

# Humanities Seminars Program

## Four Great Directors: Pathways to Hollywood

Dr. David Soren

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Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. – noon

July 8 – July 29, 2014

### Optional Text:

Soren, David. The Rise and Fall of the Horror Film. Baltimore, MD: Midnight Marquee Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-936168-01-9.

### July 8: Fritz Lang and the Metropolis of the Future

This lecture explores the problems facing Germany at the end of the great post World War I depression (1918-1925) and the attempt by Lang and screenwriter Thea Von Harbou to imagine the world of the future with American-style skyscrapers, science and technology gone mad and the need for a Messiah to mediate between the impossibly disdainful and greedy rich and the hopelessly dehumanized worker class. Optional reading in Dr. Soren's book include the introduction and chapters one and two.

### July 15: Busby Berkeley and the Transformation of the Musical

Busby Berkeley is credited with transforming the Hollywood musical from a theatrical stage-bound show to cinematic fantasy but was he the one. His predecessor, the Canadian John Murray Anderson, has long been a forgotten innovator who introduced many of the concepts Berkeley developed. The class examines how Berkeley worked, usually drunk or half-drunk with a notepad by his bathtub. Some of his most delirious and bizarre fantasies will be presented including racist and sexist forays that were available to small children in the thirties! Optional reading is chapter 3.

## **July 22: Alfred Hitchcock: The Master of Suspense**

Alfred Hitchcock is considered a cinema master but what were his secrets that he used in film after film. Dr. Soren sat down with Hitchcock's best friend and producer Norman Lloyd and investigated things such as criss-crossing montage, denial of the expected, transfer of affect and other "tricks" that are found in the Hitchcock cinematic dialectic. See how Hitchcock's early influences of Expressionism molded his film ideas and led him ultimately to explore Surrealism with Ben Hecht and Salvador Dali. Read chapters 6 and 7.

## **July 29: The Enigmatic Loreena McKennitt**

Women directors are becoming more common these days but Loreena McKennitt has been a producer, director, composer, arranger, singer, and multi-instrumentalist on harp and piano and accordion. Identifying herself with the ancient Celts and engaging in anthropological studies, her videos and recordings are three-year personal explorations which are full of elemental, animistic elements that embody many religions, pagan mysticism and a love of the earth. Her passion for the Pre-Raphaelites and Symbolists have made her performances on stage into mystical experiences and her music has made her an international cult figure. She has also been a long-time friend of Dr. Soren and he will reveal the fruits of their many discussions.