

Course Abstract

If you need accommodations due to a disability, contact Disability Services in Edison Hall Room 100, 732.906.2546.

To foster a productive learning environment, the College requires that all students adhere to the Code of Student Conduct which is published in the college catalog and website.

Course ID and Name: ENG 265 Survey of Great Cinema Directors

Department: English

Chairperson or Course Coordinator: Daniel Zimmerman

Office Location: RH 236

E-mail Address: DZimmerman@middlesexcc.edu

Telephone: 732.906.2591

Prerequisites: ENG 122 of permission of Department Chairperson **Co-requisites:**

Course Description:

This study of the director—the basis and explanation of his/her creative process—offers a critical approach to studying the relationship between the personal, theoretical, social and historical elements in creating art, specifically motion pictures. This course surveys the great cinema directors, whose body of work has elevated film to the level of art, affording them the title of “auteur.” Each has made a noteworthy, enduring and influential contribution to the development of film and the film industry. Each has directed a consistent body of work with a number of great movies, displays his/her own original style that has influenced other directors, and displays his/her own personal stamp that cuts across films, genres, and decades.

General Education Status:

Credits: 3 **Lecture Hours:** 3 **Lab Hours:** 0

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the unique, representative qualities of various “auteur” directors and their films, including aesthetic and technological methods, mise en scene, images, genres, stories, themes, cast and crew.
2. Recognize and appraise the director’s influence in shaping the overall production of a film, translating it from a written script to the screen.
3. Identify and discuss major developments in a director’s career.
4. Identify, analyze and assess representative examples of films throughout a director’s career.
5. Assess examples of classic films by auteurs, orally and in writing, analyzing and critiquing them from various perspectives: aesthetic, technological, historical, social, and economic.

Course Content Areas:

1. The Role of the Director: Who is the director, importance of the director, director's requirements and responsibilities, director's vision, telling the story with the camera, creating the mise en scene.
2. Auteur Theory: Definition: *Cahiers du Cinema* articles by Truffaut, Bazin, Chabrol, Godard and Rohmer. What makes a great director? 50 greatest directors.
3. Selected Great Directors and their Works:
 - John Ford: Literary adaptations, Westerns, naturalistic style, reflections of the American past. *The Searchers, The Quiet Man, The Grapes of Wrath*
 - Alfred Hitchcock: Thrillers, emphasis on camera angles, details and atmosphere, mistaken identity, guilt, master of audience manipulation. *Rebecca, Vertigo, Psycho*
 - Orson Welles: Creative artistic vision, experimentation with storytelling and visual techniques, plot structures, camera angles, lighting and shadow. *Citizen Kane, Touch of Evil, The Lady from Shanghai*
 - Akira Kurosawa: Epics of the ancient past and neo-realistic depictions of contemporary Japanese life, classic literary adaptations, physical and spiritual themes concerning moral conflicts of action. *Rashomon, Seven Samurai, Ran*
 - Federico Fellini: Autobiographical elements, depictions of "outsiders" in Italian society, mix of neo-realism with surrealism. *Nights of Cabiria, La Dolce Vita, Amarcord*
 - Francois Truffaut: Defines auteur in "Politique des Auteurs," New Wave cinema, emphasis on character as central to film construction. *The 400 Blows, Shoot the Piano Player, Day for Night*
 - Martin Scorsese: Modern urban sensibility, naturalism, themes of moral conflicts, masculinity, cultural identity and crime, improvisation, focus on character, varied genres. *Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, The Departed*