



South Portland, Maine 04106

### **Communications and New Media**

**Title:** Introduction to Narrative Cinema      **Catalog Number:** CNMS - 251  
**Credit Hours:** 3      **Total Contact Hours:**45  
**Lecture (or Lab):** Room HILD-102      **Instructor:** Huey Coleman  
**Office Hours – Location:** By Appointment, usually before or after class  
**Contact Information:** E-mail: [hcoleman@smccme.edu](mailto:hcoleman@smccme.edu)

**Course Syllabus – Introduction to Narrative Cinema, CNMS - 251**  
**Class Meeting Schedule: Tuesday 9:30AM - 12:15PM**  
**January 17, 2017 - May 9, 2017**

#### **Course Description & Objectives:**

This course explores the art of storytelling and the role of the hero in the history of film in American cinema. Starting with the *Great Train Robbery* in 1903 on up to current cinema, we will watch a variety of landmark films by American directors. The films are selected based on the impact they had on film history and American culture. We will focus on defining the art of cinema as well as the evolution of the Hero in American film. Influences of world cinema will be presented. Discussions and readings will explore how a story is told in film by bringing together plot, character, visual design, camera technique, along with music and sound to create the magic of movies. The competing forces of the director's desire to create art and the pressures of commercial success at the box office will be analyzed. Assignments include weekly essays on the films viewed and readings. The final project will be a research paper that uses critical analysis of a director, movie, type of character, actor, or genre.

#### **Text, Tools and / or Supplies:**

Text: *American Film, A History*, Jon Lewis, (2008), W. W. Norton & Company  
ISBN 9780393979220

#### **Evaluation & Grading:**

- a. Mid-term 15%
- b. Attendance and Class Participation in discussions 30%
- c. Weekly Assignments 30%
- d. Final Project 25%

**Assignments:**

All assignments are due at the start of the following class and will be given each week. There will be written assignments and oral presentation assignments. Your participation in class is an important component in determining your grade. Each week there will be time devoted to discussion on the subject at hand and each week you will need to be prepared to present all or a portion of your written assignment or oral presentation to the class. **Be aware that you must check your SMCC e-mail account weekly for course updates. Bring a laptop or tablet to class, if available.**

**Format**

Written assignments should be printed on 8.5x11 inch typed page, double spaced in 12 point font, with your name and date due at the top of the page. No discs please. You must keep a copy (digital or paper) of your written assignments and notes for oral presentations for reference use during the semester

**Course Policies Attendance:**

You are required, as stated in the college handbook, to attend all classes. A portion of your grade is determined by your attendance and active participation in class. Points will be deducted for unexcused absences, tardiness, or leaving class early. It is SMCC policy that if you have 3 consecutive unexcused absences then you receive an Administrative Failure which is reported to the dean of the college. I want all of you to do well in this class. If you are having problems keeping up with the class and the assignments, please talk to me so we can develop a plan that works for you. This syllabus is subject to change.

**End-of-Course Evaluation**

Students complete evaluations for each course attended at SMCC. Evaluations are submitted online and can be accessed through the student portal. Students can access the course evaluations beginning one week before the end of classes. The deadline for submission of evaluations occurs Monday at 5 p.m. following the last day of the class. You will receive an e-mail to your student e-mail account when course evaluations are available.

**ADA Syllabus Statement**

Southern Maine Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and employer. For more information, please call (207) 741-5798. If you have a disabling condition and wish to request accommodations in order to have reasonable access to the programs and services offered by SMCC, you must register with the Disability Services Coordinator, Sandra Lynham, who can be reached at 741-5923. Further information about services for students with disabilities and the accommodation process is available upon request at this number. Course policies about online testing are modified to suit each individual's accommodations.

**SMCC Pay-for-Print Policy**

Each semester students receive a \$20 printing credit. The balance resets at the end of the semester and any remaining credits are removed. The College's pay-for-print system monitors printing on all printers (including those in general access labs, library printers, Tutoring Services, Campus Center Lounge and technology labs). Be sure to log OUT of the system when you've finished your printing, to prevent unauthorized access to your account. Students can check the

number of pages they have printed by using the Printing Balance tool available on SMCC computers (located in the lower right corner of the screen, near the clock). Departments with work study students who need to print documents for the department should contact the Help Desk at 741-5696 to have a special account set up. To find ways to reduce your printing charges, please go to the IT Help tab on My SMCC. If you have questions about the pay-for-printing policy or your printing charges, please contact the Help Desk at 741-5696 or send an e-mail to [helpdesk@smccme.edu](mailto:helpdesk@smccme.edu).

### **Refunds**

Print jobs are eligible for a refund in the event of mechanical or electronic error on the part of the printer, print server, or software used to submit the job. Jobs are not eligible for a refund in cases where the job was not set up correctly, was submitted multiple times, or the student is not satisfied with the result. To request a refund, please bring the offending print to the IT Department in the basement of the Ross Technology Center. Refunds will be granted in the form of a credit to the student's account.

### **Add-Drop Policy**

Students who drop a course during the one-week "add/drop" period in the fall and spring semesters and the first three days of summer sessions receive a 100% refund of the tuition and associated fees for that course. Please note any course that meets for less than the traditional semester length, i.e., 15 weeks, has a pro-rated add/drop period. There is no refund for non-attendance.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

A student may withdraw from a course only during the semester in which s/he is registered for that course. The withdrawal period is the second through twelfth week of the Fall and Spring semesters and the second through ninth week of twelve-week Summer courses. This period is pro-rated for shorter-length courses (usually 75 percent of course meeting times; please check with the Registration Office. To withdraw from a course, a student must complete and submit the appropriate course withdrawal form, available at the Registration Office. This process must be completed either in person or by using SMCC e-mail accounts.

### **Plagiarism Statement**

If an instructor suspects that a student has knowingly committed a violation defined in the Maine Community College System Policy on Student Grade Appeals and Academic Misconduct, the instructor has the authority to review the alleged misconduct and determine the grade that the student should receive for the assignment and the course. The instructor may assign a failing grade for the assignment or course and may require the student to complete additional work for the course. The instructor may consult with the department chair and/or the College's chief academic officer prior to making such decisions. If a student seeks to challenge an instructor's determination, the student should submit a grade appeal. Grade appeal forms are available in the Advising Office on the South Portland Campus or in the administrative offices in the Learning Commons on the Midcoast Campus. An instructor may also refer the matter to the College's disciplinary officer for review under the procedures of the MCCS Student Code of Conduct.

**Introduction to Mass Communications**  
**Spring Semester, 2017**  
**Class and Assignment Schedule**  
**Tuesday 9:30AM - 12:15PM**

**You must check your SMCC e-mail account weekly for course updates.**

**NOTE:** A few classes will run to 12:30PM when longer films are shown. Those classes will be kept to a minimum. There will be discussion about the films shown at the end of every class. Part of your grade is based on your participation in that discussion. **Bring a laptop, tablet, or pen and paper to class and be prepared to take notes in class.** The syllabus is subject to change and is a guide to the semester. **Please refer to assignment sheets posted each week for the actual weekly assignments.**

**January 17**

**Week 1. In the Beginning**

Thomas A. Edison, Lumiere Brothers, Alice Guy Blache, Georges Melies, 1895-1900

Edwin Porter, *The Great Train Robbery*, 12 min., 1903

Charlie Chaplin, *The Gold Rush*, (excerpts), silent version, 95 min., 1925.

\*In-class discussion: Introduce the idea of the Hero and defining the art of narrative cinema. Chaplin's genius as director, writer, and actor.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on critical analysis of the movie(s) watched each week, averaging 3 written pages a week.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, Chapters 1 & 2 (see weekly assignment sheet for selections to read). In the weekly assignment essay you must refer to the assigned reading for the week.

**January 24**

**Week 2. From Maine to Hollywood and The Western**

Sergei Eisenstein, *Potemkin*, 1925, (excerpt - "The Odessa Steps")

D. W. Griffith, *Birth of Nation*, 1915, and *Intolerance*, 1916 (excerpts)

John Ford, *Stagecoach*, 96 min., 1939

\*In-class discussion: The influence of Eisenstein and Griffith on editing and the art of film. John Ford's odyssey from Portland High School graduate to Hollywood and 4 Oscars for Best Director. John Wayne's emergence as a Hollywood icon. The influence of The Western on films worldwide. Introduce the Auteur Theory.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, Chapters 3 - 6 (weekly assignment sheet has selections)

**January 31**

**Week 3. Famously Unsuccessful**

Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*, 119 min. 1941

\*In-class discussion: Why is *Citizen Kane* considered one of the greatest films of all time and why Welles is considered one of the greatest directors.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **February 7**

### **Week 4. German Expressionism, Film Noir, and the anti-Hero**

Excerpts from examples of German Expressionism by directors, Robert Weine, Fritz Lang, and F. W. Murnau. Excerpts from film noir by American directors like, John Huston, Billy Wilder, Howard Hawks, Stanley Kubrick, Orson Welles, and Charles Laughton.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film* (selections).

## **February 14**

### **Week 5. Loss of Innocence and the Feminine Hero**

Alfred Hitchcock, *Shadow of a Doubt*, 108 min. 1943

\*In-class discussion: Many regard Hitchcock as the greatest of American directors. But he was from England where he learned his craft. This is his first film on an American subject and supposedly his personal favorite film of all that he made.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **February 21**

### **Week 6. Teen Angst and A Film Icon**

Nicholas Ray, *Rebel Without a Cause*, 1955, 111 minutes

\*In-class discussion: The American teenager as portrayed in the 1950s and the establishment of James Dean as a film icon and influence on film acting.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **February 28**

### **Week 7. The Western Turns Awry.**

John Ford, *The Searchers*, 119 min. 1956

\*In-class discussion: Ford and Wayne and how the view of the West changed with time. The recognition of racism in Hollywood's version of the American West.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **March 7**

### **Week 8, The Living and the Dead: Dream or Reality**

Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*, 128 min., 1958

\*In-class discussion: Hitchcock's influence on the world of filmmaking as a master of creating suspense in seemingly every day moments. Maya Deren's influential psychodrama blurs the line of dream and reality.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

Begin searching for your final project.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **March 14 Spring Break - No Class**

## **March 21**

### **Week 9. Global Influences, Midterm Assigned**

Starting in the 1950s and peaking in the 1960s Hollywood and the rising independent film movement in America were strongly influenced by foreign films, which in turn had already been impacted by American made movies. Excerpts from a variety of foreign films that were key to this era will be shown: Akira Kurosawa, Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Fredrico Fellini, and Ingmar Bergman.

\*In-class discussion: The influence of Hollywood on European and Asian films now comes back as they in turn influence American films.

\*Written assignment due the next class: **Midterm Assigned**. On your own watch one of the foreign films listed. Write a review and compare and contrast to American films.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film* (selections).

## **March 28**

### **Week 10. Satire and the World of Kubrick**

Stanley Kubrick, *Dr. Strangelove*, 94 min., 1964

Kubrick, *2001*, 142 minutes, 1968 (excerpts), other Kubrick films as time allows.

\*In-class discussion: The role of satire in film and as a political and cultural statement.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film* (selections).

## **April 4**

### **Week 11 The Hero as a Loner**

Martin Scorsese, *Taxi Driver*, 113 minutes, 1976

\*In-class discussion: Scorsese's bleak vision of post Vietnam War era America set in NYC. Is it all a dream or a delusion or did it really happen?

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections).

## **April 11**

### **Week 12 This is The End**

Francis Ford Coppola, *Apocalypse Now*, 153 min., 1979

\*In-class discussion: Coppola's improvised drama was loosely based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. We see Marlon Brando in one of his last and most mysterious acting roles with Martin Sheen in a James Dean like role. The making of the film was almost as harrowing as the film's script.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion. Begin work on your final project once approved by the instructor.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections). Research for your final project.

## **April 18**

### **Week 14. Women in Film**

Excerpts from a range of women filmmakers from the beginning of cinema to today. Includes directors: Dorothy Azner, Ida Lupino, Susan Seidelman, Nora Ephron, Kelly Reichardt, Ava Duvernay and others

\*Written assignment due the next class: Watch a film by women director from the list handed out in class and write a review of the film comparing to others we have watched in the semester. Work on your final project

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: Research on your final project

## **April 25**

### **Week 13. Culture Clash**

Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing*, 120 min., 1989

\*In-class discussion: Lee's technique is to take characters with strong beliefs on both sides of an issue and put them together and bring it all to the boiling point. How racial issues and civil rights are presented in Lee's films.

\*Written assignment due the next class: Essay questions on the movie and discussion. Continue work on your final project.

\*Reading Assignment due the next class: *American Film*, (selections). Research for your final project.

## **May 2**

### **Week 15. 20 Years Later More Culture Clash, Final Project Due by 9:30AM**

Mira Nair, *The Namesake*, 122 min., 2007

\*In-class discussion: Nair's look at two cities Calcutta, India and New York City, is a portrayal of two cultures clashing and merging in the next generation. This is usually one of the more popular films shown in the course.

## **May 9**

### **Week 16 Film To Be Determined**

Your final assignment will be graded and handed back. We'll watch a film made in the last few years that has the potential to becoming a film classic.