FREN/FILM 425: French Film

Spring 2013: 130 ACAD Bldg.
Lectures: Tues-Thurs 12:45 to 2:00 p.m. Viewings: Tues 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Ralph Schoolcraft III
Office: ACAD 230-D
Hours: Tues-Thurs: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
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Course Description: This course on the history of French film focuses on movies not primarily for their entertainment value but for their contributions to cinema as an art form and a means of commentary upon human society. This includes technological developments, industry transformations, and theoretical discourses. An emphasis is placed on films of the last 50 years.

Learning Outcomes:
--Identify different stages of film-making in France
--Recognize the use of cinematographic techniques and their effects
--Apply theoretical concepts gleaned from readings to concrete examples
--Analyze the interplay of word and image to produce thematic content
--Identify France's principal directors, movements, and actors

Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification, or approval of instructor.

Required Text:
Supplementary photocopies distributed by instructor.

Grading Policy:
The final grade is calculated according to the following percentages:
Weekly quizzes . 5%
Written homework . 5%
Class participation . 10%
Group project (original reading of film + classroom debate) . 15%
3 Tests (each worth 15% of total course grade) . 45%
Final examination . 20%
(A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 and below)

Weekly quizzes, each Thursday, will verify that students have watched the films by the relevant class discussion date. Written homework consists of weekly question sheets on the films; responses posted to eLearning. Evaluation of class participation in discussion will not grade students' opinions of the films but, again, seek to verify that students are familiar with the material and can apply the concepts presented in readings and lectures. Group projects will require students to work together to produce an original interpretation of a film; this
interpretation will then be transformed into a critique arguing for the film's success or failure in achieving its artistic project. Groups will then proceed to a classroom debate of opposing positions. A detailed rubric will be distributed during the first week of classes that details how points are awarded for each student based on written and oral contributions. Study guides are provided for each test; the final examination is cumulative.

Absences: Please see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07 for current policy on university-excused absences. For illness- or injury-related absences of fewer than three days, a note from a health care professional confirming date and time of visit will be required in order to count the absence as university-excused; for absences of three days or more, the note must also contain the medical professional’s confirmation that absence from class was necessary (see Rule 7.1.6.1). For university-excused absences not related to illness, please provide a Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement of Absence from Class (available at http://attendance.tamu.edu). No penalty or grading disadvantage may accrue from any University-approved absence; make-up exams and late submission of assignments (or a satisfactory alternative) are permitted for University-excused absences within 30 calendar days from the last day of the absence, in accordance with Student Rule 1.7.3.

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute providing comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, Room B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637). For additional information, visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Academic Integrity: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do." You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor.

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Calendar of Assignments

Week I: Jan. 15 & 17
Tuesday. Introduction to class. Origins of Film-making.
   Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 23-36
Thursday. Viewing early film; discussion.
   Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 36-52.

Week II: Jan. 22 & 24
Tuesday. Presentation of early French avant-garde cinema.
   Viewing: Fernand Léger, Ballet mécanique (1924); René Clair, Entr’acte (1924); Luis Buñuel/Sal. Dali, Un Chien andalou (Andalusian Dog, 1929)
   Reading: photocopies on Léger, Buñuel
Thursday. Discussion.
   Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 53-82.
Week III: Jan. 29 & 31
Tuesday. Presentation of Jean Vigo and 1930s cinema.
*Viewing:* Vigo, *L'Atalante* (1934)
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 97-98; photocopy on *L'Atalante*
Thursday. Discussion.
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 86-88; 92-96.

Week IV: Feb. 5 & 7
Tuesday. Presentation of Jean Renoir.
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 88-90; photocopies on *The Great Illusion.*
Thursday. Discussion.

Week V: Feb. 12 & 14
Tuesday. Test 1
*Viewing:* Marcel Carné, *Le quai des brumes* (Port of Shadows, 1938)
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 82-83
Thursday. Discussion of *Port of Shadows*
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 98-117; 124-42.

Week VI: Feb. 19 & 21
Tuesday. Presentation of “Occupation”-era cinema and Henri-Georges Clouzot
*Viewing:* Clouzot, *Le Corbeau* (The Raven, 1943)
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 118-24; photocopy on Clouzot
Thursday: Discussion of *The Raven*
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 143-53; 157-94.

Week VII: Feb. 26 & 28
Tuesday. Presentation of Jean Cocteau
*Viewing:* Cocteau, *Orphée* (Orpheus, 1950)
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 154-57; photocopy on Cocteau and *Orpheus*
Thursday. Discussion
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 262-68.

Week VIII: March 5 & 7
Tuesday. Presentation of detective movies and Jean-Pierre Melville
*Reading:* Lanzoni, 195-238.

Week IX: March 19 & 21
Tuesday. Presentation of New Wave cinema and Jean-Luc Godard
*Viewing:* Godard, *Bande à part* (Band of Outsiders, 1964)
*Reading:* photocopy on Godard
Thursday. Discussion.
*Reading:* Lanzoni, pp. 239-44.
Week X: March 26 & 28
Tuesday. Test 2
Viewing: Tati, Playtime (1967)
Reading: photocopy on Tati’s Playtime
Thursday. Lecture and discussion.
Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 245-61; 269-348.

Week XI: Apr. 2 & 4
Tuesday. Presentation of France's colonial empire and its cinema
Viewing: Claire Denis, Chocolat (1988)
Thursday. Discussion of Chocolat
Reading: photocopy from Powrie and Reader, French Cinema. A Student’s Guide;
articles on France’s urban suburbs.

Week XII: Apr. 9 & 11
Tuesday. Presentation of Mathieu Kassovitz
Viewing: Kassovitz, La Haine (Hate, 1995)
Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 405-14.
Thursday. Discussion.
Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 349-65; 376-405.

Week XIII: Apr. 16 & 18
Tuesday. Presentation of contemporary popular French cinema
Thursday. Discussion of Les Visiteurs

Week XIV: Apr. 23 & 25
Tuesday. Test 3
Viewing: Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Le Fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain (Amélie, 2001)
Reading: Lanzoni, pp. 365-76; 414-18; articles debating the “message” of Amélie
Thursday. Discussion of Amélie.

Final exam: Wednesday May 8, 8-10 a.m. in ACAD 130.