

Dr. John Bruns
ENGL 212: Cinema: History and Criticism
Tues/Thurs 12:15-1:30 & 1:40-2:55
Spring 2020

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Hours: Tue 3-5 & Thu 3-5pm
and by appointment



COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to provide a **general introduction to the study of film** with a focus on **developing critical skills** and **investigating diverse approaches to analysis**. Through readings and screenings of a broad range of narrative films, the class will further serve as a brief survey of film history and an overview of classic and contemporary modes of film theory & criticism. You will be exposed to a variety of films produced in the U.S. and other countries from the very beginnings of the medium in the late 19th century, through the “silent era” of the 1910s-20s and the “golden age” of Hollywood in the 1930s-50s, up to the present. This course is designed to help you acquire a firm grounding in the methods and core material of film history and criticism and to help you become familiar with **some of the most significant topics in film studies**. Each film corresponds to a specific topic: pre-narrative cinema; techniques of storytelling in narrative film; German Expressionism and Soviet montage cinema; *mise-en-scène*; major movements in post-WWII European cinema; feminist film theory; the New Hollywood; and the rise of digital filmmaking. By the end of this course, you will become a more critical and creative viewer of the artistic medium of cinema, knowledgeable in the history of the most popular art form of the 20th and 21st centuries, and you will possess the analytical skills to understand and interpret visual forms of expression. You will also be well equipped for future courses should you choose to declare a **Film Studies minor**. The GenEd goals of this course are as follows:

1. Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture
2. Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline of Film Studies and interpret the material in writing assignments.

These outcomes will be assessed using the short paper.

FILMS WE WILL WATCH AND DISCUSS:

Way Down East (dir. D.W. Griffith, 1920); **Our Hospitality** (dir. Blystone/Keaton, 1923); **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari** (dir. Robert Wiene, 1920); **Battleship Potemkin** (dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925); **A Man Escaped** (dir. Robert Bresson, 1956); **Citizen Kane** (dir. Orson Welles, 1941); **Bicycle Thieves** (dir. Vittorio De Sica, 1948); **Shoot the Piano Player** (dir. François Truffaut, 1960); **Vertigo** (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1956); **Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood** (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2019); **Inception** (dir. Christopher Nolan, 2010)