



A Trip to the Moon (1902)



Princess Nicotine (1909)

ENG/COM 364: **History of Film to 1940**

T/Th 12:50-2:40

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Film Studies at NC State: NC State offers a Film Minor (15 hours), a Film Major (IDS Art Studies--LRT-F, 30 hours), and an English major with a film concentration (English LFM). For more information visit: www.ncsu.edu/chass/film, and feel free to ask me any questions.

Required Reading: Readings for this course are available on “e-reserve”: <https://reserves.lib.ncsu.edu/> which you can log on to under “my course reserves.” Please bring these readings with your notations to class.

Course Description/Objectives/Outcomes:

This course counts for the GEP in Visual and Performing Arts & the Global Knowledge co-requisite.

After taking this course students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and explain the importance of films produced both inside and outside the United States from the 1890s to 1940.
- 2) Compare and contrast film technology, form, style, genre, and industry practices prior to 1940 through analysis of a variety of national cinemas, including French, German, British, Italian, Soviet, Japanese, and American.
- 3) Explain aesthetic, cultural, and historical dimensions of film history prior to 1940.
- 4) Interpret and make critical judgments about the film history prior to 1940 through an analysis of structure, form, and style of specific films.
- 5) Evaluate films produced prior to 1940 based upon techniques and standards appropriate to the discipline of film studies.

Course Requirements:

Screenings/Attendance: Regular course attendance is required. Please turn *off* all cell phones prior to the start of class and consider this your two-hour vacation from the relentlessness of modern communication. *Please do not use laptops during our time together except to consult pdfs during our discussion of the class readings if you prefer not to print out the readings.*

If you miss a class, ask another student for notes and find out if you missed any new assignments. You

are responsible for making up any missed screenings on your own time. D.H. Hill library has most of the films we'll be viewing this semester, as does the film studies lab. For the early part of the semester see the DVD series *The Movies Begin* (PN1995.75 .M6), *More Treasures from American Film Archives* (PN1993.5.U6M6556), *Edison* (PN 1993.5 U6 E35), and *D.W. Griffith* (PN1998 A3G735).

In-class quizzes and exercises cannot be made up without appropriate documentation. Documented emergencies will receive special consideration if work can be made up in a *timely* fashion (please notify me within 48 hours). Excessive absences will have an adverse effect upon your grade. After missing four classes (the equivalent of two weeks) during the semester, each additional unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by a third of a grade (if you earn a "B" in the course but miss 6 days, you will receive a "C+" as your final grade).

Assignments

Your grade in this course will be based upon:

- 1) Two examinations. These exams cannot be made up.
- 2) A Thomas Edison project with a creative and a written component. I accept late assignments; they drop 5 points (out of 100) per calendar day that they are late. You are welcome and encouraged to discuss this assignment with me in advance via email or in person.
- 3) Regular unannounced quizzes (usually at the start of class), assignments, and in-class exercises, which cannot be made up without documentation.

Advice for Beginning Film Historians: I encourage you to be an active spectator and student: write down your ideas during (get a pen light) and after the screenings and readings; make connections between class discussions and what you are watching and reading; jot down questions you might want to ask in class; have conversations with your classmates about what we are studying; watch relevant films that we aren't studying in class to enrich the breadth of your knowledge; drop me an email or come by my office if you have questions or ideas you didn't get to express in class; or, even better, jump in when there's the opportunity to discuss things in class. *Without thorough notes, it will be easy to forget the many films we will screen over the course of the semester.*

Grades:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Quizzes/Take-Home or In-Class Work: 25%

Edison Assignment: 25% [Creative component, 15%; Written component, 10%]

Midterm: 25%

Final: 25%

All assignments will be graded on a point system. Consistent active participation in class discussion will help your overall performance and will positively influence borderline grades. You may review your current grade status at the Moodle site at any point during the semester.

History of Film to 1940



The Kiss (1896)

Something Good—Negro Kiss (1898)

Introduction to Film History

Th Aug 23 Screening: Edison Co.: *Sandow (The Strong Man)* (1894); *Barber Shop* (1893); *Annabelle Butterfly Dance* (1894); *Corbett and Courtney Before the Kinetograph* (1894)

The Invention of Cinema: USA, France, England

Tu Aug 28 Reading: Maxim Gorky, “Last Night I Was in a Kingdom of Shadows”
Screening: Edison Co.: *Cockfight* (1894); *Annie Oakley* (1894); *The Kiss* (1896);
Interrupted Lovers (1896); *Going to the Fire* (1896)
Lumière Brothers (1895-1897): *Leaving the Factory*; *The Baby’s Meal*; *The Sprinkler Sprinkled*; *Arrival of a Train*; *Niagara Falls*; *Swimming in the Sea*; *Promenade of Ostriches*; *Childish Quarrel*; *Photograph*; *Transformation by Hats*
Birt Acres: *Rough Sea at Dover* (1895)
Actualities: *President McKinley at Home* (1896)

Thurs Aug 30 Reading: Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions”
Screening: William Selig: *Something Good—Negro Kiss* (1898)
R.W. Paul: *The Countryman & the Cinematograph* (1901); *A Chess Dispute* (1903); *Extraordinary Cab Accident* (1903)
George Albert Smith: *The Kiss in the Tunnel* (1899); *As Seen Through a Telescope* (1900); *Mary Jane’s Mishap* (1903)
Bamforth & Co.: *The Kiss in the Tunnel* (1899); *Ladies’ Skirts Nailed to a Fence* (ca. 1900)
James Williamson: *The Big Swallow* (1901)
Cecil Hepworth: *How It Feels to Be Run Over* (1900); *Explosion of a Motor Car* (1900)
Pathé: *Par le Trou De Serrue* (1901); *Dream and Reality* (1901)

The Building Blocks of Cinematic Storytelling

Tues Sept 4 Reading: Barry Salt, “Film Form 1900-1906”
Screening: James Williamson: *Fire* (1901)
Georges Méliès: *A Trip to the Moon* (1902)
Sheffield: *Daring Daylight Burglary* (1903)
Edison/Porter: *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)

Thurs Sept 6 Case Study: Thomas Edison & Co.
Screening: *Mr. Edison at Work in His Chemical Laboratory* (1897)
Jack and the Beanstalk (1902)
The Gay Shoe Clerk (1903)
Dream of a Rarebit Fiend (1906)
The "Teddy" Bears (1907)

Narrative Cinema and Nontheatrical Film Variations (1906-1909)

Tues Sept 11 Reading: "Some Tricks of the Moving Picture Maker" (1909)
"House Fly Actors Make Their Debut" (1910)
Screening: *San Francisco Earthquake: Aftermath* (US, 1906)
Troubles of a Grass Widower, Max Linder (France, 1908)
Nero, or the Fall of Rome, Arturo Ambrosio (Italy, 1909)
Princess Nicotine; Or, The Smoke Fairy (US, 1909)
The Acrobatic Fly, Charles Urban Co. (England, 1910)
The Fly Pest (England, 1910)

Thurs Sept 13 Case Study: Alice Guy Blaché
Reading: "Alice Guy Blaché: A Dominant Figure in Motion Pictures" (1912)
Alice Guy Blaché, "Woman's Place in Photoplay Production" (1914)
Mark Garrett Cooper, "Preface," *Universal Women*
Screening: *Making an American Citizen* (US, 1912)
Falling Leaves (US, 1912)
Matrimony's Speed Limit (US, 1913)
Edison Film Assignment Due (Part I) due to Google Drive by 5:00 p.m.

Tues Sept 18 View Before Class: *The Temple of Moloch* (1914), Thomas Edison Co.
http://archive.org/details/temple_of_moloch
Reading: Miriam Posner, "Communicating Disease"
"Lessons from Lyman Howe" and "Moral Teaching by Films" (1911)
Screening: *How Men Propose*, Lois Weber (1913)
The Vagabond (1916), Charlie Chaplin

Thurs Sept 20 Case Study: D.W. Griffith
Reading: D.W. Griffith, "Ideals vs. Dollars" (1919)
Screening: *The Girl and Her Trust* (1912)
The Musketeers of Pig Alley (1912)
The Birth of a Nation (1915) (excerpts)
Edison Written Component (Part II) due to Moodle Site by 5:00 p.m.

Tues Sept 25 Screening: *Within Our Gates* (1919), Oscar Micheaux

Thurs Sept 27 Reading: Donald Bogle, "Black Beginnings."

Tues Oct 2 **Midterm Examination**

Thurs Oct 4 **Class Cancelled—Fall Break**

American Film in the 1920s

- Tues Oct 9 A Reading: Jennifer Peterson, "Glimpses of Animal Life"
Screening: Rev. Solomon Sir Jones Home Movies (1924-1928)
 One Week (1920), Buster Keaton & Edward Cline
 Wildlife on the Deserts of America's Great Southwest (192*)
 Struggle for Existence (1925), Bray Co.
- Thurs Oct 11 Screening: *It* (1927), Clarence Badger
- Tues Oct 16 Reading: "She Wants to Succeed," *Motion Picture Classic* (June 1926)
 "Interview with Clara Bow," *Motion Picture* (November 1928)
 "That Awful 'IT'," *Photoplay* (July 1930)
Screening: *The Life and Death of a Hollywood Extra* (1928), Vorkapich & Florey

Weds Oct 17 6:00-7:00pm Edison Project Premiere at Hunt Library Immersion Theater!!!!!!

French Film in the 1920s: The Avant-Garde

- Thurs Oct 18 Reading: André Breton, "The Surrealist Manifesto" (1924)
Screening: *Onesime, Clock Maker*, Jean Durand/Ernst Bourborn (France, 1912)
 Entr'acte (1924), Rene Clair
 Anemic Cinema (1926), Marcel Duchamp
 Un Chien Andalou (1929), Luis Buñuel/Salvador Dali

Soviet Film in the 1920s: Montage

- Tues Oct 23 Screening: *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Sergei Eisenstein
Clip: *Strike* (1925), Sergei Eisenstein
- Thurs Oct 25 Reading: Sergei Eisenstein, "Methods of Montage"
Clips: *Mother* (1926), Vsevolod Pudovkin
 Man With a Movie Camera (1929), Dziga Vertov

German Film in the 1920s: Expressionism

- Tues Oct 30 *Nosferatu* (1922), F.W. Murnau
- Thurs Nov 1 Reading: Enno Patalas, "On the Way to Nosferatu"
Clips: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Robert Wiene
 Metropolis (1927), Fritz Lang

Film (Mostly) in the 1930s: Sound & Color

- Tues Nov 6 Reading: Rick Altman & Richard Abel, "Introduction"
 Stephen Bottomore, "An International Survey of Sound Effects..."
Clips: *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894/5)
 Cyrano de Bergerac (1900)
 The Jazz Singer (1927), Alan Crosland
 Sunrise (1927), F.W. Murnau
 Applause (1929), Rouben Mamoulian
- Thurs Nov 8 Screening: *M* (1931), Fritz Lang
- Tues Nov 13 Clip: *Modern Times* (1936), Charlie Chaplin

- Thurs Nov 15 Screening: *Hitori musuko (The Only Son)* (1936), Yasujiro Ozu
- Tues Nov 20 Reading: Donald Richie, “Yasujiro Ozu: The Syntax of His Films”
- Thurs Nov 22 **Class Cancelled—Thanksgiving Break**
- Tues Nov 27 Reading: Kristin Thompson, “Implications of the Cell Animation Technique”
- Screening: *The Talion Punishment* (1906), Pathé
Plane Crazy (1928), Disney
Flowers and Trees (1932), Disney
I Love to Singa (1936), Tex Avery/Warner Bros.
Ferdinand the Bull (1938), Disney
A Wild Hare (1940), Tex Avery/Warner Bros.
- Thurs Nov 29 Screening: *The Wizard Of Oz* (1939), Victor Fleming
- Tues Dec 4 Reading: Douglas Churchill, “Hollywood Says Oz” (Oct. 30, 1938)
 Mervyn LeRoy, “Director LeRoy Explores a Myth” (Aug. 13, 1939)
 Frank Nugent, Review of *The Wizard of Oz* (Aug. 18, 1939)
- Thurs Dec 6 Final Exam Discussion
 Reading: Mariana Johnson, “Schools Out”
 Screening: *Zéro de conduite (Zero for Conduct)* (1933), Jean Vigo
- Tues Dec 18 **FINAL EXAMINATION, 1-4pm, Caldwell G107**