

University of Calgary
Weekend University

HIST 495
Film and History
Fall 2007

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Office Hours: I will be available to consult with students immediately before and following class in SS113. You may book an appointment to meet at another time.

Course Description: This course looks at American film as an historical artifact and source of social, cultural, and intellectual history. Topics to be examined include: the role of film at decisive moments of historical change; the content and dissemination of political ideologies and social values; film as a source of propaganda; changing attitudes to minority groups; preservation of historical detail.

Texts: The required texts in this course are Steven J. Ross, *Movies and American Society* and Robert Sklar *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of the Movies*.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution: All students are expected to have prepared the assigned readings for class and to participate actively in class discussions.

Article Review	10%	13 October 2007
Research Paper	40%	24 November 2007
Class Participation	10%	
Final Examination	40%	8 December 2007

Article Review: Students are to select one of the articles from Steven J. Ross, *Movies and American Society*, and write a 750-1000 word review. The review should identify and evaluate the thesis or argument the author puts forward.

Research Paper: This course offers students the opportunity to write a research paper using a film or set of films as primary sources and cultural artifacts. A set of topics will be circulated by the instructor. The research paper should address the following questions: how did the film[s] reflect or challenge American culture and society at the time it was made? What impact did the film[s] have on American society and culture? How was the film received? What impact did the film[s] have on the art of film making? Completion of the paper requires both a careful viewing of the film[s] studied and research in the relevant secondary literature. The paper is to be between 2000 and 2500 words in length [9-10 typed, double spaced pages].

All assignments must be completed to pass this course. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5 marks the first day and 2 marks every day thereafter up to a maximum of seven days after which an F grade will be assigned.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it's not. As noted in the *Department of History Guide to Essay Presentation*, plagiarism may take several forms: (a) Failure to cite sources properly may be considered plagiarism. This could include quotations, ideas, and wording used from another source but not acknowledged. (b) Borrowed, purchased, and / or ghostwritten papers are considered plagiarism, as is submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved. (c) Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources is also considered plagiarism, even when notes are used, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works. The use of notes does not justify the sustained presentation of another author's language and ideas as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. A plagiarized paper will automatically be failed. Plagiarism may also result in a failing grade for the entire course and other penalties as noted in *The University of Calgary Calendar*.

Safewalk/Campus Security: 220-5333

HIST 395
Lectures, Films, Readings

Class 1 The Silent Era, 1890s to 1927 [Sept. 15]

Sklar, chapt. 1-8

Ross, chapt. 1-3

The Great Train Robbery

Birth of A Nation

Class 2 The Thirties : Gangster and Horror Films [Sept. 22]

Sklar, chapt. 9-11

Little Ceasar

Dracula

Class 3 Sex, Class and Race in Thirties Cinema [Sept. 29]

Sklar, chapt. 10

Ross, chapt. 4

Tarzan, the Ape Man

It Happened One Night

Class 4 The Cinema of Democracy: The Depression and the Social Conscience Film [Oct. 13]

Sklar, chapt. 12-13

Ross, chapt. 5

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Class 5 Hollywood at War [Oct 20]

Sklar, chapt. 15

Why We Fight: War Comes to America

Class 6 Film Genres of the Forties: Film Noir and the Movie Musical [Oct. 27]

Ross, chapt. 6

The Maltese Falcon

Class 7 The American Western [Nov. 3]

American Cinema: The Western

The Searchers

Class 8 Hollywood, the Cold War and Fifties Science Fiction and Adventure Films [Nov. 17]

Sklar, chapt. 16-17

Ross, chapt. 7-8

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

Class 9 Sixties Film: Auteurs and the Counter Culture [Nov. 24]

Sklar, chapt. 18

Ross, chapt. 9-10

Easy Rider

Class 10 Seventies Cinema: Sex, Sensationalism and the New American Cinema [Dec.
1]

Sklar, chapt. 19-20

Ross, chapt. 11-12

Shaft