

**21L 011 The Film Experience – Fall 2013**  
**Prof. Thorburn**

**Lecture Outlines**

This file assembles the outlines of each lecture session given during the Fall 2013 class.

**NOTE:** The 21L.011 Fall 2013 OCW site combines lecture materials from 2006, 2007, and 2013. These outlines from 2013 reflect the continued refinement of course structure and content, and there will be occasional inconsistencies with the detailed notes from 2006 and eight lecture videos originally recorded in 2007.

**Lecture 1. Introduction**

1. What is Film?
  - Chemistry
  - Novelty
  - Manufactured object
  - Social formation
  
2. Think Away I-Pods
  - The novelty of movement
  - Early films and early audiences
  
3. The Fred Ott Principle
  
4. Three Phases of Media Evolution
  - Imitation
  - Technical Advance
  - Maturity
  
5. "And There Was Charlie"  
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Reference: James Agee, *A Death in the Family* (1957)

**Lecture 2. Keaton**

1. The Fred Ott Principle, continued
  - The myth of technological determinism
  - A Paradox: Capitalism and the Movies
  
2. *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)
  
3. *The Lonedale Operator* (1911)
  - Reference: Tom Gunning, "Systematizing the Electronic Message: Narrative Form, Gender and Modernity in 'The Lonedale Operator'." In *American*

*Cinema's Transitional Era*, ed. Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp. Univ. of California Press, 1994, pp. 15-50.

4. Buster Keaton (1895-1966)
  - Acrobat/Actor
  - Technician/Director
  - Metaphysician/Artist
5. The multiplicity principle:
  - Entertainment vs. Art
6. *The General* (1927)
  - "A culminating text"
  - Structure
  - The Keaton hero: steadfast, muddling
  - The Keaton universe: contingency

### **Lecture 3. Chaplin, part 1**

1. Movies Before Chaplin
2. Enter Chaplin
3. Chaplin's Career
  - The Multiplicity Principle, continued
4. The Tramp as Myth
5. Chaplin's World
  - Elemental themes

### **Lecture 4. Chaplin, part 2**

1. Keaton vs. Chaplin
2. Three Passages
  - *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*
  - *The Gold Rush*
  - *City Lights*
3. *Modern Times* (1936)
  - Context
  - A Culminating Film
  - The Gamin
  - Sound
  - Structure
  - Chaplin's complexity

## **Lecture 5. Film as a global and cultural form; montage & *mise en scene***

1. Film as a Cultural Form
  - Global vs. National Cinema
  - American vs. European Cinema
  - High culture vs. Hollywood
2. Montage vs. *Mise en Scene*
3. Eisenstein and *Potemkin* (1925)
  - Film as instruction, propaganda, moral fable

## **Lecture 6. German film, Murnau**

1. German Film and Expressionism
  - Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (1969)
  - *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1919)
  - *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926)
2. F.W. Murnau (1889-1931)
  - *Nosferatu* (1922)
  - *Sunrise* (1927)
  - *Tabu* (w/ Robert Flaherty, 1931)
3. *The Last Laugh* (1924)
  - The unchained camera
  - Themes: working class tragedy
  - Character: work and personal identity
  - The ending: true or false

## **Lecture 7. The Studio Era**

1. An Industry Emerges
  - The golden age of Hollywood
  - Stars and genres
  - "An aesthetics of connection"
2. Strains of Comedy
  - Anarchic
  - Worldly
  - Screwball
3. Screwball heroine: Barbara Stanwyck
  - *The Lady Eve* (1941)
  - *Ball of Fire* (1942)

## Lecture 8. The Work of Movies, Capra & Hawks

1. The Cultural Work of Movies
  - Entertainment
  - Genre and license
  - Consensus narrative: traditional, dominant and emergent voices
2. Frank Capra (1897-1991) & Howard Hawks (1896-1977)
3. *It Happened One Night* (1934)
  - Production notes
  - Context: the Depression
  - The American male
  - Romance across social class
  - "A marriage of true minds"
  - The ending
4. *His Girl Friday* (1940)
  - Theater into film
  - Counter-plot: against genre
  - Hawks' central scene: quarrelling intimacy
  - Hawks' complexity: laughter and cynicism

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### Howard Hawks (1896—1977)

Screwball comedy:

- *Twentieth Century*, 1934
- *Bringing Up Baby*, 1938
- *His Girl Friday*, 1940
- *Ball of Fire*, 1941

Westerns:

- *Red River*, 1948
- *Rio Bravo*, 1959
- *El Dorado*, 1966
- *Rio Lobo*, 1970

Other genres:

- *The Dawn Patrol*, 1930
- *Scarface*, 1932
- *Sergeant York*, 1941
- *Air Force*, 1943
- *To Have and Have Not*, 1944

### Frank Capra (1897—1991)

- *It Happened One Night*, 1934
- *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, 1936
- *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, 1939
- *Meet John Doe*, 1941
- *It's a Wonderful Life*, 1946
- *State of the Union*, 1948

## Lecture 9. Hitchcock

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980)

1. Hitchcock and "the genius of the system"
2. An anecdote
3. Hitchcock's career
4. Hitchcock the technician
5. Themes
6. The Double Man

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### Hitchcock films: a selection

*The Pleasure Gardens*, 1925

*The Lodger*, 1927

*Blackmail*, 1929

*Murder!*, 1930

*The Man Who Knew Too Much*, 1934

*The 39 Steps*, 1935

*The Lady Vanishes*, 1938

*Rebecca*, 1940

*Suspicion*, 1941

*Shadow of a Doubt*, 1943

*Lifeboat*, 1944

*Rope*, 1948

*Strangers on a Train*, 1951

*Rear Window*, 1954

*Vertigo*, 1958

*North by Northwest*, 1959

*Psycho*, 1960

*The Birds*, 1963

*Marnie*, 1964

*Frenzy*, 1972

*Family Plot*, 1976

## Lecture 10. *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Rear Window*

1. *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943)
  - Context: WWII, H. in exile
  - Against Capra
  - The opening: behind any door or window . . .
  - An American town, an American family
  - Two Charlies: rhyming shots
  - Subplot: murder as diversion
  - The ending: ambiguity
2. *Rear Window* (1954)
  - The opening scene: confinement, voyeurism
  - An essay on seeing
  - An elegant structure: the subplots
  - Class and gender
  - The ending: more ambiguity

## Lecture 11. The Musical Film

1. An American Form
2. Numbers
  - 1927-47: 919 films (48 films each year)
  - 1949-58: 23 films per year
  - 1959-80: 7 films per year
3. Themes
  - Show business: community: the show goes on
  - High culture, popular culture
  - Class or position vs. talent, merit
  - Convention, restraint vs. spontaneity, energy, "the natural"
4. History
  - Revue, Operetta: *Love Me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932)
  - Busby Berkeley & Warner Brothers: *42nd Street* (1933)
  - Astaire, Rogers and RKO: *Top Hat* (1935)
  - MGM and "the integrated musical": *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952), Arthur Freed (1894-1973): The Freed Unit

## **Lecture 12. The Musical Film (continued)**

1. Astaire vs. Kelly
2. *Singin' in the Rain*
  - Self-consciousness: an encyclopedia of musical history
  - Themes: high art vs. popular art, outer vs. inner: appearance vs. reality
  - The place of song and dance
3. *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972)
  - Beyond genre: the end of Hollywood
  - Fosse's career: the inheritor
  - Weimar Germany and America in the late 1960s
  - Style: mise en scene and montage
  - Texture: multiplicity
  - Musical numbers: true integration
  - Themes: innocence, history, the limits of satire

## **Lecture 13. The Western, part 1**

1. Movies as Consensus Narrative
  - Genre as a forum, a discourse space, the "theater of a nation"
2. Historical/Cultural Background
  - The "real" west: 1860-1890
  - Popular culture before film
  - Intellectual culture: The Turner Thesis
3. The Western as Cultural Myth
  - Founding story
  - Dichotomies
  - The divided hero: savior and savage

## **Lecture 14. The Western, part 2**

1. The Western Film
  - A quick history
2. John Ford (1895-1973)
3. *The Searchers* (1956)
  - 1) Damaged hero
  - 2) Setting: Monument Valley

- 3) Plot: founding story, captive's tale
- 4) Structure: seven 'threshold shots'
- 5) A turning point
- 6) The title and the ending: ambiguity

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## THE WESTERN MOVIE

### 1. Silent Film

- 1903 *The Great Train Robbery*
- 1913 *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (D. W. Griffith)
- 1914 *The Virginian* (Cecil B. DeMille)
- 1917 *Straight Shooting* (John Ford)
- 1923 *The Covered Wagon* (James Cruze)
- 1924 *The Iron Horse* (Ford)
- 1925 *Go West* (Keaton)

### 2. Early Sound

- 1929 *In Old Arizona* (Raoul Walsh) [first sound western]

1930s Singing Cowboys, B-westerns

Gene Autry, Roy Rogers

Saturday matinees: Lash LaRue

### 3. The Classical Age of the Western Film

- 1939 *Stagecoach* (John Ford; s: John Wayne)
- 1940 *The Westerner* (Wm Wyler)
- 1941 *Billy The Kid* (David Miller; s: Robert Taylor)
- 1944 *Buffalo Bill* (Wm Wellman; s: Joel McCrea)
- 1946 *My Darling Clementine* (Ford; s: Henry Fonda)
- 1948 *Fort Apache* (Ford; s: Wayne and Fonda)
- 1948 *Red River* (Howard Hawks; s: Wayne, Montgomery Clift)
- 1948 *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (John Huston; s: Humphrey Bogart)

### 4. The 'Adult' Western

- 1950 *The Gunfighter* (Henry King; s: Gregory Peck)
- 1952 *High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann; s: Gary Cooper)
- 1953 *Shane* (George Stevens; s: Alan Ladd)
- 1956 *The Searchers* (Ford; s: Wayne)
- 1957 *3:10 to Yuma* (Delmer Daves)
- 1958 *The Left-Handed Gun* (Arthur Penn; s: Paul Newman)
- 1960 *Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges)
- 1961 *One-Eyed Jacks* (Marlon Brando; s: Brando and Karl Malden)
- 1962 *Lonely Are the Brave* (David Miller; s: Kirk Douglas)
- 1967 *Hombre* (Martin Ritt; s: Newman)
- 1969 *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill; s: Newman and Robt Redford)
- 1969 *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah; s: William Holden)



1969 *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Sergio Leone;  
s: Fonda and Charles Bronson)

### **5. The Anti-Western**

1970 *Soldier Blue* (Ralph Nelson)

1971 *Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn; s: Dustin Hoffman)

1971 *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (Robert Altman)

1976 *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* (Altman)

### **6. Vestiges, Reincarnations**

1985 *Silverado* (Lawrence Kasdan)

1990s:

*Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood)

*Dances with Wolves* (d. and s: Kevin Costner)

*Tombstone* (s: Kurt Russell)

*Wyatt Earp* (Kasdan; s: Costner)

2007:

*3:10 to Yuma* (James Mangold)

*The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert*

*Ford* (Andrew Dominik)

TV:

1989: *Lonesome Dove* (from the Larry McMurtry novel)

2004-06: *Deadwood* (David Milch)

### **John Ford (1895-1973)**

1924 *The Iron Horse*

1928 *Napoleon's Barber* (first Ford talkie)

1935 *The Informer* (4 Oscars)

1939 *Stagecoach*

1939 *Young Mr. Lincoln*

1939 *Drums Along the Mohawk*

1940 *The Grapes of Wrath*

1946 *My Darling Clementine*

1948 *Fort Apache*

1949 *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*

1950 *Rio Grande*

1950 *Wagonmaster*

1956 *The Searchers*

1962 *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*

1964 *Cheyenne Autumn*

1965 *Seven Women*

## Lecture 15. American Film in the 1970s

1. Transformations and subversion
  - Directors
  - Actors
  - Style/Endings
  - Dissenting Genres
2. Social History
  - Vietnam war
  - Assassinations
  - JFK, LBJ, Nixon
  - Watergate
3. Film and Television: A New Consensus Medium
  - Two versions of *MASH*

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### Key Figures of the 1970s

#### Actors

Warren Beatty  
Jack Nicholson  
Elliott Gould  
Dustin Hoffman  
Robert DeNiro  
Julie Christie  
Jane Fonda  
Faye Dunaway

#### Directors

Robert Altman  
Francis F. Coppola, *Godfather* (1972), *Godfather II* (1974)  
Bob Fosse  
Stanley Kubrick, *Clockwork Orange* (1971)  
Alan J. Pakula, *Klute* (1971), *The Parallax View* (1974)  
Sam Peckinpah, *The Wild Bunch* (1969), *Straw Dogs* (1971)  
Roman Polansky, *Chinatown* (1973)  
Martin Scorsese, *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976)

## Lecture 16. American Film in the 1970s, Part II

1. Robert Altman (1925-2006)
  - Career
  - Defining qualities:
    - Moral skepticism
    - Sympathy for the marginal
    - Plot vs. character
    - Fiction vs. "reality"
2. *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971)
  - "Ruin the Sacred Truths"
  - Sound and image: a new realism?
  - Hero/savior-clown or fool
  - Love story: gal from the East
  - Founding myth: Presbyterian Church
  - The ending: slapstick murder as the town is born

## Lecture 17. Renoir and Poetic Realism

1. French film
  - A parallel history
2. Jean Renoir (1894-1979)
3. Poetic Realism
  - Forerunner: Jean Vigo (1905-34)
    - A Propos de Nice* (1930)
    - Zero for Conduct* (1933)
    - L'Atalante* (1934)
  - Key features
  - Andre Bazin (1918-58) on Renoir
4. Two examples
  - Dinner in prison: *Grand Illusion*
  - The ending of *Boudu*
5. Visual style as moral vision

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### Jean Renoir (1894-1979)

- 1926 *Nana* (Zola novel)
- 1928 *The Little Match Girl*
- 1931 *La Chienne*
- 1932 *Boudu Saved from Drowning*

- 1934 *Madame Bovary* (Flaubert novel)
- 1935 *Toni*
- 1937 *Grand Illusion*
- 1939 *Rules of the Game*
  
- 1941 *Swamp Water*
- 1945 *The Southerner*
- 1945 *The Diary of a Chambermaid*
  
- 1950 *The River*

## **Lecture 18. Renoir's *Grand Illusion***

1. Camera
  - Invisible witness: respectful, attentive, restless
2. Actors
  - Von Stroheim: The man you love to hate
  - Gabin: Mad proletarian
3. Themes
  - Prison camp as microcosm
  - Barriers, boundaries
  - Historical transition
4. Renoir's Maturity
  - Character
  - Plot: a war story without battles
  - The title: how many grand illusions?

## **Lecture 19. Italian Neorealism**

1. The Opening of *Bicycle Thieves*
  - The multiplicity principle
2. Historical Context
  - WW II
  - Italian film under Fascism
  - Hollywood film
3. Origins
  - Italian, German, French
4. Key Features
  - Non-professional actors, outdoor camera, mise en scène, documentary flavor, character vs plot
5. Central Figures

- Cesaré Zavattini (1902-77)
  - Luchino Visconti (1906-76)
    - *Obsession* (1942) *The Earth Trembles* (1948)
  - Roberto Rossellini (1906-77)
    - *Open City* (1945)
  - Vittorio De Sica (1902-74)
6. The Neorealist Counter-plot
- The beginning of *Open City*

## Lecture 20. Italian Neorealism, Part II: DeSica and *Bicycle Thieves*

1. Vittorio De Sica (1902-74)
  - 1942 *The Children Are Watching Us*
  - 1946 *Shoeshine*
  - 1948 *Bicycle Thieves*
  - 1950 *Miracle in Milan*
  - 1952 *Umberto D*
  - 1960 *Two Women*
  - 1971 *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*
2. *Bicycle Thieves*
  - Structure: organic form
  - Social themes
  - Character: father and son
  - The title

## Lecture 21. Truffaut, The New Wave, *The 400 Blows*

1. Neo-realisms: Two clips
  - *Umberto-D* (1952)
  - *The 400 Blows*
2. Origins of the *Nouvelle Vague*
  - Vigo, Renoir and Neorealism
  - American studio directors
  - Alexandre Astruc (1923- ); *caméra-stylo*
  - Bazin (1918-58) and *Cahiers du Cinéma*
  - Auteur theory
3. Key films of 1959-60
  - *Hiroshima, mon amour* (Alain Resnais)
  - *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard)
  - *The 400 Blows* (Francois Truffaut)
4. *La Nouvelle Vague*: style and tone
  - mise en scène
  - location sight and sound

- improvisation: plot and dialogue
- jump cuts and elliptical editing
- self-reflexiveness: films about film

5. Francois Truffaut (1932-1984)

- 1959 *The 400 Blows*\*
  - 1960 *Shoot the Piano Player*
  - 1962 *Jules and Jim*
  - 1962 "*Antoine and Colette*"\*
  - 1966 *Fahrenheit 451*
  - 1968 *Stolen Kisses*\*
  - 1970 *The Wild Child*
  - 1970 *Bed and Board*\*
  - 1973 *Day for Night (La Nuit americaine)*
  - 1977 *The Man Who Loved Women*
  - 1979 *Love on the Run*\*
  - 1980 *The Last Metro*
- [\* = films about the Antoine Doinel character]

6. *The 400 Blows*

- The title
- Setting: a Parisian odyssey
- The family romance
- Structure: a "natural" unfolding
- The ending: ambiguity: no catastrophe, no apocalypse

## Lecture 22. Kurosawa and *Rashomon*

Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998) and *Rashomon*

1. The "moment" of *Rashomon*

- Film as an international medium
- Modernist cinema
- Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007)
- Satyajit Ray (1921-92)
- Federico Fellini (1921-93)

2. Japanese Cinema: a note

- Theatrical traditions
- Kenji Mizoguchi (1898-1956)
- Yasujiro Ozu (1903-63)

3. Kurosawa's career

- The Kurosawa-gumi
  - 1950 *Rashomon*
  - 1952 *Ikiru*
  - 1954 *Seven Samurai*
  - 1957 *Throne of Blood*
  - 1961 *Yojimbo*

1980 *Kagamusha*

4. *Rashomon*

- The title and the historical setting
- The "medium:" a miko
- Visual style: dynamic, eclectic: "a real surrealism"
- The drama of the telling
- The ending: should we delete it?

**Lecture 23. Summary Perspectives: Film as Art and Artifact**

1. Film as a cultural form

- Stories and culture
- Culture as a process, always unfinished
- "Golden Lads:" consensus narrative
  - conservative, collaborative, accessible

2. Film as art

- Art as a form of intelligence and competence
- Texture, multiplicity
- An example: *Seven Samurai* --To the village

3. Thanks to all of you

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