

Code: BMI-FLMD-213E.20

Course title: Classical Hollywood Cinema

Course convenors: Bence Kránicz

Class time and place: Thursday 9-10.30, -137.

Course type: Lecture

Course content: This lecture in film history discusses the most important tendencies and contexts of classical Hollywood cinema, mainly in the period from the sound shift to the middle of the 1960s. We will analyse classical HW style as a paradigmatic cinematic form of the American film history and as a globally influential cinematic language. Hence we will discuss the industrial, technological, aesthetic and ideological aspects of the classical HW film from a historical perspective.

1. Approaches toward the interpretations of classical HW: industry, technology, aesthetics, ideology. The HW industry: changes in production, distribution and the studio system from the formation of HW until the end of the 1940s. The self-interpretation of HW.
2. Technological changes in HW from the shift to sound until the 1950s.
3. Star system in HW. Charlie Chaplin and the slapstick comedy, John Wayne and the western
4. Hollywood in the pre-code and the post-code era. Classical HW film style
5. Genres in classical HW: melodrama and romantic comedy
6. Genres in classical HW : gangster film and horror
7. European influences of style in the 1940s: expressionist and realist tendencies
8. Auteurs in classical HW
9. Ideological changes in the 1950s: romance and family
10. Ideological changes in the 1950s: community and nation
11. Outskirts of HW: B pictures, Poverty Row, independents
12. Twilight of the classical HW and the Hollywood Renaissance

Requirements: Written exam at the end of the semester. The exam is only valid if the student passes a test on the required films (50% minimum). Knowledge of the required films and reading is essential to passing the course.

Learning outcomes: See course content. Method: historical overview and focus case studies using the methodology of Bordwell–Staiger–Thompson’s historical formalism

Required films and reading: Required films:

1.
required: Sullivan’s Travels (1941), The Bad and the Beautiful (1952)
recommended: What Price Hollywood? (1932), A Star Is Born (1937), Sunset Boulevard (1950), In a Lonely Place (1951), The Big Knife (1955)
2.
required: The Wizard of Oz (1939), Singin’ in the Rain (1952)
recommended: The Jazz Singer (1927), 42nd Street (1933), Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (1937), Gone With the Wind (1939), Meet Me in St. Louis (1944), House of Wax (1953)
3.
required: City Lights (1931), Stagecoach (1939)
recommended: Modern Times (1936), The Great Dictator (1940), Monsieur Verdoux (1947), Red River (1948), Rio Bravo (1959), The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)

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4.
required: Waterloo Bridge (1931), Waterloo Bridge (1940)
recommended: She Done Him Wrong (1932), Babyface (1933), The Front Page (1931), His Girl Friday (1940)
 5.
required: Sunrise (1927), Trouble in Paradise (1932)
recommended: Way Down East (1920), The Wedding March (1928), The Crowd (1928), Design for Living (1933), Nothing Sacred (1937), Bringing Up Baby (1938)
 6.
required: Scarface (1932), King Kong (1933)
recommended: Underworld (1927), Little Caesar (1931), Public Enemy (1931), Dracula (1931), Frankenstein (1931), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1931), Freaks (1932)
 7.
required: The Maltese Falcon (1941), The Lost Weekend (1945)
recommended: Fury (1936), You Only Live Once (1937), Double Indemnity (1944), The Killers (1946), Night and the City (1950)
 8.
required: Notorious (1946), Rear Window (1954), Citizen Kane (1941), Touch of Evil (1958)
recommended: Rebecca (1940), Spellbound (1945), Strangers on a Train (1951), The Magnificent Ambersons (1942), The Lady from Shanghai (1947)
 9.
required: The Seven Year Itch (1955), Rebel Without a Cause (1955)
recommended: The Moon is Blue (1953), Roman Holiday (1953), The Apartment (1960), All That Heaven Allows (1955), Bigger Than Life (1956), Written on the Wind (1956)
 10.
required: High Noon (1952), The Searchers (1956), Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
recommended: The Gunfighter (1950), Shane (1953), River of No Return (1954), The Thing From Another World (1951), The Day The Earth Stood Still (1951)
 11.
required: Outrage (1950), A Bucket of Blood (1959)
recommended: Reefer Madness (1936), Detour (1945), The Tingler (1959), Little Shop of Horrors (1959), Shadows (1959), Scorpio Rising (1963)
 12.
required: Seconds (1966), Bonnie and Clyde (1967), The Graduate (1967)
recommended: The Manchurian Candidate (1962), Cleopatra (1963), It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World (1963), The Pawnbroker (1964), The Sound of Music (1965), Mickey One (1965)

Required reading:

Bordwell, David – Kristin Thompson: *Film History. An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. 68–76. (The Classical Hollywood Cinema); 144–166. (The Late Silent Era in Hollywood, 1920–1928); 194–203. (Sound in the United States); 213–238. (The Hollywood Studio System, 1930–1945); 325–352. (American Cinema in the Postwar Era, 1945–1960)

Bazin, André: *Orson Welles. A Critical View*. Trans. Jonathan Rosenbaum. Los Angeles: Acrobat Books, 1991. 64–82.

Bordwell, David: *Narration in the Fiction Film*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. 156–166.

Dyer, Richard: *Heavenly Bodies*. London – New York: Routledge, 2003. 17–63.

Elsaesser, Thomas: Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): *Film Genre Reader IV*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. 433–462.

Gallagher, Tag: Shoot-Out at the Genre Corral: Problems in the “Evolution” of the Western. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): *Film Genre Reader IV*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. 298–312.

Hansen, Miriam Bratu: The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism. *Modernism/modernity*, 6.2 (1999): 59–77.

Modleski, Tania: *The Women Who Knew Too Much. Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. London – New York: Routledge, 2016. 55–88.

Schrader, Paul: Notes on Film Noir. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): *Film Genre Reader IV*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. 265–278.

Vasey, Ruth: The Hollywood Industry Paradigm. In: James Donald – Michael Renov: *The SAGE Handbook of Film Studies*. London: SAGE, 2008. 287–311.

Warshow, Robert: The Gangster as Tragic Hero. *Partisan Review*, February 1948. URL: <https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/movies/robert-warshow-the-gangster-as-tragic-hero/>

Recommended reading:

Balio, Tino (szerk.): *The American Film Industry. Revised Edition*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Biskind, Peter: *Seeing is Believing. How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Bordwell, David – Janet Staiger – Kristin Thompson: *The Classical Hollywood Cinema. Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge, 1985.

Neale, Steve (szerk.): *The Classical Hollywood Reader*. London – New York: Routledge, 2012.

Schatz, Thomas: *The Genius of the System. Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.
