FRENCH 234
FILMS OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK AND FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT
PROF. VEST
SPRING SEMESTER 2006

7:30-10:00 p.m. Mondays  (class): Rhodes Tower 410
7:30-10:00 p.m. Thursdays  (screenings, discussions, and final presentations): Barret Library Theater

Counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement and the Film Studies Minor.
Does not satisfy the Rhodes College Language Proficiency Requirement or count toward a minor or major in French.

Jan. 12 Intro. to Hitchcock and Truffaut; scenes from Easy Virtue (1927), Rebecca (1940); Bon Voyage (1944), Aventure Malgache (1944); Hitchcock: “Film Production” Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965 ed. reprinted in Hitchcock on Hitchcock, 210-226; Wood: 55-85; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 39-61, 145-191.
Screening: Hitchcock: Strangers on a Train (1951)

Jan. 16 MLK DAY

Screening: I Confess (1953)

Jan. 23 “The Diabolic Imagination” in Gottlieb and Brookhouse: 93-112; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 199-222; Wood: 82-84; Bazin, 130-135; Rohmer: 112-119; REACTION PAPERS (GROUP A)
Jan. 26 Screening: Hitchcock: scene from Dial "M" for Murder (1954); Rear Window (1954)

Jan. 30 Wood: 101-107; “Rear Window, or the Reciprocated Glance” in Gottlieb and Brookhouse: 234-250; Bazin, 159-164; Ferrara: 21-30; Modleski: 73-85; Bozovic: 161-177; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 13-20, 223-226; REACTION PAPERS (GROUP B)
Feb. 2 Screening: Hitchcock: To Catch a Thief (1955)

Feb. 6 “Hitchcock and . . . the Kiss” in Gottlieb and Brookhouse: 132-146; Rohmer: 129-133; Bazin: 139-158; Leitch: 177-179; Villien: 253-259; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 226-227; REACTION PAPERS (GROUP C)
Feb. 9 Screening: Hitchcock: The Trouble With Harry (1956)

Feb. 13 “Hitchcockian Haberdashery” and “Hitchcock’s Hands” in Gottlieb and Brookhouse: 147-179; Villien: 261-265; Leitch: 179-183; Rohmer: 133-137; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 89-94, 227-243; REACTION PAPERS (GROUP D)
Feb. 16 Screening: Hitchcock: scene from The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934); The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) (complete)

Feb. 20 Bazin: 165-170; Wood: 358-370; Bonitzer: 178-84; Scenes from Alfred Hitchcock Presents (1955-58) and from The Wrong Man (1956); Villien: 273-275, 279; Spoto: 402-409; REACTION PAPERS (GROUP E)
Feb. 23 Screening: Hitchcock: Vertigo (1958)


March 2 Screening: Hitchcock: North by Northwest (1959)

Mar. 16  Screening: Clouzot: scene from Diabolique(s) (1954) and Hitchcock: Psycho (1960) (complete)


Mar. 23  Screening: Truffaut: scenes from The 400 Blows (1959) and Fahrenheit 451 (1966) (complete)


Mar. 30  Screening: Truffaut: The Bride Wore Black (1967)

Apr. 3  Insdorf:  58-67, 105-112; Shattuck: Forbidden Experiment, excerpt; Truffaut: Hitchcock,  301-313; ANALYTICAL PAPERS (GROUP C)


Apr. 10  Insdorf: 145-147, 151-171, 182-194; ANALYTICAL PAPERS (GROUP D); scenes from Day for Night (1973) and Small Change (1976)

Apr. 13  EASTER BREAK:

Apr. 17  Insdorf: 94-101, 118-120, 140-142, 219-239; Truffaut: Hitchcock, 313-320; Scene from Truffaut: The Last Metro (1981); ANALYTICAL PAPERS (GROUP E); consultation on and discussion of final presentations


Apr. 27  **PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS ** 7:30-10 p.m. Friends invited.

Grading:

Reaction paper 1 (3-4 page personal reaction to any aspect of a film we’ve studied)* ............ 20%
Analytical paper 2 (4 page analysis of a particular scene of a film we’ve studied)* .............. 20%
Final projects (8-10 page term paper or 18-20 page screenplay or 4-5 minute video)* ........... 40%
Classroom participation: attendance, preparation, discussion................................................... 20%
*The reaction papers and final projects will be graded on the basis of both the in-class presentation and the written or filmed content.

Note and heed:

All work turned in for a grade is submitted under the Rhodes College Honor System and should include appropriate acknowledgement of sources, assistance, etc. Be sure, at all times, to give credit where it is due.

All written materials submitted should be double-spaced, organized and presented in conformity with M.L.A. stylistic standards, and carefully proofread. Hard copy only; no electronic submissions.
Any work submitted late will be subject to a late penalty, usually one letter grade deduction for each day late. Late oral presentations will be lowered one letter grade.

Cell phones should be turned OFF or left elsewhere.
Course texts will include:


Selected readings to focus our attention on Hitchcock’s and Truffaut’s techniques and theories, chosen from the following works, on RESERVE in Barret Library:


These biographies, also on RESERVE at Barret:

Alfred Hitchcock had an intense lifelong fascination with French language, literature, cinema, art, and cuisine. He received top honors in French at Saint Ignatius academy in London, honeymooned in Paris with his bride—film editor Alma Reville—whom he referred to as “Madame” (pronounced in the French manner) throughout their half century of married life, returned often with her to French-speaking Europe and Africa, and, when his family moved from Britain to California, continued to order meals flown in from Maxim’s in Paris. His houseguests remarked on the Aubusson carpets and the impressive collection of works by Braque, Rouault, Dubuffet, Dufy, and Rodin, as well as vintage French wines.

One-fourth of Hitchcock’s films included substantial allusions to France or sequences in French. Two wartime shorts, Bon Voyage and Aventure Malgache, were entirely in French. Hitchcock’s international renown owed much to French critics associated with the Cahiers du Cinéma and the nouvelle vague: Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol were among the first filmmaker-theorists to take Hitchcock seriously, and François Truffaut enshrined him as the quintessential film auteur, i.e., as controlling cinematic creator/artist. Even the curmudgeonly André Bazin, who initially dismissed Hitchcock as a formulaic trickster, was forced to reconsider.

The passion ran both ways. Hitchcock exerted an extraordinary degree of influence on French film. Nowhere is this clearer than in the career of director-critic François Truffaut. Truffaut's marathon interviews with Hitchcock in 1962 provide a focal point for this course, which will explore Hitchcock's films of the 1950s that inspired Truffaut. We will examine Truffaut's films of the 1960s and 1970s that owe much to Hitchcock as well as to Bernard Hermann, composer for eight Hitchcock films, to whom Truffaut turned for musical scoring.

To further acquaintance with the works of both directors, major films by each will be screened and discussed, as per the attached schedule.

Selected articles on literary-film theory by Bazin, Hitchcock, Insdorf, Modleski, Ferara, Vilien, Vest, Wood, and others will focus classroom discussion on thematic and formal strategies to create and sustain suspense, e.g., storyboarding, composing, framing, camera angle and movement, montage, and use of lighting and sound.

During the semester students will write and present orally in class two 4 page reaction papers (personal response papers incorporating aspects of our common readings and class discussions) and also produce a final exercise (8-10 page research paper or 18-20 page screenplay or 4-5 minute video) that demonstrates their understanding of the cinematic practice of both directors.