

Dr. Jon Cowans
Class meets: MW 4-5:20, Hill 115

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CINEMA AND SOCIETY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
21:510:313 (28496) (Spring 2020)

This course uses cinema to examine the history of the twentieth century in the USA and Europe. In addition to looking at how films interpreted events and trends of their time and focusing on moments when cinema became a topic of general social discussion, it also traces the history of the film industry from its birth through the end of the twentieth century and analyzes major stylistic developments.

READINGS

Course reader, available **only** at PortaPrint, 33 Halsey St., 973 622-1828.

GRADING

TESTS: There will be a midterm on Mon. Mar. 9 and a final exam on Wed. May 13, 11:45-2:45pm, both consisting of a series of short essays (1/2 to 1 page). Please **read the exam instructions** (in the reader) very carefully before each exam.

Students are bound by the university's academic integrity policy, which appears here:
<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/office-dean-student-affairs/academic-integrity-policy>.

LECTURE QUESTIONS: At the end of each lecture, you must hand in a 3x5 card with one or two brief questions or comments on that session. Grades are based on the number of days when you attend and hand in a card; each unexcused absence will lower this score by five points. To receive credit, your card must contain a relevant question or comment. Time accrued through arriving late or leaving early is added up; eighty minutes equals one absence.

For an absence to be excused, you must provide written evidence of a valid reason, and you must turn in all excuses by the end of the final exam. Your overall course grade will fall by a half-letter for each unexcused absence starting with the fourth one. Anyone who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this course; such students should withdraw from the class to avoid getting an F.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Everyone is required to pay attention and to speak regularly in class, either asking questions or making relevant comments. Grading is based on how often you participate and on your level of comprehension of the day's readings and ability to analyze the course material. This grade rewards attention, so sleeping in class and using any cell phone or similar device will lower your score. Laptops are not allowed in this class.

QUIZZES: Several times during the semester, you will be quizzed on the readings and/or films assigned for that day. These quizzes will be unannounced. The lowest grade on the quizzes will not count.

Lecture questions	5%
Class participation	10%
Quizzes	15%
Midterm	30%
Final exam	40%
	100%

Wed. 1-22 Introduction

Mon. 1-27: The Advent of Cinema

- “The Invention and Early Years of the Cinema” (Reading 1)
- “Nickelodeon Theaters, 1905-1914” (R-2)
- Chicago Vice Commission, “Cheap Theaters” (R-3)
- “The First Motion Picture Audiences” (R-4)

Wed. 1-29: Early Cinema

- “The First Movie Fans” (R-5)
- “Silent Cinema as Social Criticism” (R-6)
- American Review of Reviews, “The Moving Picture and the National Character” (R-7)
- “*The Birth of a Nation*” (R-8)

Mon. 2-3: The Origins and Growth of Hollywood

- “An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood” (R-9)
- Henry Ford, “The All-Jewish ‘Movies’” (R-10)
- “The Development of Hollywood” (R-11)
- “The Sins of Hollywood: The Arbuckle Scandal” (R-12)

Wed. 2-5: Europe in the 1920s

- “The Emergence of National Cinemas” (R-13)
- “Dada, German Expressionism, & Soviet Montage” (R-14)

Mon. 2-10: Film Fandom and Audience Research

- “The Fandom Menace” (R-15)
- “Female Audiences of the 1920s and 1930s” (R-16)
- “The Science of Pleasure: George Gallup & Audience Research in Hollywood” (R-17)
- Film:** *The Sheik* (1921)

Wed. 2-12: Hollywood and the World

- “Selling Movies Overseas” (R-18)
- “Hollywood’s Global Distribution and the Representation of Ethnicity” (R-19)

Mon. 2-17: The Hollywood Studio System; The Advent of Sound and Color

- “MGM, Irving Thalberg Era, and the Studio System” (R-20)
- “Warner Bros. and the Advent of Sound” (R-21)
- “Contemporary Articles on the Advent of Sound” (R-22)
- “Color and Cinematic Realism” (R-23)

Wed. 2-19: Hollywood and the Depression, Part I

- James Chapman, “Hollywood in the Great Depression” (R-24)
- “Utopia on Main Street: Modern Theaters in the 1930s” (R-25)
- Film:** *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933)

Mon. 2-24: Europe in the 1930s

- “Surrealism” (R-26)
- “European Cinema in the 1930s” (R-27)

Wed. 2-26: Social-Problem Films in the 1930s

“Social-Problem Films: Gangsters” (R-28)

“Complicated Women” (R-29)

Henry James Forman, “Our Movie-Made Children” (R-30)

Film: *Baby Face* (1933)

Mon. 3-2: Censorship & the Production Code in the 1930s

“The Advent of the Production Code” (R-31)

The Production Code (R-32)

“The Censors Strike Back” (R-33)

“The Model of Self-Regulation” (R-34)

Wed. 3-4: Hollywood and the Depression, Part II

“*The Grapes of Wrath* and the Great Depression” (R-35)

Film: *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)

Mon. 3-9: MIDTERM

Wed. 3-11: Open Session

Mon. 3-23: Hollywood, the Nazis, and World War II

“Hollywood’s Pact with Hitler” (R-36)

“World War II and the Hollywood ‘War Film’” (R-37)

Wed. 3-25: The 1940s: Film Noir

“A Dark Mirror to Postwar America” (R-38)

Raymond Borde & Etienne Chaumeton, “Towards a Definition of Film Noir” (R-39)

Joseph Breen, “The Production Code Administration Letters on *Double Indemnity*” (R-40)

Film: *Double Indemnity* (1944)

Mon. 3-30: Postwar Europe: The American Invasion; Neo-Realism

“Liberation, Reconstruction, Neo-Realism” (R-41)

Carl Foreman, “European Viewpoint on What’s Wrong with U.S. Pix,” *Variety* (R-42)

Film: *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) (also known as *The Bicycle Thief*) (Original title: *Ladri di biciclette*)

Wed. 4-1: HUAC, the Hollywood Ten, and the Blacklist

“HUAC and Hollywood” (R-43)

The Motion Picture Alliance, “Statement of Principles” (R-44)

I.F. Stone, “The Grand Inquisition” (R-45)

Mon. 4-6: The Decline of the Studio System

“Hollywood Cartelism and US Antitrust Rulings” (R-46)

“Lew Wasserman, MCA, & the Deal that Doomed the Moguls” (R-47)

“Divorcement: The End of the Studio System?” (R-48)

Wed. 4-8: Hollywood and the 1950s: Industry Crisis and Response

“Widescreen Cinema” (R-49)

Samuel Goldwyn, “Hollywood in the Television Age” (R-50)

“Juvenile Delinquency and Crime Theory in *Blackboard Jungle*” (R-51)

Film: *Blackboard Jungle* (1955)

Mon. 4-13: Censorship Debates after WW II

“The Weakening of Censorship in the 1950s” (R-52)
Paul Blanshard, “The Church and the Movies” (R-53)
“American Catholics Debate Film Censorship” (R-54)
Luis Buñuel, “On *Viridiana*” (R-55)

Wed. 4-15: The 1960s: From the New Wave to the New Hollywood

“The European New Wave & the New Hollywood of the 1960s” (R-56)
“*Bonnie and Clyde*: From Conception to Reception” (R-57)
Bonnie and Clyde: Reviews and Letters (R-58)

Mon. 4-20: Hollywood and Race in the 1960s

“Sidney Poitier’s Rise to Stardom” (R-59)
Clifford Mason, “Why Does White America Love Sidney Poitier So?” (R-60)
Film: *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967)

Wed. 4-22: The Counterculture and Blaxploitation, 1967-1974

“Exploitation Films, 1967-1974” (R-61)
“The Rise and Fall of Blaxploitation” (R-62)
Alvin Poussaint, “Blaxploitation Movies” (R-63)
Film: *Superfly* (1972)

Mon. 4-27: The 1980s: Home Video, the Film Business, & the Culture Wars

“Home Video, Hollywood, and the Family Film” (R-64)
“The Movie Theater in the 1980s: Life after Death?” (R-65)
“Hollywood vs. America” (R-66)

Wed. 4-29: New Voices

“Mathieu Kassovitz’s *La Haine* (*Hate*), 1995” (R-67)
“Spike Lee: Interview with Elvis Mitchell” (R-68)
Films: *Do the Right Thing* (1989); *La Haine* (English title: *Hate*) (1995)

Mon. 5-4: Film and Globalization

“Film and Globalization in the Late Twentieth Century” (R-69)
“GATT and the Shape of Our Dreams” (R-70)
“Runaway Shops: The Loss of American Film Employment” (R-71)
“Cinema without Frontiers” (R-72)

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