Alfred Hitchcock and Howard Hawks

ENG 492A / IDS 496A
Spring 2009
10:15-12:05 Tues./Thurs.

Dr. Devin Orgeron
Office Hours: Tuesday: 9:00-10:00 / 12:15-1:00
Thursday: 9:00-10:00 / 12:15-1:00
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Office: Tompkins 202A

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Required Texts:
- Electronic Reserve Materials (as indicated on syllabus) – http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/

FILM STUDIES AT NCSU: Yes, there is a film major at NCSU...even a minor. Plus, we offer a vast array of exciting courses on individual filmmakers, popular genres, major international cinematic movements, film history, screenwriting and production. If you are interested in pursuing the major or minor, please contact the Film Studies Program chair (me) at: devin_orgeron@ncsu.edu, or go to www.ncsu.edu/chass/film for more information.

Course Description: Though this course seeks to investigate the individual cinemas of its focus directors, it is also concerned with the intersections between them and with issues of cinematic authorship more generally. Hitchcock and Hawks each had an incalculable influence on the critics and filmmakers of the French New Wave, the auteurists who referred to themselves and were referred to in the press as the “Hitchcocko-hawksiens.” But more critical than our ability to identify a set of formal and thematic characteristics that mark each director’s output will be our investigation of each filmmaker’s navigation of the Hollywood studio system. Students will write critical essays on selected films by both directors and take a cumulative final examination.

Course Requirements:

Screenings: You are required to be present for all screenings. If you have a documented emergency and must skip a screening, you are responsible for viewing the film(s) screened on your own time prior to class discussion.

Reading: You are required to complete all reading for each class session. Read carefully and closely, making comments in the margins of the text and taking notes in order to help your oral responses in class and prepare you for the papers and final examination.

Class Discussion/Oral Participation: Discussions will revolve around the materials we’ve seen and read so always bring the text being covered to class (even e-reserve materials) along with the notes that you have taken during or after the screenings. I frequently call on students to respond to questions or to provide topics for discussion, so be ready to participate on a daily basis. You should feel free to express your opinions and ideas, but also be prepared to draw upon supporting evidence from the films and essays.

While I do not officially quantify oral participation in determining your grade, participation influences borderline grades. An avid participant with a high “B” (mathematically) will often receive an “A” in the course, while someone who does not participate regularly with a borderline “B”/“C” will receive a “C” in the course. Students who participate usually receive the highest grades in the course, largely because they use each class session to test their own ideas.
Administrative: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations please contact me as soon as possible. In order to take advantage of these accommodations, students must register with Disability Services at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. If you will be participating in a sport or other University sponsored event this semester you should provide me with documentation so that we can make arrangements for you to make up for any missed class sessions.

Written Work: There are two formal papers in this course, both about 8 pages. The due dates for both papers are noted on your syllabus. You are encouraged to discuss paper topics or any other assignment with me in advance via email or during my office hours. This is one of the best ways to avoid writing an inappropriate paper. Proofreading and revision are essential to good writing and getting another person to read your work often reveals problems that you might miss. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Late papers drop a grade per class day that they are late.

Final Examination: This class also includes a final exam that will be cumulative. There are no make-up exams. You are responsible for all material covered in the readings, screenings, lectures, and discussions.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes plagiarism, cheating on assignments or exams, turning in work that has been written (partially or entirely) by someone else, failing to appropriately document sources, fabricating information or citations, turning in work that has been previously submitted for another course, forging documents (including attendance), or helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. In addition to being referred to the Office of Student Conduct and having to participate in that office’s Academic Integrity Program, any student who violates the Code of Student Conduct—whether in a formal paper, an informal writing assignment, an exam, etc.—will receive a failing grade in the course and be placed on Academic Integrity Probation. Except for the most basic IMDB information, your internet research should be limited to the resources available through the library and your use of these materials must be properly cited. Please see http://www.ncsu.edu/student_affairs/osc/Alpage/acaintegrity.html for an explanation of academic integrity and of the consequences involved in violating it. According to University guidelines, it is your responsibility to know the rules.

Attendance: Attendance is required. If you miss a class, please ask another student for class notes and find out if you missed any assignments. More than four absences will result in the lowering of your grade by 1/3 per additional absence (an “A” student with six absences will receive a “B+” for the course).

Film Lab: If you do miss a screening, or for a convenient way to view extra credit films (see below), please visit the film lab (Tompkins G116). Terry Hobgood is our assistant and you will need to arrange a time with him (515-9420 / tahobgoo@ncsu.edu). Terry is in the lab Monday 9-1, Wednesday 4-8, and Thursday 1-5.

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Grades:
Your final grade will be determined as follows:

20% Quizzes/In-Class Writing/Homework
20% Paper #1
30% Final Paper
30% Final

EXTRA CREDIT: During the term, you are encouraged to view Hitchcock’s and Hawks’ other films. You may earn up to 5 pts. each towards your homework/quiz grade by submitting a two-page write-up (you may do a total of two of these of the course of the term). In about two pages, briefly analyze the film (identify, describe, and interpret a scene or two)…What makes this a Hawks/Hitchcock film? What Hawksian/Hitchcockian icons are present (use your scenes as evidence)? Some recommended films (available in the media library, Netflix, or your local rental establishment):

The Lady Vanishes (1938) 97 min. To Have and Have Not (1944) 100 min.
Rope (1948) 80 min. Red River (1948) 133 min.
North by Northwest (1959) 131 min. I Was a Male War Bride (1949) 105 min.
You may, of course, select others...but please...NO OUTSIDE RESEARCH (electronic or otherwise)!!! I am only interested in your ideas and don’t want them muddied by what others have written. Also, it would be a real shame to face charges of plagiarism for a 5 point extra credit assignment, but it could happen!

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Note: This syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for all changes announced in class. If you miss some or all of a class session, contact a classmate about changes to the syllabus.

Always read the assigned text for the class session on which the assignment appears.

**Th. 1/8**

**INTRODUCTION:** Cinematic Authorship and the History of Film Criticism

**PART I. – Alfred Hitchcock: Suspense and Voyeurism (Reading from *Hitchcock* by Truffaut except ER materials)**

**Suspense and How to Build it: The Architecture of Hitchcockian Narrative**

**Tu. 1/13**

Screening: *The 39 Steps* (1935) 86 minutes

Reading: “Alexandre Astruc, The Birth of a New Avant Garde: La-Camera Stylo” (ER)

**Th. 1/15**

Reading: Preface, Introduction, & Ch 4 + Ch. 3 (pgs. 72-73) “What is suspense?” + Ch. 6 (pgs. 137-140) “What’s a MacGuffin?,” etc.

**Tu. 1/20**

Screening: *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) 108 minutes

**Th. 1/22**

Reading: Ch. 7

Andrew Sarris, “Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962” (ER)

**Here’s Looking at You, Hitch: Visual Obsessions and Gender Dynamics**

**Tu. 1/27**

Screening: *Rear Window* (1954) 112 minutes

**Th. 1/29**

Reading: Ch. 11

Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (ER)

**Tu. 2/3**

Screening: *Vertigo* (1958) 128 minutes

**Th. 2/5**

Reading: Ch. 12

Robin Wood, “Male Desire, Male Anxiety: The Essential Hitchcock” (ER)

**Externalizing the Human Psyche: The Structure of Violent Metaphor**

**Tu. 2/10**

Screening: *Psycho* (1960) 109 minutes

**Th. 2/12**

Reading: Ch. 13

Robin Wood, “Psycho” (ER)

**Tu. 2/17**

Screening: *The Birds* (1963) 119 minutes

**Th. 2/19**

Reading: Ch. 14 + Ch. 15 (pgs. 313-321)

**Tu. 2/24**

Screening: *Frenzy* (1972) 116 minutes

**Th. 2/26**

Reading: Ch. 16

Peter Wollen, “The Auteur Theory” (ER)

**PAPER #1 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
Tu. 3/3 – Th. 3/5 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

PART II. – Howard Hawks: Gender and Genre (Reading from Howard Hawks by Wood, except ER materials)

Testing The Auteur Theory: Genre and Studio Hopping
Tu. 3/10 Screening: Bringing up Baby (1938) 102 min.

Th. 3/12 Screening: Excerpts from Scarface (1932) & To Have and Have Not (1944)

Hawksian Morality and the Male Bond
Tu. 3/17 Screening: Only Angels Have Wings (1939) 121 min.

Th. 3/19 Reading: Ch. 2: “Self-Respect and Responsibility” & Ch. 5: “Male Relationships”

Tu. 3/24 Screening: The Thing from Another World (1951) 87 min.

Th. 3/26 Reading: Ch. 4: “The Group”

The Hawksian Love Duel
Tu. 3/31 Screening: His Girl Friday (1940) 92 min.

Th. 4/2 Reading: With Joseph McBride, “The Hawksian Woman” (ER)
Naomi Wise, “The Hawksian Woman” (ER)
Leigh Brackett, “A Comment on ‘The Hawksian Woman’” (ER)

Tu. 4/7 Screening: The Big Sleep (1946) 114 min.

Th. 4/9 Reading: Appendix: “Failures and Marginal Works”
Bruce Kawin, “Hawks and Faulkner” (ER)

Howard Hawks and Post-War Gender Politics
Tu. 4/14 Screening: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) 91 min.

Th. 4/16 Reading: Laura Mulvey “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes: Anita Loos/Howard Hawks/Marilyn Monroe.” (ER)
PAPER # 2 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Tu. 4/21 Screening: Rio Bravo (1959) 141 min.

Th. 4/23 Reading: With Joseph McBride, “The Western” (ER)

Final Examination: Thursday, April 30 – 8-11am
   ...No alternate days, no make ups...
   Bring an examination booklet, a pen