

# **Lecture 1 -- Introduction**

## **1. What is Film?**

- **Chemistry**
- **Novelty**
- **Manufactured object**
- **Social formation**

## **2. Think Away I-Pods**

- **The novelty of movement**
- **Early films and early audiences**

## **3. The Fred Ott Principle**

## **4. Three Phases of Media Evolution**

- **Imitation**
- **Technical Advance**
- **Maturity**

## **5. “And There Was Charlie”**

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**Reference: James Agee, *A Death in the Family* (1957)**

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## **Lecture 2 -- Keaton**

- 1. The Fred Ott Principle, continued**
  - **The myth of technological determinism**
  - **A Paradox: Capitalism and the Movies**
  
- 2. *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)**
  
- 3. *The Lonedale Operator* (1911)**
  
- 4. Buster Keaton (1895-1966)**
  - **Acrobat/Actor**
  - **Technician/Director**
  - **Metaphysician/Artist**
  
- 5. The multiplicity principle:**
  - **Entertainment vs. Art**
  
- 6. *The General* (1927)**
  - **“A culminating text”**
  - **Structure**
  - **The Keaton hero: steadfast, muddlin**
  - **The Keaton universe: contingency**

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**1) Movies Before Chaplin**

**2) Enter Chaplin**

**2) Chaplin's Career**

**The Multiplicity Principle, continued**

**3) The Tramp as Myth**

**5) Chaplin's World**

**Elemental themes**

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**1) Keaton vs. Chaplin**

**2) Three Passages**

*Steamboat Bill, Jr.*

*The Gold Rush*

*City Lights*

**3) *Modern Times* (1936)**

**Context**

**A Culminating Film**

**The Gamin**

**Sound**

**Structure**

**Chaplin's complexity**

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1. Film as a Cultural Form
  - Global vs. National Cinema
  - American vs. European Cinema
  - High culture vs. Hollywood
2. Montage vs. Mise en Scene
3. Eisenstein and *Potemkin* (1925)
  - Film as instruction, propaganda,  
moral fable

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1. German Film and Expressionism  
Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (1969)  
*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1919)  
*Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926)
2. F.W. Murnau (1889-1931)  
*Nosferatu* (1922)  
*Sunrise* (1927)  
*Tabu* (w/ Robert Flaherty, 1931)
3. *The Last Laugh* (1924)  
The unchained camera  
Themes: working class tragedy  
Character: work and personal identity  
The ending: true or false

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**Lecture 7: Hollywood in the Thirties**

- 1) An Industry Emerges**
  - The Studio Era**
  - “The golden age of Hollywood”**
  - Stars and genres**
  
- 2) The Cultural Work of Movies**
  - Entertainment**
  - Genre and License**
  - Consensus Narrative**
  
- 3) Strains of Comedy**
  - Anarchic**
  - Worldly**
  - Screwball**
  
- 4) Screwball heroine:**
  - Barbara Stanwyck in *Ball of Fire* (1942)**

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- 1) Consensus Narrative:**  
**Traditional, dominant and emergent voices**
  
- 2) Screwball heroine:**  
**Barbara Stanwyck in *Ball of Fire* (1942)**
  
- 3) Frank Capra (1897-1991) and Howard Hawks**  
**(1896-1977)**
  
- 4) *It Happened One Night* (1934)**  
**Context: the Depression**  
**The American Male**  
**Romance across social class**  
**“A marriage of true minds”**
  
- 5) *His Girl Friday* (1940)**  
**Theater into film**  
**Counter-plot: against genre**  
**Hawks’ central scene: badgering companionship**  
**Hawks’ complexity: laughter and cynicism**



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**Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980)**

- 1. An anecdote**
- 2. Hitchcock's career**
- 3. Hitchcock the technician**
- 4. Themes**
- 5. The Double Man**

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## **Lecture 10**

### **1. Hitchcock and “the genius of the system”**

#### **2. *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943)**

**Context: WWII, H. in exile**

**Against Capra**

**The opening: behind any door or window . . .**

**An American town, an American family**

**Two Charlies: rhyming shots**

**Subplot: murder as diversion**

**The ending: ambiguity**

#### **3. *Rear Window* (1954)**

**The opening scene: confinement, voyeurism**

**An essay on seeing**

**An elegant structure: the subplots**

**Class and gender**

**The ending: more ambiguity**

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**The American Musical Film**

**1. Numbers**

1927-47: 919 films (48 films each year)

1949-58: 23 films per year

1959-80: 7 films per year

**2. Themes**

Show business: community: the show goes on

High culture, popular culture

Class or position vs. talent, merit

Convention, restraint vs. spontaneity, energy,

“the natural”

**3. History**

- Revue, Operetta

*Love Me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932)

- Busby Berkeley & Warner Brothers

*42<sup>nd</sup> Street* (1933)

- Astaire, Rogers and RKO

*Top Hat* (1935)

- MGM and “the integrated musical”

*Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952)

Arthur Freed (1894-1973): The Freed Unit

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#### **The Musical (continued)**

##### **1. Astaire vs. Kelly**

##### **2. *Singin' in the Rain***

Self-consciousness: an encyclopedia of musical history

Key themes

The place of song and dance

##### **3. *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972)**

Beyond genre: the end of Hollywood

Fosse's career: the inheritor

Weimar Germany and America in the late 1960s

Style: mise en scene and montage

Texture: multiplicity

Musical numbers: true integration

Key themes: innocence, history, the limits of satire

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### **The Western Movie**

#### **1. Movies as Consensus Narrative**

**The Western genre as a space of discourse**

#### **2. Historical/Cultural Background**

**1) The “real” west: 1860-1890**

**2) Popular culture before film**

**3) Intellectual culture: The Turner Thesis**

#### **3. The Western as Cultural Myth**

**Founding story**

**Dichotomies**

**The divided hero: savior and savage**

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**The Western, continued**

**1. The Western Film**

**A quick history**

**2. John Ford (1895-1973)**

**3. The Searchers (1956)**

**1) Damaged hero**

**2) Setting: Monument Valley**

**3) Plot: founding story, captive's tale;**

**4) Structure: seven 'threshold shots'**

**5) A turning point**

**6) The title: ambiguity**

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**American Film in the 1970s**

**1. Transformations and subversion**

Directors

Actors

Style/Endings

Dissenting Genres

**2. Social History**

Viet Nam war

Assassinations

JFK, LBJ, Nixon

Watergate

**3. Film and Television: A New Consensus Medium**

Two versions of *MASH*

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### **Film in the 1970s (continued)**

#### **1. Robert Altman (1925-2006)**

Career

Defining qualities:

Moral skepticism

Sympathy for the marginal

Plot vs. character

Fiction vs. "reality"

#### **2. McCabe and Mrs. Miller (1971)**

"Ruin the Sacred Truths"

Sound and image: a new realism?

Hero/savior-clown or fool

Love story: gal from the East

Founding myth: Presbyterian Church

The ending: slapstick murder as the town is born



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**Jean Renoir and Poetic Realism**

**1. French Film**

**A parallel history**  
**Film theory**

**2. Jean Renoir (1894-1979)**

- 1926 *Nana* (Zola novel)**
- 28 *The Little Match Girl***
- 31 *La Chienne***
- 32 *Boudu Saved from Drowning***
- 34 *Madame Bovary* (Flaubert novel)**
- 35 *Toni***
- 37 *Grand Illusion***
- 39 *Rules of the Game***
- 50 *The River***

**3. Poetic Realism**

**Forerunner: Jean Vigo (1905-34)**

**Key Features**

**Andre Bazin (1918-58) on Renoir**

**4. Two Examples: The Ending of *Boudu***

**Dinner in prison: *Grand Illusion***

**5. Visual Style as Moral Vision**

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***Grand Illusion(1937)***

**1) Camera**

**Invisible witness: respectful, attentive, restless**

**2) Actors**

**Von Stroheim: The man you love to hate**

**Gabin: Mad proletarian**

**3) Themes**

**Prison camp as microcosm**

**Barriers, boundaries**

**Historical transition**

**4) Renoir's Maturity**

**Character**

**Plot: a war story without battles**

**The title: how many grand illusions?**

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**Italian Neorealism**

**1) The Opening of *Bicycle Thieves***  
**The multiplicity principle**

**2) Historical Context**  
**WW II**  
**Italian film under Fascism**  
**Hollywood film**

**3) Origins**  
**Italian, German, French**

**4) Key Features**  
**Non-professional actors, outdoor camera, mise en scène style, documentary flavor, character vs. plot**

**5) Central Figures**  
**Cesaré Zavattini (1902-77)**  
**Luchino Visconti (1906-76)**  
***Obsession (1942), The Earth Trembles (1948)***  
**Roberto Rossellini (1906-77)**  
***Open City (1945)***  
**Vittorio De Sica (1902-74)**

**6) The Neorealist Counter-plot**  
**The beginning of *Open City***

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**De Sica, *Bicycle Thieves***

**1) Vittorio De Sica (1902-74)**

**1942 *The Children Are Watching Us***

**46 *Shoeshine***

**48 *Bicycle Thieves***

**50 *Miracle in Milan***

**52 *Umberto D***

**60 *Two Women***

**71 *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis***

**2) *Bicycle Thieves***

**1. Structure: organic form**

**2. Social themes**

**3. Character: father and son**

**4. The title**

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**Truffaut and the *Nouvelle Vague***

**1. Two clips**

***Umberto-D* (1952)**

***The 400 Blows***

**2. Origins of the *Nouvelle Vague***

**Renoir and Neorealism**

**American studio directors**

**Alexandre Astruc (1923- )**

**Bazin (1918-58) and *Cahiers du cinema***

**Auteur theory**

**3. Key films of 1959**

***Hiroshima, mon amour* (Alain Resnais)**

***Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard)**

***The 400 Blows* (Francois Truffaut)**

**4. *Nouvelle Vague*: style and tone**

**mise en scene**

**location sight and sound**

**improvisation: plot and dialogue**

**jump cuts and elliptical editing**

**self-reflexiveness: films about film**

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**Truffaut and *The 400 Blows***

**1. The ending of *Breathless***

**2. Francois Truffaut (1932-1984)**

**1959 *The 400 Blows*\***

**60 *Shoot the Piano Player***

**62 *Jules and Jim***

**62 *Antoine and Colette*\***

**66 *Fahrenheit 451***

**68 *Stolen Kisses*\***

**70 *The Wild Child***

**70 *Bed and Board*\***

**73 *Day for Night (La Nuit americaine)***

**77 *The Man Who Loved Women***

**79 *Love on the Run*\***

**80 *The Last Metro***

**3. *The 400 Blows***

**The title**

**Setting: a Parisian odyssey**

**The family romance**

**Structure: a “natural” unfolding**

**The ending: ambiguity: no catastrophe, no  
apocalypse**

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**Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998) and *Rashomon***

**1. The “moment” of *Rashomon***

**Film as an international medium**

**Modernist cinema**

**Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007)**

**Satyajit Ray (1921-92)**

**Federico Fellini (1921-93)**

**2. Japanese Cinema: a note**

**Theatrical traditions**

**Kenji Mizoguchi (1898-1956)**

**Yasujiro Ozu (1903-63)**

**3. Kurosawa’s career**

**The Kurosawa-gumi**

***Rashomon* (1950), *Ikiru* (52), *Seven Samurai* (54)**

***Throne of Blood* (57), *Yojimbo* (61), *Kagamusha* (80)**

**4. *Rashomon***

**The title and the historical setting**

**The “medium”: a miko**

**Visual style: dynamic, eclectic:**

**“a *real* surrealism”**

**The drama of the telling**

**The ending: should we delete it?**

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**Film as Art and Artifact**

**1. Film as a cultural form**

**Stories and culture**

**Culture as a process, always unfinished**

**“Golden Lads”: consensus narrative**

**conservative, collaborative, accessible**

**2. Film as art**

**Art as a form of intelligence and competence**

**Texture, multiplicity**

**An example:**

***Seven Samurai* -- To the village**

**3. Thanks to all of you**