



French Cinema: From the invention of Cinematography to the 7e art

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 3101

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: French

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course Description

What is the cinema? Is it an art form, simply entertainment, an industry? ... According to Jean-Luc Godard, it's a mystery. Before writing any history of the cinema, one must first seek to define it. Beginning with the *Le coucher de la mariée* shown at a fair in 1898 to Nicole Garcia's latest film *Un beau dimanche* (2014), French cinema is extremely diverse. In order to talk about the cinema, one must be able to situate within a historical and artistic context and study the conditions under which each film is created.

Course Objectives

Learning about French cinema allows students to explore an art form. This course is designed to help students develop a thorough understanding of a specific cinematic culture through the discovery of both contemporary works and those from France's past.

Methodology

Teaching will be based on a close link between a cultural and an analytical approach. This implies the acquisition of certain knowledge, analytical tools, and the methodology necessary for developing a critical approach to studying images. The courses are based on analysis of short sequences, but three films will also be watched in the entirety: Jean Renoir's *La règle du*

jeu, Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de souffle*, and *A nos amours* by Maurice Pialat. All of these films may be viewed at the Médiathèque Centrale Federico Fellini.

Required Reading / Materials

- Jeancolas, JP. *Histoire du cinéma français*. Collection 128, Armand Colin, 2007.
- Vanoye, F, F. Frey and A. Goliot-Lété. *Collection repères pratiques*. Nathan, 2011.
- Ciné-club Jean Vigo. Salle Rabelais on the Esplanade Charles de Gaulle.
- *Les petits cahiers*. Coédition SCERIN-CNDP and the *cahiers du cinéma*. Useful examples from this series include *Le plan*, *le montage*, *L'adaptation*, *Le récit au cinéma*...

Journals

- *Les cahiers du cinéma*, *Positif*, *Bref* (available at the Médiathèque Fellini) *The*
- Médiathèque Fellini is equipped with 35 individual screens where students can view the required films for the course

Grading

Grading Rubric

| Letter Grade | Score or Percentage | Description |
|--------------|---------------------|--|
| A | 93–100 | Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| A- | 90–92 | Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| B+ | 87–89 | |
| B | 83–86 | |
| B- | 80–82 | Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. |
| C+ | 77–79 | |

| Letter Grade | Score or Percentage | Description |
|--------------|---------------------|--|
| C | 73–76 | |
| C- | 70–72 | Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements. |
| D+ | 67–69 | |
| D | 60–66 | |
| F | 0–59 | Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. |

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

| Assignments | Percentage of Grade |
|---|----------------------------|
| The student's grade will be based on a written-up analysis of a film; the student will acquire the appropriate methodology during the course. | 100% |
| Overall grade | 100% |

Assessment Details

Students will exploit different pedagogical tools, including excerpts from literary works, news source articles, visual images and graphs; a broad variety of themes and topics will allow students to improve their written and oral language skills in French and also project themselves in French and Francophone society.

Students will work on each assignment, whether written or oral, in and outside of the classroom, individually or in groups. Students will be asked to hand in assignments on a regular basis (a minimum of three written grades and one oral, for a group presentation).

The group oral presentation (2–3 students) will take place during the grammar sessions. Topics will include themes that highlight French society and potentially a comparison with American society.

Course Content

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Unit 1

PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN PHASES IN THE HISTORY OF FRENCH CINEMA

- Working off of film excerpts, the goal will be to develop a history of the cinema that will cover the principal phases of France's *7ème art* in chronological order: Beginning with the pioneers in 1895, the Lumière brothers, or Georges Méliès, and ending with the most recent releases.
- **Skills development:** How to describe a film genre: the *burlesque*

Unit 2

A THEMATIC STUDY OF THE FRENCH CINEMA

- Working from themes studied in film excerpts from 1895 to 2014, the course will focus the history of the cinema and how it is connected to changes/transformations in French society.
- **Theme 1:** The French people during the First and Second World Wars.

Unit 3

DEPICTING THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN FRENCH CINEMA

- **Films/excerpts:** *La Grande illusion* (Jean Renoir – 1937); *La chambre des officiers* (François Dupeyron – 2001); *Les fragments d'Antonin* (Gabriel le Bomin – 2005); *Un long dimanche de fiançailles* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet – 2004).
- **Skills development:** Understanding and describing *Le plan, le cadre, le champ, le hors champ* (shots, framing, field of vision, off screen).

Unit 4

FRENCH FILMS ABOUT WWII, FROM 1945 TO THE END OF THE 1960s; THE “RESISTANCE MYTH”

- **Films/excerpts:** *La bataille du rail* (René Clément – 1945); *L’armée des ombres* (Jean-Pierre Melville – 1969). Discussion of how these war films represent a major shift from those French films shot before 1939 about WWI.
- **Skills development:** Learning how to distinguish between different types of shots, shot angles, and understanding how a film sequence functions.

Unit 5

“FILMS DE LA RUPTURE”; ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT THE FRENCH DURING THE WAR

- **Films/excerpts:** *Le chagrin et la pitié* (Marcel Ophüls – 1969); *Lacombe, Lucien* (Louis Malle – 1974). Discussion of how the cinema becomes an alternative means of understanding history.
- **Skills development:** Learning how to do a fiche d’analyse for a film.

Unit 6

COMPARING DIFFERENT FILM GENRES ON THE SAME SUBJECT: FRENCH SOCIETY IN THE 1940s

- **Films/excerpts:** *Farrebique* (Georges Rouquier – 1946); *Le silence de la mer* (Jean-Pierre Melville 1947); *La traversée de Paris* (Claude Autant Lara – 1956); *Uranus* (Claude Berri – 1990); *Un héros très discret* (Jacques Audiard – 1996); *Les égarés* (André Téchiné – 2003).
- **Skills development:** Understanding the importance of point of view in the cinema

Unit 7

COURSE TOPIC: THE FRENCH FACED WITH ANTI-SEMITIC LAWS

- **Films/excerpts:** *Au revoir les enfants* (Louis Malle – 1987); *Le vieil homme et l’enfant* (Claude Berri – 1966); *Le dernier métro* (François Truffaut – 1980).
- **Skills development:** Understanding the importance of depicting reality in the cinema. This workshop will lead to a discussion and study on the function/purpose of the cinema. Is everything filmable? Is it possible to generate a fiction of that which defies description, of the Shoah? Beyond the previously mentioned films, students will analyze

the point of view of Claude Lanzmann, director of the documentary film *Shoah* in 1985, or that of Louis Malle, the director of *Nuit et brouillard*.

Unit 8

THE ROLE OF THE SOLDIERS FROM THE AFRICAN COLONIES, AN AWAKENING THROUGH THE CINEMA

- **Films/excerpts:** *Indigènes* (Rachid Bouchareb – 2003); *La force noire* (Eric Deroo and Antoine Champeaux – 2007)
- **Skills development:** Understanding the phases of film creation (from synopsis to storyboarding).
- **Theme 2:** Transformations in French society through the cinema

Unit 9

DEPICTING THE CITY IN THE CINEMA; A REFLECTION OF CHANGES IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE IN FRANCE

- **Films/excerpts:** *A propos de Nice* (Jean Vigo), *Mon oncle* (Jacques Tati), *La haine* (Mathieu Kassovitz), *L'esquive* (Abdelatif Kéchiche).
- **Skills development:** Learning how to describe a film genre, the *burlesque*.

Unit 10

THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN WITHIN A COUPLE & WITHIN A FAMILY

- **Films/excerpts:** *Et dieu créa la femme* (Roger Vadim – 1956); *L'une chante, l'autre pas* (Agnès Varda – 1977); *Chaos* (Coline Serreau – 2001); *Mères et filles* (Julie Lopes Curval – 2009); *Potiche* (François Ozon – 2010); *Rengaine* (Rachid Djaïdani – 2012).
- **Skills development:** Understanding sound work in the cinema.

Unit 11-12

ADOLESCENCE & SEDUCTION, FIRST LOVE IN THE CINEMA

- **Films/excerpts:** *Le Rayon vert* (Eric Rohmer – 1986); *Naissance des pieuvres* (2007) and *Tomboy* (2011) by Céline Sciamma; *A nos amours* (Maurice Pialat – 1983); *Persépolis* (Marjane Satrapi – 2007).
- **Film viewing, analysis, and discussion.**

Unit 13

SEPARATION, JEALOUSY, & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **Films/excerpts:** *L'Atalante* (Jean Vigo – 1934); *La séparation* (Christian Vincent – 1994); *L'enfer* (Claude Chabrol – 1994); *L'enfer d'Henri-Georges Clouzot* (Serge Bromberg – 2010); *La Femme d'à côté* (François Truffaut – 1981); *La femme défendue* (Philippe Harel – 1997).
- **Skills development:** Comparing the writings of directors and film theoreticians on the following theme: Does film editing define or negate the cinema?

Unit 14

THE COUPLE & CONTEMPORARY FRENCH CINEMA, THE END OF TABOO SUBJECTS?

- Homosexuality, same-sex marriage, old age and seduction, love and disabilities
- **Films/excerpts:** *L'Homme blessé* (Patrice Chéreau – 1983); *Les Nuits fauves* (Cyril Collard – 1992); *Chansons d'amour* (Christophe Honoré – 2007); *Nationale 7* (Jean-Pierre Sinapi – 2000); *Darling* (Christine Carrière – 2007).
- **Skills development:** In-class debate and discussion. Is it possible to show everything in the cinema? Comparison and contrast between the United States and France

Unit 15

POPULAR FRENCH CINEMA

- Exploring comedies (extracts) by a variety of directors including Georges Méliès, Jacques Tati, Gérard Oury, Jacques Weber, Albert Dupontel, and Eric Toledano.
- **Course conclusions and discussion.**

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).