THEA 220: CINEMA: HISTORY AND AESTHETICS
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS, BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2014

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Boise State's Foundations Program provides undergraduates with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience. THEA 220: Cinema History and Aesthetics satisfies three units of the Foundation program's Disciplinary Lens: Visual and Performing Arts requirement. It supports the following University Learning Outcome, along with a variety of other course-specific goals.

THEA 220 is designed to provide knowledge of the development of motion pictures with attention given to the elements and qualities peculiar to cinema which give it validity as a unique and multi-cultural art form. This course helps to achieve the goals of the Foundations Program by focusing on the following course learning outcomes. After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Distinguish between the various components of film form and content;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of major advances, events and individuals in the development of motion pictures;
3. Distinguish the major influences of various historically important filmmakers;
4. Articulate the meaning of a film through the analysis of its form and content;
5. Identify a variety of historically and critically important films from various periods and cultures.

To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact the Disability Resource Center by phone, (208) 426-1583, or e-mail, drcinfo@boisestate.edu. Students are required meet with a Disability Specialist prior to receiving accommodations and may be required to provide documentation to clarify accommodation requests. Information about a disability is confidential. More information on the accommodation process can be found at http://drc@boisestate.edu

Grading: Students will be required to attend class regularly, to participate in class discussions, to attend required film viewings, to pass three exams, and to complete and submit a writing assignment at the required time.

Attendance and participation: Attendance effects your grade in two ways: 1) People who attend class regularly will tend to get higher grades; and 2) If your final grade averages out to within a point or two of a higher grade, you will receive the higher grade if you have not missed more than three classes.

Writing Assignments: Students are required to complete and submit two writing assignments based on a required film viewing. These are one-page essays, the first worth 10% of your final grade and the second worth 15%. Late papers are dropped one full letter grade for each day they are late. Papers are due at beginning of class on the deadline date (or before): NO EXCEPTIONS. Details of the assignment follow further down in this syllabus. Essays are due March 19 and April 30.

Exams: Students are required to pass three exams based on the required reading, lectures, and required films. Each exam is worth 25% of final grade. Make-ups are given only because of extraordinary circumstances with verifiable documentation and permission of instructor. Exams are scheduled September 26, October 31 and December 19.

Class Conduct: Oftentimes in large courses, we feel as students that we are almost completely anonymous and faceless and that our behavior has no impact on the class. I want to emphasize that I regard each of you as an intelligent individual who has something to offer. And your presence in this class is noticed. Therefore, I ask that you be aware of the following behaviors that detract from the class experience and show great disrespect to your peers. Please do not:

- Whisper or talk to your neighbor excessively;
- Eat breakfast or lunch during class;
- Sleep during class;
- Leave your cellphone on or text-message during class;
- Leave early without informing me before class begins;
- Cheat or plagiarize. This is very important. According to the BSU Code of Conduct, cheating and plagiarizing (which includes writing someone else’s words as your own or taking a paper right off the internet with your name on it) are simply unacceptable and can seriously jeopardize your final grade and your future at Boise State.
- Inappropriately surf the net on your laptop.

Course Breakdown (in weeks):

Jan. 27: Fundamental principles continued. The beginnings of cinema/In-class screening: Edison kinetoscopic shorts/Méliès Shorts (1903-4) and Edwin S. Porter’s Life of an American Fireman (1902) and The Great Train Robbery (1903).


Mar. 5: Basic film language: cinematography and basic shot properties.


First Theme assignment due on Wednesday, March 19. They will be returned to you on Friday, March 21.

April 2: Studio Years continued. Second Exam on required reading (assigned sections of chapters 5, 6, 8, and 10), lectures, and screenings.

April 9: Begin Post-War International Cinema and the new Auteurs (Rossellini, deSica, Fellini, Truffaut, Godard, Bergman, Kurosawa)


April 23: Post-War International Cinema continued

Theme Analysis Paper Due April 30. Papers will be returned to you on Friday, May 9.


May 14: Final Exam. 12noon-2pm. Latecomers will not be allowed to take the exam.

Critical Analysis Assignment
FOR THEA220 CINEMA
KLAUTSCH/Fall 2013

Papers

The required writing assignments focus on the Themes of movies and your ability to identify thematic content. Each assignment is one page long and must include a separate title page. Each paper must be double-spaced with no more than one inch margins, and be carefully proofed for typos and grammatical errors. Please organize your writing coherently, with an introductory paragraph that includes the title of the film and your thesis (or principal argument), and a concluding paragraph. This essay is making an argument about a film. It requires an over-riding thesis and a series of subpoints supporting that thesis. For each subpoint, you must include examples which support your claims. Be as precise as possible in discussing these examples. Never assume that they speak for themselves. You may quote from the film or from other critiques, as long as you cite those references in MLA format. You may support your points using comparisons with other films or comparisons with the filmmaker’s other works.

Choose a film to write about from the list at the end of this syllabus. NO EXCEPTIONS OR SUBSTITUTIONS

First assignment (due March 19):

Choose a movie from the attached list and identify what you consider to be its primary theme (or central argument). Justify your choice by describing two moments from the film that support your choice of theme.

Second assignment (due April 30)/ Choose a different film from the list at the end of this syllabus

In your opinion, what is the major theme, or idea, explored in this film? How is the theme represented by action or characterization? How relevant is the theme to contemporary audiences and to modern social issues?
What I want in your papers for THEA 220 Cinema History

Title Page
Create a title page for your paper that includes a title, your name, class section (THEA 220.001), and your seat number if you can remember it.

Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs
Introductory paragraphs give your reader a general understanding of your essay and the context for the subject of your essay. For instance, an intro paragraph identifies what you are writing about (the name of the movie, the year it was released, possibly the director and principal actors, the specific sequence or scene you are covering, etc.) and why you are writing about it. *This means you must include a thesis statement in your intro paragraph.* For instance, your intro paragraph might end in a thesis statement: “The central theme of *Memento* is that the past is a construction of our imaginations, designed only by what we think, feel, or want to have happened, rather than by reality.”

A concluding paragraph summarizes your main points and restates your thesis.

A Clear and Specific Thesis Statement

In one sentence, what is your primary “argument” or point; what are you trying to say with this paper?

Note: be sure to identify what the paper is analyzing. Are you analyzing the editing in a particular sequence? If so, be sure to state that clearly in your paper and identify specifically the sequence itself. If you are analyzing theme, be sure to identify what you think the theme is very clearly.

ALSO: be sure to look over the handout once again that describes “theme.” Remember that theme is a MAJOR IDEA. It is NOT a one word condition of being such as “love,” “betrayal,” “revenge,” “disrespect,” “greed,” “jealously,” or using a whole bunch of similar words in a scattergun approach to trying to find an
idea. For instance, writing that a movie is about “revenge, redemption, love, and guilt” will not work. Those are NOT ideas; they are qualities of being. Remember, a major idea requires some major thought.

BAD (actually, NONEXISTENT) THEME = “this movie is about revenge.”
GOOD THEME: “The story of the anguished and vengeful gladiator illuminates the primary theme of the movie, which is that popularity, or the power of celebrity, is as influential in the manipulation of the masses as any other political resource.”

Avoid Too Much Plot Summary

Organization

Paragraphs focus on a particular topic or topics and logically lead to the next topic which launches your next paragraph. The first sentence of each paragraph should identify what the paragraph will be about and should draw the reader into your analysis. Topic sentences help your essay flow and keep your reader focused on the main points of your essay.

Mechanics

Edit, edit, edit. Check and double-check:
Spelling (especially the titles of films and names of directors or actors);
Grammar (no comma splicing, sentence fragments, inconsistent tenses, etc.);
Typos;
Margins (maintain consistent margins throughout, no more than 1” on all sides);
Font: no larger than 12-pt font.

THE THESIS: A one-sentence condensation of the main idea of an essay. It summarizes the main point of the paper and helps readers predict how the paper will be developed and organized.
MAJOR QUALITIES THAT MAKE THESIS STATEMENTS INTERESTING:

Complexity: The thesis is not just an easy truism (“I have chosen to write about a scene that helps the plot and develops character…”). It accepts and embraces the messy complexities potentially present in any subject. (“This scene may seem to contribute nothing to the development of the Little Tramp or to the story itself, but after a closer examination you begin to realize how vulnerable and desperate Chaplin’s character really is and how much the plot actually depends on this event to make sense.”)

Edge: A good thesis is in some way controversial, surprising, or even troubling. If you turn your subject around to look at all sides of it, you can usually push an ordinary idea until it reaches an edge—until it becomes more than just an easy truism that nobody would ever disagree with. But it takes some real hard thought.

MISCONCEPTIONS

1. The thesis of the paper is just a statement of the subject. Wrong. The thesis has to be a claim. For instance, a bad thesis is “This paper is about term limits.”
2. The thesis is merely a general statement, one the writer agrees or disagrees with. Wrong. You can’t just say “Term limits are wrong.” You must address some questions that narrow and focus the issue. Wrong for whom? In which government, federal, state, local? And so on.
3. You have to have the thesis nailed down before you start writing. Wrong. Use your writing to discover ideas and to start thinking things through. In most cases, the act of writing itself will help you think more deeply about what you are trying to say.
4. There are absolute rules about the form and placement of the thesis. There are exceptions.
THEME

Theme is the central or dominating or major idea, the “message” implicit in an artistic narrative or other work. The theme of a work is very seldom stated or depicted directly. It is an abstract concept indirectly expressed through recurrent images, actions, characters, and symbols, and must be inferred by the reader, listener, or spectator.

Theme is not the same as SUBJECT (a topic or thing described in the work); theme is a comment, observation, or insight about the subject.

For instance, the subject of a poem may be a flower; its theme, a comment about the fleeting nature of existence.

The subject of a movie might be revenge (such as Gladiator); its theme, a comment on the intoxicating power of celebrity.

Theme is NOT a SUBJECT: examples of subjects are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Revenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greed</td>
<td>Addiction</td>
<td>Lust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemption</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Self-sacrifice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basically, if you can say it in one word it’s NOT a theme.

Also, theme is not a cliché, saying, maxim, proverb, adage, epigram, or dictum. So “You can’t judge a book by its cover” is NOT a theme.

THEME is a major idea that says something profound and meaningful about the subject of the movie. It is difficult to find and to put into words. Do not be satisfied with your first choice. Think about it!! Sometimes the more profound the theme the harder it is uncover.

Movie List for Analytical Assignments THEA 220 Cinema History
Richard Klautsch
### Silents
- Intolerance 1916
- Way Down East 1920
- Broken Blossoms 1919
- Nosferatu 1922
- Greed 1924
- The Big Parade 1925
- The Last Laugh 1925
- Mother 1926
- Sunrise 1927

### 1930's
- All Quiet on the Western Front 1930
- M 1931
- It Happened One Night 1934
- The 39 Steps 1935
- Grand Illusion 1937
- Stagecoach 1939
- Rebecca 1939
- Gone With the Wind 1939
- Wizard of Oz 1939

### 1940's
- The Grapes of Wrath 1940
- Sullivan's Travels 1941
- Citizen Kane 1941
- Casablanca 1942
- The Ox-Bow Incident 1943
- Ossessione 1943
- Double Indemnity 1944
- The Best Years of Our Lives 1946
- El Gato Giro 1948
- The Bicycle Thief 1948

### 1950's
- Los Olvidados 1950
- Rashomon 1950
- Born Yesterday 1950
- High Noon 1952
- On the Waterfront 1954
- Nights of Cabiria 1955
- Diabolique 1955
- The Searchers 1956
- The Seventh Seal 1957
- Paths of Glory 1957
- Touch of Evil 1958
- The 400 Blows 1959
- Hiroshima, Mon Amour 1959
- Ben Hur 1959
- Some Like it Hot 1959

### 1960's
- Breathless 1960
- A Raisin in the Sun 1960
- To Kill a Mockingbird 1962
- Harakiri (Seppuku) 1962
- Lawrence of Arabia 1962
- 8½ 1963
- Dr. Strangelove 1964
- Closely Watched Trains 1966
- The Graduate 1967
- Bonnie and Clyde 1967
- Cool Hand Luke 1967
- 2001: A Space Odyssey 1968
- Easy Rider 1968
- The Wild Bunch 1969
- Midnight Cowboy 1969

### 1970's
- Little Big Man 1970
- The Conformist 1970
- A Clockwork Orange 1971
- Harold and Maude 1971
- The Last Picture Show 1971
- Aguirre: The Wrath of God 1972
- The Godfather 1972
- Deliverance 1972
- Mean Streets 1973
- The Conversation 1974
- Chinatown 1974
- Taxi Driver 1976
- Seven Beauties 1976
- Annie Hall 1977
- Apocalypse Now 1979

### 1980's
- Raging Bull 1980
- The Gods Must Be Crazy 1980
- Ordinary People 1980
- Fanny and Alexander 1982
- The Big Chill 1983
- The Killing Fields 1984
- Ran 1985
- Lost in America 1985
- Brazil 1985
- Hannah and Her Sisters 1986

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**TA220 CINEMA HISTORY AND AESTHETICS STUDY OUTLINE FOR EXAM #1**

The exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and a short essay question. Questions will be taken from the assigned reading sections of the text, *Looking at Movies*, in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10, major lecture points.

**Study topics:**
The twelve influences on perception: be familiar with each of the twelve influences and be prepared to use examples from various films you have seen or film-viewing situations to illustrate your understanding of each.

Edison, Dickson.

Important Date and Griffith: We talked about an important early date in the history of cinema (remember 1896?). Also, look over your notes carefully on Griffith. What are some of the innovations he introduced into the filmmaking process (like rehearsing, using the same actors, moving the camera, more sophisticated cross-cutting, etc.) Also, remember Birth of a Nation. For instance, what did the Supreme Court rule in 1915 as a result of the trouble this film created? Finally, remember his most important contribution (idea): the content of the shot….

Lumiere Brothers, Porter and Melies: fundamental differences. Why was Porter called the Father of the Narrative Film? What did Melies mean by “artificial linking of scenes?” What are the titles of Porter’s groundbreaking short films from 1903? What are the differences between the Lumieres’ and Melies’ early silent movies?

Oscar Micheaux, Lois Weber and Alice Guy Blache.

The Gold Rush. Choose one of two essay questions to answer referring to the movie:

a) When exactly does Georgia fall in love with the Lonesome Prospector and what happens in the movie to justify your answer;

OR

b) Why doesn’t the Lonesome Prospector return to Georgia after he and Big Jim rediscover the gold mine?

Text: review carefully the following sections in your book

Chapter One: Looking at Movies. Be familiar with these and the sections in which they are described. Look closely at the sections titled Implicit and Explicit Meaning pp.11-13 and Formal Analysis pp. 14-20.

Chapter Two: Principles of Film Form. Be familiar with these sections: Form and Content, pp. 36-39; Fundamentals of Film Form, pp. 46-56; Realism and Anti-Realism, pp. 56-60 and Cinematic Language, pp. 60-61.

Chapter Three: Types of Movies. Be familiar with the sections titled The Idea of Narrative; Types of Movies; and 6 Major American Genres.

Chapter Four: Elements of Narrative. Be familiar with the sections pages 122-149.

Chapter 10: Film History. Be familiar with the section titled A Short Overview of Film History, pp. 435-443.

STUDY GUIDE FOR EXAM #2

For Exam #2, please study carefully your class notes and each of the following sections in your text under Chapters 5, 6, 8, and 10.


Chapter 6: Cinematography; What is Cinematography? Page 226; The Director of Photography pp. 226-228 Cinematic Properties of the Shot pp.228-248; Framing of the Shot pp. 248-275; Speed and Length of the Shot pp. 275-279

Chapter 8: Editing: Pages 340-375

Chapter 10: pp. 443-455.

Lecture Notes
Look over your notes on Editing and Camera Work, German and Soviet cinema of the 20’s in particular. Remember the following directors: FW Murnau; Fritz Lange; Lev Kuleshov (and the Muzhakin Experiment, meaning the old actor’s face intercut with the soup, the woman in the coffin, the little girl); Sergei Eisenstein; the Production Code and Ratings System; Orson Welles and Citizen Kane.

STUDY GUIDE FOR FINAL EXAM

Please review carefully the following sections in your text in preparation for the final exam. **REMINDER: the final is scheduled on Wednesday, May 14, 12noon-2pm.**

Also, please be aware that after the first person who finishes the exam leaves the classroom, no latecomers will be admitted to take the exam.

Lecture notes: the four influences we discussed in class on Hollywood after WWII; Italian Neo-Realism; the French New Wave; Ingmar Bergman. Also study notes on American cinema in the 60's (movies like The Graduate and Easy Rider); and American directors in the 1970’s (Coppola; Scorsese; Spielberg); and what's the main influence on movies of the 80's.

Text book: read these sections of Chapters 7 (Acting), 9 (Sound), 10 and 11 very closely:

Chapter 7: What is Acting (pages 288-289); DW Griffith and Lillian Gish (pp. 295-297); Acting in the Classical Studio Era (pp. 299-302); Method Acting (pp. 302-304); Screen Acting Today (pp. 304-309); and Types of Roles (pp. 314-316).

Chapter 9: What is Sound (pp. 388-390); Sources of Film Sound (pp. 395-397); Environmental Sounds (pp. 401-403).

Chapter 10: pp. 455-461.

Chapter 11: How a Movie is Made (pp. 491-495); The Studio System (pp. 495-501).