

**English 578.01: Special Topics in Cinema:
Show Business & the Art of Money**

Professor Elizabeth Hewitt
Denney Hall 565
hewitt.33@osu.edu | 292-1153

Denney Hall 250
M 1³⁰-4¹⁸, W 1³⁰-3¹⁸

office hours: Tuesdays 9⁰⁰-11⁰⁰ and by appointment

We will study some American novels and films that depict the role of commerce, labor, and profit in the modern United States. Our task will be to think about the representation of economic labor and commerce in film and literature, as well as to consider how film and fiction represent themselves as a kind of labor.

January 3: [screening] Greed (1924; Erich von Stroheim)

January 5: discussion of Greed; begin discussion of McTeague

January 10: [screening] Wall Street (1987; Oliver Stone); discussion of McTeague and Greed

January 12: discussion of Wall Street; discussion of McTeague; **Quiz 1**

January 17: no classes, Martin Luther King Day

January 19: discussion of The Rise of Silas Lapham

January 24: [screening] Citizen Kane (1941; Orson Welles)

January 26: discussion of Citizen Kane and Silas Lapham; **Quiz 2**

January 31: discussion of Citizen Kane; begin discussion of The Big Money; **Quiz 3**

February 2: discussion of Citizen Kane and The Big Money

February 7: [screening] Modern Times (1936; Charlie Chaplin); continue discussion of The Big Money; **Quiz 4**

February 9: discussion of Modern Times; continue discussion of The Big Money

February 14: [screening] Casino (1995; Martin Scorsese)

February 16: discussion of Casino; discussion of The Day of the Locust

February 21: [screening] Double Indemnity (1944; Billy Wilder); discussion of Day of the Locust; **Quiz 5**

February 23 discussion of Double Indemnity; discussion of Gain

February 28: [screening] Chinatown (1974; Roman Polanski); discussion of Gain; **Quiz 6**

March 2: discussion of Chinatown; discussion of Gain

March 7: discussion of Chinatown; discussion of Where I was From

March 9: discussion of Where I was From

Texts:

Frank Norris, McTeague (1899) | Signet Classics 0451528913

William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885) | Penguin 0140390308

John Dos Passos, The Big Money (1936) | Mariner Books 0618056831

Nathaniel West, Day of the Locust (1939) | Signet Classics 0451523482

Richard Powers, Gain (1998) | Picador 0312204094

Joan Didion, Where I was From (2003) | Knopf 0679433325

Responsibilities:**a. readings**

We will be reading several long novels, which means that you need to keep on top of the reading. I will give specific page assignments in class.

b. screenings

The films required for this class will be screened in class on Mondays. On days when a class begins with a screening, the film will begin five minutes after class starts. *Be on time*. All the primary films for this class will be on 24 hour reserve in the main library for supplementary screenings. In other words, you should be in class for film screenings and I will take attendance on Monday classes.

c. quizzes

In the place of a final exam, there will be six scheduled quizzes designed to make certain that the readings and screenings are being understood and adequately prepared. If you are keeping up with the work for the class, they will be fairly easy. These quizzes will be given in the first 5-10 minutes of class on the days indicated in the syllabus; no make-ups will be offered for absent and late students, so be certain to arrive at all classes on time. The lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the course provided you have taken all five quizzes. For each missed quiz over one, you will receive a "O" averaged in to your final quiz grade for the course. The quizzes are worth 25% of your final grade.

d. exam

There will be a take-home midterm, asking you to respond to three essay questions. The exam will be due on Monday, February 21st and I will give you the questions on February 14th. The exam will be worth 25% of your final grade.

e. paper

There will be a final paper for this class: a 6-8 page paper developing an argument about one or more of the texts (either film or fiction) in the class. Detailed instructions will come soon, and the paper will be due Friday, March 11th. The paper will be worth 25% of your final grade.

f. discussion

This is a large class, and as a result it will not always be easy to make certain everyone is getting a chance to have their ideas heard. We will have a web discussion forum at our WebCT class. To get to the discussion forum, merely take your browser to <http://class.osu.edu/> -- then sign in

with your email name (name.##) and password (the one you use to receive osu.edu email). Go to “Discussions” section. Here we can discuss the screening and readings, raise questions, try things out, and generally “chat.” This will allow everyone a chance to participate: participation on the web-based discussion site will count as part of your participation grade, which will prove especially helpful for those having a difficult time participating in class. Participation will be worth 25% of your final grade.

g. attendance

Given the pace of and the responsibilities demanded by this course, a strict attendance policy will be enforced. More than two absences will negatively affect your final grade; more than three will likely result in a failing grade in the course. If you have a personal situation that will require more than two absences, then please do not take this class.

i. academic honesty

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

j. students with disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall, who will work with you and me to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities.