

FRW 3391 French Cinema Spring 2005

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics - Florida State University

Tuesdays 3:35-6:00pm and Thursdays 3:35-4:15pm

Williams 320

Dr. Reinier Leushuis



Scene from François Truffaut's "Jules et Jim" (1962)

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the rich history and development of the French cinema, from the first films of the Lumière brothers in 1895 until the youngest generation of French filmmakers. Within a

chronological and thematic framework, we will analyze films from the major directors and movements of French filmmaking. One of the leading questions of this course will be: what makes French cinema particularly "French"? In order to answer this question, we will keep two sets of objectives in mind throughout the course: 1) to reach an understanding of French cinema in its relationship to modern France. What is the social, historical and political context of the film? How does the film reflect this context and address its audience accordingly? 2) to study the contribution of French movie directors to film as an art form. What was the unique creative vision of the director and/or the 'school' to which he/she belonged? What were the esthetic and theoretical concerns of the moviemaker and how did he/she try to give shape to these concerns in the artistic elements of the movie?

Instructor's Contact information:

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Course Materials

- *Required readings:* for each Tuesday session, you will find readings posted on Blackboard under the link "Readings and Worksheets".
- *Background Readings:* over the course of the semester, a series of books, to be used for individual papers and/or presentations, or simply for additional background reading, will be made available on course reserve at Strozier library. See the link "Bibliography" on Blackboard for the list of works on reserve.

Screenings and Classes

The Tuesday class will be used for the film screenings, with a short introduction of the movie by myself and a brief question-and-answer session afterwards. The Thursday class will be used for classroom discussion and short five minute oral presentations on the movie screened on Tuesday. After screening, the movies will be made available in the Strozier Library Digital Media Center, where they can be viewed Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM.

Attendance and Participation

- *Attendance* for both screenings and discussion sessions is mandatory. I keep attendance in both sessions. Absences will only be excused for religious holidays, serious accident or illness (medical note required) and serious family circumstances. Please notify me at least a week in advance in case you need to miss class. Each *unexcused* absence after the *third* will reduce your final grade by *two* percentage points. If for instance your final grade was 88% but you missed 5 classes, your grade would be adjusted to B instead of B+.

- *Participation* in the Thursday classroom discussions is crucial in this course and a substantial part of your final grade. While you watch the movie, I expect you to take notes. For every Thursday session, I will post a *worksheet* on Blackboard with some questions that will be the basis for classroom discussion. You are expected to study this worksheet and bring your answers and comments to the discussion. I will grade your overall participation in classroom discussions.

- *Classroom behavior*: you are expected to contribute to a pleasant viewing and learning experience for all. This includes in particular switching off your cell phone before entering class, coming on time for each class, and exiting and entering quietly in case you need to use the bathroom.

Assignments

(Late assignments are not accepted under any circumstances other than the ones specified in the attendance policy)

1) Critical Response Paper

During the semester each student will turn in three (3) *Critical Response Papers* of three (3) double-spaced typewritten pages (Times New Roman 12 font, one-inch margins). See the due dates in the course program. Material that will help you drafting your paper will be given out during the semester. Remember that a *Critical Response Paper 1*) has to be written in correct English and to be well-structured and argued (introduction, argumentation and conclusion: these elements will be reflected in your grade), *2*) has to link thematic content of the movie to aspects of its cinematography, *3*) has to reflect a minimum amount of research (see recommended readings) and *4*) has to reflect some understanding of written analysis of film as we will discuss it in class and readings.

2) Short Oral Presentation

For every Thursday class, I will indicate on Blackboard three students (so each student at least once during the semester) to orally present *one* of their answers of the worksheet to the rest of the class in about 5 minutes (absolutely not longer!). This is not a full-size oral presentation, but simply an introduction for further debate. Therefore, be sure not only to elaborate your particular answer, but also to make your point briefly and efficiently.

3) Worksheets (posted weekly on Blackboard for each film)

- For all students, the worksheet serves as the basis for the Thursday classroom discussion (see above under *Participation*).

- For every Thursday class, the three students doing their oral presentation, will ALSO turn in a one-page answer to ALL questions of that week's worksheet (usually three or four). This will be graded separately by me, but will go into your grade for the oral presentation.

- I allow each student to turn in ONE more worksheet on a movie of their choice at any given point during the semester (but the movie cannot be the one already discussed for the oral presentation). Do not exceed the length of one hand-written page for all answers.

4) Final Course Paper

At the end of the course, each student will turn in a final course paper of 8-10 pages (absolutely no more than 10 pages) according to the same rules for lay-out as the critical response papers. The final paper has to be a development of one or a combination of your critical response papers (of your own choice). In the final paper, in addition to an analysis of the film, I also expect a well-developed background on both the socio-historical issues as well as the aesthetic and cinematographic issues that surround the movie.

Evaluation (Final Course Grade)

Attendance and Participation	25%
Critical Response Papers (3)	40%
Oral Presentation and 2 Submitted Worksheets	10%
Final Term Paper	25%

Attention : there will be no final exam for this course

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to uphold the academic honor code (for the text of the honor code see the web site <http://www.fsu.edu/~union/honor.htm>).

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: 1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) in 08 Kellum Hall, telephone 644-9566; 2) Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating which academic accommodations you need. This should be done within the first week of class.

Program

(please note: 1) schedule is subject to change; 2) only the dates of the Tuesday screenings are provided)

WEEK I (Thursday January 6): Course Introduction: Beginnings of Cinema in France

- Lumière Brothers, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*

WEEK II (Tuesday January 11): What is French Film?

- François Truffaut, *Day for Night* ["La Nuit américaine"] (1973) {116'}

WEEK III (Tuesday January 18): **Early (Silent) and Surrealist French Cinema**

- Lumière Brothers, *Selection of First Films*
- George Méliès, *Selection of 'Trick' Films*
- René Clair, *Entr'acte* (1924) {22' }
- Louis Buñuel, *Un chien andalou* (1928) {17' }

WEEK IV (Tuesday January 25): **Classical French Cinema I**

- Jean Vigo, *L'Atalante* (1934) {87' }

WEEK V (Tuesday February 1): **Classical French Cinema II**

- Jean Renoir, *The Rules of the Game* ["La Règle du jeu"] (1939) {110' }

WEEK VI (Tuesday February 8): **Classical French Cinema III**

- Marcel Carné, *Children of Paradise* ["Les Enfants du paradis"] (1945) {185' }
- **Critical Response Paper 1** due in class on Thursday February 10

WEEK VII (Tuesday February 15): **"New Wave" Cinema I**

- Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* ["À bout de souffle"] (1959) {89' }

WEEK VIII (Tuesday February 22): **"New Wave" Cinema II**

- Agnès Varda, *Cléo from Five to Seven* ["Cléo de 5 à 7"] (1962) {90' }

WEEK IX (Tuesday March 1): **"New Wave" Cinema III**

- François Truffaut, *Jules and Jim* ["Jules et Jim"] (1962) {105' }
- **Critical Response Paper 2** is due in class on Thursday, March 3

SPRING BREAK

WEEK X (Tuesday March 15): **War and History I**

- Bertrand Tavernier, *Life and Nothing But* ["La Vie et rien d'autre"] (1991) {135' }

WEEK XI (Tuesday March 22): **War and History II**

- Claude Berri, *Lucie Aubrac* (1997) {116' }

WEEK XII (Tuesday March 29): **War and History III**

- André Téchiné, *Wild Reeds* ["Les Roseaux sauvages"] (1995) {110' }

WEEK XIII (Tuesday April 6): **The New Generation I**

- Krzysztof Kieslowski, *The Double Life of Veronique* ["La double vie de Véronique"] (1991) {96' } OR *White* ["Blanc"] (1993) {92' }

WEEK XIV (Tuesday April 12): **The New Generation II**

- Claude Sautet, *A Heart in Winter* ["Un Cœur en hiver"] (1993) {105' }
- **Critical Response Paper 3** is due in class on Thursday April 14

WEEK XV (Tuesday April 19): **The New Generation III**

- Jean-Pierre Jeunet et Marc Caro, *Delicatessen* (1991) {95' }