EMF 313.003

(A) FILM HISTORY

Dr. Michael S. Duffy
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OFFICE: Media Center, Room 105
Availability: Mon/Wed, 12:30-2:00pm, or by appointment

Lectures: Mondays, Wednesdays, 3:30-4:45pm, Media Center 104
Film Screenings: Mondays, 5:00-7:00pm, Van Bokkelen 204

The main goal of this course is to broaden your knowledge, appreciation and critical interpretation of cinema through a comprehensive survey of cultural, economic, artistic and technological factors involved in the evolution of motion pictures from 1895 to the present; this course should also help you improve your writing of expository (non-fiction) prose by writing analyses or critiques of specific films, styles and movements.

Generally, each class will consist of a lecture enhanced by screenings of relevant material, discussions of the required reading and films, and in-class activities, which might include a bit of experimentation with image and sound!

The primary objectives are to:

- Trace the technological and aesthetic advances that established and guided cinema
- Examine film “canon” and various filmmakers’ contribution to cinema and the industry
- Identify film genres and national cinemas through specific historical and cultural contexts
- Introduce critical analysis of modes of representation in cinema, such as race and gender
- Explore the significance of economics, marketing and promotion in the film production process
- Provide a brief introduction to film theory (psychoanalysis, feminism, multiculturalism)
- Discuss how contemporary technologies are changing cinema and media

Additional readings may be required/recommended as the semester progresses; they will be posted on Blackboard and/or provided as weblinks.

All films formally referenced through screenings, readings and in-class discussion are considered suitable exam material.
**Required Text:**


+ Additional Readings as noted and assigned via Blackboard

**Recommended:**

EMF 313 fulfills a course requirement in both the Film and Media Studies and Film/Video/Digital Media tracks. This course is designed to help you to:

- Write papers with a clear beginning, middle, and end, each part being proportionate to its purpose
- Develop strong reasoning and analysis about film history and film studies
- Write paragraphs, sentences, and phrases and clauses within sentences that are logically related
- Use correct words and vocabulary that are emphatic when needed and avoid clichés
- Find a consistent tone and an objective (yet well-argued) point of view
- Avoid sub-literate errors in grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling
- Establish a basic grasp of referencing/documentation relevant to the discipline

**Class Schedule**

**Monday, Jan. 28th** Screening: The Beginnings of Cinema: Early Shorts, Actualities, Narrative
(A list of the screened films will be provided on Blackboard.)

**Mon. Jan. 28th, Wed. Jan. 30th:** Introductions, overview of syllabus
Cinema – the first flickering attempts and early pioneers
Edison, Lumiere Bros., Georges Melies; early Hollywood
Reading: Dixon/Foster, 1-21

**Monday, Feb. 4th** Screenings: Suspense (Lois Weber, 1913),
Modern Times (Charlie Chaplin, 1936)

**Mon. Feb. 4th, Wed. Feb. 6th:** Silent Film, Race Issues, Comedy.
The issues surrounding The Birth of a Nation (D.W. Griffith, 1915)
The emergence of a cinematic language…
The Comedic 1920s – Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, early scandals
Reading: Dixon/Foster, 22-52
Mon., Feb. 11th Screening: The Hands of Orlac (Robert Weine, 1924)

Feb. 11th, 13th: German “Expressionism” – F.W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, etc.
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Wiene, 1920),
Nosferatu (Murnau, 1922),
Metropolis (Lang, 1927)

+ Soviet silent cinema/montage, Sergei Eisenstein’s Battleship Potemkin (1925)
See also: Man with a Movie Camera (D. Vertov, 1929)

Reading: Dixon/Foster 70-88
Recommended: Dorothy B. Jones, “Sunrise: A Murnau Masterpiece”

+ Also recommended:
Documentary…or is it? Nanook of the North (Flaherty, 1922)
Erich Von Stroheim’s excessive iconoclasm: Greed (1924), The Wedding March (1928)

Feb. 18th Screening: Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939)
  + Steamboat Willie (Ub Iwerks, 1928)

Feb. 18th, 20th: Sound and Color – a time of transition.
  “The Studio System” and “The Production Code.”
  Warner Bros., MGM, Paramount, Fox, Universal.
Reading: Dixon/Foster 89-116, 126-128 (Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks)

Feb. 25th Screening: The Philadelphia Story (George Cukor, 1940)

Reading: Dixon/Foster 116 (“Preston Sturges”) to 136
  + Andrew Sarris, “The Comedy without the Sex” (Blackboard)
  + Stanley Cavell, “The Philadelphia Story” (Blackboard)

+ Also: France between the wars – the rise of the Avant-garde and “Poetic Realism.”
  Dixon/Foster 53-70

March 4th Screening: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (Howard Hawks, 1953)

March 4th, 6th: 1950s Hollywood; Widescreen, Technicolor, Marilyn Monroe
Reading: Dixon/Foster, 187-202
  + Europe during WWII
  Dixon/Foster 137-158
March 11th Screening: The Big Heat (Fritz Lang, 1953)

March 11th, 13th: Hollywood in the 1940s, European emigres, Film Noir
+ Truncated Visions: Orson Welles, Citizen Kane, etc. etc. (108-112)
Reading: Dixon/Foster 168-188
**FIRST ESSAY DUE Wed., MARCH 13th

MARCH 18th – 22nd: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

March 25th Screening: To Sir, With Love (James Clavell, 1967)

March 25th, 27th: Sidney Poitier, The 1960s
+ Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), etc.
+ Sergio Leone’s Italian ‘Spaghetti’ Westerns, A Fistful of Dollars (1967), etc.
+ Post-1950s Italy, England, France
Reading: Dixon/Foster 203-229, 258-271 (also see Ch. 5 159-160), 274-301

April 1st Screening: Diva (Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1981)

April 1st, 3rd: French Innovations from the 1960s onward
Featuring Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Agnes Varda, etc. etc. etc.
Reading: Dixon/Foster 239-255, 321-323

April 8th Screening: Dog Day Afternoon (Sidney Lumet, 1975)

Star Wars (1977), Apocalypse Now (1979), Heaven’s Gate (1980)
Reading: Dixon/Foster, 359-376

April 15th Screening: Not One Less (Zhang Yimou, 1999)

April 15th, 17th: Contemporary Chinese Cinemas: Hong Kong, China, Taiwan
Reading: Dixon/Foster 341-346 + additional readings on contemporary China
April 22\textsuperscript{nd} Screening: \textit{Flirting} (John Duigan, 1991)

April 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 24\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{Australia and New Zealand cinemas} – Peter Weir, Peter Jackson
Reading: Dixon/Foster 330-333 (Australia and New Zealand)

+ “New German Cinema” – Werner Herzog’s cave of forgotten dreams
Dixon/Foster 307-310 (Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders)

April 29\textsuperscript{th} Screening: \textit{But I’m a Cheerleader} (Jamie Babbit, 1999)

April 29\textsuperscript{th}, May 1\textsuperscript{st}: LGBTQ Issues and Women Directors in Contemporary American Cinema
+ The MPAA and the American film ratings system
  “This Film is Not Yet Rated”
Reading: 376-380
+ Additional Reading on \textit{But I’m a Cheerleader} (Blackboard)

May 6\textsuperscript{th} Screening: \textit{Dark City} (Alex Proyas, 1998)

May 6\textsuperscript{th}, 8\textsuperscript{th}: Contemporary Visual Effects and Global Workflows
Reading: 380-405
+ Additional Reading(s) on \textit{Dark City} (Blackboard)

**SECOND ESSAY DUE Mon., May 6\textsuperscript{th}**

May 13\textsuperscript{th} Screening: \textit{Train to Busan} (Sang-yo Yeon, South Korea, 2016)

May 13\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{LAST DAY OF CLASS, FINAL EXAM REVIEW}

**FINAL EXAM**
MONDAY, MAY 20\textsuperscript{th}, 3:00-5:00pm (Don’t be late!)
ESSAY REQUIREMENTS:

The required written work of the course will consist firstly of periodic requested responses/quizzes to the week’s main film screenings. You will also then be required to write two separate papers dealing with film in broader terms.

1. The first paper is to be a comparative essay on a film viewed outside of class and approved in advance by me, inspired by a connection or comparison to a film that you’ve been exposed to during the main film screenings. This paper should be approx. four to five (4-5) pages in length, double-spaced.

2. The second paper should be at least seven to eight (7-8) pages in length, subject-approved by me, and include at least two outside academic references in the form of critical articles on the films or subject. The paper should be thematic (and perhaps, theoretical) in nature and scope. Some examples of possible themes could be…
   1) Mel Gibson’s “violent nature” in his movies – seriously, why did the guy establish a career of literally beating himself up on screen…before he even had any controversies?
   2) How Angelina Jolie’s on-screen career seems (or seemed?) both elevated and limited based on the sexuality of her roles
   3) How Spike Lee treats the idea of race in his “fictional” films vs. his documentary work.
   4) What do the contemporary films of Michael Bay say about American and “who we are” on both a blockbuster-appetite level and our country’s socio-cultural dissemination into the world?
   5) How many 30-year old franchises can Hollywood reboot before they decide that it’s better to just use DARPA to reverse-time and literally take us back to the 1980s?
   6) Why are Hollywood blockbusters (and superhero films particularly) so boring lately?

No, seriously, come up with a better question…and answer.

You do not need to pick one of these themes – in fact, you will gain points for creativity – so I encourage you to come to me with a new suggestion!

Only one essay on Tarantino will be allowed – so whoever gets to me first with something of substance beyond “how controversial” his films are!
Only one essay on Christopher Nolan will be allowed – and it cannot be about The Dark Knight (…or Interstellar?)
Only one essay on superhero films will be allowed – and it cannot be about “what an amazing journey Marvel Studios has had.” (Or equally, how frustrating Warner Bros.’ DC output has been.)
Only one essay on Disney/Pixar films will be allowed – and it must be on a topic other than “Disney Princesses” or the Toy Story films.
Format for papers:

All papers are to be typewritten and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and stapled together horizontally in the upper left-hand corner. A size 12 font in Times New Roman script is the required format.

I generally prefer MLA format for academic writing, and a nice set of guidelines are posted here: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

While I do not expect strict adherence to MLA standards within your essays, your title page(s) should reflect a general knowledge of MLA guidelines and approaches.

Essay Submittal Policies:

All assignments are to be turned in by the end of the lecture period on the due date.

Assignments will not be accepted by email unless specifically arranged with the instructor.

All late assignments will be lowered by 5% per weekday. This penalty may be waived in cases of illness or emergency documented to my satisfaction. Computer/technology problems are usually NOT valid excuses for late work.

All papers must be handed over directly to me – under no circumstances are assignments to be handed over to departmental assistants or placed in the Professor’s departmental mailbox. To submit a late paper outside of class, you must contact me via email to arrange a “handoff.”

Writing Resources:

You are expected to work on improving your writing about film during the course. Unidentified excerpts of students’ work may be used for in-class exercises or to make points regarding common writing mistakes. You may meet individually with me to discuss your writing. Those desiring assistance outside of class may also benefit from using one of the following resources:

- The Writing Support Program helps native English speakers with sentence-level and grammar skills. Phone 410-704-3426 or to schedule an appointment. Liberal Arts 5330.
  http://www.towson.edu/cla/centers/writing/

- English Language Center (for non-native English speakers):
  http://www.towson.edu/academics/international/englishlanguagecenter/

- Academic Achievement Center: http://www.towson.edu/aac/
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

While at Towson University, you are expected to pursue an academic career with honorable integrity and honesty. Please view/download the “Student Academic Integrity” document on this page: https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/academicaffairs.html

You are expected to understand this document.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated.

Anyone feeling that they still do not understand the policy or have specific questions should arrange to meet with me.

Anyone caught plagiarizing will automatically receive a grade of **F** on the assignment in question, and may be given a failing grade for the course.

Plagiarism is defined in Diana Hacker’s A Pocket Style Manual as follows: “(1) Failing to cite quotations or borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words.” Any suspicious phrases or passages of text will be checked through Google, “turnitin.com,” Amazon.com’s “Search Inside the Book” and other tools at our discretion.

Mid-term Exam:

The mid-term will be an essay exam based on material covered during the first half of the semester. The exam will be comprised of short answer/essay questions, and should take no more than one hour to complete.

Final Exam:

The final exam will be comprehensive in nature and may include questions from all film and history material covered during the semester. Please note: proper nouns (titles of films, names of actors and directors, etc.) must be spelled correctly, or points will be deducted. The final exam will be comprised of essays and short answer questions, etc.

You must contact me as soon as possible if you foresee missing either Exam.
**Attendance:**

Regular attendance and participation is expected. Classroom lectures and discussions of films/material will amplify and clarify assigned readings. Failure to attend regularly will inevitably result in lower test scores and more poorly written papers, leading to lower grades. **Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each lecture period, even if not physically noted.** If a student accumulates more than three unexcused absences (as each of these weekly sessions account for two regular-length classes), his/her final grade will be lowered by one letter. If, for example, after factoring in all grades for papers, tests and the final exam, a student’s final grade is a B+ and he/she has missed three lecture periods, that final grade will be lowered to a C+.

**Pluses, Minuses, and All That Stuff**

Plus and minus grades will be used to designate the precise grade earned. Only an excellent paper qualifies for an A or A-; a very good one will receive a B+, B or B-; an average one a C+, or C, etc. In other words, grades are to precisely reflect the caliber of the work submitted. The grade awarded each paper will be equally based on content and, to a certain degree, on writing skills (organization, style, grammar, spelling and punctuation).

**Grading:**

- **Paper 1:** 15%
- **Paper 2:** 25%
- **Mid-term:** 20%
- **Final Exam:** 25%
- **Class participation/quizzes/critical responses to screenings:** 15%
**Class Rules and Conduct:**

Please turn OFF and put away your earbuds, cell/smartphone/Blackberry/PDA/iPhone before the class begins and before film screenings begin. If the lecture period is interrupted by noise or activity due to any of the above (or any similar device), the offending student will be given a one-time warning; if the same student causes a second interruption, he/she will be dismissed from the class and re-admitted only under my discretion.

It should go without saying that NO electronic devices are allowed during Exam periods.

**LAPTOPS/PCs/MACs are discouraged.**

Students cannot repeat a TU course more than once without the permission of the Academic Standards Committee.

**If you have been diagnosed with a learning disability or you play for a Towson team, you are required to inform me at the beginning of the course, please hand-deliver me Accommodation forms as needed.**

**EMF Policy about Multitasking in the Classroom**

The EMF Department recognizes the utility of laptop computers and other electronic devices in the classroom, but only for academic purposes related to the course and under the direction of a faculty member to enhance learning. Student use of electronic devices for personal or other, non-course related activities, such as texting, e-mailing, Internet surfing, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, iPod, gaming, etc., is disruptive to fellow students, disrespectful to the professor, and detrimental to the student’s own academic performance.

Recent research findings indicate students who multitask perform **significantly worse** than do those who don’t multitask – with multitasking students performing at the same level as those who **never come** to class.

For these reasons, the Department of Electronic Media & Film fully supports faculty if they implement a course policy prohibiting or limiting the use of personal electronic devices in the classroom. The Department of Electronic Media & Film also fully supports any penalties, stated in the syllabus, assessed against students who violate the course policy.
Weapons Policy:
To promote a safe and secure campus, Towson University prohibits the possession or control of any weapon while on University property. The term weapon includes any potentially dangerous objects, substances or replica thereof. The full policy and important others ones can be found at this link: https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/general.html

Emergency Text Alerts:
All students must sign up for the Campus Emergency Alert Text Message Notification System. Go to following link for instructions to do so: http://www.towson.edu/publicsafety/notification/index.html

COFAC Civility Code
All College of Fine Arts & Communication Studies students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

We must take responsibility for the relationship between our personal conduct and the quality of campus life. What we do and say always has an effect on others, whether we see it or not. Civility means more than respecting campus facilities and grounds. Civility means consistently treating people with consideration and respect. It means being courteous, polite, and fair. It means recognizing diversity and honoring differing points of view. When our behavior is guided by concern for others in our community, we are being civil. Practicing civility requires thoughtful behavior and checking our assumptions and perceptions of others’ race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, abilities, culture, belief systems and economic status.
Civility Code

COFAC places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors and offensive comments. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all COFAC students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one’s choices, actions and comments; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language using professional writing standards and etiquette; and (4) accepting consequences of one’s choices and actions.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a student include:

- Being respectful of the professor and other students.
- Not texting or using cellular phones and other electronic devices.
- Not eating or drinking in class.
- Not reading newspapers or listening to music during the class.
- Not sleeping in class.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a faculty member include:

- Being respectful of the students.
- Attempting to understand individual student needs and learning styles.
- Discussing civil behavioral expectations during the first class.
- Taking time to talk with students whose behaviors negatively affect the classroom.
- Encouraging students to follow your civil behavior.
EMF Google Group List Serve –

All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF. This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs. Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts.

Instructions:

1. Create a user account and password, and be sure to use the email to which you prefer receiving mail. (You only need to sign up once and you’ll continue to receive EMF Google group emails.)

2. Please select one of the three Email options for reading the group messages:

   (a) Abridged Email (No more than 1 email per day) -- Summary of new activity each day

   (b) Digest Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Up to 25 full new messages bundled into a single email

   (c) Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Best way not to miss important postings, as you get every message sent as it arrives