

FILM 3342-001: THE FILM MUSICAL
Spring 2013, 1:00-3:45 PM Thursday, AH2 1.204

- Instructor:** Dr. Adrienne L. McLean
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Office Hours: After class, and by appointment. *E-mail queries are answered promptly, and are encouraged.*
Required Texts: Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (1987).
Steven Cohan, ed., *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader* (2002) **(HM)**.
Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell, eds., *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* (2000) **(MHB)**; e-book available online through UTD's library catalogue.
Weekly required readings are posted on eLearning **(RR)**, as is all *confidential* information required for uploading papers to turnitin.com.
Note that full-length films are assigned each week for viewing before the regular class session. *These films are required texts as well.* All are on reserve at McDermott Library, but are also likely available through a number of other suppliers (such as NetFlix), whatever video rental stores remain in existence, or your local library. Please do not consider that you have actually watched these films if your viewing venue is a smartphone. Larger is better in this case.
Other Information: Please note that eLearning will be used only for the posting of the syllabus and required readings. No other information will be transmitted or read by the instructor through such Web-based resources except in a dire emergency, when an e-mail may be circulated to all students using the course roll.

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Course Description and Format. For more than thirty years the musical was perhaps Hollywood's most popular and profitable adult genre. Its utopianism and sexual energy are still useful to art and popular culture (e.g., in music videos, variety and reality television shows such as *American Idol* or *Dancing with the Stars*, and in recent films such as the *High School Musical* [2006-2008] and *Step Up* [2006-2012] franchises, or Broadway adaptations like *Les Misérables* [2012]). This course will explore the rise and fall and rise of the film musical from its beginnings in 1927 through the present day, primarily in the U.S. but with attention paid to the films of Europe and Asia as well. We will consider the musical as a set of myths, as an industrial product, and as an art form, investigating its historical development and how it interacted with other film genres and other kinds of theatrical performances and entertainment industries; its narrative structure and formal features; its modes of performance; and the meanings it produced for its audiences. We will trace the various ways in which the musical represented race and ethnicity, class, and sexual difference at certain points in its history, and how scholarship on the film musical has profitably been applied to other genres such as pornography and horror. After an introduction to genre and study of the history of the film musical, each week will be devoted to a specific topic or issue. Brief screenings of relevant material will augment our discussions, and from time to time entire films will be screened during class meetings.

Grading and Requirements. You are expected to attend all classes and screenings, to be punctual and attentive, and to participate vigorously in discussions of films and readings. *If you must miss a class, you remain responsible for all course material covered in that class; there are no make-up sessions, and each class will only be taught once.* Each class period represents one week's worth of work, so roll will be taken at the beginning or end of every class. The week's reading and screening assignments are all to be completed by the beginning of each Thursday session. The exams, including the final, are in-class exams, and will likely all

include essay components as well as some combination of multiple choice, matching, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions.

Please note that the *Rules on Student Services and Activities* of the University of Texas System will be strictly adhered to. For information on the administration's rules and policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, e-mail use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grade policies, disability services, and religious holy days, consult the material, generated by the administration, available on eLearning or in the university catalogue. **There will be no incompletes given in the course, all course requirements must be met (including attendance; if you miss more than four class periods, you will generate an automatic failing grade for the course), late work will be penalized, all exams and other requirements must be completed in full, and make-up exams will be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented to my satisfaction.** UTD also subscribes to plagiarism detection services; all student papers will be screened using turnitin.com.

Grades will be figured as follows (your final course grade may be weighted, to your benefit only, at the instructor's discretion):

Attendance and participation	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%

Particulars regarding the papers are attached and will be discussed further in class.

CLASS CALENDAR

Date	Topic/Screening/Reading
<i>Week 1</i> January 17	<i>Introduction, Course Mechanics</i> SCREENING [in-class]: <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1952; 103 mins.).
<i>Week 2</i> January 24	<i>All-Talking, All-Singing, All-Dancing: The Early Musical</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Broadway Melody</i> (Harry Beaumont, 1928; 104 mins.). READING: Altman chs. I-III. HM Cohan, "Introduction: Musicals of the Studio Era."
<i>Week 3</i> January 31	<i>"Aggregate" Form: Busby Berkeley at Warner Bros.</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Gold Diggers of 1933</i> (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933; 96 mins.). SCREENING [in-class]: <i>42nd Street</i> (Lloyd Bacon, 1933; 89 mins.). READING: HM Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia"; Rubin, "Busby Berkeley and the Backstage Musical."
<i>Week 4</i> February 7	<i>"Integrated" Form: Fred Astaire at RKO</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Top Hat</i> (Mark Sandrich, 1935; 101 mins.) or <i>Swing Time</i> (George Stevens, 1936; 103 mins.). READING: Altman chs. IV-V. ... Paper 1 due at beginning of class ...
<i>Week 5</i> February 14	<i>The Fairy Tale Musical</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Pirate</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1948; 102 mins.). READING: Altman ch. VI.
<i>Week 6</i> February 21	<i>The Folk Musical</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1944; 113 mins.). READING: Altman ch. VIII.
<i>Week 7</i> February 28	<i>The Show Musical</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Band Wagon</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1953; 112 mins.). READING: Altman ch. VII. HM Feuer, "The Self-Reflective Musical and the Myth of Entertainment."
<i>Week 8</i> March 7	... MID-TERM EXAM ...
<i>Week 9</i> March 11-15	<i>SPRING BREAK</i> OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>On The Town</i> (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1949; 98 mins.).

- Week 10
March 21 ***The Postwar Studio Musical, the Post-Studio Musical***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *It's Always Fair Weather* (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1955, 101 mins.).
READING: **RR** Babington and Evans, "*It's Always Fair Weather* and the Gene Kelly Musical"; Gayle Sherwood Magee, "Robert Altman and the New Hollywood Musical."
... **Paper topic due at beginning of class** ...
- Week 11
March 28 ***The Integrated Musical? Race and the Musical Canon***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Show Boat* (James Whale, 1936; 110 mins.) **or** *Show Boat* (George Sidney, 1951; 107 mins.).
READING: **HM** Clover, "Dancin' in the Rain"; Rogin, "New Deal Blackface."
MHB Richard Dyer, "The Colour of Entertainment"; Peter Stanfield, "From the Vulgar to the Refined: American Vernacular and Blackface Minstrelsy in *Showboat*."
- Week 12
April 4 ***NO CLASS - paper work day***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Victor/Victoria* (Blake Edwards, 1982; 132 mins.).
- Week 13
April 11 ***Gender and/as Spectacle***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Jailhouse Rock* (Richard Thorpe, 1957; 96 mins.).
SCREENING [in-class]: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953; 92 mins.).
READING: **HM** Seneca and Arbuthnot, "Pre-text and Text in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*"; Cohan, "'Feminizing' the Song-and-Dance Man."
- Week 14
April 18 ***Camp: Visual Codes, Spectatorship, Performance***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Ziegfeld Follies of 1946* (Lemuel Ayres, Roy Del Ruth, Robert Lewis, Vincente Minnelli, George Sidney, 1945; 110 mins.).
READING: **HM** Dyer, "Judy Garland and Camp"; Tinkcom, "'Working Like a Homosexual'"; Roberts, "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat."
- Week 15
April 25 ***"Art Musicals": Europe and Beyond***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Billy Elliot* (Stephen Daldry, 2000; 110 mins.).
READING: **RR** Jane Feuer, "The International Art Musical"; Bhaskar Sarkar, "The Mellifluous Illogics of the 'Bollywood Musical.'"
- Week 16
May 2 ***Summing Up: What Is a Musical Now?***
OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *High School Musical* (Kenny Ortega, 2006; 98 mins.).
READING: Altman ch. IX and Conclusion. **RR** Steven Cohan, "How Do You Solve a Problem Like the Film Musical?"
... **Paper 2 due, uploaded to turnitin.com by 11:59 PM...**

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... **FINAL EXAM THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2:00-4:45 PM (NOTE TIME!) ...**

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*All screening times are approximate.
Syllabus subject to change, but not without notice.*