Readings

Historical Terms
nickelodeons
vaudeville

A Trip to the Moon
The Great Train Robbery
The Birth of a Nation

Technical Terms
zootrope
persistence of vision
Daguerreotype
Kinetoscope
Vitascope
pantomime
intertitles
cross-cut, or parallel editing
intellectual montage

Personalities
Thomas Edison
Eadward Muybridge
Lumiere Brothers
Georges Melies
Edwin S. Porter

D.W. Griffith

Lillian Gish

Other Potential Identify Items

Major plot events and characters in Musketeers of Pig Alley and Broken Blossoms

Concepts (for essay questions)

The development of motion picture technology in the late 19th century and the technique and importance of the first important narrative films, A Trip to the Moon (1902) and The Great Train Robbery (1903).

The contributions of D. W. Griffith to establishing film making techniques and conventions that we take for granted today (Remember the clear differences between Edwin S. Porter’s The Great Train Robbery, from 1903, and D.W. Griffith’s A Girl and Her Trust, from 1912.)

Griffith’s mature film-making technique in Broken Blossoms (cross-cutting, intellectual montage, film tinting, the actors’ use of pantamime—that is, how their posture, facial expressions and gestures convey character and feeling).

Griffith’s use of silent film to explore troubling topics such as urban poverty and crime (The Musketeers of Pig Alley), as well as drug addiction, domestic abuse, and cultural and racial prejudice (Broken Blossoms).

Films (on reserve in Medford Library, subject to checkout policies on syllabus)

The Great Train Robbery (Dir. by Porter) and A Trip to the Moon (Dir. by Melies) in The Movies Begin, Vol. 1 (DVD)

The Girl and Her Trust (Dir. by Griffith), in The Movies Begin, Vol. 5 (DVD)

The Musketeers of Pig Alley, in D.W. Griffith’s Biograph Shorts (DVD)

Broken Blossoms (Dir. by Griffith), DVD