

American Film Institute's Top 100

Student taught course, spring 2010

Student instructor: Christian Griset (senior, Physics)

Sponsoring Professor: Robert Rosenstone

Course description:

In this course we will study nine films on the American Film Institute's list, "100 Movies, 100 Years", ranging from Modern Times to Pulp Fiction. The course will introduce students to the elements of film making and storytelling which solidified these films in cinematic history (e.g. Orson Welles' innovative techniques to manipulate camera angles in Citizen Kane; camera induced tension in 12 Angry Men; the driving dialogue in Pulp Fiction). Each week will be structured as to watch a film followed by a class discussion lead by the instructor. The films are chosen from my judgment of what students will find most interesting and on the ease of being able to appreciate technical aspects of each film.

Tentative film schedule by week:

1. 12 Angry Men
2. Raging Bull
3. Modern Times
4. Apocalypse Now
5. Citizen Kane
6. Do the Right Thing
7. Duck Soup
8. The Unforgiven
9. Pulp Fiction
10. Class discussion of Pulp Fiction

Grading:

Grading will be broken up into three equal parts among in-class/homework assignments, class participation, and a final essay. A passing grade is 67%.

Homework and assignments:

Before watching each film, I will hand out a list of questions the students can choose to answer either during the movie or as homework. The questions will be designed to prepare the student for the discussion following the film, for which I will have a list of prepared topics on important aspects which helped define its role in cinema. The participation grade will be based on quantity. The idea is to get people thinking and express their own point of view, since film impacts everyone differently. The final essay will be a two page minimum (more is welcome) analysis of Pulp Fiction, as I believe students will find it relatively easy to analyze from a

technical perspective. The paper can be on anything the student wants, from character development to plot devices to recurring themes. The paper will be due on the last class, which will be spent discussing this film.