

MTA 101 AI – “FILM IN AMERICA,” Fall, 2007

Film in America is a selective inquiry into the development of the motion picture in the United States as an art, a craft, and a business. Like nearly any subject, the development of the American motion picture can be approached from numerous perspectives. The instructor believes that film history has been shaped globally by complex relationships between market forces (the tastes of paying audiences), the intentions of corporate management (and its need to build as much reliability as possible into audience demand through standardization), the artistry, ego, and enterprise of individual directors, production crew members, post-production technicians, and actors, as well as the influence of larger social and cultural forces. Interpretive concerns such as these frame the topics that we will investigate together each week. "American film," of course, includes various types of production, but in MTA 101AI exclusive emphasis is on feature films produced for release in movie theaters.

Readings: THE REQUIRED READING FOR MTA 101AI IS MOVIES IN AMERICA: THE ART, CRAFT, AND BUSINESS OF HOLLYWOOD (Pearson Publishing, 2007). THE BOOK IS WRITTEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR FOR THE COURSE, PAUL MONACO, AND IS AVAILABLE IN THE M.S.U. BOOKSTORE. EACH WEEK, YOU NEED TO DO THE ASSIGNED READING THOROUGHLY AND CAREFULLY BEFORE THE TUESDAY CLASS MEETING. ALSO, BRING YOUR COPY OF MOVIES IN AMERICA TO CLASS EACH THURSDAY. DO NOT NEGLECT THE ASSIGNED READINGS, AND DO NOT FALL BEHIND IN THEM. THEY ARE A VITAL PART OF THE COURSE. YOU MUST READ THEM WELL, AND STUDY FROM THEM, IN ORDER TO EARN GOOD GRADES ON THE MTA 101AI EXAMINATIONS.

Examinations: The three MTA 101AI examinations are on Thursday, September 27th (2:10-3:00 pm), Thursday, November 1st (2:10-3:00 pm), and Thursday, December 6th (2:10-3:00 pm). NO ALLOWANCE WILL BE MADE FOR LATE ARRIVALS AT EXAM TIMES. Only written documentation of an *EMERGENCY* for missing an examination will be considered as an excuse. Also, please plan ahead: examinations may NOT be taken prior to the scheduled exam date to accommodate personal travel plans, social functions, etc. THERE IS NO COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM IN MTA 101AI. Each examination covers roughly a third of the course material and is worth 100 points. On these exams, you are responsible for all lectures, films shown in MTA 101, discussions in class, and the pages assigned for reading for each course segment. Each exam consists of fifty (50) multiple-choice questions; each question is worth two (2) pts. Remember to bring two sharpened # 2 pencils, each with a clean eraser, to the exams. Review sessions, conducted by the instructor, will be announced for the Wednesday evening before each 101AI exam.

FINAL GRADES FOR MTA 101AI ARE BASED ON TOTAL POINTS EARNED ON THE THREE EXAMS:

A = 270, A- = 267, B+ = 255, B = 240, B- = 237, C+ = 225, C = 210, C- = 200, D+ = 183, D = 166, F = 165 or lower

GRADING ON THE EXAMS IS NOT CURVED. THERE ARE NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS IN MTA 101AI, AND THERE ARE NO POSSIBILITIES TO EARN EXTRA CREDIT IN THE COURSE.

The Films: Full-length films and/or film excerpts are shown in MTA 101AI each Tuesday. These films are selected to illustrate certain issues, or to complement specific segments in the assigned readings, or to be representative of some aspect of the development of the movies in the United States. They are "samples" and are not intended to constitute a comprehensive exposure to the major works of American cinema. As explained in the introduction to *MOVIES IN AMERICA*, the approach in this course values the list of 'Best Pictures' selected by the members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, as well as the American Film Institute's list of "100 Greatest American Films" as determined by a vote of 1,500 "leaders of the American movie community." During Fall Semester, all MTA 101AI students are encouraged to expand their knowledge of American film by seeing movies from these lists. Moreover, students majoring in film are encouraged to view as many of the movies as possible from these two lists during their first two years in that major in order to become familiar with a wide range of significant American feature films.

The Instructor: Paul Monaco (monaco@montana.edu; 406-994-6225) has written and published on various topics in film and media history. He is a member the National Advisory Board of the Cinema History Project. Among his recent books are *Understanding Society, Culture, and Television* (Praeger), and *The Sixties: 1960-1969 in The History of American Cinema Series* (University of California Press); he is the author of *Movies In America* which is required for this course. He is also a filmmaker who has produced, directed, and edited more than thirty films/videos in various genres. Paul's office is in the Visual Communications Building (11th at Grant), Room # 217. During the Fall Semester 2007, his scheduled office hours are: Wednesdays, 2:00 – 4:00 pm and Thursdays, 3:15 – 4:30 pm. If you are unable to see him at these times, please inquire by e-mail to schedule an appointment at another time.

Important Suggestions: Class attendance is important, because what will be asked on the exams is highlighted in the lectures and discussions. Focus during the lectures and discussions is important, because you need to stay alert and take notes. Seeing the films each week IN CLASS is important, because all these movies were made to be seen on a big screen, with an audience, in a darkened space in which the viewer concentrates on them without distractions. You may access Paul's personal homepage through www.montana.edu: click A-Z Index; click Media & Theatre Arts; click Motion Picture/Video/Theatre; click Faculty; click Paul Monaco. His page includes topic outlines for the MTA 101AI lectures, also these may vary slightly from what is actually presented in class.

MTA 101AI – FALL SEMESTER 2007 SCHEDULE

WEEK I – August 28 and 30 "EARLY CINEMA AND THE FOUNDING OF HOLLYWOOD"

Film: THE BIRTH OF A NATION (excerpts); THE GOLD RUSH

Readings: *Movies In America*, introduction and chapter one through page

WEEK 2 – SEPTEMBER 4 and 6 " *THE BUSINESS OF HOLLYWOOD*"

Film: THE BIG PARADE

READING: *Movies In America*, chapter one, pages 21 through 27

WEEK 3 – SEPTEMBER 11 and 13 " *EARLY SYNCHRONOUS SOUND*"

Film: THE JAZZ SINGER; FRANKENSTEIN

Readings: *Movies In America*, chapter two, through page 46

WEEK 4 – – SEPTEMBER 18 and 20 " *HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1930s*"

Film: IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT; DUCK SOUP

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter two, pages 46 through 50, and chapter three

WEEK 5 – SEPTEMBER 25 " *BANNER YEARS*"

Film: THE WIZARD OF OZ

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter four, through page 77

(REVIEW SESSION: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 5:10 – 6:00 PM)

[THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1st EXAM, 2:10-3:00 pm]

WEEK 6 – OCTOBER 2 and 4 " *THE BOY WONDER AND AUTEURISM*"

Film: CITIZEN KANE

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter four, pages 77 through 89

WEEK 7 – OCTOBER 9 and 11 " *WORLD WAR TWO AND HOLLYWOOD*"

Film: CASABLANCA

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter five

WEEK 8 – OCTOBER 16 " *POST-WAR SHIFTS*"

Film: THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter six

WEEK 9 – OCTOBER 23 and 25 " *HUAC, METHOD ACTING, AND SCREEN REALISM*"

Film: ON THE WATERFRONT

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter seven

WEEK 10 – OCTOBER 30 "*HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1950s*"

Film: REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter eight

(REVIEW SESSION: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 5:10 – 6:00 P.M.)

[THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1st, 2nd EXAM, 2:10-3:00 PM]

WEEK 11 – NOVEMBER 6 and 8 "*DOWNTURN AND THE CINEMA OF SENSATION*"

Film: BONNIE AND CLYDE, Excerpts from PSYCHO, BULLITT, THE WILD BUNCH

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapters nine and ten

WEEK 12 – NOVEMBER 13 AND 15 "*CONGLOMERATE CONTROL AND MOVIE BRATS*"

Film: THE GODFATHER II (screening will last until 5:15 pm)

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter eleven

WEEK 13 – NOVEMBER 20 "*HOLLYWOOD HIGH CONCEPT*"

Film: JAWS

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapters twelve and thirteen

WEEK 14 – NOVEMBER 27 AND 29 "*HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1980S*"

Film: RAGING BULL

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter fourteen

WEEK 15 – DECEMBER 4 "*HOLLYWOOD ENTERS THE DIGITAL AGE*"

Film: FARGO

Reading: *Movies In America*, chapter fifteen and conclusion

(REVIEW SESSION: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 5:10 – 6:00 PM)

[THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 3rd Exam, 2:10-3:00 pm]