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Introduction to Cinema

CMUN 274: Introduction to Cinema

Fall 2020-Online

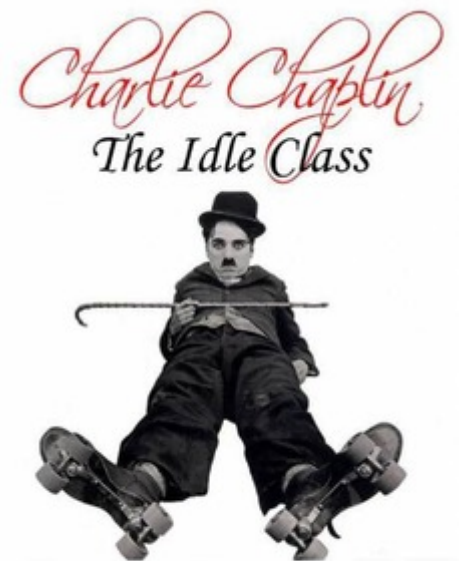
Classroom: Our digital ether

Office: Virtual or outdoor Chicago

Class time: Weekly check-in, Asynchronous--your choice, your time

Virtual Office Hours: Wed, 2:00-3:00; by appointment

Instructor: Elizabeth Coffman; ECoffma@luc.edu.



Objectives and Outcomes:

Why do films, television shows and other mobile media generate such powerful emotions in the viewer? How do producers, directors and film crews create cinematic stories from images in motion? How do they create persuasive arguments?

Introduction to Cinema examines the development of cinema throughout the last century, beginning with its material and economic roots in the early 1900's and continuing with cinema's development as a complex medium of digital storytelling. In this class students will learn terminology and the historical backgrounds necessary to understand the basic conceptual techniques of cinema—the process (from fund-raising to distribution), the script and storytelling goals, the 'shot' and cinematography, the mise-en-scene and sets/costumes/acting styles, montage/editing, sound and music well as the impact of (and creative responses to) social changes and systemic racist, sexist, classist representations. Students will be encouraged to raise questions, practice script analysis, image/sound capture techniques, and produce original research that explores the past, present and future of cinematic storytelling in the digital era, and now, in during a pandemic. (Content is in high demand!)

Learning Outcomes:

- Acquisition of the critical, technical and aesthetic vocabulary to describe, analyze and produce cinema.
- Improved critical and creative thinking, writing and media skills.
- Increased ability to critically evaluate cinematic works in light of aesthetic, historic, political precedents.
- Increased ability to articulate and to defend your views verbally, in writing and in multimedia formats.

Texts, Supplies & Screenings:

Required: [Film Art: An Introduction, 11th](#) eds. By Bordwell, Thompson, Smith (can rent online); Articles on Sakai; Hand-held cell phone or laptop camera. (Let me know if no access.) All film screenings are available online.

Grade Scale:

Participation--Written feedback (250 words min; 5 total)	20%
--3 posts on readings, 1 beat sheet, and 1 new film review	
1 Group Reading Presentation	20%
1 Visual Exercise (Recreate a film still)	10%
1 Midterm Exam	25%
1 Multimedia Research Project (& proposal)	25%

Course Expectations:

Responses to weekly readings: You will create at least 5 individual posts (250 words each; 5 points each) on Sakai. Posts include a **film review** and a "**beat sheet**" analyzing the key narrative moments for a scene in a (favorite) film or TV series. Your 3 other reviews will cover the reading topic for any week and any film that you've watched inside/outside of class that are relevant to (or mentioned in) the readings. You should integrate the readings with interesting examples please (include Youtube or other URL links in your response).

3 posts are due before Midterm Exam date, which include both the film review and beat sheet.

Group presentations: Sign up for one Group via the Sakai Tab. Your presentation is created via Voicethread on Sakai by midnight on Wednesday of that week. Each group member will identify an important point (in their part of the assigned readings/films), support this point with an interesting example(s) that you share/discuss on your Voicethread section. Each group will appoint one volunteer to be the leader who coordinates the Voicethread entries. All film examples need to be shorter than two minutes. (Indicate time of where to start watching, if needed.) Your personal speaking time on reading summary is around two minutes each. Voicethread allows you to include/create slides while you record your voiceover. Creativity and commenting on other group members examples is encouraged...

Visual Exercise: Recreate a film still from a movie made by a director and write a one-page (300 word) description explaining your mise-en-scene, camera angle, and directing choices. Complete using a cell phone, digital camera or any other props, lights, costumes available to you.

Midterm: will be taken online, and is open book, open note. Test is multiple choice and short answer, covering materials from the readings and presentations.

Multimedia Research Project: 6-8 pages (1200-1500 words) of text with sources, images and links). Topic (with research list of at least 5 sources, two peer reviewed) must be turned in after fall break (Nov. 9th). All work must be original and done for this class.

Class Ethics: Copying or plagiarism of essays or writing online will result in an "F" for the class. Always reference the author's name, use "quote marks" and standard MLA bibliographic format for Sources. If you are quoting reading from the class use the format--(author's last name, pg # and/or URL). Review these guidelines. http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

If you need help completing assignments, please contact me or go to the Writing Center for outside help. You must view additional media outside of class time. If you are sick, we must see a note from the infirmary or a doctor. If you have any kind of disability that requires accommodation, review these guidelines or speak with me privately. <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>

Course Schedule—All readings and assignments are due on day listed.

Week 1: August 24th

Can cinema reflect on history, current events?

Your prof introduces herself...

- **Look at online:** Paul Schrader's [First Reformed](#); [My Welcome video](#); [Flannery trailer](#)
- Sign up for group presentations
- **Complete:** Post a link to your favorite film scene on Voicethread! (I've started it). Record your voice comment describing what you like about this scene--the acting, the camera work, the action editing, the music, the joy, surprise, etc... Voicethread allows you to import a Youtube or video file [via URL](#). Then you can [leave a comment on your own video](#) by positioning "scrubber" ball at the point in video where you want to leave a comment, hit the + sign and select microphone.

Week 2: August 31st Storytelling, Production Process and CHC

How does the business of Hollywood define the business of America? How did Classical Hollywood Cinema (CHC) style begin?

- Look at online: Entire film: [The Manchurian Candidate](#) Excerpts from Michael Mann's [Collateral](#); [Lumieres](#), [Edison](#), [Melies](#), [Bonus: An Introduction to Within Our Gates](#); [The Films of Oscar Micheaux](#); [Alice Guy Blache shorts](#), [Birth of a Nation clip](#)
- **Groups 1 and 2 presentations** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 1, Film as Art, Creativity and Business; Ch.12 Film as History, Early Cinema (up to German Expressionism) pp.451-460; Where phrase "[Manchurian Candidate](#)" comes from; Jerome Christensen, America's Corporate Art; [Can there be a Fairy Tale Ending for Hollywood after Covid-19?](#)
- **Complete:** Consider writing a participation response to reading/viewing; watch related films and presentation

Week 3: September 7th

Film Forms and Screenwriting

What are the basics of film form? How are film narratives segmented or broken down in similar and very different ways in CHC? :

- **Look at online:** Entire film: [Citizen Kane](#), Excerpts from: [The Wizard of Oz](#) [Jurassic Park](#) [The Idle Class](#), [Collateral](#), [Zorns Lemma](#); **Groups 3 and 4 presentation** due by midnight on Monday-watch

- **Groups 3 and 4 presentations** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Ch. 2, 3, look through Blake Snyder's Save the Cat! Web site for beat sheet exs.
- **Complete:** Consider writing a participation response to reading/viewing, beat sheet analysis; watch related film

Week 4: September 14th

The Shot—Mise-en-Scene and the Power of Performance

How do choices about actor expressions/movements, costumes, lighting, set designs, and camera choices compose a film's or director's signature style? How did certain national cinemas develop distinctive mise-en-scenes? What were their goals in terms of creating a counter balance to most CHC?

- **Look at online:** Entire film: Alfred Hitchcock's [Vertigo](#), [That Spielberg Face](#) (video essay), [History of Projection and Frame Rates for Film](#) Excerpts from: [Metropolis](#), [The General](#), [Alfred Hitchcock documentary](#), [Cabinet of Dr. Caligari](#), [Badlands trailer](#); [Fruitvale Station](#)
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Ch. 4; Ch. 12, German Expressionism, French Impressionism pp.463-476
- **Groups 5 and 6 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch.
- **Complete:** Write beat sheet analyzing major narrative beats in a film, documentary or video game.

Week 5: September 21st

Write like a film reviewer!

- **Watch:** Rent a film or binge watch a Netflix series
- **Complete:** Write your film review

Week 6: September 28th The Shot—Cinematography

How do choices with camera placement, movement, lenses and lighting communicate meaning? What's a hair light? Or how does a wide angle lens distort space? What do aerial or drone shots set up for us?

- **Look at online:** : Entire film: [Moonlight](#); Excerpts from: [Digital Cinema Filmmaker--Lighting module](#), [Koyaanisqatsi](#), [Touch of Evil](#), [Bicycle Thief](#);
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Ch. 5, 12 Italian Neorealism 477-482. Andre Bazin weblink (Sakai)
- **Groups 7 and 8 presentations** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch.
- **Complete:** Consider writing a participation response to reading/viewing; watch related film

Week 7: October 5th

Montage: Shot to Shot, Continuity Editing

What is the dialectic approach to storytelling?

- **Look at online:** Entire film: [Vivre Sa Vie](#), Excerpts from: [Hitchcock Loves Bikinis](#); [Battleship Potemkin](#), [Breathless](#), [Do the Right Thing](#), [Bourne Legacy](#);
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 6; Ch. 12 Soviet Montage, pp 470-473; French New Wave, 479-482; [**Optional Read:** Sergei Eisenstein “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form”; <http://sensesofcinema.com/2002/cteq/breathless/>]
- **Group 9 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch;
- **Complete: Visual exercise one; recreate a film still**

Week 8: October 12th

- **Due:** 3 written posts (250 words each, beat exercise counts as one) and 1 visual exercises; All due on Sakai by Oct. 12th, midnight.

Week 9: October 19th

- **MIDTERM EXAM (will be completed online during class time)**

Week 10: October 26th Sound, Music and Emotion

- **Look at online:** Entire film: [A Raisin in the Sun](#); Excerpts from: *Across the Universe*; [The Conversation](#),
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 7; Ch. 12 CHC after Coming of Sound, pp 474-477 Randy Thom, “Designing Movies with Sounds
- **Groups 10 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch;
- **Complete:** Consider writing a participation response to reading/viewing; watch related film

Week 11: November 2nd Film Genres—Documentary

- **Look at online** Entire film: Ava DuVernay's [13th](#); Jay Rosenblatt's [Human Remains](#) (30 mins) Excerpts from *Night and Fog*, *Almost There*, *Act of Killing*
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 10 pg 350-369 ; Bill Nichols, *Six Modes* reading
- **Groups 11 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch;
- **Complete: Final Project Topic-1** page with research list/bibliography including peer review material.

Week 12: November 9th Experimental and Animated

- **Look at online:** Entire film: [Wings of Desire](#) by Wim Wenders; 30 mins of [Brothers Quay](#) animations Excerpts from: Chris Marker's [La Jetee](#), [Maya Deren](#), Stan Brakhage, Sadie Benning, Cauleen Smith, Pipolitti Rist/Beyonce;

- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 10, pg 369-398; **Groups 12 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch; Patty Zimmerman, “The Amateur, the Avant-garde, and Ideologies of Art”; [Group 8 Presentation]
- **Complete:** Consider writing a participation response to reading/viewing; watch related film

Week 13: November 16th New Narratives and Indie films

- **Look at online:** Entire film: *Pan’s Labyrinth*. Excerpts from: *Battle of Algiers*, *Sweetie*.
- **Read:** *Film Art*, Chapter 12 pg. 478-492 ; “Mexican New Wave and Globalization” (Sakai)
- **Group 13 presentation** due by midnight on Wednesday-watch;
- **Complete:** Work on final research project

Week 14: November 23rd

- **Complete: Final Research Projects Due on Sakai (midnight)-Turn It In**
- Final Written Feedback due (2)—by midnight

Week 15: December 1st

- **Complete: Any outstanding work due by midnight**

Syllabus and Calendar are open to change by professor. All changes will be posted to Sakai.

