



Screen Ages: A Survey of American Cinema

By John Alberti

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Screen Ages is a valuable guide for students exploring the complex and vibrant history of US cinema and showing how this film culture has grown, changed and developed.

Covering key periods from across American cinema history, John Alberti explores the social, technological and political forces that have shaped cinematic output and the varied impacts cinema of on US society.

Each chapter has a series of illuminating key features, including:

- ‘Now Playing’, focusing on films as cinematic events, from *The Birth of a Nation* to *Gone with the Wind* to *Titanic*, to place the reader in the social context of those viewing the films for the first time
- ‘In Development’, exploring changing genres, from the melodrama to the contemporary super hero movies,
- ‘The Names Above and Below the Title’, portraying the impact and legacy of central figures, including Florence Lawrence, Orson Welles and Wes Anderson
- Case studies, analyzing key elements of films in more depth
- Glossary terms featured throughout the text, to aid non-specialist students and expand the readers understanding of changing screen cultures.

Screen Ages illustrates how the history of US cinema has always been and continues to be one of multiple screens, audiences, venues, and markets. It is an essential text for all those wanting to understand of power of American cinema throughout history and the challenges for its future.

The book is also supported by a companion website, featuring additional case studies, an interactive blog, a quiz bank for each chapter and an online chapter, ‘Screen Ages Today’ that will be updated to discuss the latest developments in American cinema.

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Editorial Review

Review

‘An interesting, comprehensive, and up-to-date history of the US cinema industry. *Screen Ages* betrays our dependence on glossy overviews and simple narratives. The history of American cinema is far more varied, interesting, and complex than commonly recognized, and the careful work of John Alberti successfully reveals the richness of our shared Hollywood heritage. From the silver screen to our smartphones, movies continue to be a significant aspect of the modern American experience. *Screen Ages* traces the intriguing and often unrecognized history of the evolution of US cinema and show how this profoundly important medium matters amidst larger structures of social change.’ Gerardo Marti, L Richardson King Associate Professor of Sociology at Davidson College and author of *Hollywood Faith: Holiness, Prosperity, and Ambition in a Los Angeles Church*

‘Screen Ages acknowledges that the reason we study film is because, first and foremost, we love to watch movies. John Alberti has contextualized the history of cinema within that frame, which is always simultaneously about the craft of making movies and the pleasure of watching them. This text is exceptionally well suited to student learning because Alberti makes it relevant for them, connecting the past to the present in creative ways?for example, linking the Kinetoscope to YouTube. An especially valuable and unique feature of this text is its exploration of gender genres across time, which shows how the changing nature of gender roles have been at times challenged and at others reinforced by movies and moviegoing in American culture. Furthermore, Alberti’s inclusion of women in film from Alice Guy-Blaché to Lena Dunham offers a more diverse analysis of filmmaking than other textbooks. *Screen Ages* is comprehensive in its coverage of the history of cinema, accessible in its clear design and approachable style, and a genuine contribution the field.’ Laura Mattoon D’Amore, Assistant Professor of American Studies, Roger Williams University and editor of *Smart Chicks on Screen: Representing Women's Intellect in Film and Television*.

‘John Alberti's *Screen Ages: A Survey of American Cinema* should work well with traditional College age students as well as adults in introductory courses in American cinema. The text is interesting, easy to read, not overly detailed, and it regularly draws connections between past and present developments, practices, characters, storylines and images. Each historical period is given roughly equal treatment as appropriate for a survey text. Clear and telling examples are used to illustrate changes in popular genres that reflect changes in society. Economic and technical topics are explained well. There is much throughout the text to spark productive questions and discussion.’ Walter Skiba, Associate Professor of Media and Fine Arts Calumet College of St. Joseph Whating, Indiana

‘An interesting and innovative handbook of genuine value to a wide range of readers and students.’ Oliver Harris, Professor of American Literature, Keele University, UK

About the Author

John Alberti is Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Cinema Studies in the Department of English

at Northern Kentucky University, USA. His previous books included *The Working Life: Readings on Work, Labor, and Career*, *Leaving Springfield: The Simpsons and the Possibilities of Oppositional Culture*, and *The Canon in the Classroom: Pedagogical Implications of Canon Revision in American Literature*.

Users Review

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