

FILM APPRECIATION

HUM 2003

Instructor: Dan May

Class Time Wed 5:30-8:20 PM

Office: 219 Office Hours: Posted on MY office door

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<http://www.goodgravydesign.net>

<http://www.saumag.edu/art/dm.html>

Purpose:

Film as an art form has developed to become the artistic preference for enjoyment and entertainment by the majority of Americans. Ideally, it removes us from the mundane world and immerses us in one which is constructed from the imagination of a collaborative group of people who distribute their collective vision to us by a variety of vehicles either in a movie theatre or disk or via the internet to be played in one's own home. However movies may be delivered, it combines visual, musical and narrative forms simultaneously in a reasonably inexpensive manner. Its evolution as an art form reflects the time, culture, sophistication, and to some, the degeneration of its audience. It is sometimes considered a fingerprint for the era in which it was produced and has inadvertently become a prime source, in the eyes of many political entities across the planet, a form of cultural domination.

In class, we will explore the evolution, effects and development of film on American culture and touch upon its effects on other cultures. We will discuss the many genres of film and their structure and which directors and actors were (and are) known as leaders in their endeavors and why they earned that distinction.

We will develop a way that we can 'objectively' analyze the movies we watch and critically assess if they can be placed in the category of classic. It is my hope that we discuss why some films resonate with some in the class and not to others. Some films you may not like. Some of the films you may even find objectionable on some level, but the films presented have not been selected to appeal to prurient interest, or out of personal preference (well maybe a little bit of that) but rather by their place as being "iconic" by their structure or through the message that they convey.

Analyzing films within an artistic and technical context requires a certain amount of introspection. Some of us do not like one actor, or one type of film as a rule, but to limit ourselves to preconceived notions sometimes limits our scope of understanding and as an **appreciation class** it is my hope that you will begin to question some of those preconceptions. We will hopefully gain the ability to recognize the structure, language and dynamics involved in a movie's creation, and use that rather than personal taste as an objective guideline to assess a movie's worth. We will examine early B/W movies, and examine their place and voice in history in relation to newer films which may emulate them. Students will view films and portions of films in class within a critical context of historical or philosophical significance and will be tested in that vein. Notes are encouraged...unless of course you have a photographic memory.

We will analyze films in accordance to film theory, art, politics, historical context, and philosophical viewpoint.

Prior to the viewing, I will introduce the film and its significant attributes in accordance with what was previously outlined. Following most screenings, (if time allows) there will be a discussion/ question and answer time with a review of the material we watched with a time for your personal opinions. Level of participation in these discussions will determine a portion of the student's grade. You will receive a guide to fill out as you watch the film to help inform you about the issues most pertinent to that particular class.

Finally what is the overall purpose of this class? By the end of the semester you as a student should be able to identify the different styles, genres and structural aspects in Film, and have a general understanding of the evolution of film. In a larger context it is my hope that this class will be able to assist you in developing the analytical skills that will carry you forward in your subsequent studies.

Grades:

A=(93-100)

B=(92-85)

C=(84-75)

D=(74-66)

F=65 and below

Attendance

Absences will reduce your grade. We only meet 16 times in the semester, sooooo **FOUR ABSENCES WILL *PROBABLY* RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANTLY LOW GRADE. MAYBE EVEN AN "F"**. In all of the classes we will be watching movies and analyzing them. Some are available on Netflix and in the library, but some may not be readily available for you to review outside of class. It is strongly advised that you attend every class. Excused absences will only be allowed as outlined in the University handbook. ***If for some reason an unavoidable absence occurs, reasonable accommodations will be made to assist you to make up the work.***

Assignments:

1) There will be in class assignments designed to assist your study . You will be instructed to watch for certain forms, ideas and terms which will be gone over prior to the movie being shown. You will answer the questions while watching the movie, and turn them in at the end of the class to be graded, and subsequently use them as study guides for your tests when I return them to you.

This is also designed to give you a better idea on the proper format to use when writing your term paper.

2) One Term Paper: 100 points: Subject Matter: Compare and Contrast two films to be announced later...(one will be a 'classic' film while the other will be of made within the last twenty years ; Length 6 pages. MLA format. 12 pt type, double spaced plus bibliography for a total of 7 pages...bibliography must have 5 citations. Two citations must come from a traditionally published source i.e. periodical (magazine), book , newspaper while the last three may be web based . Please be sure to define your source with an appropriate URL if it is a web source.

OPTION : IN PLACE OF A TERM PAPER (125pts)

You may opt for creating a short film as a collaborative project instead of writing a paper. There should be no less than four students to a collaborative team and no more than eight. More points are offered for this option due to its difficulty to complete.

Your film must be original in content.

and be at least five minutes long with titles and credits. All collaborators and their specific contribution must be cited at the end of the piece in the credits. You must turn in ***a peer evaluation. If your peers feel your efforts are sub standard then your grade will be reduced accordingly. 25 % of your grade is based on peer evaluation. 25% based on class response. (A form will be passed out when your film is screened) The final 50% based on my evaluation.***

Each film submitted will be graded/assessed based on the structure and terminology that we learn in class.

Narrative structure must be based on one of these genres:

Film Noir

Documentary

Science Fiction

Term Papers and/or film assignments will be due prior to the Thanksgiving break.

3) Finally : You will be required to attend either
one film,

one art exhibition,

one theatrical event, or

one music exhibition in the semester that I will assign. I will make announcements and post to blackboard for acceptable events during the term. Proof of attendance will be a ticket stub, program receipt or some form of printer ephemera, in the case of university events, on -campus events, there will be a sign up sheet provided at the end of the event.

25 points will be given for attendance to these events...no attendance...no points.

Tests

Midterm 150 pts _____ Final 200 pts

These tests will be based on lectures, films and the in class room critiques and observations you make, so it is imperative that you take notes and attend classes.

There are NO extra credit assignments.

Some students towards the end of the course for whatever reason inevitably ask if there is some way to raise their grade. There is no way to do that. I don't assign extra credit. Your attendance, test scores, assignments and participation is your best guarantee of a passing grade.

Academic Integrity

The mission of Southern Arkansas University empowers all members of the University community to develop and encourage learning environments that create, expand, acquire, share, evaluate, and communicate knowledge. Academic integrity at SAU is an organizational and individual responsibility to honesty in all learning experiences. Students, faculty, and staff share responsibility for maintaining the highest standards for academic integrity. This policy focuses on the academic integrity in course-related work, its basis and context is applicable to all. Any act of dishonesty in academic work constitutes academic misconduct and is subject to disciplinary action. Acts of dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism and cheating.

For detailed information on academic integrity, read pages 26-27 of the SAU 2010-2011 Undergraduate Catalogue.

in Relation to Academic Integrity: Papers and Plagiarism

Students should be aware of University Policy concerning this.

Essentially if you use a phrase or paragraph of someone else's writing in your own work you must attribute it to that person through some form of citation. To do otherwise is plagiarism.

Here is a direct quote from the University Handbook:

"A. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one's own.

- 1. To avoid plagiarism give written credit and acknowledgment to the source of thoughts, ideas, and/or words, whether you have used direct quotation, paraphrasing, or just a reference to a general idea.*
- 2. If you directly quote works written by someone else, enclose the quotation with quotation marks and provide an appropriate citation (e.g., footnote, endnote, bibliography.)*
- 3. Research, as well as the complete written paper, must be the work of the person seeking academic credit for the course. (Papers, book reports, projects, and/or other class assignments are not to be purchased from individuals or companies which provide these services.)"*

Any student who is guilty of plagiarism will receive an "zero" for their work.

Text:

There is no required text however there are suggested readings.

Film Art {An Introduction }(David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson) University of Wisconsin

Film {A Critical Introduction}, (Maria Pramaggiore, Tom Wallis) Allyn and Bacon

The Art of Watching Films, (Dennis Petre, Joseph Boggs) McGraw Hill

Cell Phones:

I collect them and mount them to my wall like dead animals. So, if you would like to keep them, turn them off before class. (No vibrating, no texting will be allowed.)...

Any one caught texting in class in the immortal words of the floor walker in the film "Cool Hand Luke" will spend a night in the box.....seriously what that entails is this...

I reserve the right to give a pop quiz immediately after any cell or 'smart' phone rings or if I see any one texting, or consulting their cell during class.

Disability Support Services:

It is the policy of Southern Arkansas University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Support Services, which is located in room 216 Reynolds Center, telephone 235-4145.



Still from the movie "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"

Week 1: Discuss Origins of German Expressionism and Film Noir

German expressionist: "Anti War Film:

The "evil" Dr Caligari who throughout the film murders and terrorizes a sleepy German mountain village is really the psychiatrist at an Asylum which treats war victims.

Story line "reveals" that the protagonist is insane and is being treated by Caligari.



German Expressionism can be identified by severe disorienting perspective lines and stark color.



Fight Club: The fight against Corporate Control and The Victory of Self Determination?

Are Movies a Reflection of Life or Does Life Imitate the Movies

Excerpts from the Unabomber Manifesto:

"Freedom means having power; not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one's own life.(94) [The alternative] is totalitarian force.(219) Society requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the human race evolved and to behave in ways that conflict with the patterns of behavior that the human race developed [earlier].(46) Modern man's fate depends on the actions of persons remote from him whose decisions he cannot influence.(114) The value of opportunity is destroyed by the very fact that society gives it.(76) Thus, in order to avoid serious psychological problems, a human being needs [autonomous] goals whose attainment requires [autonomous] effort, and he must have a reasonable rate of success in attaining his goals.(37, 42) What makes us feel secure is not so much objective security as a sense of confidence in our ability to take care of ourselves.(68)

"People do not consciously and rationally choose the form of their society.(106) Science and technology constitute a mass power movement [that necessarily restricts our freedom].(90,114) [Serious] questions are asked about the foundations of scientific knowledge and about how, if at all, the concept of objective reality can be defined.(18) Thus there is no stable framework.(49) [Those with power react to this instability with self serving and futile efforts to engineer and control it with technology, resulting in abuse.] [The powerful] will be forced to use every practical means of controlling human behavior.(150) [Since man can not be adjusted] to this new environment by artificial re-engineering, he will be adapted to it through a long and painful process of natural selection [in the form of social conflict].(178) The line of conflict should be drawn between the mass of the people and the power-holding elite of industrial society.(190) [The only relevant] social conflicts [are those that address] the conflicts of power, elite vs. ordinary people, technology vs. nature.(191) [In resisting technology,] we must distinguish between two kinds of technology: [useful] small-scale technology and [abusive] organization-dependent technology.(208)"

Words of Osama Bin Laden:

"...we are fulfilling a duty which God, Praise and Glory be to Him, decreed for us. We look upon those as heroes, those men who undertook to kill the American occupiers in Riyadh and Khobar (Dhahran)."

Edit 31 Mar 1997 Source

"All praise is due to Allah, who built the heavens and earth in justice, and created man as a favor and grace from Him."

Edit 08 Sep 2007 Source

Politics

"The US today as a result of the arrogant atmosphere has set a double standard, calling whoever goes against its injustice a terrorist. It wants to occupy our countries, steal our resources, impose on us agents to rule us based not on what God has revealed and wants us to agree on all these. If we refuse to do so, it will say you are terrorists. ... The US does not consider it a terrorist act to throw atomic bombs [killing] women, children and elderly people [...] in Japan."

Edit 31 Mar 1997 Source

Capitalism

"As you liberated yourselves before from the slavery of monks, kings, and feudalism, you should liberate yourselves from the deception, shackles and attrition of the capitalist system. If you were to ponder it well, you would find that in the end, it is a system harsher and fiercer than your systems in the Middle Ages. The capitalist system seeks to turn the entire world into a fiefdom of the major corporations under the label of "globalization" in order to protect democracy."

Edit 07 Sep 2007 Source

Is there life after death?

"To us, the life hereafter is really important, not this life."

Edit 05 Aug 1999 Source

Tyler Durden : Fight Club

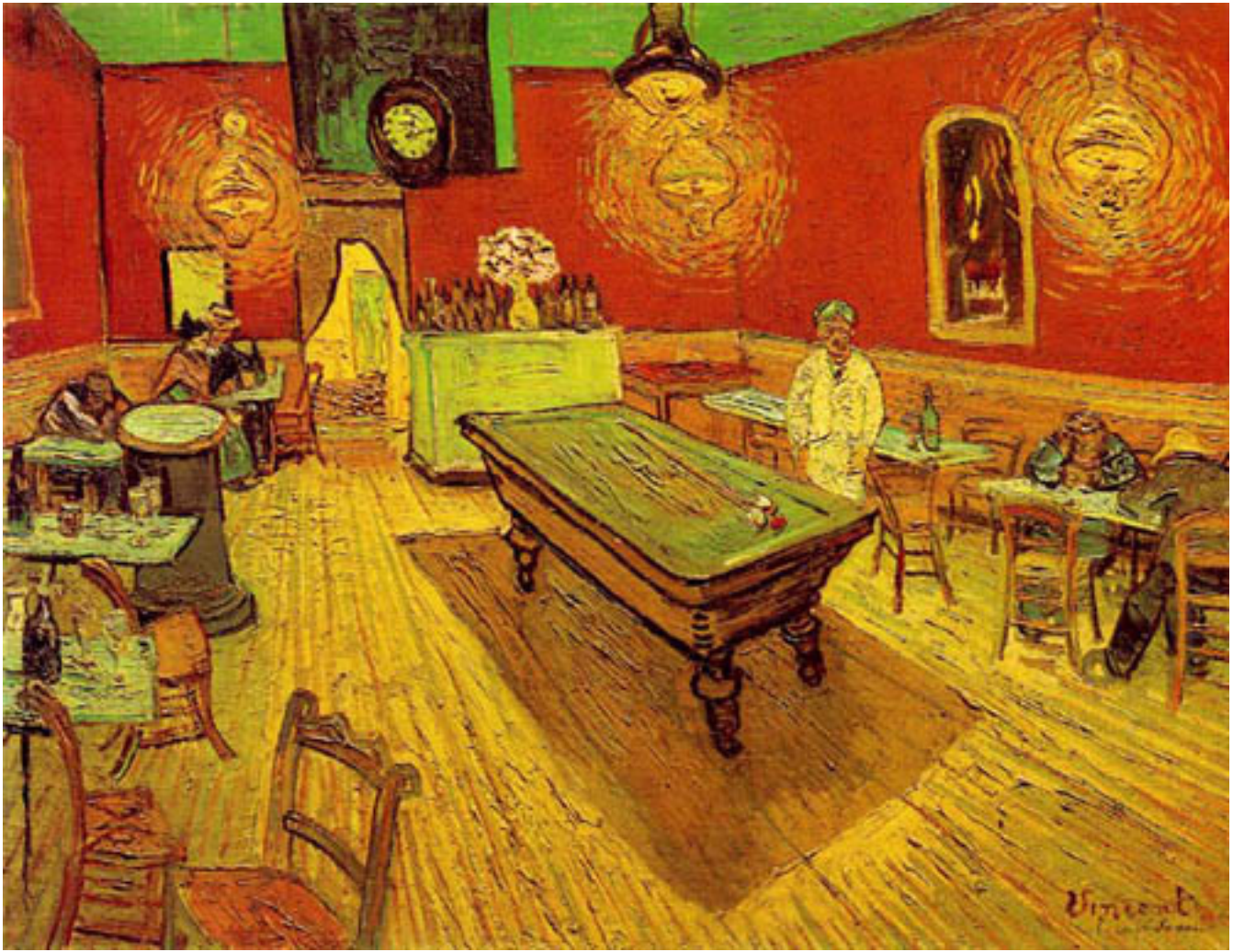
"I see in fight club the strongest and
smartest men who have ever lived --
an entire generation pumping gas and
waiting tables; or they're slaves
with white collars.

Advertisements have them chasing cars
and clothes, working jobs they hate
so they can buy shit they don't need.

We are the middle children of
history, with no purpose or place.

We have no great war, or great
depression. The great war is a
spiritual war. The great depression
is our lives. We were raised by
television to believe that we'd be
millionaires and movie gods and rock
stars -- but we won't. And we're
learning that fact. And we're very,
very pissed-off.

We are the quiet young men who listen
until it's time to decide."



Van Gogh's "Night Cafe"

Colors are high key predominantly green elevating a sense of disorientation and despair

Color

Composition



Leonardo Da Vinci
"Virgin of the Rocks"

Triangular composition
whose spatial relationship
holds to the same ratio
as the Golden Proportion
which is 1:1.618