EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: FILM
[V55.0750]  
SPRING 2004

Professor: Bill Simon  
Preceptors: Irene Garcia-Rodriguez  
Ragan Rhyne  
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Office Hours:  
Monday, 10:00-11:30  
TBA  
TBA  
TBA

Course Syllabus

Course Requirements:  
* 4 brief (1-page) response essays  
* 2 brief (3-page) essays  
* 1 Mid-Term exam  
* 1 Final essay take-home exam (8-10 pages)  
* Class participation

Grade Distribution:  
10%  
20%  
20%  
40%  
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 course proposes a central methodology for understanding films as well as other artistic and cultural products. In addition, because Welles worked in

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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:


The additional readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available in a photocopy packet available for purchase at Unique Copy Center, 252 Greene Street (between Waverly Place and 8th Street). These are required readings and will also be available on reserve in Bobst Library. The items on the syllabus which do not have an asterisk beside them are supplementary readings, they are not included in the photocopy packet but are on reserve at Bobst Library. You should make every effort to read these materials as well.

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**Course Schedule**

**January 21:**

*Introduction to course subject matter and methodology*

**Screenings:**

*Ed Wood* (excerpt) (Tim Burton, 1994)

*Heavenly Creatures* (excerpt) (Peter Jackson, 1994)

**Readings:**


- For recitation sections on January 22 & 23:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 294-333, 2-45.

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January 26:  *Citizen Kane*

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

January 28:  Orson Welles' Theatre Career (1934-40) and New Deal Culture

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

**Assignment:** Response Paper

**Readings:** Naremore, pp. 1-13.


- For recitation sections on January 29 & 30:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 176-228, 347-388

February 2:  Orson Welles' Radio Career: Storytelling

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

**Readings:** Naremore, pp. 13-17


February 4:  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*

**Assignment:** Response Paper.

**Screening:** *The War of the Worlds* Press Conference

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- For Recitation Sections on February 5 & 6

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 229-293.

**February 9:** Welles in Hollywood: The Heart of Darkness Project, Citizen Kane Revisited

**Screening:** Citizen Kane (excerpts)


Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 68-105, 394-401

Naremore, pp. 17-83

**February 11:** Citizen Kane (con’d)

**Screenings:** Citizen Kane (excerpts)

**Assignment:** Short Essay based on film excerpt shown in sections Feb 12 & 13


February 16:  Holiday (President Day)

February 18:  *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)


February 23:  *The Magnificent Ambersons* and Cultural Transformation

Screening:  *The Magnificent Ambersons*  (Orson Welles, 1942)

Readings:  Naremore, pp. 84-110


February 24:  *The Magnificent Ambersons* (con’d)

Screenings:  *The Magnificent Ambersons*  (excerpts)

March 1:  Cold War Culture:  *The Stranger* and the Threat of Fascism in American

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

Readings:  Bordwell and Thompson pp. 107-127


*Orson Welles, “Survival of Fascism.” Unpublished manuscripts—draft*
March 3:  
*The Stranger* (con’d)

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

March 8:  
*Macbeth* as Film Noir

Screening:  
*Macbeth* (Orson Welles, 1948)

Readings:  
Naremore, pp. 136-45.


March 10:  
Shakespeare on Screen

Screenings:  
*Hamlet* (excerpt) (Laurence Olivier, 1948)  
*Hamlet* (excerpt) (Kenneth Branagh, 1996)  
*Romeo & Juliet* (excerpts) (Franco Zeffirelli, 1968)  
*West Side Story* (excerpts) (Jerome Robbins & Robert Wise, 1961)  
*William Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet* (excerpts)  
(Baz Luhrman, 1996)  
*Shakespeare in Love* (excerpt) (John Madden, 1997)  
*Throne of Blood* (excerpt) (Akira Kurosawa, 1957)

**Mid-Term exam in sections on March 11 & 12**

March 15 & 17:  
Spring Break

March 22:  
*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 24:  
*The Lady from Shanghai* (con’d)

Screening:  
*The Lady from Shanghai* (excerpts)

March 29: Welles as Expatriate: Post-War Europe and The Third Man
Screening: The Third Man (Carol Reed, 1949)
Readings: Naremore, pp. 172-76.


March 31: Othello and Montage
Screening: Othello (Orson Welles, 1949-52)
Assignment: Response Paper
Readings: Naremore, pp. 176-82.


April 5: Mr. Arkadin and Parody
Screening: Mr. Arkadin (Orson Welles, 1955)

Naremore, pp. 182-94.


April 7: Mr. Arkadin (con'd)
Screenings: Mr. Arkadin (excerpts)
Alphaville (excerpts) (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)

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April 12: 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 14: *Touch of Evil* (con’d)

**Screening:**  
*Touch of Evil* (excerpts)

**Readings:**  


April 19: Welles and European Art Cinema: *The Trial*

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

**Assignment:** Response Paper

**Readings:**  

April 21: *The Trial* (con’d)

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

**Readings:**  

April 26: Welles Requiem: *Chimes at Midnight*

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

**Readings:**  
Naremore, pp. 215-34.

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April 28:  
**Screening:**  
*Chimes at Midnight* (excerpts)

**Readings:**  


May 3:  
**Intertextuality: My Own Private Idaho**

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

**Assignment:**  
Take Home Essay Exam

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