

Common Course Outline
SPCH/THTR/MCOM/HIST 150
The Movies: Historical & Aesthetic Perspective
3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Course Description

The Movies: Historical & Aesthetic Perspective

Examines history of motion pictures from their origin as a late 19th century curiosity to their present status as a powerful form of mass communication; the development of film techniques; the evolution of popular movie genres such as the western, the horror film, the science fiction/fantasy film, and the animated feature film. Explores film's unique capacity to record and reshape history, and its power to reflect and shape public attitude and social values. Includes screening and a historical and production analysis of selected feature films.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Assess the magnificence and power of the motion picture as an art form and as a propaganda tool (I, II, III, 1, 2, 3, 4,5,6, 7) ;
2. Differentiate the production styles used by non-western cultures in the lensing of a motion picture (I, II, III, IV, V, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7) ;
3. Develop a sense of filmmaking aesthetics and vocabularly (I, II, 1, 2, 5, 7) ;
4. Recognize, analyze, and discuss the history of film (V, 3, 5, 6) ;
5. Analyze the impact of technology on contemporary filmmaking (IV, 2) ;
6. View and analyze film and the filmmaking process with a more discerning eye and ear. Render a critical evaluation (I, III, !V, V, 1, 2, 5, 7) ;
7. Differentiate the essential contributions of the producer, director, editor, screenplay writer, director of cinematography, and film score composer; describe the collaborative nature of motion picture production (I, 3) ;

Overall course objectives (continued)

8. Prepare three researched writing assignments that utilize film vocabulary and discuss production concepts from specific periods in the historical development of film (III, 3, 4, 6) ;
9. Recognize, analyze, and discuss the social significance of film and the impact of the motion picture industry in general (V, 3, 5, 6) ;
10. Assimilate effective film language in formal class discussions on cinematic style and motion picture production techniques (I, II, III, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Major Topics

- I. Film language: presentation of basic film terms and vocabulary.
- II. The Filmmakers: The principal players. A historical overview of the evolution of the film director, writer, cameraman, production designer, and producer.
- III. The Early Years: The start of the film industry from the development of the motion picture camera to the formal channels of distribution.
- IV. The Pioneers: Thomas A. Edison, Willis O'Brien, and George Eastman: A look at early inventions and the development of "special" trick photography.
- V. A Single Story, A Personal Vision: The influence of David Wark Griffith and Cecil Blount DeMille. The evolution of the director as a storyteller with a unique, personal vision.
- VI. East Coast Production Moves to the West Coast. The formation of the silent film studio system. The early studios establish an identity for story types, directors, stars, and channels of distribution.
- VII. Filmic Styles of the Twenties: An exploration of the Hollywood studio production assembly line. The role of the studio executive and early attempts at licensing popular novels for screen adaptation. The rise of the contract film director: King Vidor, John Ford, George Marshall, and Frank Capra.
- VII. International Filmmaking During the Twenties: German Expressionist Cinema and Soviet Use of Montage Editing
- IX. Sound: The invention and acceptance of screen sound and its impact and application within the film industry.
- X. The Studio Years: A look at the production styles set by the major Hollywood studios in the 1930's with emphasis on the contribution of outstanding directors of the period.
- XI. Film Animation: A look at the early efforts of pioneer film animator Max Fleischer and the rise of the color, animated feature length film.
- XII. Film as Entertainment and Propaganda: An investigation of film as both entertainment and propaganda in the 1930's and 1940's.

Major Topic (continued)

- XIII. Welles: A study of *CITIZEN KANE* as culmination of film methods at the service of narrative technique.
- XIV. Postwar Studio Production and the Rise of Independent Filmmaking: An in-depth look at the development and organization of the Disney Studio; The independent actor as producer (Wayne/BATJAC Productions, Douglas/BRYNA Productions, Lancaster/HECHT,HILL,LANCASTER).
- XV. The International Independent Filmmaker: The influence of Samuel Bronston and the international status of Madrid, Spain as a filmmaking mecca during the late 1950's and early 1960's.
- XVI. Hollywood During the late 1960's: New Visions - Gordon Parks' impact on the studio system.
- XVII. Film Curriculum : Cinema studies - east coast film schools vs. west coast film schools.
- XVIII. Asian Film Production: The influence of Japanese and Chinese filmmakers.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and active participation in class.
2. Two written exams.
3. Three formal research assignments.
4. Annotated scholarly or creative project with written and oral components.
5. A written review of a recent foreign film release.

Other Course Information

The Community College of Baltimore County is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience that results in a growth of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to function successfully as a transfer student, in a career and as a citizen. To accomplish this goal, we maintain high academic standards and expect students to accept responsibility for their individual growth by attending class, complete all homework and other assignments, participating in class activities and preparing for tests.