

**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 from the late nineteenth century to become the narrative preference of the majority of Americans. In class, we will explore many genres of film (some would argue they are "movies" not films) from a variety of cultures to determine if there is such a thing as universal values, and why these movies resonate to some and not to others. The overriding theme will be the director as author, or as the french call it the "realisateur".

We will analyze these films within a historical, artistic and technical context.

Text:

Required: **none**

Most of your study materials will be posted on line, films are available on Netflix for the most part, but much of what will be covered will be exclusively in lectures.

Grades:

A=(93-100)

B=(92-85)

C=(84-75)

D=(74-66)

F=65 and below

Attendance

Absences will reduce your grade. **FOUR ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN AN "F."**

Since in all of the classes we will be watching movies and some of the film clips may not be readily available for you to review outside of class, it is essential that you attend. 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.

Assignments:

One Paper Subject Matter: TBA; Length 6 pages. MLA format. Style: Compare and Contrast

One attendance to a theatrical or artistic event. (we will go over that in class.)

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. Prior to the viewing, I will introduce the film and its significant attributes. 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.

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.....

Tests:

Midterm and Final.

These tests will be based entirely on lectures and films.

The Midterm will be a film that you will analyze for content and substance using terms learned.

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 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 0).

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.)"

Directors, Writers and Actors to be studied:

Barbra Stanwyck

WC Fields

The Marx Brothers

John Ford

Mae West

Orson Welles

Humphrey Bogart

Gary Cooper

Dalton Trumbo

DW Griffith

Cecil B. Demille

Howard Hawks

Frank Capra

Graham Greene

Dashiell Hammett

Alfred Hitchcock

John Huston

Roman Polanski

David Fincher

The Coen Brothers

The Wachowski Brothers

Tom Twyker

Stephen Chow

Quentin Tarantino

Stanley Kubrick

Francois Truffaut

Jean Luc Goddard

Walt Disney

Steven Spielberg

Woody Allen

I encourage all students to email or phone me if there is a problem that you may need assistance with or if you see foresee a scheduling conflict. I will assist you as much as I am able.



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

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.



Allegory of the Cave:
Plato

Is a resident of the cave (a prisoner, as it were) likely to want to make the ascent to the outer world? Why or why not? What does the sun symbolize in the allegory? And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:--Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled sud-

denly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,--what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them,--will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honors and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

Better to be the poor servant of a poor master, and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner? (1)

Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, I said, such a one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said.

And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; (2) and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death. (3)

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world.*Here Plato describes his notion of God in a way that has influenced profoundly Christian theologians, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.....*

I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you.

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

Yes, very natural.

And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavoring to meet the conception of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?

Anything but surprising, he replied.

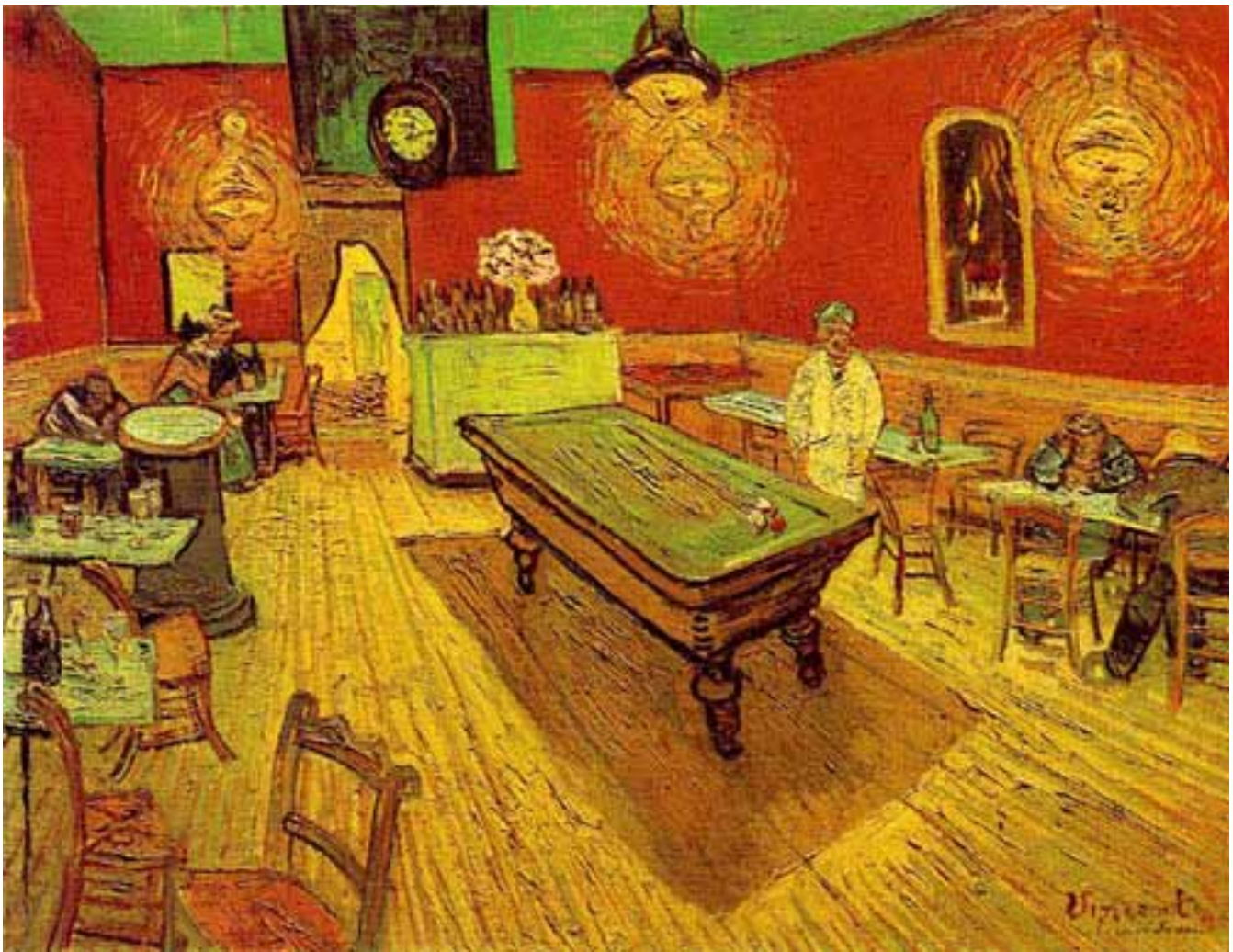
Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.

That, he said, is a very just distinction.

But then, if I am right, certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.

They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

Whereas our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good.



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