

**CTCS 501 (18161R) *World Cinema Before 1945***  
**Thursday 10:00 am -1:50 pm**  
**2 units**

Professor Vicki Callahan

**Office Hours:** Monday: 4:00-5:00 pm and Thursday: 2:00-3:00 pm  
and by appointment, office hours will be on Zoom

**Sign up in Blackboard or Calendly:** <https://calendly.com/vcallahan>

**email:** vcallahan@cinema.usc.edu

*World Cinema Before 1945* investigates the beginnings of the cinema from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of World War II. We approach our exploration of cinema through the lens of a series of “local histories.” That is, we examine the complex array of social, cultural, economic and aesthetic factors shaping the development of cinema along paths sometimes not taken or overlooked. While cinema history often privileges a monolithic account of Hollywood filmmaking and sites of authorship, the turn to “local histories” offers a place of disruption of singular narratives by valuing different sites, kinds, and outcomes of labor as well as labor rendered invisible via capital or historical accounts. The course examines U.S., national, and international film movements, often in complex conversation but without a default toward any particular filmmaking style or industrial model.

The course addresses issues regarding early cinema “attractions” and the development of “classical” style, the transition to sound, along with various political and “national” film movements. We look at sites of authorship beyond the director and directors less well-known in received or conventional film history.

This course offers Critical Studies MA students an overview and PhD students the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and engage in further research on topics related to this period. MFA students will learn about the cultural and social context in which film emerged and familiarize themselves with filmmaking styles across time and in different locations.

**Required Texts:**

Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey. *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (New York and London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999) (OHC) Available online,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/socal/detail.action?docID=431159>

Additional readings will be available either in pdf or online format



## Assignments:

**Presence/Prep/Community: 30 points;** contributions to our community/discussion/feedback on projects, etc. This includes your prep for each session using weekly reading or screening with some brief informal notes. 2 points per week.

**Media Remix: 35 points:** Individual Projects with remix of your choice (at least two media in conversation, text and image, sound and image, etc) with short reflection.

**Research Project: 35 points,** Individual or in Groups of 2 with selection options: Curation (with written component), Essay, Video (with written component), or Marketing Campaign (deck + proposal)

**Karma points (extra credit) may be added at any time for any assignment!**

## Course Ethos

**Presence, Participation, and Community:** We are building a space to discuss, create, and provide feedback in a supportive context. You are encouraged to go deeply into the what and why of your research, thinking, writing, making, and our sessions are designed to help facilitate your process. Our class depends on group work, ongoing feedback, and community building, which makes your attendance and contributions key. Join us in class. If you miss a class, please notify me and be sure to get any notes and assignments from your colleagues. We also cover subject matter that is often provocative and can challenge our worldviews. Lively debate is expected and encouraged with all points of view welcome. Our conversations are grounded in love and respect for our colleagues. Research, imagination, and careful analysis are the foundations on which we build community.

**Content Notice:** The work in our class involves the engagement of material that can at times be difficult, painful, or stressful to encounter. We may at times deal with issues of oppression across race, gender, class as well as other areas of oppression (e.g., ethnicity, age, nationality, ability) with the intent to understand our current context and future possibilities. I will do my best to provide warnings whenever I can. If for some reason, you want or need to miss material due to the topic or approach, please connect with me to consider alternatives. **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment:** The sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment is prohibited and against USC university policy.

*SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

## Course Schedule: Subject to Change

### Week 1, Jan 13: Who Writes History?

Course Logistics and Intro to Local Film Histories

#### In class Reading:

- \* Michel Rolph Trouillot, selections from *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*
- \* Ayesha Adu, “The Power to Tell Everyone’s Story: An Interview with Cheryl Dunye” <https://walkerart.org/magazine/cheryl-dunye-stranger-inside-interview>
- \* Kyna Morgan, Aimee Dixon, “African American Women in the Silent Film Industry” [https://wfpp.columbia.edu/essay/african-american-women-in-the-silent-film-industry/#Who was the First African American Female Filmmaker](https://wfpp.columbia.edu/essay/african-american-women-in-the-silent-film-industry/#Who%20was%20the%20First%20African%20American%20Female%20Filmmaker)

#### In class Screening:

*Watermelon Woman* 1996, Cheryl Dunye

### For Week 2,

#### Read:

- \* OHC, pages 13-42
- \* Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde, (PDF on Blackboard)
- \* Allyson Nadia Field “Introduction” to *Uplift Cinema*, pgs. 1-28. (PDF)

### Week 2, Jan 20: Early Cinema: Forms, Uses, Audiences

#### In Class Screen:

Selection of early films including work by Alice Guy, Georges Méliès, Edwin Porter, Mack Sennett, Lois Weber

### For Week 3

#### Read:

- \* Muriel Andrin, “Back to the Slap: Slapstick’s Hyperbolic Gesture and the Rhetoric of Violence” (PDF)
- \* Kristen Anderson Wagner, “Have Women a Sense of Humor: Comedy and Femininity in Early Twentieth Century Film” (PDF)

### Week 3, Jan 27: The “Hyperbolic Bodies” and Ironic Twists of Slapstick Screening:

*The Immigrant*, Chaplin, 1917

*Cops*, Buster Keaton, 1922

Mabel Normand short films including *The Nickel Hopper*, Jones, 1926

### For Week 4

#### Read:

- \* OHC, 105-123

\*Robin Walz, "Serial Killings: Fantômas, Feuillade and the Mass Culture Genealogy of Surrealism" *The Velvet Light Trap*, 37, 1996: 51-57. (pdf)

\*Vicki Callahan, "Screening Musidora: Inscribing Indeterminacy in Film History" *Camera Obscura* 48 February 2002. 58-81. Pdf

#### **Week 4, Feb 3: The Cinema of Uncertainty**

##### **In Class Screening:**

Selections from *Fantômas* (1913); *Les Vampires* (1914), Louis Feuillade

##### **For Week 5**

##### **Read:**

Stewart, Jacqueline. "'We Were Never Immigrants': Oscar Micheaux and the Reconstruction of Black American Identity." In *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity*, 219-44. University of California Press, 2005. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppd3z.13>.

And

Green, J. Ronald. "Middle Class Cinema" in *The Straight Lick: The Cinema of Oscar Micheaux*" (Chapter 6) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/socal/reader.action?docID=3014828&ppg=104>

#### **Week 5, Feb 10: Counter and Corrective Cinema**

##### **In class Screen:**

*Within Our Gates*, Oscar Micheaux, 1920

*Clips from:*

*Commandment Keeper Church*, Zora Neale Hurston, 1940 (Kanopy)

*Hellbound Train*, Gist

##### **For Week 6**

##### **Read:**

OHC, 136-151 (German National Cinema)

Selections from *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*

#### **Week 6, Feb 17: Artists and Aesthetics**

##### **Screen:**

*The Last Laugh*, 1924, FW Murnau

**Experimental film of 20s and 30s**

*Symphonie Diagonalee*, 1923

*Rhythmus 21*, Richter, 1921

*Vormittagsspuk*, Richter, 1928

##### **For Week 7**

##### **Media Remix Due**

#### **Week 7, Feb 24: Media Remix Due**

##### **Sharing session of projects**

##### **Screen if time:**

*White Fawn's Devotion*, James Young Deer, 1910

*The Flying Ace*, Richard E. Norman, 1926

### **For Week 8**

#### **Read:**

\*OHC 159-173 (Pre-Soviet and Soviet Cinema)

\*Chapter 3, "Female Creativity in the Wake of Censorship, Consolidation, and Disney," from Michele Leigh and Lori Mjolsness, *She Animates: Gendered Russian and Soviet Animation*

#### **Browse:**

<http://greatwomenanimators.com>

### **Week 8, March 3: Soviet Montage/Early Women Animators**

*Bed and Sofa*, Abram Room, 1927

*Chess Fever*, V. Pudovkin, 1925

*The Cameraman's Revenge*, Ladislav Starevich, 1912

Soviet era women in animation, Screen on Youtube

### **For Week 9**

#### **Read:**

\*OHC: 409-412 (China before 1949)

\*Miriam Hansen, "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism," *Film Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 10-22.

\* Kristine Harris, "The Goddess: Fallen Woman of Shanghai," *Chinese Films in Focus II*. Bloomsbury, 2008: 128-136.

### **Week 9, March 10: Melodrama and Vernacular Modernism**

#### **In Class Screen:**

*The Goddess*, Wu Yonggang, China, 1934

### **For Week 10 (due after Spring break)**

#### **Read:**

\*Jean Epstein, "Magnification." In *French Film Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by Richard Abel, 235-239. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993. (Cinégraphie and the Search for Specificity pdf of Abel)

\*Germaine Dulac, "The Expressive Techniques of the Cinema" In *French Film Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by Richard Abel, 305-314. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993. (Cinégraphie and the Search for Specificity pdf of Abel)

\*Jean Epstein, "On Certain Characteristics of Photogénie" In *French Film Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by Richard Abel, 314-318. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993. (Cinégraphie and the Search for Specificity pdf)

\*Fischer, Lucy. "René Clair, 'Le Million,' and the Coming of Sound." *Cinema journal* 16, no. 2 (1977): 34-50.

### **Spring Break: March 13-20**

### **Week 10, March 24: Experiments in Image and Sound**

#### **In class screen:**

*Le Million*, René Clair, 1931

*Smiling Madame Beudet*, Germaine Dulac, 1923: *Menilmontant*, Dimitri Kirsanoff, 1924

### **For Week 11**

\*OHC: Selection from *The Studio Years*: Thomas Schatz, "Hollywood, The Triumph of the

Studio System” 220-234 and Richard Maltby, “Censorship and Self-Regulation” 235-248 (please read at least two of the inserts on stars in the section).

\* “Dorothy Parker’s Wit and Tragic Life” <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20170605-dorothy-parkers-stunning-wit-and-tragic-life>

\* <https://dorothyparker.com>, browse this website and listen to this short radio play: <https://dorothyparker.com/2020/05/listen-to-radio-play.html>

### **Week 11, March 31: Tracing Signatures across a System**

#### **In Class Screen:**

*A Star is Born*, 1937, Dorothy Parker, screenwriter

#### **For Week 12**

\*OHC: 427-435 (Cinema in Latin America)

\*Jacqueline Avila, “Juxtaposing Teatro de Revista and Cine: Music in the 1930s Comedia Ranchera.” *The Journal of Film Music* 5, no. 1-2 (2012): 121–126.

\*Garcia, Desirée J. “Not a Musical in Any Sense of the Word: *Alla En El Rancho Grande* Crosses the Border” in *The Migration of Musical Film: from Ethnic Margins to American Mainstream* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014.

### **Week 12, April 7: Border Crossings**

#### **In Class Screen**

*Alla En El Rancho Grande*, Fernando de Fuentes, 1936

#### **For Week 13:**

#### **Read:**

\*OHC: 344-349, inserts on Renoir 338-9 and Trauner, 346

\*Ginette Vincendeau, “Community, Nostalgia, and the Spectacle of Masculinity: Jean Gabin”

\*Laura Horak, selection from *Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934*

### **Week 13, April 14 International Stars and Cultural History**

#### **In Class Screen:**

*La Jour Se Lève*, Marcel Carné, 1939

*The Life and Death of 9413: a Hollywood Extra*, Robert Florey and Slavko Vorkapich, 1928  
Clips from *Morocco* and *Queen Christina*

#### **For Week 14**

#### **Read**

\*Selection from Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, Chapter 15, (Selznick and Hitchcock)

\*Selection from Christina Lane’s *Phantom Lady: Hollywood Producer, Joan Harrison, the Forgotten Woman Behind Alfred Hitchcock* (prologue and Chapter on *Rebecca*)

### **Week 14 April 21: Film Authorship**

#### **In Class Screen:**

*Rebecca*, 1940, Hitchcock

## **For Week 15:**

### **Research Projects due with short presentation**

#### **Suggested Reading, not required:**

Christopher Sterba, “I Ought to Know How to Talk to Negroes, A New Understanding of Spencer Williams, Jr.’s Life and Work in Film,” *California History*, 2019 pdf

## **Week 15, April 28: Research Projects due with presentation and feedback**

### *Screen if time*

*The Blood of Jesus*, Spencer Williams 1941

### **Final Exam Week – Wellness Time!**

## **COVID-19 Information for On Campus Activities**

USC has COVID-19 and health protocols requirements for in person | on campus attendance. Please consult the [USC COVID-19 resource center website](#) for the latest COVID-19 testing and health protocol requirements. Requirements are continuously updated so please check frequently. Students are expected to follow the [University’s Expectations on Student Behavior](#).

Students should also stay informed with the “We Are USC” portal: <https://we-are.usc.edu/students/>

## **Course Policies and Additional Info/Resources:**

### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### **Statement on Fair Use:**

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. Projects are produced with fair use doctrines in mind using its four pillars: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Generally speaking, this means you must only use as much of a copyrighted work as is necessary to make your point, and you must cite your sources accordingly.

### **Citation Guidelines:**

We assert that work produced in our classes is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects must include academically appropriate

citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The References section is either included in the project itself or as a separate document, as appropriate. For citation purposes, please use Chicago or MLA style format. You may find information on either at [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

### **Research:**

Need to do research but don't know where to start? Searching for a book, article, or data to support your argument? Not sure how to cite a source in your bibliography? Ask a librarian! Research help is available:

- In person and by phone, chat and email at Ask a Librarian
- Through research guides and FAQs
- By contacting your subject librarian USC Libraries: <https://libraries.usc.edu/>

### **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health* - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*Student Health Leave Coordinator* – 213-821-4710  
<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call [studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- based harm.

*USC Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)*- (213) 740-5086 | *Title IX* – (213) 821-8298  
[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.



*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

A venue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Service - (213) 740-0776*

<https://osas.usc.edu>

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu),*

[emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu) Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu) Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*

[ombuds.usc.edu](http://ombuds.usc.edu)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concerns.

