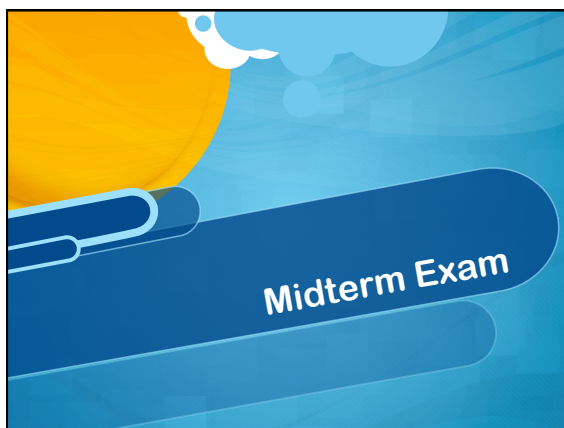



**Week 7 Agenda**

- Return and Discuss Midterms
- Discuss *Citizen Kane*: Backgrounds, Subtexts, Scenes & Meaning
- Homework (website)
- Feedback for Next Week's Film
- Breaks @ 5:30 & 6:30



**General Points**

- Decent job on first section but only average only screenshots, surprisingly
- Definitions of terms seemed difficult to you: prose problems ...
- Weakest overall on paragraph responses defining German Expressionism and Italian Neorealism
  - lack of specificity or development
  - 2-3 people forgot to even answer these questions (!)
- Essays on *Bicycle Thieves* and *The Departed* were generally good – and did approach "meaning" through analysis of form

**Average Scores**

Grade	Point Range
A+	75
A	74-69
A-	68
B+	67
B	66-61
B-	60
C+	59
C	58-53
C-	52
D+	51
D	50-45
D-	44

- Part I average = 66.4
- Part I total points = 75
- High B average
- Extra Credit points were added in here
- Shockingly, two people completely forgot questions 36 & 37 (total 10 pts)
- Total Exam Average = 133 points, a B+

**Average Scores Pt. II**

Grade	Point Range
A+	40
A	39-38
A-	37
B+	36
B	35-34
B-	33
C+	32
C	31-30
C-	29
D+	28
D	27-26
D-	25

- Bicycle Thieves* Essay average = 35.7
- Part I total points = 40
- High B average
- Biggest problem seemed to be that you know too much about the meaning of the film, so that took preference over your technical analysis

### Average Scores Pt. III

Grade	Point Range
A+	35
A	34-33
A-	32
B+	31
B	30-29
B-	28
C+	27
C	26-25
C-	24
D+	23
D	22-21
D-	20

- The Departed Essay average = 31.7
- Part I total points = 35
- High B+ average
- Here, because you hadn't studied this film, you focused more on camera techniques and terminology – and in general this improved your essays

### Bicycle Thieves Essay

- Tracking shots (on bike)
- Non-diegetic sound (music)
- Close-ups of Bruno's and Ricci's faces
- Low angle shots
- Negative space vs. ladders
- Blocking (ladders) vs. Framing (earlier/faces)
- Smiles ... pride ... job ensures roles of provider
- Visual union vs. separation (spacing of Bruno & Ricci)
- Potential significance of Bruno saying goodbye
- Desolation of scenery ... anonymity of work
- Metaphorical potential of upward mobility (ladders and bicycles)

### The Departed Essay

- Alternating low-angle tracking shots vs. high-angle boom or crane shots
- Diegetic sound (bagpipes and gunshots)
- Sequence of shot/reverse shot close-ups and eye-line matches
- Expert blocking and framing
- Final stationary shot
- Uniforms .. Uniformity
- Silent, visual conversation between characters, specifying relationship
- Alternating perspectives: crime (close-up or low-angle) vs. judgment (high)
- Death, "faithful departed," moral & romantic
- Visual allusion to Carol Reed's *The Third Man*

## Citizen Kane: Background & Subtexts

Welles, Kane & Hearst

### Rolling the Dice

- After finding success on stage and with his *War of the Worlds* (1938) broadcast, Hollywood recruited Welles to write, act, and direct
- RKO Pictures offered him an unprecedented deal: complete artistic freedom over the screenplay, the casting, and even the final editing (final cut)

- Welles was only 26 (!) and had no prior film experience—yet was given complete artistic control
- One of the most shocking leaps of faith ever taken on a novice director.



## Did it Pay Off?

- Not initially / definitely now
- Welles tried a few other (failed) projects before determining the subject of Citizen Kane.
- Employees on the RKO compound were placing bets that he'd never produce a single thing
- Welles even barred studio executives from visiting the set during production

- Upon release, the film was a critical success but a financial flop.
- RKO failed to recoup its investment (approx. \$840k), and in 1941 the film quickly faded from the public's mind
- Current reputation as the greatest film of all time began only in the 1950s: following a critical reappraisal (Andre Bazin) and the American re-release of the film in 1956



Which audience are you: 1941 or mid-1950s?

Your Reactions...

Kane's Model:  
William Randolph Hearst

1863-1951

## Why Hearst?

- Created the largest newspaper and magazine empire in the world
- Pioneered "yellow journalism" — stories of dubious merit and questionable sources



- Exercised enormous political power and is credited for pushing the US into war with Spain in 1898
- Two failed campaigns for mayor of New York
- Also lost races for governor and lieutenant governor of New York
- Ironically, though, was elected twice (as a Democrat) to the U.S. House of Representatives

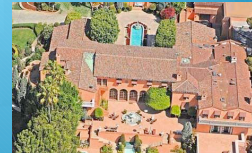


## Hearst Castle, San Simeon

- Before Michael Jackson's Neverland, there was Hearst's Castle ...
- Like Xanadu in the film, a never-finished mansion, now open to the public and available for virtual tours
- Housed the world's greatest (& most idiosyncratic) collection of statues & antiques

## Other Properties

- St. Donat's Castle, Wales (now Atlantic College)
- Home in Beverly Hills
  - Reduced from \$165M to \$90M in Sept. 2010
  - Used for the famous horse's-head scene in *The Godfather*



## Hearst's Reaction

- Tried to block the film's creation by embarking on a newspaper campaign to expose illegal immigrant employment in Hollywood.
- Barred all his papers from reviewing RKO films and successfully pressured theaters into not showing it.



NYC Premiere,  
May 1, 1941



- Pressure was so great that at one time representatives from the other major studios approached RKO—offering to fully compensate them if they scrapped the project and burned the prints

## Payback

- Citizen Kane was nominated for 9 Academy Awards, including best picture, actor, direction, editing, music, cinematography etc.
- The film would win only 1 Oscar, however, and was booed every time it was mentioned because people still feared Hearst's wrath.
- Welles never forgave Hollywood—and in many respects Hollywood never forgave him.

Who Wrote Citizen Kane?

Welles vs. Herman J. Mankiewicz

### Herman Mankiewicz

- Successful Hollywood writer (albeit an alcoholic) in 1940
- Dictated the entire screenplay to his secretary
- Went to Screen Writers Guild to demand appropriate credit


### Orson Welles

- Inexperienced Hollywood writer in 1940. Also liked his drink.
- Welles's own secretary typed up suggestions and corrections
- According to Mankiewicz, Welles offered to buy him out to take full credit

### Final Words

Now people credit Mankiewicz for the screenplay and Welles for the direction and visual appearance of the film.

Pauline Kael in 1971: "Under the present rules of the Guild, Welles's name probably would not have appeared. [And so ...] when Academy Awards night came, and Welles should have got the awards he deserved as actor and director, the award he got (the only Academy Award he ever got) was as co-author of the Best Original Screenplay."



## Cinematography and Direction

Welles and Toland

### What's the Difference?

- Sometimes called the "director of photography," the cinematographer is responsible for the technical aspects (esp. lenses and lighting, exposure, filters etc.) of the scene. Chief of camera & lighting crews.
- The director oversees all aspects of camera use, placement, and aesthetics
- Generally work together or fail.





### Gregg Toland

- One of the most celebrated cinematographers of all time
- "Photographing *Citizen Kane* was the most exciting professional adventure of my career." (Toland)
- "I've known only one great cameraman: Gregg Toland, who photographed *Citizen Kane*" (Welles)




- Toland sought out Welles because he had a reputation for innovation in the theater
- Wanted to work with Welles to "test and prove several ideas generally being accepted as radical in Hollywood"
- Also wanted to assimilate known cinematic techniques to create a visual masterpiece – a dream shared by Welles





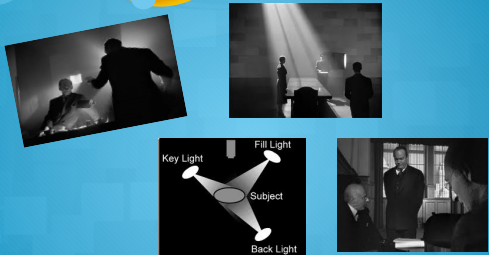
- Holes were cut in floors to facilitate the extreme low-angle/worm view shots (view ch. 18, 1:10:42-1:15:06)
- Sound stages then didn't have ceilings, so muslin was hung to create that illusion



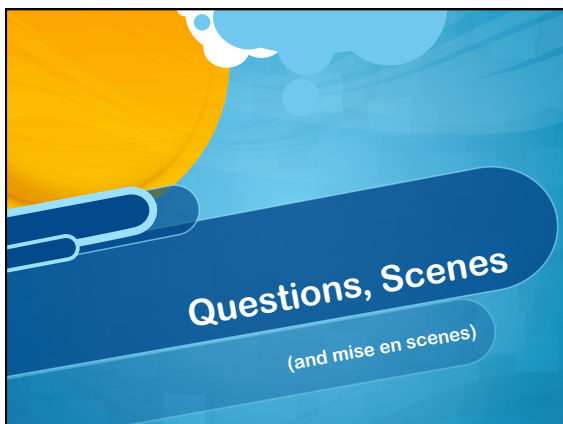
- Deep focus was their primary achievement and was sometimes achieved through lenses or in-camera effects (esp. rewinding and reshooting a scene, thereby layering the negative)



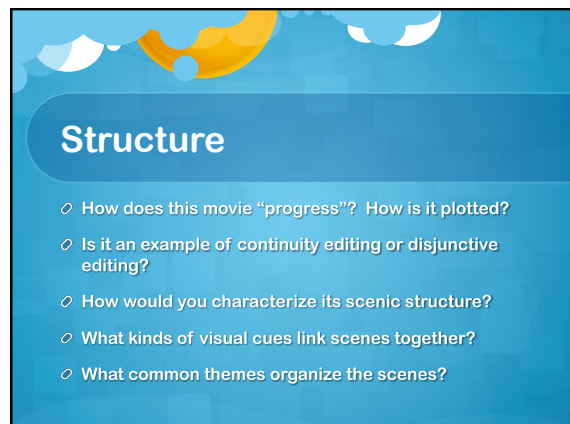
- Remember that Welles had learned much from German Expressionism; its shadows and dark psychologies suffuse the film



- Extreme backlighting was another favored technique
- View Chap. 5: 17:42-18:49



## Questions, Scenes (and mise en scenes)



## Structure

- How does this movie "progress"? How is it plotted?
- Is it an example of continuity editing or disjunctive editing?
- How would you characterize its scenic structure?
- What kinds of visual cues link scenes together?
- What common themes organize the scenes?

## Susan Alexander Scenes



◦ DVD Chapters 4, 22, 27 & 28



## Kane & Love

- During the famous marriage montage (chapter 14, 52:00-54:40) Mr. Leland concludes that Kane did "everything for love"
- To what extent do you think this statement is accurate?
- Whose love does he seek?



## Kane & Wealth

- In chapter 8 Kane states, "If I hadn't have been very rich, I might have been a good man."
- What does he mean?
- Is this even true?



## Kane & Promises

- Why is the keeping of promises so important to Kane?
- Who doesn't keep their promises to him?
- Whom does he betray?
- View campaign speech scene (DVD chapter 16): 1:00:45-1:03:00



## Declaration of Principles



## Identity

- Citizen Kane is of course a movie about a Great Man, a larger-than-life character.
- To what extent is he also an Everyman character?
- What universalizes (or generalizes) him for us?



## Identity & Fate

- For the ancient Greeks, character was fate (Heraclitus). You cannot alter it, only adapt.
- Was Kane fated to live his life in this classical Greek sense?
- Is "Rosebud" his symbolic hamartia?
- What is his hubris?



## Homework

- Read Jorge Luis Borges's 1941 review of Citizen Kane: *October* 15 (winter 1980): 12-14. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778448> (PDF)
- Read Roger Ebert's comments on the film (PDF)
- Also read through the blog response linked from the class website (no PDF)
- Then respond to the following question in a 250-350 word essay ...

## Homework cont.

- To what extent do you think "Rosebud" defines Kane's life? Or do you agree with the film's final words, that it is "just another piece in a jigsaw puzzle"?
- Probe **both possibilities fully** and refer to at least one of the linked sources in your response



## Post-1965 Films

Options and Advice

### Best Options

- Woody Allen, "Annie Hall"
- Martin Scorsese, "Taxi Driver"
- Stanley Kubrick, "A Clockwork Orange"
- Milos Forman, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"
- Roman Polanski, "Chinatown"
- Francis Ford Coppola, "The Godfather" and "The Godfather Part II"