EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: FILM
[V55.0750]

Spring 2003

Professor: Bill Simon
Preceptors: Kenneth Crab
Talitha Espiritu
Steven Schneider

Office Hours:
Tuesday, 10:00-11:30
TBA
TBA

Course Syllabus

Course Requirements:                     Grade Distribution:

* 4 brief (1-page) response essays        10%
* 2 brief (3-page) essays                20%
* 1 Mid-Term exam                        20%
* 1 Final essay take-home exam (10 pages) 40%
* Class participation                    10%

Course Policies:

Attendance to all lectures and recitation sections is mandatory. We shall 
take attendance in each class, and three or more unexcused absences 
will result in a lowering of your grade.

All work must be handed in on time except in the case of serious illness, 
medical emergency, or some other compelling mitigating circumstances. 
Failure to hand in work on time will result in the lowering of your grade. 
Incomplete grades and extensions will not be given without documented 
evidence of hardship (e.g., medical problems).

Plagiarism (quoting, presenting, or paraphrasing someone else’s ideas as 
if they were your own without appropriate footnote and bibliographic 
citation) will result in a grade of F.

Educational Objectives:

This course will examine the career of Orson Welles as a case study for 
understanding film as an art form and as an instance of cultural 
production. We shall especially emphasize the relation of Welles’ films 
(and his theatre and radio work) to the multiple historical, political, and 
cultural discourses during the time in which he worked—for example, 
relating his work in the 1930s to New Deal culture and in the 1940s to 
Cold War culture. In pursuing the study of film in this manner, this

Continued on next page
course proposes a central methodology for understanding films as well as other artistic and cultural products. In addition, because Welles worked in radio, theater, and television as well as film, and because his productions often involved adaptation from novel or drama to film or radio, we shall examine the relationship of film to other art forms, both in terms of how film shares qualities with other arts and is autonomous from them. In terms of this latter emphasis, we shall develop an understanding of the specificity of film form and style, and the critical vocabulary we use to understand them. This will lead to close textual and formal analyses of the narrative structure and style of Welles’ work and an understanding of Welles’ historical role in the transformation of film form. In relation to this latter issue, we shall consider Welles’ specific relations to recent filmmakers. Finally, Welles’ career raises questions of relevance to an understanding of film and art in the contemporary world (for example, the relation of High Culture to Popular Culture); we shall consider the status of such issues in Welles’ work as a way of addressing these concerns in contemporary culture.

The following books are required for the course and are available for purchase at the N.Y.U. Bookstore, 18 Washington Place:


All other readings listed below are available in a photocopy packet available for purchase at Unique Copy Center, 252 Greene Street (between Waverly Place and 8th Street). These readings will also be on reserve at Bobst Library.

Course Schedule

January 22: Introduction to course subject matter and methodology

Screenings: Ed Wood (excerpt) (Tim Burton, 1994)
Heavenly Creatures (excerpt) (Peter Jackson, 1994)

Readings:


Continued on next page
• For recitation sections on January 23:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 249-290, 2-37.

January 27:  *Citizen Kane*

Screenings:  *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

January 29:  Orson Welles’ Theatre Career (1934-40) and New Deal Culture

Screenings:  *The Hearts of Age*  (Orson Welles, 1934)

Assignment:  Response Paper

Readings:


• For recitation sections on January 30:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 156-192, 291-326

February 3:  Orson Welles’ Radio Career: Storytelling

Radio Plays:  Excerpts from *Dracula, Treasure Island, Algiers, Huckleberry Finn*

Readings:

Naremore, pp. 13-17


Continued on next page
February 5:  Orson Welles and the Golden Age of Radio: Documentary Imagination

Radio Plays:  Excerpts from *Fall of the City, The March of Time,* and *The War of the Worlds*

Screening:  *The War of the Worlds* Press Conference

Readings:


- For Recitation Sections on February 6
  
  Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 193-248.


Screening:  *Citizen Kane* (excerpts)

Readings:

Orson Welles, "Introductory Sequence of the Unproduced *Heart of Darkness.*" *Film Comment,* vol. 8, no. 4 (November 1972), pp. 24-26.


Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 59-92, 332-339

Naremore, pp. 17-83

February 12:  *Citizen Kane* (con’d)

Screenings:  *Citizen Kane* (excerpts)

Assignment:  Short Essay based on film excerpt shown in sections Feb 13

Continued on next page
Readings:


February 17: Holiday (President Day)

February 19: It's All True and Pan-Americanism; Radio and War Propaganda

Screening: Four Men on a Raft (American Film Institute, 1993)

Radio: Hello Americans (excerpts)

Readings:


February 24: The Magnificent Ambersons and Cultural Transformation

Screening: The Magnificent Ambersons (Orson Welles, 1942)

Readings:

Naremore, pp. 84-110


February 26: The Magnificent Ambersons (con'd)

Screenings: The Magnificent Ambersons (excerpts)
March 3: Cold War Culture: *The Stranger* and the Threat of Fascism in American

**Screening:** *The Stranger* (Orson Welles, 1946)

**Readings:**

Bordwell and Thompson pp. 95-109


Orson Welles, "Survival of Fascism." Unpublished manuscripts—draft

March 5: *The Stranger* (con’d)

**Screenings:** *The Stranger* (excerpts)  
*Nosferatu* (excerpts) (F.W. Murnau, 1922)

March 10: *Macbeth* as Film Noir

**Screening:** *Macbeth* (Orson Welles, 1948)

**Readings:**

Naremore, pp. 136-45.


March 12: Shakespeare on Screen

**Screenings:** *Henry V* (excerpt) (Laurence Olivier, 1945)  
*Henry V* (excerpt) (Kenneth Branagh, 1989)  
*Macbeth* (excerpt) (Roman Polanski, 1971)  
*Throne of Blood* (excerpt) (Akira Kurosawa, 1957)  
*William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet* (excerpt)  
(Baz Luhrman, 1996)  
*Shakespeare in Love* (excerpt) (John Madden, 1997)

**Mid-Term exam in sections on March 13**

Continued on next page
March 17 & 19: Spring Break

March 24: *Around the World* and International Discourse; *The Lady from Shanghai* and Noir Narrative

Screening: *The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles, 1948)

Readings:
Naremore, pp. 125-36, 271-76.

March 26: *The Lady from Shanghai* (con’d)

Screening: *The Lady from Shanghai* (excerpts)

Readings:

March 31: Welles as Expatriate: Post-War Europe and *The Third Man*

Screening: *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949)

Readings:
Naremore, pp. 172-76.


April 2: Othello and Montage

Screening: *Othello* (Orson Welles, 1949-52)

Assignment: Response Paper

Readings:
Naremore, pp. 176-82.

Continued on next page

April 7: Mr. Arkadin and Parody

Screening: Mr. Arkadin (Orson Welles, 1955)

Readings:


Naremore, pp. 182-94.


April 9: Mr. Arkadin (con’d)

Screenings: Mr. Arkadin (excerpts) Alphaville (excerpts) (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)

Readings:


April 14: Return to America: Touch of Evil

Screenings: Orson Welles Sketchbook (1955) Touch of Evil (Orson Welles, 1958)

Assignment: Short essay

Readings:

Naremore, pp. 182-94.


April 16: Touch of Evil (con’d)

Continued on next page
Screening: *Touch of Evil* (excerpts)

Readings:


**April 21:** Welles and European Art Cinema: *The Trial*

**Screening:** *The Trial* (Orson Welles, 1962)

**Assignment:** Response Paper

**Readings:**


**April 23:** *The Trial* (con’d)

**Screenings:** *The Trial* (excerpts)
*F for Fake* (1973) (excerpts)

**Readings:**


**April 28:** Welles Requiem: *Chimes at Midnight*

**Screening:** *Chimes at Midnight* (Orson Welles, 1966)

**Readings:**

Naremore, pp. 215-34.


**April 30:** *Chimes at Midnight*

**Screening:** *Chimes at Midnight* (excerpts)

Continued on next page
Readings:


May 5: Intertextuality: *My Own Private Idaho*

Screening: *My Own Private Idaho* (Gus Van Sant, 1991)

Assignment: Take Home Essay Exam