**SEMESTER EXAM – AMERICAN CINEMA, COM 260-D & F -- SPRING 2018**

The first three questions are required of every student, followed by your choice of three questions from a list of five, totaling six questions for this exam.

1. *The Best Years of Our Lives* was the quintessential film for returning WWII veterans and its three protagonists represented a significant percentage of the real-life veterans at that time. What forces in the lives of these characters (Al Stephenson, Homer Parish, and Fred Derry) illustrated so well the problems veterans faced upon their return to civilian life?
2. a. What are the elements of an iconic classic film such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Citizen Kane*, *Casablanca*, *Best Years*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *On the Waterfront?*
3. All these films were made under the Classical Hollywood Studio System and yet two, *Citizen Kane* and *On the Waterfront*, broke barriers that predated the end of the Studio System and are in various ways more representative of the Independent filmmakers who took over Hollywood beginning in the 1960s. What differentiated Kane and Waterfront then from the rules and methods of Hollywood filmmaking in 1941 and 1954 respectively?
4. *Cinema Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood* depicted the circumstances under which more than 800 Jewish emigrants fled Europe and came to Hollywood. Many of them succeeded, but for some not as auspiciously in the 1930s as in the 1940s through the 1960s. However, the movement itself is marked by the way in which these profoundly talented artists changed forever the nature of American Cinema?

Explain how and why this happened, illustrating your arguments with examples of the directors, film composers, actors, producers, and other contributors to American Cinema?

From the following questions, select only three you prefer to answer:

1. The Hollywood Ten were producers, writers, and directors who challenged The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in the 1940s and lost. The result was a jail term for all 10 men and in November 1947 with the Waldorf Agreement, most of Hollywood’s most powerful executives capitulated to HUAC and established the Blacklist, which lasted effectively until 1960 but its effects were far more long-lasting for the history of American Film. Describe what happened after the Agreement was signed in this era of the Cold War and the consequences of the Blacklist.
2. Film Noir began in earnest in 1940 with *Stranger on the Third Floor* and the genre/style was dominant until at least the late 1950s. What were the main characteristics of Noir and describe how they were used in several films at least.
3. Choose three films you viewed outside of class and provide a commentary on why these films represented definitively their era, genre, style, movement, or social reality.
4. We have discussed at greater length the idea of the Social Problem Film, from the early 20th century through the 1950s. Examples are *Children Who* *Labor* (1912); *The Immigrant* (1917); *IT* (1927); Pre-Code (*Baby Face* and *Red-Headed Woman*, 1932); *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940); *Casablanca* (1943); *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946); *Crossfire* (1947); *No Way Out* (1950); and *On the Waterfront* (1954). Are there specific issues that unite all these films in some way, or ways in which you can discuss topics like race, class, mental illness, prejudice, families and children, labor-management conflict, and the changing nature of how women are depicted in American film, and be able to find a thesis statement for a possible master’s thesis or dissertation?

1. What social problems have we not discussed in class this semester that you think are important and have been the subject of American films or have been ignored by American filmmakers?