

Eastern Illinois University
Department of Theatre Arts
Spring Semester 2013

FILM 3759G: HISTORY OF CINEMA
A University-designated "Writing Intensive" Course

Instructor. Dr. Chris Mitchell
2347 Doudna Fine Arts Center ("Red Zone," second floor)
581-3451
cjmitchell@eiu.edu

Office Hours: TR 11:00 am – 1:30 pm, or by appointment.

Professor's website: <http://ux1.eiu.edu/~cjmitchell> (check often)

Class Meets. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:15 pm, in DFAC 2040
Wednesdays, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, in DFAC Lecture Hall

Texts. Textbook rental should issue you:
Giannetti and Eyman, *Flashback: A Brief History of Film (6th ed.)*

Also, you should have close at hand:
A research paper style manual appropriate to your discipline.

Other Costs. None.

Prerequisites. ENG-1001G and ENG-1002G. No prior experience or coursework in Film Studies is required or expected.

Overview. This course offers a comprehensive yet selective overview of the history of cinema, integrating the basic tools for analyzing film as art. It will examine how the uses of camera, editing, lighting, sound, and acting contribute to the construction of meaning for audiences, as well as consider how meaning is filtered through various cultural contexts.

This course is a core course in the Film Studies minor. It also serves as a general education course in the "Arts and Humanities" and "Cultural Diversity" categories. Furthermore, it may count as an elective in your major; consult your academic advisor to see if this is the case.

The day-to-day operations of the course will be a blend of lecture, screenings (both "clip" and full-length, as appropriate), and discussion.

Please note: If you simply can not tolerate black-and-white and/or silent films, then you may wish to find another course.

Requirements And Grading. The grading scheme is easy to follow for this class. Please note the individual point values for each numbered assignment below.

The course requirements are as follows:

1. **Active participation and keeping up with assigned readings.** This includes ensuring that the reading assigned for a particular series of classes is done on time, that you bring the text to class, and that you enthusiastically and intelligently contribute to discussions in class. The volume and scope of covered material necessitates your constant engagement with the material and with other members of this class; your rating of **0 to 75 points** here reflects how consistently and diligently you are engaging these. You will be rated **TWICE**, once at midterm and once at the end of the semester. Each rating is an independent grade. There is a rubric sheet explaining how participation is evaluated on [my website](#).

Reading assignments are covered in a separate handout, which is posted on your class page of [my website](#).

2. **A midterm exam and a final exam.** In keeping with the writing-intensive designation of this course, these are essay exams which will determine how well you connect concepts together. The midterm, tentatively scheduled for **February 28**, will cover material from the first half of the semester and the final, scheduled for **Thursday, May 2, from 10:15 am to 12:15 pm**, will cover material from the second half only (i.e. it's not cumulative). Each exam is worth a total of **200 points**.

I do generate review sheets for each component we cover. They will be posted on your class page of [my website](#).

3. **A 4-5 pp. analysis paper** on a specific film chosen from a list I will provide. Further details TBA. You'll do this in two drafts: the first draft is due **January 29** and the final draft is due **February 20**. This paper is worth a total of **150 points**.

Paper particulars are covered in handouts which be posted on your class page of [my website](#).

4. **A 8-10 pp. written research paper** on a topic in cinema history, complete with annotated bibliography, chosen by you in consultation with me. This will involve library research. You will submit a proposal to me by **March 19** and then have a feedback meeting with me within the two-week window after this date. Then, the final paper

will be due on **April 24**. Further details TBA. This paper is worth a total of **300 points**.

Paper particulars are covered in handouts which be posted on your class page of [my website](#).

So, in sum, it breaks down like this:

First half participation	=	75
Second half participation	=	75
Midterm exam	=	200
Final exam	=	200
Shorter analytic paper	=	150
Longer research paper	=	300

TOTAL	=	1,000 points possible

Your final score, which will be adjusted for attendance (see “Attendance,” below) and any extra credit received (see “Extra Credit,” below) will correspond to the following final letter grade:

- A = final adjusted score 900 – 1,000 points
- B = final adjusted score 800 – 900 points
- C = final adjusted score 700 – 800 points
- D = final adjusted score 600 – 700 points
- F = final adjusted score less than 600 points

ATTENDANCE. Along with active participation, consistent and prompt attendance is absolutely necessary to reap the maximum benefit from the course. As such, you will be held accountable for your attendance. An attendance sheet will be circulated at every class meeting **on and after Tuesday, January 15**, and it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to ensure you have signed it before you leave class. In tracking absences, the following definitions apply:

- “Excused absence”: An excused absence results **ONLY** from a university-sanctioned activity, a family emergency, a health-related absence in which you are under a physician’s care, or an extraordinary circumstance as determined by the professor. All “excused absences” must be supported by a note from an official (physician, university official, etc.) supporting the absence.
 - “Excused absences” do not result in a penalty applied to your final average.

- “Unexcused absence”: Anything not defined by “excused absence” above. This includes, but is not limited to: “personal” days or non-university business, oversleeping, and health-related absences not supported by a physician’s note.
 - You are permitted TWO “unexcused” TR-class absence and ONE “unexcused” Wednesday-class absence without penalty to your final average; more than this, see box below.

For every unexcused TR absence beyond the two you’re permitted, you will lose **30 points** off your final average.
 For every unexcused Wednesday absence beyond the one you are permitted, you will lose **50 points** off your point total.
ATTENDANCE IS SERIOUS BUSINESS IN MY CLASSES.
 Please note also that missing more than half of a Wednesday screening session is considered to be an absence.

EXTRA CREDIT. There will be an opportunity or two for you to earn some extra points that can bolster your final average. As a general rule, these will be posted to [my website](#), so it is up to you to keep checking it!

Late Policy. Short paper. Unless an alternate arrangement is made with me in advance, I will accept your work past the due date subject to the following late penalty: for each calendar day the paper is late, **5 points** will be deducted from the score for the paper.

Long paper. Unless an alternate arrangement is made with me in advance, for each calendar day your proposal or final paper is late, **10 points** will be deducted from the final score of the paper.

Exams. I only grant makeups for absences that meet the criteria for “excused absences” above. These will be done outside of class time.

Classroom Etiquette. A few ground rules to maximize fairness to all and to help make our classroom environment enjoyable and productive:

1. Be on time and plan to stay the whole time. Don’t begin getting ready to go at 5 minutes— or more!— before the class is scheduled to end. If you’re doing that, you’re being rude to everyone in the class.

“The 10-minute rule.” Even though I can’t remember the last time this was relevant (I’m very time-conscious), you can safely assume that the “10-minute rule” is valid for this class, according to the “official time” of the classroom (usually the classroom clock, unless otherwise designated by the professor).

2. Respect other class members’ right to learn as well as your own. This includes not having distracting conversations with your neighbor (or cell phone/text message buddy), not listening to your iPod/mp3 during class time, not reading newspapers or other non-class material during class, and always respecting others’ opinions in class conversation, even if you disagree. While you may keep your cell on “VIBRATE” in case of emergencies, all other electronic devices must be turned OFF during class time.
3. During examinations, no electronic device is permitted in the classroom, save your cell phone on “VIBRATE.”

Disabilities. Should you require any special accommodations due to a documented disability, please contact the office of disability services at 581-6583 as soon as possible. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to give me a copy of the “Academic Accommodations” statement no later than January 17.

Academic Integrity. All assignments are expected to be your original work, and ALL resources you quote must be properly cited using an accepted citation method, appropriate to your discipline. THIS INCLUDES INTERNET SOURCES! You can always ask for help from me on citation method; that’s what I’m here for.

Academic honesty, suffice it to say, is taken VERY seriously here, and any instance of plagiarism (see me if you are not clear on the definition of the word) or cheating will result in a zero for the assignment AT MINIMUM (depending on the severity of the infraction).

No paper will be accepted for a grade without proper documentation of sources. If I see a paper without citations, I will return it to you the next class period and you will begin losing points as per the late policy above.

***THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PROFESSOR.***