# Introduction to Film History

## Prof. Maria Francesca Piredda; Prof. Andrea Chimento

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the requisite historical, linguistic and theoretical tools for learning about and understanding international cinema, from its origins to the present day, and for interpreting cinematic works, both as aesthetic-cultural and economic and social products.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

* recognise and understand the main expressive forms in the history of cinema (Knowledge and ability to understand);
* understand the developments within the field of audio-visual arts (Ability to learn);
* interpret and analyse a cinematographic text in depth (Applied knowledge and understanding);
* develop communicative and expressive skills in cinematography (Communicative ability).

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will take a diachronic and synchronic approach to exploring the various eras including the most important works to come out of various countries within the canon of Western cinematography, with a particular focus on forms of representation developed within genre and auteur cinema. The history of cinema will also be addressed through the filter of the main film festivals at international level: The analysis of certain representative films will serve to reveal both the linguistic and aesthetic developments of the medium and the cultural, political and economic forces that governed the circulation of works among the public.

The course is divided into two modules, one per semester.

Module 1

This module covers the main stages of cinema development, from its origins to World War II (30 hours) and includes a single-subject focus on five films presented in the main film festivals of the ‘30s and ‘40s.

Module 2

This module covers the history of cinema from the post-World War II period to nowadays, with a monographic focus on five films presented at some of the main international festivals of the second post-war period.

***READING LIST***

*Students taking the 6 ECTS-credit exam*

D. Bordwell-K. Thompson, *Storia del cinema. Un’introduzione*, edited by D. Bruni-E. Mosconi, 5e, McGraw Hill, Milan, 2022 (chaps. 1-10 + Appendice).

M.F. Piredda, *I festival del cinema in Italia. Forme e pratiche dalle origini al Covid-19*, Carocci, Rome, 2022, pp. 7-143.

Details of any supplementary reading material will be published on the course Blackboard page and provided during lectures.

The following films in full, available from the university media library (the *Medioteca*):

*A me la libertà* (*À nous la libertè*, René Clair, 1931)

*Accadde una notte* (*It Happened One Night*, Frank Capra, 1934)

*Lo squadrone bianco* (*Id.*,Augusto Genina, 1936)

*La grande illusione* (*La grand illusion*, Jean Renoir, 1937)

*Giorni perduti* (*The Lost Weekend*, Billy Wilder, 1945)

*Students taking the 12 ECTS-credit exam*

D. Bordwell-K. Thompson, *Storia del cinema. Un’introduzione*, edited by di D. Bruni-E. Mosconi, 6e, McGraw Hill, Milan, 2022, (chaps. 1-16 and 19-20 + Appendice).

M.F. Piredda, *I festival del cinema in Italia. Forme e pratiche dalle origini al Covid-19*, Carocci, Roma, 2022, pp. 7-143.

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*La grande illusione* (*La grand illusion*, Jean Renoir, 1937)

*Giorni perduti* (*The Lost Weekend*, Billy Wilder, 1945)

*Germania anno zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1949)

*Il posto delle fragole* (*Smultronstället*, Ingmar Bergman, 1957)

*Donne sull’orlo di una crisi di nervi* (*Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*, Pedro Almodovar, 1988)

*Le iene* (*Reservoir Dogs*, Quentin Tarantino, 1992)

*Roma* (*Id.*, Alfonso Cuaron, 2018)

*Non-attending students*

As well as the texts and films indicated above, students must also contact the lecturer to arrange a specific syllabus.

*Erasmus students*

Erasmus students are invited to set up an ad hoc syllabus in agreement with the lecturer.

***TEACHING METHOD***

* Frontal lectures, during which audio-visual material will be presented and analysed.
* Distance-learning activities (on course texts and the materials available on the course Blackboard page).
* An optional additional seminar (in the second semester, solely for students taking 12 ECTS).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

At the end of each semester, there will be a written interim test - open to attending students only - comprising open questions on the chapters of the course textbook. The mark achieved will be supplemented by means of a final oral test on the films and the single-subject course text. From the official exam dates, non-attending students will also be able to divide the whole syllabus into partial tests (a written one on the textbook; an oral one on the other sections).

Generally, the textbook-based assessment is worth 70% of the final mark, with the assessment on the single-subject part of the course accounting for the remaining 30%. Participation in the supplementary seminar – in Semester 2 - will be worth one point for the 12-ECTS students, to be added to the marks achieved in the other tests.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students who, for good reason, are unable to attend the course must contact the lecturer at the beginning of the year.

Information on enrolment, attendance and exams will be provided at the start of lectures.

Students are strongly encouraged to regularly check the lecturers’ webpage and the course Blackboard page to keep themselves informed on any communications, clarifications, course materials or updates.

As this is an introductory course, there are no prerequisites. However, the concepts and methods presented in Module 1 prepare students for the content of Module 2. For this reason, students taking the course to complete their degree curriculum (6 ECTS credits) are obliged to take Module 1.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.