Film, Power and American History: History 225g
Spring 2020

Professor Vanessa R. Schwartz
10:00-11:50, M, W
Sections: Friday
THH 301
TAs: Simon Judkins (History, Visual Studies) and Joshua Poorman (History)
Schwartz Office Hours: Monday at noon and by appointment: vschwart@usc.edu
Schwartz Office Location: THH 336
Simon Judkins Office Hours: 1-3 Fridays
Joshua Poorman Office Hours: 2-4 Mondays
TA Office Location: SOS 171

Course Description:
The goal of this class is to consider the history of the twentieth century as created by the existence of the movies and its institutions. This is not a class on American history through the movies. Instead, we will ask about the special role played by America in shaping the history of “the cinematic century.” Hollywood has played a disproportionately large role in the history of the movies, including achieving global influence. This course is the story of how America came to dominate the world in part by capturing hearts and minds through a powerful form - at once art and document. We follow the emergence of Hollywood itself as a cosmopolitan and international center of film production. Hollywood is not nor has it ever been “America.” We begin from the premise that the openness of Hollywood and the mobility (often forced) of foreign-born filmmakers who came to Hollywood made Hollywood into Hollyworld. The class examines the history of the movies and its institutions and practices at the same time that it considers the enormous influence and impact of the movies on shaping the history of the twentieth century. The course suggests that the major social issues of the twentieth century were not only debated in the medium of film but also that film became a major social force since the advent of the movies, functioning as a center of power because of its mass nature.

General Education C: Social Analysis
At a time of rapid social, economic, and cultural transformation, both in the United States and globally, the insights of social analysis take on critical significance. The social sciences seek to explain the causes and consequences of a wide range of complex phenomena, including how individual and collective human action shapes and is shaped by economic organizations, political institutions, and social and cultural settings broadly understood. These phenomena include the role of gender, sexuality, race, class, and other aspects of identity across time and settings in the United States and the world. Courses in this area will introduce students to analytical approaches and methods of social sciences, quantitative and/or qualitative, and how these insights can be brought to bear to better understand our social world.

Class Format: We will meet twice weekly in a lecture format (with lots of materials being screened) and then once a week for discussion of the reading materials, screenings and lectures in section directed by the teaching assistants. Attendance three times a week is mandatory. We will check-in in class via blackboard. All readings and screenings are to be completed by Friday’s discussion. Readings come from books made available for purchase or in the form of articles that are posted on the class Blackboard. Screening materials will be available on reserve in Leavey Library or via our vimeo website: https://vimeo.com/channels/history225g.

Required Readings and Films:
Books for Purchase:

Articles on Blackboard:
- James, David: *Rock and Film* (OUP, 2016), Introduction and Chapter 8 on Hard Days’ Night.
- National Archives. Description of Photographic Unit from National Archives – Experiences in European Theater of Operations.
• Ross, Chapter One from Hollywood, Left and Right (Oxford, 2011).
• Variety on “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?” in Ross, 273-279

Out of Class Film Viewings:

• Curtis, “In the Land of the Headhunters” (https://youtu.be/73u7eugbbu8)
• Charlie Chaplin, “The Great Dictator” (1940) - LVYDVD 786 disc 1; LVYDVD 786 disc 2; (https://usclib.kanopy.com/video/great-dictator)
• Christian Delage, “Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing their Crimes” (2006) - LVYDVD 3728 disc 1; LVYDVD 3728 disc 2
• US Department of Defense, “The Nazi Concentration Camps” (1945) – on the Delage DVD above, also on Amazon or Netflix.
• Walt Disney’s “Fantasia” (1940) - LVYDVD 294; on Disney+
• Todd, Around the World in Eighty Days (1956): LVYDVD 4691 discs 1 and 2
• Richard Lester, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964) - LVYDVD 1026 disc 1; LVYDVD 1026 disc 2; https://usclib.kanopy.com/video/hard-days-night)
• Bonnie and Clyde (1967) LVYDVD6909 disc 1

Video Links are also referred to in the weekly readings section if film is publicly available

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

a) Paper One, 4-5 pages: February 22 in section
b) In-Class Mid-term: Monday, March 9 in class
c) Paper Two: 4-5 pages: Friday April 17 in section
d) Final Exam: Monday, May 11, 8am to 10am

No late papers will be accepted. No missed exams will be accommodated unless there is a true emergency such as a documented death or severe illness.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION
First Paper: 15%
Mid-Term: 15%
Second Paper: 25%
Final: 30%
Participation: 15% (This grade includes attendance and making three post-class comments made on blackboard during the semester (sign-up in first section, as well as for your section participation).

Statement for Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services Program (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me by the third week of classes.
DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number is 213-740-0776. ability@usc.edu.

**Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** all work submitted must be your own. Cutting and pasting from the Internet is an especially common form of plagiarism. The instructor and TA’s will enforce all university regulations in regard to the violation of policies related to academic integrity to the furthest extent. See [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf) for definitions of plagiarism.

**Digital Etiquette Policy:** The following policies have been developed with one thing in mind: the quality of your education. I do not seek to ban technology as such for there are many advantages to having a laptop and ipad and phone in the classroom and even internet access when it is fixed on the learning at hand. We will, for example, use Blackboard to check into lecture.

For the length of a class session you are expected to have no electronic connection to the internet and I urge you to take notes by hand rather than through the computer but I leave that up to students. **Other chores and tasks of life will simply have to wait.**

The classroom is a place where you leave your other worries and commitments behind for a fixed amount of time. When in doubt, please recall the principle that the use of all technology should specifically enhance and relate to the course.

The best studying also happens when you dedicate fixed off-line times. I highly recommend you do that at set times during the week. There are applications dedicated to this. For example: [http://anti-social.cc](http://anti-social.cc) or [https://macfreedom.com](https://macfreedom.com)

Phones: Please silence all phones or turn them off entirely. Do not put them on vibrate.

Laptops: Do not, during class: IM, look at Facebook, shop at Amazon or anywhere else, follow a game, respond to email. These behaviors distract you and those around you. Although multi-tasking is a skill, here we will work instead on lessons in focus and concentration.

**Expectations regarding interaction with TA’s and Instructor:** If you email one of us you should expect a reply within 24 hours, Monday to Friday and within 48 hours on the week-end unless you receive an email explaining that we are unable to reply as quickly as usual due to travel or other reasons. Each of us has regular office hours and can also see you by scheduled appointment in our offices or via electronic video communication if the instructor determines that is most desirable.

**Schedule of Lectures, Readings, Screenings and Discussions**

*Week One: Before the Movies Begin*

**Monday, January 13:** Introduction: Mass Culture and Shaping America’s Global Power in the 20th Century

**Wednesday, January 15:** Modern Life Before Film: Mobility, Machines and Mechanical Reproducibility

Read:
• Charney and Schwartz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*: Introduction, pp. 1-12; Singer, pp. 72-99; Rappaport, pp. 130-155.
• David Bordwell on Doing Film History: [http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/doing.php](http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/doing.php) (read up to A Case Study)

**Friday, January 17:** Discuss Readings

**Week Two: The Birth of Cinema: Popular Realism**

**Monday, January 20:** No Class: MLK Day

**Wednesday, January 22:** The Public Taste for Reality

Read:

- Charney and Schwartz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*: Schwartz, pp. 297-319; and Sandberg, 320-361
- Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, pp. 3-32

**Friday, January 24:** Discussion

**Week Three: The Birth of Cinema: Mass Entertainment vs. Information**

**Monday, January 27:** The Movies Begin:
In-Class Screenings: Lumière Brothers, Méliès Films, Zecca Film

**Wednesday, January 29:** Nickel Madness and New forms of Story-Telling
Screen in Class: “Life of a Fireman”

Read:


**Friday, January 31:** Discussion

**Week Four: Social Problems, Social Significance**

**Monday, February 3:** The Movies for the Common Good

**Wednesday, February 5:** Americans in the Making


Read:

- Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, pp. 48-64
- "Whissel, Regulating Mobility." in Camera Obscura, 17:1
- [http://wn.com/tcm%27s_race_hollywood_latino_images_in_film_ramona_1910](http://wn.com/tcm%27s_race_hollywood_latino_images_in_film_ramona_1910)

**Friday, February 7:** Discussion

**Week Five: Writing History with Lightening**

**Monday, February 10:** D.W. Griffith and the Birth of a Nation

**Wednesday, February 12:** In class Screenings: From D.W. Griffith, “Father of Film” and clips from “Birth of a Nation” and “Intolerance” (Schwartz out of town)

Read:


**Friday, February 14:** Discussion

**Week Six: History with Lightening II**

**Monday, February 17:** No Class, President’s Day

**Watch Before Class on Monday:** Great War on line: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRtdSoeYQYk&list=PL3H6z037pboEHxyHECLD5881OH_FvPtF](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRtdSoeYQYk&list=PL3H6z037pboEHxyHECLD5881OH_FvPtF), at least EPISODES ONE and TWO...

**Wednesday, February 19:** WWI and film (Schwartz out of town)

Screen in Class:
Chaplin: “Shoulder Arms” Selections from Gance, “J’ accuse” Selections from “The Battle of the Somme” Selections from “They Shall Not Grow Old”


**Friday, February 22:** First paper due in section
Week Seven: The Rise of Hollywood

Monday, February 24: Going West! Hooray for Hollywood

Wednesday, February 26: Chaplin and the Power of Stars, Part One

Read:
- Sklar, 67-103, 141-157
- McDonald, The Star System, pp.1-55

Friday, February 28: Discussion

Week Eight: The Extent of Star Power

Monday, March 2: Part Two Chaplin and Politics: Taking on the Dictator

Wednesday, March 4: What is Documentary? (Schwartz out of town)

Watch:
- Charlie Chaplin, “The Great Dictator” (1940)

Read:
- Sklar, Movie-Made America, pp. 104-120
- *Ross, Chapter One from Hollywood, Left and Right

Friday, March 6: Discussion of Chaplin

Week Nine: Mid-term Exam and Documenting Social Problems

Monday, March 9: Mid-Term Exam

Wednesday, March 11: Ethnography and Documentary: where drama and description collide (again)

Watch:
- Curtis, "In the Land of the Headhunters" (1914) stream on Amazon Prime: https://www.amazon.com/Land-HeadHunters-Stanley-Hunt/dp/B016887802 see also: https://curtisfilm.rutgers.edu/film/film-synopsis-mainmenu-33

Read:
- Sklar, Movie-Made America, pp. 175-194 and pp. 215-246
- *Glass and Evans, “Consuming the Head Hunters: A Century of Film Reception,” in Return to the Land of the Head Hunters, 146-166.
• *Evans, “Indian Movies and the Vernacular of Modernism,” in Return to the Land of the Head Hunters, 190-211.

**Friday, March 13:** Discussion

**March 14-22:** Spring Break

**Week Ten: World at War**

**Monday, March 23:** Contributing to the War Effort
Clips from “From D-Day to Berlin” “Saving Private Ryan” “Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips” and “Private Snafu”

**Wednesday, March 25:** Filming Atrocity and Its Aftermath
In-Class Screening of “This is Your Life: Hannah Bloch Kohner”


Read:
• *Description of Photographic Unit from National Archives
• Sklar, Movie-Made America , 249-269

**Friday, March 27:** Discussion

**Week Eleven: Where High Meets Low: Film Internationalism I**

**Monday, March 30:** Disney... and Europe

**Wednesday, April 1:** Disney Screenings: “The Old Mill” and Selections from Fantasia

Read:
• Sklar, Movie-Made America, pp. 269-286
• *From Robin Allan, Walt Disney and Europe, p. 91-174

**Friday, April 3:** Discussion

**Week Twelve: Cosmopolitanism and Global Film**

**Monday, April 6:** Frenchness and American Film

**Wednesday, April 8: The Scale of the World: Widescreen**
Screen in class clips from “Lawrence of Arabia” “Ben Hur” “The Ten Commandments” and “The Sound of Music”
Read:
- Schwartz, *It's So French!* Ch. 1, 3 and 4

Watch:

**Friday, April 10:** Discussion

*Week Thirteen: Youth, TV and the Movies*

**Monday, April 13:** The Battle for the Nation’s Youth: TV, Disneyland and Media Integration

**Wednesday, April 15:** The Rock and Roll Movie

***Watch:***
- “Richard Lester, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964) before class ([https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3xa5m9](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3xa5m9))

Read:
- McDonald, *The Star System*, pp. 55-113
- *David James on Hard Days’ Night*

**Friday, April 17:** Discussion

*Second Paper Due in Class on Friday, April 17*

*Week Fourteen: New Waves*

**Monday, April 20:** America Re-Makes French Films

**Wednesday, April 22:** The New Hollywood

Watch:
- “Bonnie and Clyde”

Read:

**Friday, April 25:** Discussion

*Week Fifteen: Instant History: Seeing the Past from All the Angles*

**Monday, April 27:** Social Turmoil and Media Matters
• Clip reel in class (Civil Rights and Feminism) on Blackboard Review of “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” and “Unmarried Woman” Info Guide

**Wednesday, April 29**: Liveness and Surveillance: Watching the President Die and O.J.’s Wild Ride

Read:
• *Air & Space* magazine: [https://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/zoom-shot-57396049/?all](https://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/zoom-shot-57396049/?all)

Watch:

**Friday, May 1**: Discussion

**Final Exam: Monday, May 11, 8 am to 10 am**