



ENG 585: Studio Era Hollywood
Spring 2004
Thursday 6:00-10:00, Caldwell G107

Dr. Marsha Orgeron

Email: marsha_orgeron@ncsu.edu

Office Hours: Tu/Th 9:30-10:00; Th 2:00-6:00; please make an appointment whenever possible

Office: Tompkins 287

Office Phone: (919) 515-4178

Course Description and Expectations:

This course will explore the economics, politics, and aesthetics of the Hollywood Studio System. We will study the “major” and “minor” studios that thrived (and struggled) during the era, including representative producers; directors; stars; make-up, costume, and set designers; and, of course, the movies themselves. Students will leave the course with an understanding of the business and politics of Hollywood during this era, especially the industry’s capacity for producing publicity and feeding its star-hungry public. Time will also be devoted to those filmmakers who managed to work outside of the powerful studio system. Regular course attendance and participation is required. Please bring relevant readings to each class session. Assignments will include an archival fan magazine project with an in-class presentation and a final research paper.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade in the course. Please see http://www.ncsu.edu/student_affairs/osc/AIpage/acaintegrity.html for an explanation of academic integrity and of the consequences for violating it.

Grades:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Fan Magazine Archive Assignment/Presentation: 25%

Final Research Paper (around fifteen pages): 50%

Final Exam: 25%

Outside of Class:

One of the perks of studying film is the extra-curricular exploration you can do in theaters, on cable, at the library, or through rental. This may also be a way for you to stumble into a paper idea. This semester there are two film series you should consider attending. One will be taking place here at Witherspoon theater, <http://www.ncsu.edu/cinema/>, with screenings of three Bette Davis films: *Jezebel* on February 15, *All About Eve* on February 22, and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* on February 29. All films start at 7:00 p.m. and are free. The second is at the NC Museum of Art, <http://ncartmuseum.org/events/lecturesandevents/films.shtml>. Films include *Roman Holiday* on February 14, *Bringing Up Baby* on February 20, *Adam’s Rib* on February 28, *Road to Morocco* on March 5, *The Cat and the Canary* on March 6, *The Patsy* on March 13, and *Two Seconds* on March 20. Films start at 7:30 and are \$3.50 for students/NCMA members, \$5 for the general public.

Texts:

Schatz, Thomas. *The Genius of the System*. Henry Holt & Co. (required)
Doherty, Tom. *Pre-Code Hollywood*. Columbia. (optional; also on e-reserve)

The following readings will be available on "e-reserve": <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/rbr/> under Eng585.
Please print out all articles and bring them to class on the days we will be discussing them.

- Allen, Robert. "The Role of the Star in Film History." Film Theory and Criticism. Eds. Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford, 1999. 5th ed. 547-561.
- Black, Gregory. "Hollywood Censored: The Production Code Administration and the Hollywood Film Industry, 1930-1940." Movies and American Society. Ed. Steven Ross. Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2002. 99-127.
- Berry, Sarah. "Consumer Fashion and Class." Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 1-46.
- Buscombe, Edward. "Notes on Columbia Pictures Corporation 1926-1941." The Studio System. Ed. Janet Staiger. New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1994. 17-36.
- Butler, Jeremy. "The Star System and Hollywood." American Cinema and Hollywood: Critical Approaches. Eds. John Hill & Pamela Church Gibson. New York: Oxford, 2000. 116-127.
- Davis, Ronald. "Design, Hairstyling, and Makeup." The Glamour Factory: Inside Hollywood's Big Studio System. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1993. 205-231.
- Doherty, Thomas. "Criminal Codes." Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934. New York: Columbia, 1999. 137-170.
- . "On the Cusp of Classical Hollywood Cinema." 1-20.
- . "The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930"; "Applications"; "Amendments." 347-367.
- Flynn, Charles & Todd McCarthy. "The Economic Imperative: Why Was The B Movie Necessary?" Kings of the Bs. Eds. Todd McCarthy & Charles Flynn. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975. 13-43.
- Gomery, Douglas. "Hollywood Control." Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1992. 57-82.
- . "20th Century-Fox." The Hollywood Studio System. New York: St. Martin's, 1986. 76-100.
- Gorbman, Claudia. Excerpt from "Classical Hollywood Practice: The Model of Max Steiner." Unheard Melodies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 91-98.
- Marorstein, Gary. "Work Like a Soul Inspired: Fred Astaire and the Great Songwriters." Hollywood Rhapsody: Movie Music and Its Makers 1900 to 1975. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997. 142-159.
- Meisel, Myron. "Edgar G. Ulmer: The Primacy of the Visual." Kings of the Bs. Eds. Todd McCarthy & Charles Flynn. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975.
- Rabinovitz, Lauren. "The Hitch-Hiker." Queen of the 'B's: Ida Lupino Behind the Camera. Ed. Annette Kuhn. Westport: Praeger, 1995. 90-102.
- Schatz, Thomas. "Anatomy of a House Director: Capra, Cohn, and Columbia in the 1930s." Authorship and the Studio System. Eds. Robert Sklar and Vito Zagarrío. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998. 10-36.
- Selznick, David O. Selznick. Selected correspondence. Memo from David O. Selznick. Ed. Rudy Behlmer. New York: Random House, 2000. 284-290; 293-305; 314-318.
- Stacey, Jackie. "Feminine Fascinations: Forms of Identification in Star-Audience Relations." Stardom: Industry of Desire. Ed. Christine Gledhill. New York: Routledge, 1991. 141-163.

Studio Era Hollywood Syllabus for Spring 2004

Introduction:

Th Jan 15 The Birth of the Studio System: *It* (1927), Dir. Clarence Badger (72 min.)
A Trip Through A Hollywood Studio (Vitaphone, 1934)
Read: *Genius*, 1-66

The Majors:

- Th Jan 22 Paramount: *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), Dir. Ernst Lubitsch (82 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 69-81
Black, Gregory. "Censorship and the Attack on Hollywood Immorality." (e-reserve)
Doherty, Thomas. "On the Cusp of Classical Hollywood Cinema." Pre-Code. (e)
"The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930" Pre-Code Hollywood. (e)
- Th Jan 29 Warner Bros.: *The Public Enemy* (1931), Dir. William Wellman (83 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 135-155; 199-227
Doherty, Thomas. "Criminal Codes." Pre-Code Hollywood. (e)
Gomery, Douglas. "Hollywood Control." Shared Pleasures. (e)
- Th Feb 5 Warner Bros.: *Mildred Pierce* (1945), Dir. Michael Curtiz (111 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 297-321; 411-439
Butler, Jeremy. "The Star System and Hollywood." American Cinema & Hollywood. (e)
Stacey, Jackie. "Feminine Fascinations." Stardom: Industry of Desire. (e)
Allen, Robert. "The Role of the Star in Film History." Film Theory & Criticism. (e)
Gorbman, Claudie. Excerpt from "Classical Hollywood Practice: Max Steiner." (e)
- Th Feb 12 20th Century Fox: *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), Dir. John Ford (128 min.)
Read: Gomery, Douglas. "20th Century Fox." The Hollywood Studio System. (e)
- Th Feb 19 RKO: *Top Hat* (1935), Dir. Mark Sandrich (101 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 125-134
Davis, Ronald. "Design, Hairstyling, and Makeup." (e)
Marmorstein, Gary. "Work Like a Soul Inspired: Fred Astaire." (e)
- Th Feb 26 MGM: *Grand Hotel* (1932), Dir. Edmund Goulding (115 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 98-124; 159-175; 252-270
Berry, Sarah. "Consumer Fashion and Class." (e)
- Th Mar 4 MGM: *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), Dir. George Cukor (112 min.)
Guest Lecturer, Laura Boyes, Film Curator of the N.C. Museum of Art
Read: *Genius*, 359-380
- Th Mar 11 CLASSES CANCELLED—Spring Break

The Minors:

Th Mar 18 Columbia: *It Happened One Night* (1934), Dir. Frank Capra (105 min.)
Read: Buscombe, Edward. "Notes on Columbia Pictures." The Studio System. (e)
Schatz, Thomas. "Anatomy of a House Director." Authorship & Studio System. (e)

Paper Proposals Due

Th Mar 25 Universal: *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), Dir. James Whale (75 min.)
Guest Lecturer, Dr. Maria Pramaggiore, Head of Film Studies at NCSU
Read: *Genius*, 82-97; 228-251; 340-358

Independent Production/B Movies:

Th Apr 1 Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940), a David O. Selznick Production (130 min.)
Read: *Genius*, 176-198; 271-294; 322-339; 381-407
Selected correspondence of David O. Selznick re: *Rebecca*. (e)

Th Apr 8 CLASSES CANCELLED—Easter Break

Th Apr 15 *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953), Dir. Ida Lupino (71 min.)
Read: Flynn & McCarthy. "The Economic Imperative: Why Was the B Movie Necessary?" (e)
Rabinovitz, Lauren. "The Hitch-Hiker." (e)
Final Paper Roundtable with Annotated Bibliography

Th Apr 22 B Double Feature!: *Detour* (1945), Dir. Edgar Ulmer (67 min.) and
Glen or Glenda? (1953), Dir. Ed Wood (65 min.)
Read: Meisel, Myron. "Edgar G. Ulmer: The Primacy of the Visual." (e)

The End of an Era:

Th Apr 29 *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), Dir. Billy Wilder (110 min.)
Reading: *Genius*, 440-492
Final Paper Due

Th May 6 6:00-9:00, Final Exam