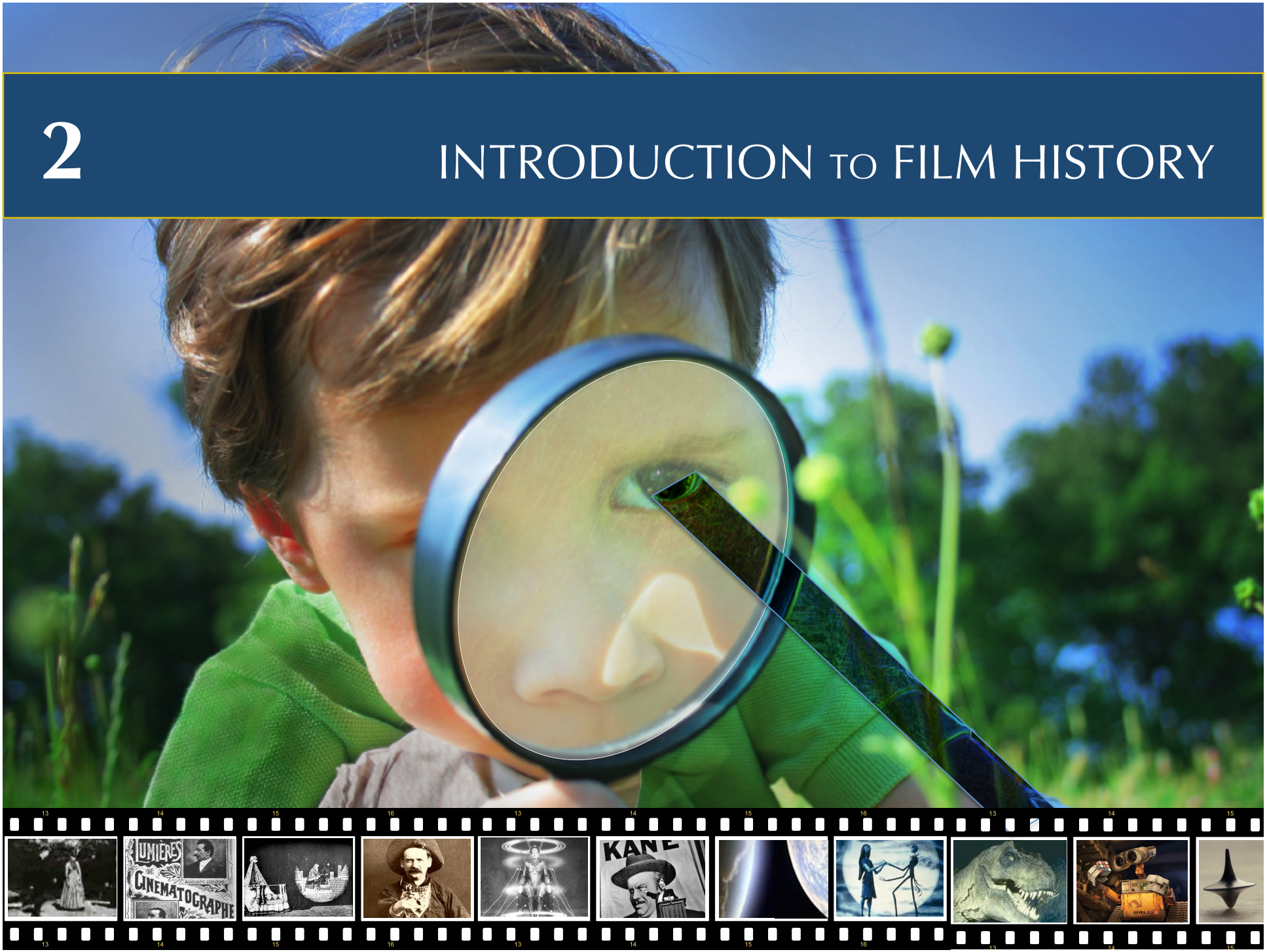
# 2 INTRODUCTION TO FILM HISTORY



# PRE 1900s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

Roundhay Garden Scene (1888)

Boxing Cats (1894)

Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (1894)

The Serpentine Dance (1896)

**1878**

Eadweard Muybridge takes the first rapid-succession photo-graphs (of a racing horse), displays them on an early projector

**1882**

French inventor Etienne Marey develops a gun-shaped camera that can take 12 pictures per second

**1889**

Thomas Edison and W.K. Dickson develop the Kineto-scope, a peep-show device in which film is moved past a light

**1893**

Edison displays his Kinetoscope at the World's Columbian Exhibit in Chicago, receives patents for his movie camera

**1895**

The Lumiere Brothers patent a combination movie camera and projector, capable of creating an image viewable by a crowd

Although a "pre-1900" history of film could easily stretch back to the early 18th century—when German physicist Johann Schulze discovered that silver salts turned dark if exposed to light—this chapter aims to provide first-year film students with a more tightly knit and succinct history of film; to this end, we'll begin in 1878, when Eadweard Muybridge worked to address a long-lasting debate about motion. At the time, there was much interest in whether or not all four hooves of horses simultaneously left the ground when they ran. Muybridge rigged twelve glass-plate cameras to photograph a horse as it ran down a track at Leland Stanford's Palo Alto Stock Farm; what Muybridge then assembled via his "zoopraxiscope" was a relatively small, rotating disc upon which silhouette paintings of each photograph were applied. The device revealed that all hooves did in fact leave the ground.

A disc for the zoopraxiscope

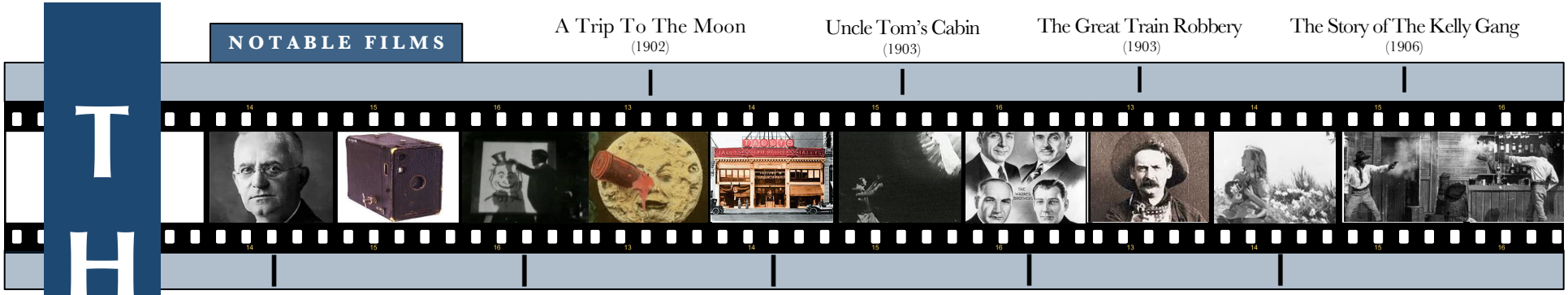
Meanwhile in France, Etinenne-Jules Marey, a young physiologist fascinated by motion and the physics of animal flight, was preparing to embark on his own cinema-related experiments. As one of the scientists emboldened by Muybridge's endeavor, Marey aimed to develop a more accurate device for measuring movement; in 1822 he completed the "chronophotographic gun," a device that could take up to 12 photographs per second.

Marey's chronophotographic gun

In the following years, inventors began creating devices that would allow the public to view motion pictures. In 1889, Thomas Edison and W.K. Dickson unveiled the Kinetoscope, which allowed a single viewer to look into a window atop the device; it filtered light through a series of photographs quickly enough to produce the illusion of movement. Half a decade later in France, Louis and Auguste Lumiere patented a combination movie camera and projector capable of projecting an image that could be seen by a large crowd. Their 1894 film featuring a train's arrival stunned the public.

# THE 1900s

## NOTABLE FILMS




**1900**

The Eastman Kodak Company introduces the "Brownie" camera

**1900**

Animator and film-maker J.S. Blackton produces *The Enchanting Drawing*, an early surviving stop-motion animation prototype

**1902**

Thomas Tally's Electric Theater, the first cinema house, is built in Los Angeles

**1905**

The Warner Brothers open their first nickelodeon, in New Castle, Pennsylvania

**1907**

The first filmmakers arrive in Los Angeles, and quickly identify it as an ideal location in light of its climate and rich landscapes

The advent of filmmaking in the late 19th century led to both a film craze throughout the Western world—particularly in North America and France—and a heated patent/copyright war among the leading inventors of the day. In many ways, the ferocity of the legal battles that ensued mirrors contemporary conflicts over tablet and mp3 player technology.

Edison filed patents for his Kinetograph and Kinetoscope as early as 1888, in anticipation of the aforementioned film craze. Despite taking these precautions, Edison's former partner W.K. Dickson manufactured and began marketing a "Biograph" projector within the decade. A prolonged legal battle ensued between the former partners; although the U.S. Circuit Court initially ruled in Edison's favor, Dickson's company, the American Mutoscope and Biograph Co., appealed the ruling. Ultimately, a U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the initial ruling by early 1902. They insisted that Edison did not invent the motion-picture camera itself, but rather invented only the sprocket system that moved film through the camera; this effectively prevented Edison from establishing a strong hold on motion picture technology.

While these emerging legal complications in large part defined the first half of the decade, several promising developments regarding both the types of films being made and the public's access to said films were on the horizon. In addition to the advent of the feature-length film (which most scholars identify as the 70-minute long Australian film *The Story of The Kelly Gang)*, between 1902 and 1907 filmmakers began carving out genres such as science fiction (George Melies' *A Trip To The Moon*), the western (Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*), and the earliest attempts at a realistic or documentary film (Porter's *Life of an American Fireman*).

Moreover, theaters began cropping up around America. In 1905, Harry Davis and John Harris opened one of the first American nickelodeons (whose name combined the typical cost of a showing and the Greek-based name for a famous French theater, the Odeon). Some scholars estimate that by 1908, 10,000 nickelodeons were up and running.

# THE 1910s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

An Artist's Dream (1913) · Cabiria (1914) · The Birth of A Nation (1915) · The Tramp (1915)


**1910**

John Randolph Bray patented the 'cel' animation process used by animators & pioneered cartoons with focused stories

**1910**

Alice Guy Blache became the first woman to own and run her own studio: the New York-based Solax Co. Studios

**1912**

William Fox creates The Fox Film Foundation

**1915**

D.W. Griffiths pioneers several essentials within modern cinetography, including altered angles, multi-shot scenes, etc.

**1919**

Richard Oswald directs *Different From The Others*—one of the first films to portray gay characters in an empathetic light

Just as inventors and directors asserted their presence in the first decade of the 20th century, so did particularly talented (and fortunate) actors begin cementing their positions in the century's second decade: the 1910s.

It was in this decade that opening credits made their first appearance, as did the first "movie stars". Carl Laemmie, who founded the Independent Motion Picture Company as an alternative to Edison's juggernaut Trust (the MPPC), manufactured a "star making system" to build anticipation for his company's films. Florence Lawrence was the first "star" crowned by Laemmie—and though the general public has largely forgotten her, it was only a few short years afterward that enduring stars like Charlie Chaplin emerged. Chaplin was, to be sure, the first movie star whose status was confirmed by a seven-figure contract with First National (for nine films).

Film budgets began escalating in tandem; D.W. Griffiths' *The Birth of A Nation* and Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria* cost 110,000 dollars and 1 million lira, respectively. Nevertheless, Griffith's *Birth* went on to earn in excess of 10 million dollars, making it the first legitimate blockbuster film.

Amidst these ever-ballooning expenses (and profits), William Fox engaged in a legal battle with Thomas Edison over the latter's alleged attempts to monopolize film-related technology. In 1918—less than twenty years after Edison's foray into the world of cinematography, a U.S. federal court ruled that Edison's Patents Co. did in fact serve as the infrastructure for a monopoly. Edison was issued a 20 million dollar fine, and was subsequently forced to leave the film business.

This decade also demonstrated how geopolitics could impact the emergence of a popular, but still fledgling art-form like film; the start of World War I stalled motion-picture production in Europe and eventually brought it to a halt after significant shortages of power and supplies crippled the continent. Meanwhile, the American motion-picture industry thrived, and the profits made then allowed American companies to produce more expansive and ambitious films.

# THE 1920s

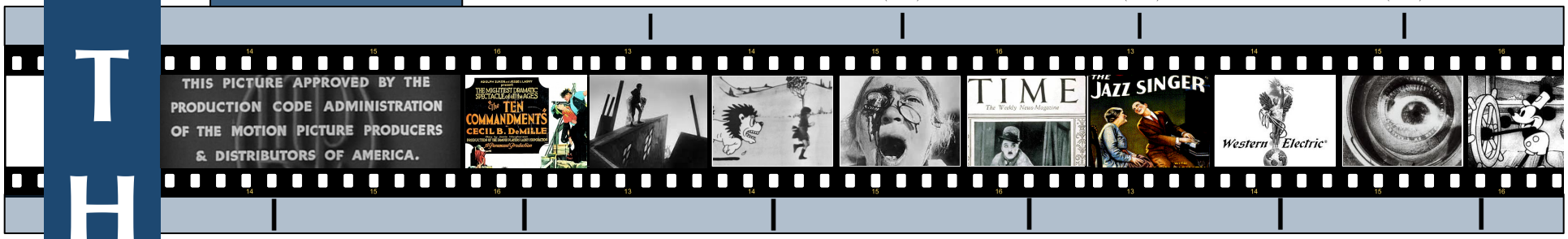
## NOTABLE FILMS

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

Battleship Potemkin (1925)

The Jazz Singer (1927)

The Man With A Movie Camera (1929)




**1922**

Hollywood insiders form the Motion Picture Producers & Distributors of America (MPPDA) in order to censor film from within the industry

**1923**

DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* becomes the most costly film of all time ($1.2 million), features the largest set ever

**1924**

Animator Walt Disney directs his first cartoon, *Alice's Wonderland*—a 12 minute short

**1925**

Following the success of *The Gold Rush*, Chaplin makes the cover of TIME magazine

**1928**

Hollywood's major studios sign an agreement with AT&T/Western Electric to produce films with sound

**1928**

Walt Disney's "Steamboat Willie," starring Mickey Mouse, is released

Although scholars of language arts often point to the 1920s as a watershed decade for literature—one that included James Joyce's daring modern-epic *Ulysses* and T.S. Eliot's jagged masterpiece poem "The Waste Land"—it was also a stunning period of innovation and artistry for filmmakers around the globe. German director Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was released in the US in 1920, and more or less inaugurated the German Expressionist movement; its low-key, contorted, and nightmarish quality, complete with twisted alleyways, tilted camera angles, claustrophobic spaces, and crooked cityscapes in large part helped define this new aesthetic.

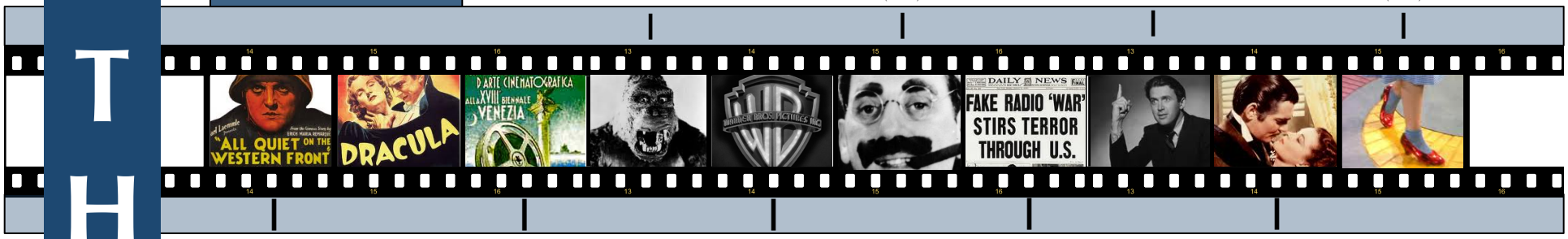
In Russia, Soviet director Lev Kuleshov experimented with what would come to be known as the Kuleshov Effect; Kuleshov filmed a short clip of actor Ivan Mosjoukine's relatively expressionless face, and then edited the footage to precede three other images—a bowl of soup, a coffin, and a young girl—during the editing process (for a total of six shots). When Kuleshov screened this short film, he discovered that audiences *projected* moods onto Mosjoukine's character (i.e. solemnity over the soup, grief over the gravesite, and lust for the girl). In turn, Kuleshov insisted that directors use the editing process to take full advantage of this emotional reflex of an audience. Soon afterward, Russian director Sergei Eisenstein employed a dramatic new approach towards editing—which is now known as the Soviet montage—to provoke viewers to both feel and think more deeply in the theater. While Eisenstein identified multiple types of montage, its essence lies in the combination of two or more, sometimes seemingly unrelated, images. For instance, a shot of an animal being tortured and a day-laborer being lectured by his supervisor might be paired together to suggest that the working class are perceived as sub-human by those who manage them.

The introduction of sound to movies came on the heels of these bursts of visual innovation, as did the perceived need among industry insiders to censor their own films in order to not offend their growing customer-base. Within a three-year period (1927-30) both "talk-ies" and the strict Hays Code surfaced.

# THE 1930s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

King Kong (1933) | Duck Soup (1935) | Mr. Smith Goes To Washington (1939) | The Wizard of Oz (1939)




**1930**

*All Quiet On The Western Front* is released as the first major anti-war film of the sound era

**1932**

The world's first major film festival was held in Venice, Italy as part of the *Venice Biennale*

**1934**

Warner Bros. becomes the first studio to cease its German distribution office to protest the Nazi's anti-Semitic policies

**1939**

Orson Welles terrifies the American public when he broadcasts his realistic adaptation of the alien invasion novel *The War of the Worlds* (via CBS)

**1939**

Dubbed by many critics as the greatest year of cinema; 1939 featured *Gone With The Wind, The Wizard of Oz, etc.*

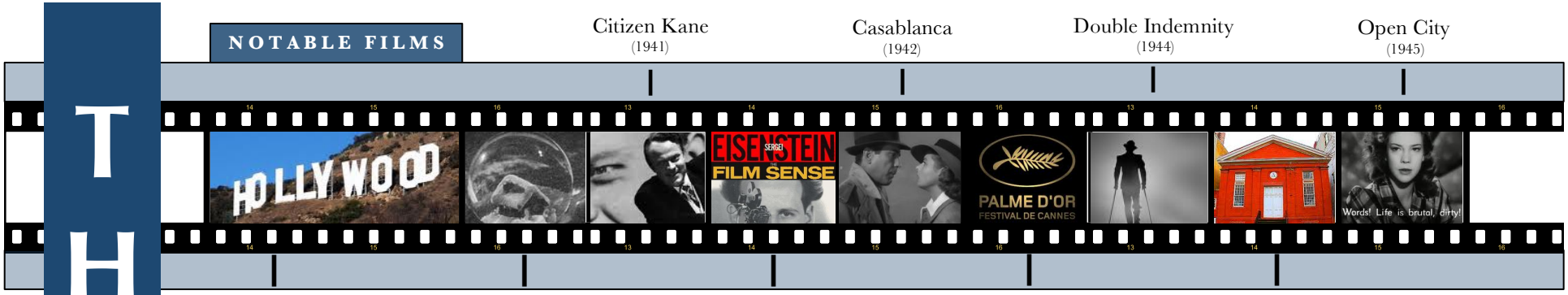
On the heels of the Great Depression, films entered the so-called "Golden Age"—in large part because of the affordable escapism that so many films created during the 30s provided. As attendance at theaters ballooned, so too did the level of scrutiny towards films increase; former Postmaster General William Hays began instituting a decency code in response to pressure—in large part from the Catholic Church—that filmmakers avoid shooting scenes that glamourized crime, pre-marital sex, or any other behavior perceived as illicit. By 1934, the Production Code Administration (the offspring of Hays' tenure) instituted a censorship certificate, which forced all studios to submit its films for approval or face a $25,000 fine. Moreover, the Church established a "Legion of Decency," which boycotted films that did not heed the Production Code's guidelines.

In the midst of this content witch-hunt, the burgeoning relationship between film and sound only drove those films approved by Hays' administration (the MPPDA) deeper into the fiber of American culture. For instance, both the inclusion of an original score in RKO's 1933 hit *King Kong* and the heavy-reliance on radio promotion of the film led it to break all standing box-office records. In addition, *King Kong* featured the first customized musical score, which scored rave reviews. A few years later in 1938 Disney released a soundtrack album for the score to its first full-length (and wildly successful) animated feature, *Snow White and The Seven Dwarves*.

The decade finished not with a whimper, but a bang, as some of the greatest films of the 20th century were released—including *Gone With The Wind*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Ninotchka*, *Stagecoach*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Wuthering Heights*. In France, both Marcel Carné's *Daybreak* (aka *Le Jour Se Lève*) and Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* (considered by some to be the greatest film of all-time, but banned during the German occupation) were released.

# THE 1940s

## NOTABLE FILMS




**1940**

Agents begin to establish networks for actors, screenwriters and studios

**1941**

*Kane* is lauded for its experiments with audio, complex flashbacks, and daring cinematography, including new camera angles, montage, etc.

**1941**

Eisenstein publishes *The Film Sense*, a film theory text that offered its readers a critical look at film and its social impact

**1946**

The Cannes Film Festival debuts in France on the French Riviera

**1947**

Kazan, Lewis, and Crawford found The Actors' Studio in NY; it becomes the nexus for "method acting" in the 1950s

In the midst of its golden years, the film industry yielded some of the most memorable work of the 20th century (Welles' *Citizen Kane*, the arrival of the *film noir* sub-genre, Italian Neo-Realists films, etc.) and felt, as in the 1910s, the war effort's impact—though the costs of World War II and the ensuing fight against Communism proved to be economic as well as deeply personal.

As the War escalated, the government began to significantly affect Hollywood's day-to-day operations. In 1942, The Office of War Information (OWI) stated that studios should inquire, before shooting anything, if the films in pre-production contributed towards the war effort in some way. Moreover, the Production Board for the war established both a $5,000 set expenditure limit and prohibited the use of cloth. These economic and material limitations were followed in the latter half of the 40s by an investigation (via the House Un-American Activities Committee) into the political beliefs of individuals in Hollywood. Come 1947, the HUAC began its hearings regarding the alleged communist influence in Hollywood; HUAC subpoenaed 41 witnesses, 13 of whom were writers. In 1948, 10 Hollywood employees were charged with contempt of Congress and jailed for refusing to cooperate (particularly, for refusing to answer the question, "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"). At the same time, the newly appointed President of the Screen Actors Guild, Ronald Reagan, announced that he would keep the FBI abreast of any Communist sympathizers in Hollywood.

Despite these serious complications, innovative filmmakers defined new aesthetics and pioneered techniques that enhanced the narrative power of film. For *Kane*, Welles had unconventional sets built to allow him to shoot from extremely low angles, and thereby render his characters especially ominous. *Film noir* (French for "black film") came into its own with the release of *The Maltese Falcon* and *Double Indemnity*; to this day, the sub-genre evokes the image of gruff detectives brooding alone while shards of light pierce through their office blinds. Finally, via *Open City* and *The Bicycle Thief*, Italian Neo-Realism asserted itself; it revolved around guerrila cinematography, low-grade grey-scale film stock and untrained actors working sans script. These socially-aware, documentary-style films captured the despair and confusion of post-War Europe.

# THE 1950s

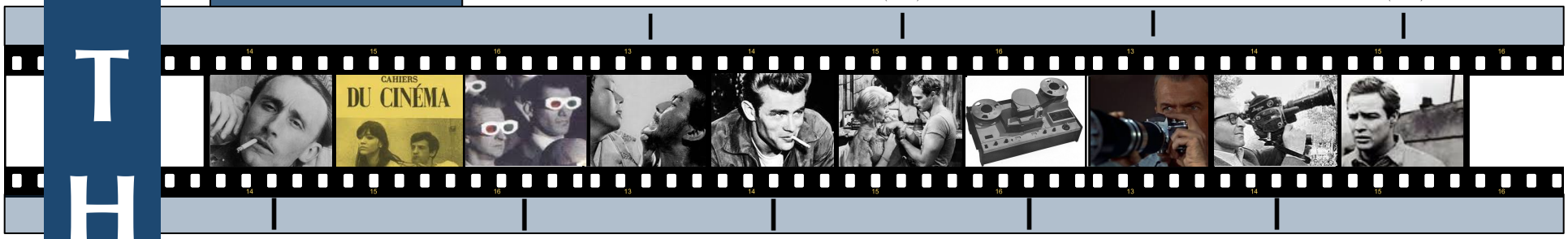
**NOTABLE FILMS**

Rashomon (1950)

A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)

Rear Window (1954)

On The Waterfront (1954)




**1951**

Film theorists Bazin, Doniol-Valcroze, & Lo Duca establish the influential film journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*

**1952**

Hollywood begins producing 3-D films *en masse* in order to compete with the increasingly popular television

**1955**

James Dean films *East of Eden* & *Rebel Without A Cause*; dies in a vicious car crash in California

**1956**

The first commercially viable videotape recorders are released (with a $50,000 price tag)

**1959**

French New Wave cinematographers establish the essential/elemental features of their aesthetic

While the HUAC continued to scrutinize the political leanings of those in Hollywood into the 1950s, another significant nemesis of the film industry—the television—also began to rear its head. The 50s were home to a host of classic films and invigorating new cinematographic theories and techniques, and yet the allure of television left studios scrambling to keep films an attractive and unique form of entertainment. Film scholar Tim Dirks asserts, "to avoid losing the battle with television, Hollywood counter-attacked with 3-D films. The first feature-length 3-D sound film released was the indie film *Bwana Devil* (1952) distributed by UA, inspiring a flood of other quickly (and often cheaply made), but sometimes successful 3-D features, such as *Robot Monster* (1953) and It *Came From Outer Space* (1953).

The drive-in movie also came into its own; by the end of the decade, Dirks reports that 5,000 drive-ins were up and running.

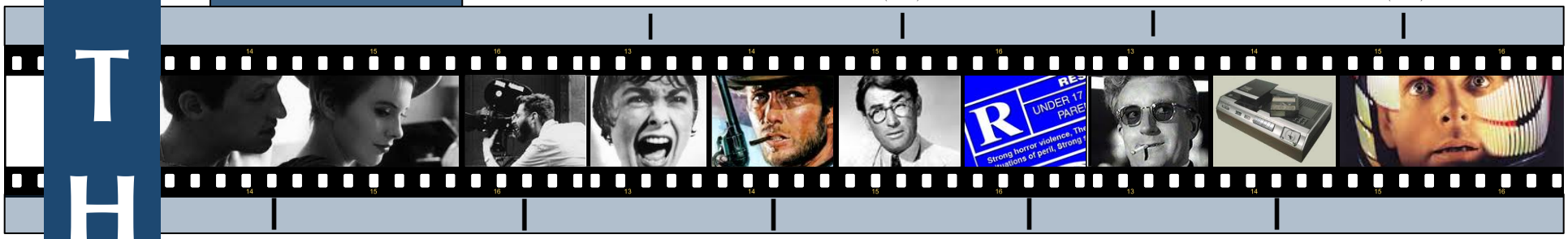
As these innovations to the infrastructure of movie theaters materialized, a new approach to the art of filmmaking gained momentum in France. Bolstered by the "auteur" theory, young filmmakers began to look at film as a means of expression on par with the novel. Film critics and theorists Andre Bazin and Roger Leenhardt argued that it is the director (the "auteur," or author) that animates a film by embedding it with the spirit of his or her thoughts, feelings, and ideologies—in this sense, film functioned as a vehicle for the very intimate vision of a sole creative leader, rather than as a primarily money-making means of entertainment.

In the late 1950s, the French New Wave (known in its birthplace as "La Nouvelle Vague") movement manifested as a significant and fresh method informed in part by the auteur theory. Francois Truffaut's feature film debut, the semi-autobiographical *Les Quatre Cents Coups [400 Blows]* (1959) and Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle [Breathless]* (1960) set a tone for the movement; these films were created in the economic shadow of World War II, and thus were defined in part by each director's personal style as well as their financial limitations. Consequently, some New Wave features included casting unknowns, the use of hand-held cameras, natural lighting, and loose, improvised direction and editing.

# THE 1960s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

Psycho (1960) | To Kill A Mockingbird (1962) | Dr. Strangelove (1964) | 2001:A Space Odyssey (1968)




**1960**

Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* is released; Godard's use of jump cuts and hand-held cameras in part define French New Wave

**early 1960s**

*Cinema verite*—an approach to film-making that explored the relationship between film and reality--emerges

**1967**

The first "spaghetti western"—*A Fistful of Dollars*, starring Clint Eastwood—opens in America

**1968**

The MMPA releases the first iteration of the now-famous "ratings system" (with "G," "M" (Mature), and "R" ratings

**1969**

Sony unveils the videocassette recorder (VCR) prototype

While the film industry continued to strategize in response to the growing popularity of television—in a decade, no less, where an American family's status hinged in part on the ownership of a car and a television set—it also ushered in a surge of cosmopolitanism and diversity. In 1962 alone, over 700 foreign films were released in American theaters; to be sure, the rise of Italian Neo-realism and French New Wave over the previous decades insisted that Hollywood pay close attention to Europe's contributions. In addition, Hollywood's relationship with both the work and portrayal of African-Americans progressed in this decade; Shirley Clarke's feature crime film *The Cool World (1964)* served as a *cinema verite*-style examination of the rise of the Black Power movement and the lives of African-Americans in the inner-city. It was the first commercial film to be shot on location in Harlem. Moreover, Sidney Poitier's Academy Award triumph in 1964 served as a small but noticeable sign that the lives and work of African-Americans had gained a foothold in Hollywood.

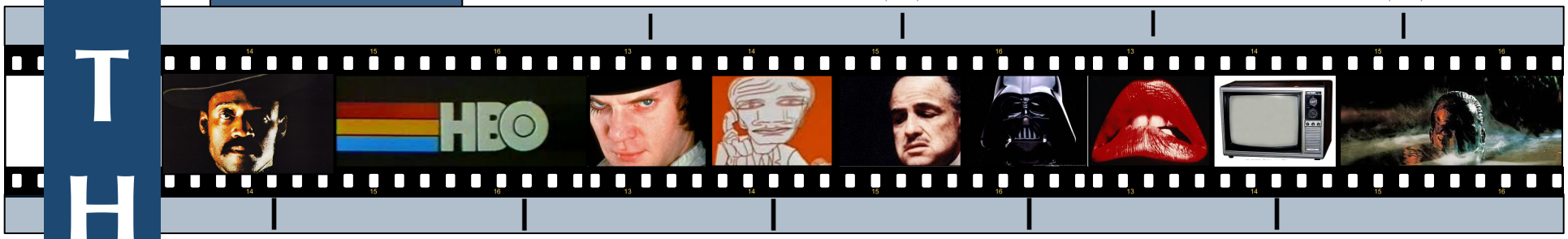
These cultural steps forward mirrored the major artistic steps taken—particularly in regard to film genres—by daring filmmakers of the 1960s. Roughly half a century after the first filmmakers used the medium to explore the human condition, artists of the 60s released films that elevated several of the most essential genres: comedy, horror, and science-fiction. Comedy films such as *The Pink Panther* (1963) & *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966) thrust forward the concept of a modern "tragi-comedy," in which the film's structure allowed filmmakers to portray life as simultaneously silly and sad. Auteurs such as Hitchcock lent a similar sophistication to the horror genre: by eschewing the typical, though popular, supernatural fiend-villain in favor of an all-too human antagonist, horror films became stages upon which human psychology was under the knife—Hitchcock's *Psycho* demonstrated what the traumatized male mind can become. Likewise, Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, elevated science-fiction to a new level of admiration. Kubrick's expansive and yet simultaneously claustrophobic depiction of deep-space set a tone for the genre that remains powerful today—his set design for *2001* is reflected in contemporary films such as *Sunshine* (2007), *Moon* (2009), and *Prometheus* (2012).

Finally, the elimination of the Hays Code rang out as perhaps the clearest signal that film's boundaries had shifted in step with the changing mores of America as a whole.

# THE 1970s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

A Clockwork Orange (1971) | The Godfather (1972) | Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) | Apocalypse Now (1979)




**early 1970s**

The blaxploitation subgenre was launched with Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song! (1971)*

**1972**

HBO transmitted its first cable television programming to 365 home subscribers in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

**1974**

Peter Foldes' *Hunger* becomes the first animated film to use computer digitization

**1977**

Lucasfilms releases *Star Wars*; the film breathes life into the science-fiction genre

**late 1970s**

The popularity and profitability of HBO in the mid-1970s helped jumpstart the growth of cable TV

With the seventies came a rude awakening regarding the all-too-permeable boundary between the silver screen and "real life"; two of the decade's most notable films—Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and Coppola's *The Godfather, Part I*—were quickly identified as dangerous films. After a series of UK-based crimes in which the perpetrators mimicked scenes from *Clockwork*, Kubrick himself opted to withdraw the film from distribution; in America, Coppola's portrayal of the Italian mafia in *The Godfather* led the Italian-American Civil Rights League to protest and thus draw attention to a film they estimated could damage the image of all Italian-Americans. These instances reminded the public the rhetorical power of a popular film.

The negative press Coppola received for his first installment of The Godfather was followed, upon the premiere of its predecessor with high praise from the industry; Coppola was showered with accolades not only for forging a great film, but also for making a sequel that was deemed superior to the original. Up until the mid-70s, sequels were generally perceived as shadows of the original—film critic and historian Timothy Dirks argues that *The Godfather, Part Two* helped "launch the trend toward blockbuster sequels".

Just as Coppola demonstrated how one could extend a film's profits and cultural influence via sequels, so did other filmmakers begin experimenting with special effects in a manner that would prove essential for the health of future blockbusters. A year after *The Godfather, Part Two*'s release, a young director named George Lucas established a facility dubbed Industrial Light and Magic—typically known now as simply ILM—with John Dykstra and producer Gary Kurtz. The facility allowed them to pioneer new cinematographic technology; to this day, ILM remains a cutting-edge team that realizes the special effects for nearly all major blockbuster films, including Jurassic Park, Iron Man, and Avatar.

Vietnam War films dominated the end of the decade, particularly The Deer Hunter and Apocalypse Now. Such films were distinct from the war films created in the mid-20th century; they tended to emphasize not the heroic potential of soldiers in war, but rather the war's nightmarish effects on both the countries involved and the psyches of those on the front lines.

Finally, in 1972, just as Sony released the first U-Matic cassette tape, a small Japanese company operating under the name "Atari" began developing the arcade version of *Pong*. Thus in a decade rife with blockbuster films, the first seeds had been laid for an entirely new entertainment industry that presently is showing more consistent growth than even mighty Hollywood.

# THE 1980s

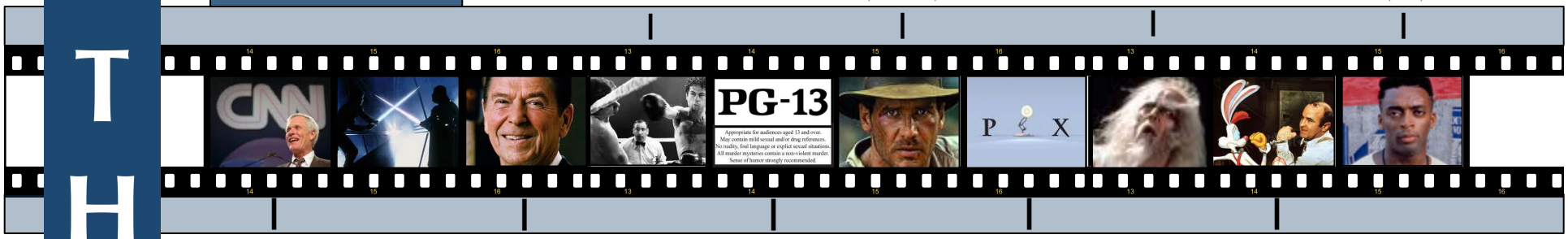
**NOTABLE FILMS**

Raging Bull (1980)

The Indiana Jones Trilogy (1981-1989)

Ran (1985)

Do The Right Thing (1979)




**1980**

Ted Turner launches CNN—the world's first 24-hour cable new channel

**1981**

Pres. Reagan supports the American Family Life Act: a abstinence-centered response to perceived loose sexual mores in modern films

**1984**

The PG-13 rating is issued in response to complaints regarding violence in *Gremlins* and *Indiana Jones &The Temple of Doom*

**1985-6**

Apple's CEO Steve Jobs buys Pixar from Industrial Light & Magic for $10 million

**1988**

*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* proved a landmark film with its innovative blend of animation & real action

The midnight-premiering, record-breaking summer films that have come to be staples of American culture were conceived, in large part, in the 1980s. Home to the monumentally successful films of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, moviegoers of the 80s witnessed the advent of the deep space film; forward-thinking studios such as Industrial Light & Magic and Pixar enabled directors to set their narratives galaxies away in a manner that was paradoxically very real, very human. In decade prior, attempts to fashion an E.T.-puppet or the dozens of alien barflies in the famous cantina scene in *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* might have looked too crude to engage the average moviegoer—yet by the 1980s, technology caught up with the imaginations of these significant directors, and allowed them to redefine the scale and scope of the contemporary blockbuster.

And as the epic creations of Spielberg and Lucas left their mark on American culture, the films of John Hughes—now renowned for his contemporary teen angst coming-of-age films such as *The Breakfast Club* and *Sixteen Candles*—ushered in a series of cult classics regarding the small moments in the life of the ordinary American adolescent. These films established and examined several of the predominant cliques with contemporary high schools, including the popular kids, the jocks, the loners, the "druggies," the nerds, etc.

The emerging format of the music video was similarly popular with the adolescent market; although Pink Floyd's elaborate video for *The Wall* was among the first serious music videos created, director John Landis' 14 minute short film-musical for Michael Jackson's "Thriller" stands as the watershed moment for music videos—while many early videos were fairly crude, simplistic clips of artists lip-synching to pre-recorded songs, these videos dramatically altered the cultural impact and distribution of music. Traditional radio stations continue to struggle to maintain their popularity regarding music.

Finally, just as the technology pioneered via Pixar and like facilities began flourishing, outcry broke out against media mogul Ted Turner's plan to colorize classic films from the early 20th century. Orson Welles felt threatened enough by Turner's off-the-cuff remark about Citizen Kane—which he suggested he might colorize—that he instructed filmmaker Henry Jaglorn to keep Turner and his "crayons" away from *Kane.* While Turner did ultimately colorize films such as *King Kong* and *It's A Wonderful Life*, in May of 1987, Rep. Richard Gephardt proposed the Film Integrity Act, which served as a revision of the Copyright Act of 1976, and limited the extent to which one could alter pre-existing works of art—including the colorizing motion pictures.

# THE 1990s

## NOTABLE FILMS

Silence of the Lambs (1990)

Pulp Fiction (1994)

Fargo (1996)

Saving Private Ryan (1998)


**1990**

In a $14 billion merger, Time Inc. and Warner came together officially to form TimeWarner

**1991**

*Terminator II*'s T-1000 surfaced as the first fully computer-generated main character in a feature film

**1991-2**

*Malcolm X* & *Boyz In The Hood* help usher in a subgenre that attempts to express the struggles of the 20th century black male

**1994**

Bravo network launches the Independent Film Channel (IFC), on which it showcases indie films

**1997**

DVDs (digital video discs) are sold to the public and quickly become the standard for home screenings of films

For all the big-scale romantic (*Titanic*), futuristic (*Terminator II*, *Jurassic Park*), and war-based (*Saving Private Ryan*) films released in the 1990s, Disney's animated features enjoyed perhaps the most success throughout the entirety of the decade. That 1996s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (which garnered over $100 million) was the company's least profitable film of the 90s highlights how wildly successful the so-called Disney renaissance (i.e. *The Little Mermaid*, *The Beauty and The Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, etc.) was. *Toy Story* was an especially grand achievement, for its Pixar-based animation made it the first entirely computer-generated feature-length animated film. Film historian Tim Dirks writes that "It was noted as being Pixar's first feature to be released in theaters …The visuals were entirely generated from computers, creating a wonderfully-realistic 3-D world with lighting, shading, and textures."

These impressive and novel animation-based achievements ran parallel to a host of bold socio-political statements embedded in the live-action films of the 90s. Topics such as the Holocaust (*Schindler's List*), AIDS (*Philadelphia*), feminism (*Thelma & Louise*), and gangland violence in African-American communities (*Boyz In The Hood*) became vogue.

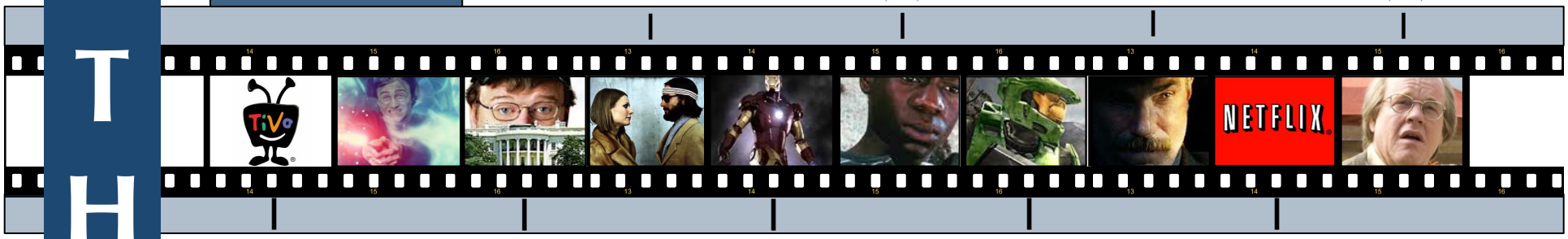
And lastly, a note on the simultaneous expansion of the big-budget, major motion pictures and the burgeoning independent market: the 90s served as home to a bevy of daring, expensive, and forward-thinking films by major studios, and in turn, many A-list actors of the decade began demanding greater salaries, perks, and artistic control. It was not unusual, for instance, for major stars (think Kevin Costner, Tom Cruise, or Harrison Ford) to levy for control over promotional material for films, and a say in script approval as well as the final cut of a film (in addition to receiving 8-figures).

At times, the level of control exerted by stars did not result in especially strong box-office results; Demi Moore, for instance, traveled with a costly entourage when promoting her mid-90s movies—no less than three of which were flops. Meanwhile, the guerrilla marketing campaign for the independent and deliberately lo-fi *The Blair Witch Project* seized the attention of the American public. The producers of the film purposefully toyed with audiences' perception of the footage; their "is it real or not?" approach fascinated Americans enough to provoke viewers to sit through the hand-held, cinematically amateur film. To be sure, the film's nearly quarter of a billion profit (worldwide) led major studios to take notice of the growing indie-film landscape; by the decade's close, most studios established independent film divisions (such as Fox's Searchlight division) that would make star-free films with challenging, provocative, or 'serious' social issues.

# THE 2000s

**NOTABLE FILMS**

The Royal Tenenbaums (2001) | City of God (2003) | There Will Be Blood (2007) | Synecdoche, NY (2008)




**early 2000s**

TiVo becomes a commonly-used tool to record television programs

**2001**

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center spawns dozens of cinematic interpretations of the tragedy

**2002-2008**

Films based upon popular fantasy novels and comic books become go-to blockbusters for major studios

**2005**

Video games such as *Halo* began garnering profits comparable to those generated by the movie industry

**2007**

In early 2007, Netflix reported its billionth DVD rental

Like the decades that immediately precede it, the 2000s brought with them technological innovations including advanced motion capturing and 3-D—and yet, some of the most significant developments in the film world revolved around things not usually associated with high-octane Hollywood.

Although plenty of thoughtfully produced and popular television programs existed in the 80s and 90s (Chris Carter's *The X Files*; Jerry Seinfeld's *Seinfeld*), the new millennium's has thus far been dubbed the "golden age" of television. Starting with late-90s-early 2000s program *The Sopranos* (which featured a mostly unknown cast), David Chase sought to bring the cinematic and narrative richness of the best films to the small screen via HBO. James Gandolfini's psychiatrist-seeking mob boss character inspired a gallery of self-destructive and emotionally-scarred alpha males—including *Mad Men*'s Don Draper and *Breaking Bad's* Walter White.

In a similar sense, though the second half of the 20th century was home to dozens of famous documentaries, controversial directors such as Michael Moore as well as a battery of controversial topics have elevated the contemporary documentary to blockbuster status. *Bowling For Columbine*, *Born Into Brothels*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and *Super Size Me* offered powerful takes on issues such as gun control, child prostitution, global warming, and the dietary habits of the average 21st century American. And it is precisely because the aforementioned documentaries challenge our presuppositions about key aspects of human behaviors, the environment, and other monolithic issues that high schools and universities have begun including critical film courses into their curriculums. Because we receive so much information via video (whether in the form of a new broadcast, televised political ads, etc.) it has become essential for students to be instructed about the ways in which filmmakers can use cinematic devices to (sometimes unethically) shape our feelings and thoughts about a particular subject.

These developments within the industry all developed, moreover, in the shadow of a global shift regarding our access to videos at large. The advent of Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, Hulu, Netflix, etc.—as well as bit torrent and streaming sites such as Mega Upload—made it easier than ever to watch pirated versions of popular films and television programs. In 2012, HBO's *Game of Thrones* series became the most pirated series ever with an estimated 4 million illegal downloads per episode. Television and film studios continue to struggle to combat piracy and retain the lion's share of their programs profits.