MOVIE PROJECT

Description

The movie project will be an opportunity to creatively respond to the ideas discussed in class using a sustained example of your choosing. You will focus on a genre, director, specific film, or combinations of all three to examine in-depth in both a research paper and short iMovie project. The projects should be detailed and well focused on a specific element, theme, question, or set of questions—e.g.,

- How do Quentin Tarantino's films borrow from multiple genres (spaghetti western, Blaxploitation, grindhouse, war, revenge, noir) yet create one coherent directorial style?
- Women's roles in gangster movies: What roles are available to women in gangster movies? How does this communicate a larger set of values within the "gangster" universe? Are there any examples that break the trend? If so, perhaps you would only mention this in passing in your paper, but have it be the main focus of your short movie.
- Slapstick comedy: You might focus in on the differences between slapstick and other forms of comedy, slapstick's historical heyday, and The Three Stooges as a paradigmatic example.

Relationship between Paper and Movie

The movie and paper should be complementary, but not redundant. The movie should emerge out of your research, reading and viewing, or should be a creative exploration of the topic, but should not merely repeat what you wrote in the paper. It will be informed by it, but not limited to it. For example, if you write about slapstick as a form of comedy, its historical emergence, what theorists have said about why it was popular and the philosophical purposes of comedy in general and slapstick comedy in particular, you will probably mention the Three Stooges. You might even describe an example or two from their movies. In your short film, you might re-enact a couple Stooges scenes with your friends, then describe how the Three Stooges enacted general principles of slapstick, what their most popular movies were, and comedic descendants of the Three Stooges. You would be explaining the "general" ideas of slapstick that you wrote about in your paper, but in an abbreviated way, and through the specific example of the Three Stooges. Furthermore, you would be adding new content to your project about the Three Stooges that you did not cover in your research paper.

Timeline

M 9/19	**Topics chosen** (4 weeks until research paper due)
W 10/12	iMovie workshop
M 10/17	**Research Paper due** (4 weeks until movie draft due)
M 10/24	**Script due**
M 11/14	**Draft of Movie due** (2 weeks until final draft due)
	Peer Critique Session
M 11/28	**All Movies due**
	Filmmaker's Note due
	Student Film Fest
W 11/30	Student Film Fest
M 12/5	Student Film Fest

Grading/Expectations

1. Topic Chosen, due 9/19

Brief verbal report of specific topic for both your research paper and your short movie. If absent, email short description by 4pm. Required, ungraded. Topic suggestions at end of document.

2. Research Paper, due 10/17

Paper should be 8 (full) - 10 pages (not including bibliography), double-spaced, with 12 pt. Times New Roman font and one-inch margins, strict MLA formatting, citations, and bibliography. You should have at least 5 sources in your bibliography in addition to films. These should be scholarly, academic articles, essays, chapters, or books on the subject. They can include readings from class. Turn in hard copy, email by 4pm on due date if absent from class. Essay should include theoretical/conceptual analysis with use of evidence and examples. It can be more historical, more philosophical, or more film theory based as fits your interests and topic.

15% of final grade. Grading guidelines at end of document.

3. Movie Script, due 10/24

Script should include all dialogue and narration. Plan on one page per minute (read aloud to yourself to estimate more precisely). Script should also include descriptions of settings, visuals, images, transitions, on-screen text, and whatever else will be seen on screen *in brackets*. The more detailed your script, the more painless your movie-making process will be. Example:

> Voice-over: I am discussing such and such today, particularly, this example of such and such as it relates to this other thing.

> [Title on black screen: "Such and such." Fade out of title to classic Hollywood movie poster of The Big Sleep.]

Required, ungraded, but failure to complete will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade from your movie project (i.e., an A will become an A-, an A- will become a B+). Turn in hard copy, email by 4pm on due date if absent from class.

4. Peer Critique (draft of movie due), in class 11/14

There will be a peer critique session in which you will show your rough draft to a small group of your classmates and will provide feedback in written and verbal form to each of your group members. I will provide a feedback form for guidance. You need to show up for this critique with your film in a close-to-finished state, be attentive to your peers, and provide constructive and helpful feedback. Draft of movie due to Emory Box in .mp4 or .wav format. Uploading instructions to come.

Required, ungraded, but failure to complete will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade from your movie project (i.e., an A will become an A-, an A- will become a B+). If you have extremely dire circumstances that prevent you from attending class in person that day, you must contact me and you will still participate by viewing your peers' movies and filling out the feedback form.

5. Final Movie, due 11/28

Your short movie should be 3-5 minutes long. This will vary wildly on the kind of movie you are making—if utilizing the typical iMovie "digital storytelling" format with voice-over narration and music paired with pictures, stills, text, short movie clips, etc., your movie will probably be 3-4 minutes, as this process is actually quite time-consuming. If filming originally scripted or re-enacted scenes from movies with a camera/phone and a few friends, and cutting those in to the voice-over/pictures format, it might be on the longer side. If you get really ambitious and want to create, say, your own animation, you might need it to be even shorter than 3 minutes – if you think this case will apply to you, please see me well in advance of the movie's rough draft due date. Other than special cases, your movie must be a minimum of 3 minutes.

Due to Emory Box in .mp4 or .wav format. 15% of final grade. Grading guidelines at end of document.

6. Filmmaker's Note, due 11/28

Short (½-1 page) typed note on the experience of making the movie, which addresses:

- How, specifically, you incorporated your peers' feedback when editing your rough draft into a final cut, or well thought-out reasons why you chose not to incorporate their feedback.
- The development of the topic from research paper to movie, how the two pieces are related (e.g., "while in my paper I discussed the theoretical reasons behind x and y, my movie focused less on the theory and more on specific instantiations of x and y within z"), and what was "new" in your movie that was not contained in your research paper (or how you expressed the same ideas in a "new," creative, or imaginative way).
- What the process was like for you—any particularly difficult moments, steps, or techniques, time management, things that surprised you, hidden talents.
- What you are particularly proud of in making the film (your process) or in the final product, as well as what you would do differently (in your process) or change about the final product if you did it again.
- You may (not required) also discuss any reflection you have about your research paper or writing process, as long as all the above points are satisfied in relation to your movie.

Required, ungraded, but failure to complete will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade from your movie project (i.e., an A will become an A-, an A- will become a B+). Turn in hard copy, if absent on first day of film fest turn in hard copy on the following day.

Resources

Woodruff Library
3rd floor computers (one level up from main entrance) have iMovie, FinalCut, Photoshop, etc.

ECDS
3rd floor of Woodruff library
M-F, 9-5
- Has workstations with iMovie, Final Cut, Photoshop, etc. Help and instruction available.
- Has an audio recording suite where you can record voice-over narration or other audio. Send an email to ecds@emory.edu to reserve the space. Basic instruction available.

MediaLab
4th floor of Woodruff library
Staffed hours: M-TH 12-8, F 12-5
Unstaffed hours: Music and Media Library hours
- Has workstations with iMovie, Final Cut, Photoshop, etc. Help and instruction available.

Writing Center
Callaway North 212
SUN-TH 12-8, F 12-5
- Schedule an appointment at http://writingcenter.emory.edu/

Movie Grading Guidelines

A-F scale out of 100 points

All movies:
- Title (appropriately specific and/or creative)   5
- Clear, coherent, well-organized   20
- Effective use of visuals   15
- Effective use of spoken word and music   15
- New and different material from research paper   15
- Integration of peer feedback/appropriate reason why not   5

More analytically-inclined movies:
- Depth of analysis   10
- References ideas, theorists, films, questions discussed 10
  in class or authors/research conducted on one's own
- Creativity, unique voice/perspective   5

More creatively-inclined movies:
- Creativity, imaginative portrayal of genre & topic   10
- Creative content still effectively communicates elements 15
  of genre & topic

Research Paper Grading Guidelines

A – Essay is well-crafted, engages the topic on a deeply reflective and critical level, with clear ideas and questions, connections between ideas, appropriate summary, and textual and filmic evidence whose relevance and meaning is explained in the paper. Texts and theorists are quoted, but the essay does not rely on an overabundance of quotes—essay is in author's own voice, with author's own summary and ideas. Essay should be focused on one clear and specific question or topic and include a clearly identifiable thesis that states this question or topic as well as an answer to the question or position on the topic. This purpose should be kept in view throughout the entire essay, each subsequent idea or summary should be relevant to this thesis, and this relevance should be explicitly stated. Connection to the text is maintained at all times. Writing flows well and does not have any grammatical or spelling errors. Texts are properly cited, length follows the guidelines, and bibliography follows guidelines. Research is cited within the essay.

B – Essay does not explore the topic in enough depth (e.g., fails to provide cogent or detailed theoretical or historical discussion or close analysis of formal qualities of film examples), does not provide enough textual support for ideas, thesis is not clear enough or is too broad, organization of paper needs improvement—ideas, summary, and evidence do not flow or follow one another in a way that makes sense. More emphasis on explicit connections and clarity is needed. However, ideas are still interesting, relatively focused, and engage theoretical and filmic texts. Few grammatical or spelling errors, minor citation problems. (A "B" paper may not have all of these problems, but these are common reasons behind a "B" grade.)

C – Organization of paper and connection of ideas needs significant work. No clear thesis or direction in paper. Little engagement with research or textual support, ideas are untethered and tangentially related without clear explanation of their relevance and meaning. Writing echoes the research without providing original analysis or thought, summarizes entire films rather than scenes, or summarizes film scenes without explaining their relevance to the focused thesis/topic; paper is primarily a general summary with little focus around a question or position taken in regards to that question. (A "C" paper may not have all of these problems, but these will be common reasons behind a "C" grade.)

Movie Project: Genre List

Examples of topics below are not exhaustive.

Noir
      Noir hybrids
          Cyberpunk
              Blade Runner
              Cyberpunk anime: *Akira, Ghost in the Shell*
      The figure of the "femme fatal"
      Who Framed Roger Rabbit?
      Lighting and shadow in classic noir films
Heist
Spy
Crime
      Heat
Gangster
      The impact of the *Godfather* movies

Western
      John Ford
      Space Westerns (*Star Wars, Firefly, Cowboy Bebop*, etc.)
      Clint Eastwood
      John Wayne (*Stagecoach, The Searchers, Red River*)
      American myth
          The figure of the "cowboy"
      Representations of Native Americans in classic Westerns

Comedy
      Stanely Cavell, remarriage comedies of the '30s and '40s
      Comedy as a form of social critique
      Charlie Chaplin
      Monty Python
Rom-Com
      Nora Ephron
Satire
      The Producers
Camp
      Subversive elements of camp

Buddy movies
      Laurel and Hardy
      Thelma and Louise, female buddy film in male-dominated sub-genre, road movie hybrid
      Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Western and "buddy movie" hybrid
Road movies

Musical
      Stage vs. film productions
      The golden age of Hollywood musicals and their decline from popularity
      The pop music musical (*Moulin Rouge, Mamma Mia*, etc.)

War
    Apocalypse Now
    Bridge on the River Kwai
    Vietnam movies
    Holocaust movies
        Schindler's List, use of color in the film
Soviet
    Battleship Potemkin
Propaganda
    Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*
Historical
Epic
Courtroom Drama
    12 Angry Men

Horror
    Alien movies, Ripley's character, gender analysis
    "B" horror movies
    The "final girl" figure
    The "paradox" of horror (fear as a positive emotion, Noel Carroll and other theorists)
Grindhouse
    Fake commercials and fake "damaging" of "film" in Tarantino/Rodriguez *Grindhouse*
Thriller

Melodrama
Superhero
    Contemporary resurgence of superhero films
Sports
    Rocky movies
    American cultural values portrayed through tropes of success/defeat, hard work, etc.
Science Fiction

Animation
    Hayao Miyazaki
    The Thief and the Cobbler, animation style, production history, conflict with *Aladdin*
    Disney
        Disney princesses and effect on culture, gender
        Enchanted
    Pixar
    The relationship between Disney and Pixar

Documentary
    Errol Morris, *The Thin Blue Line*
    Concert Documentaries, *The Last Waltz*
    Seven Up! series