

2065 222 01

Film Language

RIT WINTER 2005-06

Lecture: Mondays 10 AM to 11:50AM. Room 01-2000
Screenings: Mondays 6:30PM to 9:20PM. Room 01-2000

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An overview: Film Language is a screening and readings course designed to give the production student the opportunity to trace the development of many of the techniques and forms in what now constitutes the classic cinema.

Required Readings:

Giannetti, Louis D.; Understanding Movies (9th edition ?); Prentice Hall, 2002.
various timely class handouts.

ALL of Giannetti will be read *out of sequence*. A CALENDAR accompanies this syllabus with all readings noted. One week of course work covers topics roughly related in theory and production to one decade of the development of syntax in the 100 year history of motion pictures. It is ESSENTIAL that you read the assigned selections and handouts for the next week's class discussion, and view the provided films with a questioning, critical frame of mind. Attendance is required.

Recommended readings: Read the national and local movie reviews available on current films, especially and always those which you view in the theaters. Such journals would be "The Democrat and Chronicle", "City Newspaper", "The New York Times", "The Village Voice", "Premiere", "Film Comment", "Time", "Newsweek", various web blogs and postings, etc.

Read everything to do with filmmaking, film theory and critique. Filmmakers and video makers read and discuss what other producers have written and said. To read the primary insights of a filmmaker will assist your own production as it forms your opinion and sharpens your critical ideas. Read so that you will not expensively repeat the mistakes of others.

Grading:

15% paper #1, DUE in class Jan.9.
25% paper #2, DUE in class Jan. 30.
35% paper #3, DUE in class Feb. 20.
27% class FINAL EXAM, Feb. 20.

The papers are assigned throughout the quarter, each paper assigned increasing numerical importance. These papers are to be short and to the point: three pages each, maximum.

Each paper will be designed to answer a specific question raised by the viewings, the readings, or the lectures.

Papers must be typed: double-spaced, normal margins. Papers are to be proofread for all spelling, grammatical, and descriptive mistakes. Untyped papers will not be read.

Papers must be delivered to Battaglia in hard copy.

Any paper that is plagiarized will result in the failure of this course.

Late papers will not be accepted, although papers will be accepted before the due calendar date.

The class final examination will be on film terms and ideas especially noted in class and in the readings.

The 102 point grade total may be amended as a percentage in accordance with student attendance at screenings and in class. Grade distribution will be as follows:

- 102- 93 points = A, "Excellent".
- 92 - 84 points = B, "Good".
- 84 - 73points = C, "Satisfactory".
- 72- 65 points = D, "Poor"
- 64.5 points and below = F, "Failure".

A Final Note

Although the class material is entertaining, the films are not offered for enjoyment alone. The films and videos must be regarded as **data** to be examined. If you attend all screenings and view the materials in the passive-responsive state of a "naive" movie audience, and you have not prepared yourself with study and a critical eye, much of the educational purpose of these screenings will be lost.

You must not only view the films, BUT view yourself, examining your responses and anticipations, as you view the films.

I look forward to working with you all,

2065 222 01

Film Language

Calendar

RIT Winter 2005-06

Lecture/Discussion: Monday 10AM to 12 noon, Room 01-2000.
Screenings: Monday evenings 6:00 PM to 8:50 PM; Room 01-2000.

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Below is the listing of dates of films/tapes to be screened with film titles, directors, countries and year of production noted, along with the dates of required papers and readings.

Readings are listed as of the day of assignment. They are to be read for the **following** class meeting. Except for handouts, all readings are from Giannetti's Understanding Movies (9th edition). "**G**" indicates the assignment pages from the 8th edition. If you have purchased a more current edition, you will have to identify the appropriate sections for study.

There are two types of class meetings: the class lecture (in which often a short film will be screened) with class discussion Monday mornings, and a separate class screening of a feature length film to be attended on Monday evenings. Classes begin on time.

2005

Nov. 29: Photography, Frame, Movement.
morning
Lumiere **Shorts**, dir. Louis and Auguste Lumiere, (France)
1895 - 1903
Lumiere & Co.; various directors (excerpt)(France) 1995.
G. Chapter 1: "Photography",
Chapter 2: "Mise-en-Scene"

evening: **The General**, dir. Buster Keaton (USA) 1927.

Dec. 5: Editing 1: Continuity; and the Psychological CloseUp.
morning: Méliès **Shorts**, dir. Georges Méliès, (France) 1901-04,
Dream of a Rarebit Fiend; dir. Edwin S. Porter (USA) 1908; OR:
The Great Train Robbery, dir. Edwin S. Porter (USA) 1903.

G. Chapter 3: "Movement".
also READ: G.: Ch. 8 "Story", pp.359-364 for "The Classical Paradigm."

evening: **The Battleship Potemkin**; dir. Sergei Eisenstein (USSR) 1925.

Dec.12
morning: Editing 2: Vectors, Graphics, Associations, Rhythms.
"The Odessa Steps Sequence" from **The Battleship Potemkin**
Film Graphics: Abstract Aspects of Editing.
also: A *short animated film* by Paul Glabicki.

G. Chapter 4, "Editing", especially the "North by Northwest" storyboard
(COMPARE the written script sequence in G.: Chapter 9, "Writing", pp. 404-409).
G.: SEE CAPTION under production still from
"Caligari", p. 327.

evening: **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari**; dir. Robert Wiene, (Germany)
1919 (1924 edit).

2006

Jan. 9
morning: American Expressionism I
Lullaby of Broadway, excerpt from "The Goldiggers of 1933"
(dir. Merwyn LeRoy /choreography: Busby Berkeley)(USA) 1933.
Metropolis, dir. Fritz Lang (Germany) 1927?

PAPER #1 DUE in class.

G: Chapter 12: "Synthesis: Citizen Kane".
handouts on Kane.

evening: **Citizen Kane**. dir. Orson Welles (USA) 1940.

Jan.16
American Expressionism 2: Germany and the USA.
Citizen Kane. (excerpt) dir. Orson Welles (USA) 1940.
Parataxis; Skip Battaglia (USA) 1980.

G.: Ch. 5, "Sound".
G.: Ch. 6, "Acting"
handout: "Some Visual Motifs of Film Noir"

evening: **Double Indemnity**; dir. Billy Wilder (USA) 1944.

Jan.23:
morning The American Film after "Citizen Kane": film noir, gothic, and
first person narrative.
A Touch of Evil (opening); dir. Orson Welles (USA)1956.
a short animated film from "**Cartoon Noir**" (DVD).

readings: handouts
G.: Ch 11. "Critique", pp.474-488.

evening: **Psycho**; dir. Alfred Hitchcock (USA) 1960.

Jan. 30: Realism. The Western.
Paisan (excerpt); dir. Roberto Rosselli (Italy) 1946.

PAPER # 2 DUE IN CLASS.

G.: Chapter 7: "Drama".
Chapter 8: "Story".
Handout: on neorealism; Cesare Zavattini.
"On the Western Hero": Robert Warshow.

evening: **Unforgiven**; dir. Clint Eastwood (USA) 1992.

Feb 6: Fantasy and Naturalism.
Moulin Rouge; dir. Baz Luhrman (USA) 2001.
Invasion of the Body Snatchers; dir Don Siegel (USA) 1956.

G.: Chapter 11: "Critique" (remainder)
Chapter 10: "Ideology"

evening **What's Eating Gilbert Grape?**, Lasse Halström, (USA), 1993.

Feb. 13: American Realism.
morning **What's Eating Gilbert Grape?** (exerpts)
Pleasantville (excerpt)

G: Ch. 9: "Writing".

evening: **Wings of Desire**; dir. Wim Wenders (West Germany) 1988.

Feb 20: **Alone. Life Wastes Andy Hardy**; dir. Martin Arnold (Austria) 1997.

PAPER #3 DUE

and

FINAL EXAM on readings and terminology
to be taken in morning class.

NO EVENING CLASS.

----- "That's all, Folks." -----