and two exams.

Key Dates

Annotated Bibliography: Friday, Sept. 25 at 11:30 p.m.
 Research Paper: Friday, Oct. 9th at 11:30 p.m.
 Mid-term Exam: Friday, Oct. 23rd 11:30 p.m.
 Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 10 12:00 (noon).

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Film History and the Shock of the New/ Old

T. (Aug 25) In-person class meeting
 Read: Gorky, "The Lumière Cinematograph"
 Screen: in class screening of select early films.
 R (Aug 27) In-person class meeting
 Read: Littau, "Arrival of the Train."

Week 2: From Early Cinema to the Idea of a Feature Film

T (Sept 1) A-synchronous lecture
 Read: Bordwell and Thompson, "The Classical Hollywood Cinema,"
 Screen: *The Cheat* (USA, DeMille, 1915, 59 min.) Brightspace
 R (Sept.3) In-person class meeting
 Read: Higashi, Sumiko. "The Screen as Display Window: Constructing the 'New Woman.'"

Week 3: Hollywood Rising: The Studio System and its Stars

T (Sept. 8) A-synchronous lecture
 Read: Bordwell and Thompson, "The Late Silent Era in Hollywood, 1920-1928)"
 Screen: *It* (USA, Badger, 1927, 72 min.) Brightspace
 R (Sept. 10) In-person class meeting
 Read: Orgeron, "Making It in Hollywood."
 Explore and comment on Cara Bow and 1920s Fan Magazines.

All Post on Brightspace by 11:30 p.m. Sept. 10th.

Week 4: How Hollywood Sells Itself

T (Sept 15) Zoom Session (recorded)
 Read: Paper Assignment
 Screen: One of the Assigned Films
 Read: Press Book for that film

R (Sept. 17):

ZOOM session recorded with Frank Lester, VU Media Librarian on conducting research for this paper assignment. We will not be meeting in person!

Week 5 Melodrama and Shanghai's Vernacular Modernity

T (Sept. 22) A-synchronous lecture
 Read: Zhen, "An Amorous History of the Silver Screen"
 Screen: *The Goddess* (*Shen nu*, China, Wu, 1934, 77 min). Brightspace

R (Sept. 24) In-person class meeting
Read: Hansen “Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons”
Annotated Bibliography Due. Friday Sept. 25th 11:30 P.M.

Week 6: Weimar Cinema: Identity and the False Image

T (Sept. 29) A-synchronous lecture
Read: Sabine Hake, “Weimar Cinema 1919-1930”
Screen: *The Last Laugh (Der Letzte Mann, Germany, Murnau, 1924, 90 min.)* Kanopy
R (Oct. 1) In-person class meeting
Read: Silberman, “The Modernist Camera and the Cinema Illusion”

Week 7: Soviet Montage and the Aesthetic Revolution

T (Oct. 6) A-synchronous lecture
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, “Soviet Cinema in the 1920s”
Screen: *Battleship Potemkin (Bronenosets Potyomkin Eisenstein, USSR, 1925, 75 min.)*. Kanopy
R (Oct. 8) In-person class meeting
Read: Bill Nichols, “*Battleship Potemkin*: Film Form and Revolution”
Press Book Paper Due Friday Oct. 9 at 11:30 P.M.

Week 8: The Popular Front and Class Warfare

T (Oct. 13) A-synchronous lecture
Read: Bordwell and Thompson, “France: Poetic Realism, The Popular Front, and the Occupation, 1930-1945.”
Screen: *Rules of the Game (Le Règle de jeu, France, Renoir, 1939, 113 min.)* Kanopy
R (Oct. 15) In-person class meeting
Read: Faulkner, “Rules of the Game: A Film Not Like the Others.”
All Post on Brightspace by 11:30 PM Oct. 14th.

Week 9: Neo Realism and the Beginning of Postwar

T (Oct.20) A-synchronous lecture
Read: Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema”
Bordwell and Thompson, “Postwar Context” and “Neorealism and After.”
Screen: *Rome, Open City (Roma Città Aperta, Italy, Rossellini, 1945, 105 min.)* Kanopy
R (Oct. 22) In-person class meeting
Read: Landy, “Rome, Open City”
Take home mid-term exam due Saturday, Oct.23th by 11:30 p.m.

Week 10: Cinema and Revolution in Algeria

T (Oct. 27) A-synchronous lecture
Read: Alan O’Leary, “*The Battle of Algiers* at Fifty: End of Empire Cinema and the First Benlieue Film.”
Screen: *Battle of Algiers (La Battaglia di Algeri, Italy/ Algeria, Pontecorvo, 1966, 120 min.)* Kanopy.
R (Oct. 29) In-person class meeting
Read: Crowds, “Terrorism and Torture in *The Battle of Algiers*: An Interview with Saadi Yacef”
Norma Claire Moruzzi, “Veiled Agents: Feminine Agency and Masquerade.”

Week 11: Senegal and Sembene’s De-colonial Cinema

T Nov. 3) A-synchronous lecture

Read: Genova, "Cinema and the Struggle to (De)colonize the Mind in French/ Francophone West African Cinema (1950s-1960s)."

Pfaff, "Sembene A Griot of Modern Times"

Screen: *Black Girl (La Noire de... Senegal, Sembene, 1966, 65 min.)* Brightspace

R (Nov. 5) In-person class meeting

Read: Pfaff, "Black Girl"

Sembene, "Interview with Ousmane Sembene"

All post on Brightspace 11:30 PM Nov. 4th.

Week 12: American Cinema and the L.A. Rebellion

T (Nov. 10) A-synchronous lecture

Read: Field, Horak, Stewart, "Emancipating the Image: The L.A. Rebellion of Black Filmmakers." Pp. 1-37.

Screen: *Killer of Sheep* (USA, Burnett, 1977, 83 min.) Brightspace

R (Nov. 12) In-person class meeting

Read: Hozic, "The House I Live In: Interview with Charles Burnett."

Recommended: Massood, "Appropriate to Conditions: Killer of Sheep, (Neo)Realism, and the Documentary Impulse"

Week 13: Hong Kong Dreaming

T (Nov. 17) A-synchronous lecture

Read: Abbas, "The New Hong Kong Cinema"

Screen: *Chungking Express* (Wong, 1994, 1 h. 42 min.) Brightspace

R (Nov. 19) In-person class meeting

Read: Abbas, "Wong Kar-Wai"

Thanksgiving Break Nov. 24-, 26

Week 15: Senegal and the Crisis of Migration (and Cinema)

T (Dec. 1) A-synchronous lecture

Read: Fofana, "A Critical and Deeply Personal Reflection: Malick Aw on Cinema in Senegal Today."

Searcey and Barry, "Why Migrants Keep Risking All on the 'Deadliest Route'" *Atlantics*, press book.

Screen: *Atlantics* (Senegal/ France, Doip, 2017) Netflix

R. (Dec. 3) Zoom- recorded

Read: Aguilar, "A Language Possessed and Reconquered: Mati Diop on *Atlantics*"

Lim, "Crossing Over."

Dry, "'Atlantics': How Mati Diop Turned Senegalese Folklore into a Feminist Mood Piece"

All Post on Brightspace by 11:30 p.m. Dec. 2.

Final Exam Thursday, Dec. 10 12:00 (noon).